# Activism in the Works of the Beat Generation

# Activism in the Works of the Beat Generation:

*Mapping Spaces*

By

Andreea Cosma

**Cambridge**
**Scholars**
Publishing

To my grandfather.

# Contents

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# INTRODUCTION

Cities change in terms of infrastructure or physical locations and through the psychological spaces fostered by a metropolis. The concept of investigating such spaces and places through an integrative exploration which includes literary experimentation, historical links, and an approach to activism may reveal a facet of the geocritical discourse of the last century which is not only interdisciplinary but also quite rare in the field of spatial studies. This reflection on some of the works of the Beat Generation writers, which mostly incorporates texts that were dedicated to, written in, or about the three Beat hubs (New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles) seeks to highlight important features of this movement's literary and socio-political contributions to U.S. and world culture. To achieve this endeavor, a new definition of activism is proposed, which extends beyond literary representations of concepts, activities, and philosophies of said activism. This perspective envisions a synthesis of a certain lifestyle, as exemplified by the Beat writers featured in this book, with literary expression and diverse forms of activism. These forms of activism are connected to ideological, metaphorical, and physical spaces, including protest marches, sit-ins, journalism, and public speeches advocating for social change. Additionally, this blend encompasses isolation, imprisonment, and the initiation of alternative civic education initiatives, which arose from the formation of various groups, schools, and movements. The relentless quest for progress within an urban environment is driven by active citizenship, which stems from a deep-seated need for change and a prevailing sense of social unrest. Subversiveness, in this context, simultaneously unites and challenges, fostering new values while questioning established norms. The post-war era, characterized by intense social upheaval, development, and expression, played a pivotal role in reshaping the sociocultural landscape of the United States.

Against the background of the civil unrest in the 1950s, writing became an increasingly powerful tool that reached spaces that physical protest could not. The literary texts of the Beat Generation thoroughly illustrate the relationship between the individual and the space of social change, as well as the way in which they influenced each other. By following this stream of thought, the book follows the cartographies that may be traced in the prose of Jack Kerouac (*Big Sur*, 1962), Joyce Johnson (*Come and Join the Dance*,

1961), Lawrence Lipton (*The Holy Barbarians*, 1959), and in the poetry of Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Diane di Prima and Anne Waldman, with a view to offering the reader an authentic taste of New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco during the second half of the twentieth century, when social and political activism developed. Through the geocritical approach used in this pursuit, the male and female perspectives on the evolution of the metropolis from the 1950s through the 1970s will be illustrated by the works of the Beats, who managed to create a special space that may be read as the intersection of literary representations, protest, criticism, and change. The complexity of meanings, which certain urban spaces are charged with, their palimpsestic structure combined with the written or vocal manifestation of social, political, and cultural protest could be read, I argue, as "meta-manifest places." The term expresses the joint meanings of real, geographical space, its metaphoric depiction, and its ideological representation.

Social progress and equality are directly linked to the degree to which minorities challenge the authorities that maintain norms which discriminate against them. Activism had frequently been mistaken for delinquency, before and during the second half of the twentieth century. In those challenging times, the Beat Generation representatives rose to disrupt the traditional values which they considered to be square and obsolete. Their rebelliousness did not necessarily mean social troubles; rather, their subversion stemmed from a deeper social cause. A 1951 *Time* article reveals the results of a survey conducted among young people, in order to determine what the youth's ethos was. The magazine describes the after-war youth as a "small flame," "the Silent Generation," and "the oldest young generation" (*Time,* Nov. 05, "The Younger Generation" 8-28). Such labels uncover the deeply rooted conventionalism that sprang out from the lingering sense of prostration caused by the rise of nuclear fear and the pre-war economic depression. The survey also shows that among the main aspirations of the young generation is money and that they prioritize getting "well fixed" (*Time,* Nov. 05, "The Younger Generation" 11) before being socially involved or innovative.

It seems that the post-war economic boom influenced the "Silent Generation" to pursue a hedonistic lifestyle, centered around comfort and pleasure. The Beat Generation stood out from the 1950s mainstream crowd, due to their rejection of lavish lifestyles and consumerism. Their defiant literary works and disobedient attitude broke the silence of their generation by challenging the social norms. The confusion created around a majority paralyzed by capitalism and McCarthyism and a struggling minority of people who felt unrepresented fueled the Beats' subversivism of mainstream

trends and gave rise to other countercultures and movements in the late 1960s and 1970s, which defy ready categorization. While the "silent majority" abstained from public discourse, both Beat Generation writers and Civil Rights leaders were born from the Silent Generation. Although the Beats' protest was expressed more through literary means than through physical manifestations, as is the case of the Civil Rights activists, both groups relied on civil disobedience[1] and on the credo that one's ideology should transcend the universe of the 1950s authoritarian discourse. The intersections between the Beats and the Civil Rights are left to interpretation, depending on whether one looks at the Beat group of (predominantly white) writers or at the Beat Generation movement, which involves Beatniks of various social, racial, and cultural backgrounds. These Beat enclaves and social networks did manage to stir the 1950s society and pave the way for the fight against disenfranchisement. The different narratives of the 1950s and 1960s, some of which overlap at times or transverse one another create a unique countercultural context, important to acknowledge in order to reveal the Beats' social involvement.

The first half of the twentieth century in America was characterized by conformity and a number of crises and struggles caused by the two World Wars and the Great Depression in between them. Such times of sacrifice backfired in the second half of the century, a period of revolution, change, achievement, and rebellion. Starting with the 1950s, America was marked by great milestones in politics, economy, and culture. The Civil Rights activists exchanged "immediate survival or interests" (King, 1992, 66) meaning temporary basic needs, such as safety and comfort, for the quest for social change that aimed at permanent improvement of more complex social needs related to dignity and social recognition. New social groupings started to rally together and confront the oppressive norms imposed by their contemporary mainstream culture. The fragmentation of society into activist groups and polarized communities restructured the traditional social and

---

[1] Henry D. Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience." *Walden and Civil Disobedience*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 2005, 245-246. Henry D. Thoreau, who served as a main influence on the Beat culture and philosophy, emphasized the importance of setting priorities regarding social patterns. In his "Civil Disobedience" (1849) he demonstrates that self-reliance, individuality and anti-materialism are the three pillars of a harmonious society. The issues that Thoreau identifies at the middle of the nineteenth century, related to the role of the individual regarding environmental protection and social responsibility seem to persist in the twentieth century and to be supported in the Beats' work in their subversion of mainstream norms, lavish lifestyles and pollution. The same problems continue to affect the global society we live in today, as revealed by the current campaigns on global warming, consumerism and social discrimination.

cultural patterns that had been respected throughout history. Minorities and oppressed groups started to act on social issues by identifying the sources of their oppression. Moreover, the creation of organizations and social workers had a great impact on shaping new identities and goals for Americans, especially for those from marginalized groups.

The Beats depicted in their work the opposition between the status they had inside their group and the one in the society: "It is a kind of hall of glory, as these people, in Ginsberg's view, are the 'saints given vision' who are now 'shrouded in junk'" (Quinn, 2003, 198). After the Second World War, the Beats were among the first youth groups to see the world differently and adopt a lifestyle that opposed the 1950s expectations, thereby contouring the image of the activist in literature through their writing. David Bornstein's *How to Change the World* (2004) emphasizes the meager literature on activism and the difficulty in coming up with analytical strategies to describe it: "One can analyze an entrepreneur, but how does one analyze a saint?" (Bornstein, 2004, 92). The activist becomes, thus, an underdog of society and a dreamer of social welfare who is trying to make ends meet amongst the needy and the wealthy.

This study focuses on mapping spaces of protest as portrayed in literary and non-literary texts and aims at giving visibility to writing as a form of insurgent art, as Lawrence Ferlinghetti claims in "Poetry as Insurgent Art" (1975). A spatial analysis of the Beats' work, against the backdrop of real historical events, reveals the main challenges that the Beat Generation members confronted while experiencing urban life and living under the values, norms, and principles of late twentieth-century America.

In his work, *Writing on Cities* (1991), Lefebvre claims that sciences fragment the city in order to analyze it. History, sociology, demography, geography, economy, architecture, and design are some of the sciences that shape the holistic image of the city by fragmenting the urban space into pieces. Lefebvre observes that different parts of the city can be unified only through a plan or project (1999, 94). Social and cultural projects, as designed by grassroots organizations and activists united the city through cross-cutting actions that incorporated art, music, writing, protests, and the advancement of a certain lifestyle. An important question about people's lifestyle in the urban sphere is how the individual or a group of people insert their own "rhythm" of life into that of the others, that is the rest of the city. Another significant question on the same matter is how one follows their own rhythm compared to that of authority, such as political, cultural, economic, and social power structures.

While Lefebvre states that projects have the role of unifying a city from a trans-sectorial approach applied to the urban space, in *The Location of*

*Culture* (1994), Bhabha considers that it is the creation of projects that fragments the community: "Social differences are not simply given to experience through an already authenticated cultural tradition; they are the signs of the emergence of community envisaged as a project" (1994, 3). Social discrepancies that occur in the urban space trigger individual or group projects, which naturally create subcultures and socio-cultural trends. Such voices in society, expressed through various means such as art, literature or demonstrations gave rise to movements that people resonated with and created waves of social change.

Edward Soja, in *Postmodern Geographies* (1989), discusses the economic and geographic fragmentation of cities by describing the shift from urban to suburban life and from luxury to necessity (1989, 101). This restructuring of regions and cities led to the development of infrastructure, such as highways, new neighborhoods, and corporations that promoted the consumption of products and services that met the new trends and lifestyles after the 1950s. This "crabgrass frontier" (Jackson, 1985, ix) has drawn clear boundaries between lower- and higher-class people, geographically, by the migration of the richer classes to the suburbs. Subsequently, the well-off adopted certain titles and routines such as ownership of the suburban house, isolation from the workplace and the crowded city, and the idea of home and family prosperity as a priority in one's life.

In *Rebel Cities* (2012), David Harvey acknowledges the importance of the political spectrum of the city as an important power structure of the urban space, which is built by the city itself: "The city of God, the city on a hill, the relationship between city and citizenship - the city as an object of utopian desire, as a distinctive place of belonging within a perpetually shifting spatio-temporal order - all give it a political meaning that mobilizes a crucial political imaginary" (2012, xvii). This structure is held and changed by the society that mirrors its philosophy onto the city. However, difference, in one's understanding of what the city represents, may cause fragmentation in all layers of the city: social, cultural, political, economic, and geographical.

According to Robert Tally's *Spatiality* (2012), literary cartography and literary geography walk the reader through the maps of specific writers. In this case, the Beat texts may be read as maps of the city, which lay out both the social and individual problems of the time and the gender roles and relations in a large metropolis. Michel Dear's theory of creative places shows that both the selection and the omission of spatial details of the narrative, mapping literary texts convey a blueprint of the mid-twentieth century city and depict the urban realm at that time, from the perspective of an underdog. The gaps found in the texts contribute to the creation of places,

either as sources of inspiration or as artifacts that illustrate cultural realities and encourage social change. Castells, on the other hand, asks a series of questions in his work, *The City and the Grassroots* (1983) when he analyzes the relation between places and subcultures: "What are the cultural themes of the community, the forms of its social organization, the waving flags of its political battles?" (Castells, 1983, 139). Space fosters the development of group identity while, at the same time, it is shaped by social and political endeavors. This research focuses on the symbiosis between people and places and seeks to depict the city as a socio-cultural construct from both male and female points of view in the 1950s through 1970s.

In her "Preface" to *Gender Trouble* (1990), Judith Butler argues that we ought to analyze and consider the needs of minorities before labeling them as social pariahs (2006, viii). It is through the efforts of writers as activists, whose works serve as representations of communities, that social outcasts receive a voice. Poet and activist of the same period as the Beats, Adrienne Rich notes in "Compulsory Heterosexuality" (1980) that gender discrimination is based on a tradition that should be deconstructed and defined by its social role, that is to impose order among citizens: "I am suggesting that heterosexuality, like motherhood, needs to be recognized and studied as a political institution" (1980, 637). Rich compares heterosexuality to a political institution in order for people to understand what the root cause of social inequality is: a deficient social order.

Feminist critique supports the production and restructuring of space in order for the socio-cultural gap between men and women, created by the patriarchal discourse, to be eliminated. The fact that women claimed space in the urban sphere, restructured both cities and gender relations. Judith Butler identifies the "inbetweenness" that occurs at the border of male and female spaces due to "gender trouble" or unmet traditional gender roles and believes in the rejection of established disciplinary boundaries in what concerns Women's Studies. Both Betty Friedan in "*The Feminine Mystique*" (1963) and Gillian Rose in *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (1993) discuss the necessity to dislocate what is considered by the patriarchal society as "women's spaces" from the male gaze and to deconstruct the idea of domestic spaces as feminine spaces. The beautiful garden and the immaculate home had been associated by the patriarchal discourse with the attractive female body or with the obedient and subservient wife. Feminist literature points out these stereotypes, gender roles, and cultural patterns and offers the necessary tools for women to create new spaces for themselves in society and to reconstruct the image of domestic spaces from a female point of view.

Michel Foucault also contributes to feminist politics in what concerns gender and space by discussing gender and sexuality as cultural constructs rather than innate features. In his *The History of Sexuality* (1976), he also argues that "bio-power" (Foucault, 1978, 143), which refers to the intersection of biopolitics and disciplinary power enables the authority to have control over the masses. Foucault mentions in his chapter, "The Moral Problematization of Pleasures" (1976), that "the freedom that needed establishing and preserving was that of the citizens of a collectivity of course, but it was also, for each of them, a certain form of relationship of the individual with himself" (1978, 79). The fragmentation of American big cities was triggered especially by the 1950s' conformity and authoritative norms which clashed with the citizens' need for social acceptance and inclusion. These challenges provoked a sense of *angst* (or "unhomeliness") among people, which refers to the individual having "uncanny" feelings, a term that Heidegger uses in *Being and Time* (1953) (Heidegger, 1962, 233), which facilitated the restructuring of spaces and their meaning and role in society. The artists of the Beat Generation struggled with social isolation and a sense of "unbelonging," which led them toward an unconventional lifestyle that set the tone of their literary work. The Beat writers can be seen as pioneers of the social movements after the 1950s, as they encouraged the youth to rethink their place in the world.

The Beats could be viewed as a literary manifest against conformity and tradition. Their lifestyle shocked the urban society at the time. One can look at the Beat city as a compound of "paroxysmal places," if we use Michel de Certeau's phrase (de Certeau, 1984, 91). In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), he compares the conglomeration of spaces in New York, seen from a rooftop, to an acute clinical condition. The Beats portrayed the city in a similar manner, by describing an attack of architectural styles, cultures, and social endeavors. The Beats create such places which could be called "paroxysmal" (de Certeau, 1984, 91) or described as "chronotopes" (Bakhtin, 1981, 58) by inhabiting and incorporating them in their literary productions. Social activism after the 1950s emphasized the importance of "differences" in the city, especially in terms of oppositions such as nature *versus* built space and being *versus* thought (Lefebvre, 1999, 88). In American metropolises, this period is marked by grass-roots efforts that had a significant impact on the achievement of individual freedom.

By looking at the Beat literature through the lens of activism and the social agenda of the Golden Age America, I have identified a number of questions that this interdisciplinary research attempts to answer:

- How did the Beats' discourse disrupt the social paradigm of the mid-twentieth century America?
- What were the main projects and movements enabled by activists, that resulted from social differences in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s and how did the "Beat project" influence the production of these and other similar social projects?
- How did the Beat writers represent the three epicenters of their cultural creativity: New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles and how are they connected to social activism?
- What roles did gender and sexuality take during these three decades (the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s) in mainstream society and how did the Beats respond to it?

Through these questions, this research aims first to raise awareness about the importance of activism in the post-war era. The analysis of the cultural practices and cultural productions of the Beat Generation will reveal the Beats' response to the "square" values promoted by the upper- and middle- class society at the time. Second, it aims at enlarging the understanding of the spatial dimension of activism, by referring to spaces of protest and creative cartographies that may serve as social and ideological manifestations through literature. Such spaces will be coined as "meta-manifest places." Through the literary act, the writer as an activist creates a map of spaces of protest, by combining the real with the imagined, which becomes embedded in the literary text. Such "meta-manifest places" determine the grassroots nature of a certain temporal period and endow the writer with an extra role besides that of the author of the text, namely that of becoming an activist.

An analysis of the acts of protest and forms of activism that took place during a time of major importance and influence is relevant for a better understanding of the mechanism of social inclusion and exclusion at work during the post-war era. Equal rights and access to resources and opportunities represent key-elements in achieving welfare and a prosperous urban society in an era marked, and reshaped, by the desire, and the power, of people to push limits out of frames. It is important to find new, feasible solutions to obtuse social norms, which can be applied in accordance with the needs of citizens, by giving visibility to root causes. Activists take responsibility for emphasizing such problems through various means and seek to find solutions for the benefit of the community. In order to obtain a comprehensive image of a social movement or act of protest, it is essential to connect such forms of manifestation to space and place. Literary works can reveal subversive meanings, depending on the way in which space is

laid out and on the role that a place has in conveying messages of opposition to social norms.

The book is organized into five chapters: the first chapter outlines the theoretical background of the study, the second represents an overview of the social and cultural events that took place in three American metropolises from the 1950s through the 1970s. The last three chapters serve as case studies because they discuss specific places and topics in the works of the Beat writers.

Thus, Chapter One, "Mapping and Social Activism in Literary Works," illustrates the relevance of space in the analysis of important social movements in America as well as the scope of geocritical theory and gender studies in mapping and discussing social, political, and cultural activism. This section outlines the theoretical approaches chosen for the close-reading of texts in the subsequent chapters and proposes a new concept of analysis: "meta-manifest place."

The second chapter, "The Beat Epicenters: New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco" presents the context in which the after-war movements developed. The chapter describes the change in perspective in the American urban society between the 1950s and the 1970s. The post-war paradigm shift manifested itself first into a social reorganization that stood at the leadership of activists during the Civil Rights Movement, Second Wave Feminism, and during the protests regarding LGBTQ+ rights, environmental protection, the Vietnam War, and social and cultural equality. Moreover, the chapter will describe the three Beat "havens:" New York, Venice (Los Angeles), and San Francisco.

Chapter Three, "The Male Poet as Activist" and Chapter Four, "The Female Poet as Activist," analyze the poetry of Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Anne Waldman, and Diane di Prima, respectively, by foregrounding the spaces of social struggle mapped in their texts. Considering writing as one of the oldest forms of expression, these chapters elaborate on the role of the poet in reporting on, and inspiring from, social change.

The last chapter, "The City as Character with Joyce Johnson, Jack Kerouac, and Lawrence Lipton" discusses the texts of the three Beat writers, *Come and Join and the Dance*, *Big Sur,* and *The Holy Barbarians*, respectively. The chapter interprets the cartographies created by the authors and emphasizes the role of the Beat group in raising awareness about the social problems at the time and in influencing the next generations. This section also draws on the way in which male and female Beat writers describe the city and analyzes the extent to which space affects one's need to belong to a social circle or group. Conclusions will round up the analysis in the chapters described above.

# CHAPTER ONE

# MAPPING AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM
# IN LITERARY WORKS

## Introduction

Space is one of the most significant dimensions of a city, as it draws on the quality of life of its inhabitants and on the way in which people animate its places. The impact of spaces over people's lives has been thoroughly analyzed by a considerable amount of literary and non-literary writers. However, this chapter aims to compare and contrast theories of space in the context of the 1950s through the 1970s in America, as an example of three decades of change that led to the restructuring of cities and to people's understanding of space and place at a time of social and political development. This chapter also focuses on a possible influence of space on activism and protest which may have contributed to the development of spaces as we know them today.

The achievement of social inclusion is an interdisciplinary process that requires first, awareness and second, political reform. For this reason, the work of artists and writers may influence policies that aim at urban regeneration. The cartographies created through art and literature document the grassroots sentiment of cities and make the public more aware of the shortcomings of urban life and its experience, which inevitably lead to social and physical urban change. I call such artistic descriptions of locations and maps, found in literary works, "meta-manifest places," because they take the form of a place and, as such, they can be mapped and, at a closer reading, they may also raise awareness concerning struggles for civil and political liberties.

## 1.1 Space, Place, and Activism

In the chapter, "Creativity and Place" Michael Dear (2011), discusses the difference between "creativity in place," which "refers to the role that a particular location, or time-space conjunction, has in facilitating the creative

process" and creativity "of place," which "refers to the ways in which space itself is an artifact in the creative practice or output" (Dear, 2011, 9). In this respect, one can offer special attention to space, either as the element that triggers creativity or as creativity *per se*. As Dear notes, "the simplest creative acts are fraught with geographies that instruct the spectator how to see, but also hide things from us" (2011, 9). Thus, writers use these creative acts in order to convey an image of the place as they wish to present it in their writing by adding or removing certain details. Creative places can thus refer to these "geographies" that are stylistically and strategically used to convey a built environment through the writer's own urban imagery in a unique artistic piece. The author may use "creativity in place" to produce "creativity of place" in order to obtain both a real and an imagined space through the writing process.

Creative space, as an output, could take the form of a map created by a writer through his particular description of space. The concept of mapping through literature has been discussed by Robert Tally in his book, *Spatiality* (2012). Tally explains that literary cartography can be easily associated with mapmaking. He describes the act of writing as a cartographic activity because both the writer and the cartographer have to examine a territory, to choose certain important characteristics of the territory, and include them in the map (2013, 45). Moreover, any writer may be considered a mapmaker, as the author of a story has to decide to what extent the writing will be influenced by the place it depicts. Tally states that "the literary cartographer, even one who operates in such non-realistic modes as myth or fantasy, must determine the degree to which a given representation of a place refers to any "real" place in the geographical world" (2013, 45). This suggests the fact that the writer has to draw the details of the story's spatiality, more or less, depending on the relevance that this space has for the text. He further states that "storytelling involves mapping, but a map also tells a story" (2013, 46), meaning that there is a very strong connection between writing and place, whereas in most cases, they co-occur and complement each other.

Michael Dear also develops the concept of cartography in his "Creativity and Place" (2011) but from a creative point of view:

> Cities also have a 'soft' dimension, that is, they comprise an infinite number of mental maps lodged in the minds of their inhabitants. To see how these cognitive maps are formed, artist kanarinka invited residents of the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to rename their favorite streets and places. (Dear, 2011, 6)

After the experiment, the artist found a unique blueprint of the city (i.e. the "soft city") "full of humanity, invention, and fun, totally unlike the 'hard'

city with its ponderous monuments, commemorative namings, patrolled spaces, and formal geometries" (Dear, 2011, 6). The "soft dimension" that Michael Dear describes refers to the urban imagery that the inhabitants of the city possess about the real built environment of the urban space. By renaming places with ones that trigger certain emotional responses, the author proves that only through "creativity in place," together with one's own experience, can "creativity of place" be achieved. By describing the new names of places as "inventive," the writer emphasizes "creativity" as a feature that spaces can have.

Rewriting space through the use of creative places can be seen as a genre of art that aims at portraying space beyond its common definition, which refers only to its "physical" aspect, that is "space" as the location of something. In his essay, "Visual Geographies: Geoimagery," Jim Ketchum discusses how places are represented, by comparing the view of a window with a painting of the same sight, emphasizing the difference between the two, that is the subjective lens through which the painter envisaged the window. Ketchum notes that while the window view serves as a symbol for "geography," the painting of that view can be interpreted as its "geographic representation," due to the fact that the perception of the same sight is transformed and filtered through the senses, knowledge, and skills of the artist (2011, 139). Place can therefore gain a more meaningful significance, other than that of "physical space," it can be reinterpreted as a new means of representation, built through emotional attachment and personal experience.

While "literary cartography" is created through the writer's own view and understanding of a place, Robert Tally explains that "literary geography" is the way in which the reader further transforms the literary map through his personal experience. Literary geography refers to the reader's role in this "project" of literary mapping. Thus, while literary cartography is related to the mapmaker, literary geography is concerned with the map reader. As map readers interpret a map, the text may represent a tool that the readers use to visualize and orient themselves in the space described by the text. Tally adds that "the reader is never simply a passive receptacle for the spatial messages transmitted by the map or text," due to the shifting and changing of meaning (2013, 79). Therefore, the reader is actively involved in the understanding of the map, considering and analyzing all the elements that a map or a text could comprise.

The connection between literary cartography and literary geography is at the core of one's ability to read the text or map, grasp the information, and then transform it and subjectively envision it. As Tally claims, "to the writer's literary cartography, we might add the reader's literary geography"

(Tally, 2013, 79), meaning that the reality of a place is perceived and distorted through the reader's judgment and thinking. Moreover, "the critical reader becomes a kind of geographer who actively interprets the literary map [which reveals] new, sometimes hitherto unforeseen mappings" (2013, 79). In this respect, a place described by a writer could be seen by the reader in a very similar way, or it can be understood and pictured differently. Thus, the map (i.e. the text) could direct its readers to various trajectories, plots, and spaces. The writer cannot fully control what the reader perceives since the information is subjectively understood by him. As Tally points out, literary geography refers to the way in which the reader envisions the text and the places mapped by the writer. Thus, literary geography can be linked to the readers' level of imagination, to their mindset, social status, ethnicity, and also to their gender. People may think and perceive a place differently, based on their background and personal affinity.

The people-place relationship was formerly analyzed by Martin Heidegger through the concept of "Dasein," in *Being and Time* (1953), which refers to the people's choice to be in a certain place and to embrace and open themselves to what surrounds them. Heidegger further discusses the dissonance of the relationship people-place, the opposite of "Dasein:" "*Dasein* finds itself alongside in anxiety [which portrays] the 'nothing and nowhere.' But here 'uncanniness' also means 'not-being-at-home' [*das Nicht-zuhause-sein*]" (1962, 233). One's relocation translates into the individual's coping mechanism against the anxiety of not feeling at home and not feeling that he/she belongs to a certain community. Heidegger argues that anxiety turns into fear when the first has fallen prey to the world (180). This is the result of living an inauthentic lifestyle that does not meet the needs and values of the individual. He further states that "only because Dasein is anxious in the very depths of its Being, does it become possible for anxiety to be elicited physiologically" (Heidegger, 1962, 234), which portrays the incompatibility of a person with a place and its effects on the individual.

Heidegger's discourse on unhomeliness and place-related anxiety is strongly related to the experience of space. One's positive resonance with the place in which he/she is located is triggered by the encounters, reactions, and events connected to that certain place. The experience of the street dweller is one of the ways of interaction with the city and the determiner of experience. The relation between the dweller and the city is also discussed by Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984). He envisages the city-dweller as a creator of stories: "They [the dwellers] walk an elementary form of this experience of the city, they are walkers, *Wandersmänner*" (de

Certeau, 1984, 93). The author compares the small streets and large avenues of cities with "urban text" and notes that "these practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen" (93). Each stroller "writes" a different experience about the city and there are as many "texts" as passers-by. These different representations of the city are connected to what Robert Tally calls "literary geography." While there is one cartography of the city, created by the map-maker, there are countless readings of the same map that distort it. Each stroller reacts to the city based on their personal values and background, which affects one's ability to objectively analyze a certain space.

The walker can experience the city differently compared to the feeling of watching the city from above. While a view from the top may instill a sentiment of power over and yet separation over the city, as it overlooks its "paroxysmal spaces" (de Certeau, 1984, 91), a stroller's view may offer a deeper and even more detailed picture of the city. The stroller may feel part of the city, but may feel less free in their encounters of the city, when compared to one's panoptical view over a space from the top. De Certeau gives the Atlantic coasts as examples of paroxysmal spaces, to emphasize the excess of built environment when seen next to the ocean. He further describes the difference between top *versus* down view in relation to power: "Must one finally fall back into the dark space where crowds move back and forth, crowds that, though visible from on high, are themselves unable to see down below? An Icarian fall" (1984, 92). The design of the city is one of the main factors in building a positive or negative experience with the city, achieving compatibility or triggering anxiety with a certain place. De Certeau argues that the position one has in the city, not only geographically, but also in terms of values, principles, and power, determines the extent to which an individual feels he/she belongs to their community and location. He offers the example of a billboard which looks "sphinxlike" on the $110^{th}$ floor of a building, with the message: "*It's hard to be down when you're up*" (de Certeau, 1984, 92). The author emphasizes the fact that the billboard's message influences the stroller to envision their status in connection to their social but also physical position in the city.

Traveling can be understood as a way of overcoming anxiety through relocation and search of other spatial experiences. De Certeau notes that there is a connection between physical and imaginary journeys which serve as escape-spaces: "Certainly walking about and traveling substitute for exits, for going away and coming back, which were formerly made available by a body of legends that places nowadays lack" (de Certeau, 1984, 106). The commodification of travel along with its development and accessibility to people led toward the replacement of legends, stories, and superstitions with physical travel. The urge for travel is determined by one's need for new

unlived experiences that cannot be encountered at a local level. Both legends and traveling are ways of producing space, real or imagined, and have the effect of disconnecting and displacing people through the discovery of new places.

Travel, migration, and technological development are important factors that led to the reshaping of the cities. This process brings forward new issues that need to be taken into consideration when analyzing space. In *Writing on Cities* (1996), Henri Lefebvre writes about the theory of "difference" as a discourse that tackles the continually-changing world from simple models of cohabitation toward a very complex social system: "difference is a way of linking that which is near and far, here and there, actual and utopian, possible and impossible. That is why we must struggle against a society of 'indifference,' not just by producing discourses but also in the way we live 'differentially'" (Lefebvre, 1999, 27). It is important to include "difference" as a criterion in analyzing the welfare of a certain community. Lefebvre insists that "difference" does not refer to uniqueness, but rather to the "struggle, conceptual and lived" (1999, 26) that may be experienced in the social space. Some of the struggles occurring in the city during postmodernity refer to "divergence, displacement, decentering" (Lefebvre, 1999, 50), which trigger along a deconstruction of culture and politics that fragment the society into smaller groups. Spatial struggle may appear in the city and impact society through the production of new places as a consequence of the complexity and interdisciplinarity of space. Lefebvre offers the example of the construction of a new building and portrays the numerous domains impacted by the modification of space:

> If one wishes to build a commercial or cultural centre, taking into account functional and functioning needs, the economist has his word to say. In the analysis of urban reality, the geographer, the climatologist, and the botanist also intervene. The environment, global and confused concept, fragments itself according to these specialties. (1999, 94)

While space is fragmented by the different sciences to which it is connected, Lefebvre affirms that it is a project or a strategy that unites them together. The reorganization of space should align with both scientific principles and the needs of the people. Even when rights of nature, heritage, economics, and architecture are to be followed and respected, it is vital for the prosperous development of the community that space is also in line with social rights. It is what Lefebvre calls "the right to the city," that depicts the meaning of one's place in the city: "The right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit" (Lefebvre, 1999, 173). "The right to

the city" may differentiate among generations and cultures, and may be challenged by waves of change. To keep this right relevant, space must be restructured to reflect new values. In *The Production of Space* (1974), Lefebvre argues that social change will not happen unless space directs it: "Change life! Change Society! These ideas lose completely their meaning without producing an appropriate space" (1991, 59). He further claims that with the development of societies, new spaces that meet the expectations of the emerging social trends and patterns are needed: "a lesson to be learned from soviet constructivists from the 1920s and 30s, and of their failure" (1991, 59). "The right to the city" can be seen as a project that analyzes social developments and transposes them onto the blueprint of a city. How a city is settled and how public and private spaces are used determine the experience of citizens with space.

The experience of a place is highly connected to Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the "choronotope," which emphasizes the connection of time-space in literature, as a metaphor that depicts the sociocultural dimension of communities in different eras and locations. Bakhtin defines this concept in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975): "[the] chronotope (literally, 'time space') [serves as the] intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (84). Various aspects of human life are portrayed in literature through the use of chronotopes as the time and space of the action. The frequency of using certain chronotopes in different novels and poems, from a similar time period and geographical location, demonstrates the customs of human experience developed there and then. Another important socio-cultural characteristic expressed through the use of chronotopes in literature refers to the ratio between private and public spaces illustrated in a text. Such writing choices may draw on the preferred spaces for different activities at the time. Bakhtin offers the examples of the road and the drawing room, which represent chronotopes of past human interaction. The road has lost its role as a space for social interaction due to the rise of the automotive industry, which has diminished its emotional importance for fostering profound human relationships. However, the road has been and still is the setting for new unforeseen conflicts in a storyline: Bakhtin notes that the road facilitates "random encounters," in the sense that people "of *all* social classes, estates, religions, nationalities, ages-intersect at one spatial and temporal point" (Bakhtin, 1981, 243). The categories of people that are typically separated by social distance and physical barriers (such as neighborhoods and regions that are far apart from one another) may unintentionally cross paths and, thus, the most disparate fates may collide (Bakhtin, 1981, 243). The road can be understood as a chronotope which deconstructs the values, principles, and

expectations followed in a certain period of time, as it is the proper place to put social hierarchy in a vulnerable position. Bakhtin further notes that even as geographic and temporal "series" become more complicated and tangible due to the dissolution of social barriers, the time and space characteristics defining people's destinies and lives blend in various ways while traveling (Bakhtin, 1981, 243). The reconstruction of social roles may be possible in a space-time conjunction of transition, such as the road, where there is access for all categories of people. The removal of social distance among these groups may disclose new, unexpected types of behavior and relationships.

While the road is understood in literature and social studies as a public space, where certain types of interaction are appropriate, private space has been depicted in many texts through the use of the drawing room. Even if it is perceived as a private, enclosed space, it also has a public dimension, as the drawing or living room is also the space where one receives visitors in their house. Bakhtin explains that this shift from public to more private spaces is triggered by people's need for intimacy, as they feel less exposed to the public eye, norms and expectations (1981, 144). The idea of isolation and social distance of small groups of people is implied through the use of such chronotopes. The socio-cultural values expressed by these private spaces describe the hospitality and the close relationships among familiar people in different situations of life. In this way, chronotopes serve as the essence of sociocultural facts, common for a certain time-space.

In literary works, as well as in other forms of artistic expression, choronotopes may be used as a way to document time-space and its corresponding cultural traits or may be used as metaphors that aim at following political agendas and at shaping mainstream culture. Homi Bhabha explains in his *The Location of Culture* (1994), that culture has been used as a way of manifestation, manipulation, and rebellion: "Forms of popular rebellion and mobilization are often most subversive and transgressive when they are created through oppositional *cultural* practices" (20). Culture is formed and reformed through the succession of waves that instill new values and points of reference which determine "normality" for the mainstream society. The transformation of culture may be influenced by the unfolding of newer cultural movements over the previous ones, by mobility due to the increasingly globalized world, or by highly intercultural spaces, such as borderline communities or societies built from a variety of minorities. Homi Bhabha defines this "ambivalent" (1994, 224) community as "third space," and argues that the lack of a consensus between incompatible contrasts of both worldwide and local cultures, that is created by the "non-

synchronous temporality" produces a sense of tension especially among "borderline" communities (Bhabha, 1994, 218).

The cultural reality is constantly challenged by external or internal shifts in thought and lifestyle, that build a new understanding of space, time, and life. "Third space" is also characterized by a sense of resistance among the clashes of cultures, which reinforces the native values against the pressure of cultural appropriation. Bhabha further affirms that the concept of "third space" can be understood as a method for social progression, as it constantly discloses new, unforeseen ways of life due to one's struggle to adapt to society while protecting their own identity: "This liminality of migrant experience is no less a transitional phenomenon than a translational one; there is no resolution to it because the two conditions are ambivalently enjoined in the 'survival' of migrant life" (1994, 224). By producing a hybrid-like identity, as a consequence of combining two or more cultures, the lack of one's full acceptance of a culture, despite the struggle of adapting to a new environment and principles, will result in a compromise of identity, that is focused on the inclusive emergence of the individual in the society.

The clash of cultures happens at a spatial level, not only when discussing borderline lifestyles but also in the context of the urban-rural or built environment-natural environment binaries as a result of urbanization. Edward Soja describes the distinction between society (urban life) and nature, in his *Postmodern Geographies* (1989), by claiming that:

> In the context of society, nature, like spatiality, is socially produced and reproduced despite its appearance of objectivity and separation. The space of nature is thus filled with politics and ideology, with relations of production, with the possibility of being significantly transformed. (Soja, 1989, 121)

Changes in thought require space changes, which portray the current identity of the society as a group. Such reproductions of spaces are influenced by socio-cultural and political tensions that try to gain dominance. Nature is fused with the built environment and is transformed into a source of "use values rather than exchange values" (Soja, 1989, 121). Nature has served as a resource for centuries; however, it is with the start of technological development that nature has been used, transformed, and reshaped in a truly impactful way. The creation of new spaces has led to waves of fragmentation in the society. The extension of cities through the creation of suburbs affected the city as a construct, by leaving there the lower classes, while the higher ones relocated outside cities. Nature was similarly affected by the progress of infrastructure, which has been expanding continuously, through both pollution and replacement of the

green environment with the built one. Edward Soja describes this phenomenon as "selective abandonment:"

> Expansive metropolitanization, accompanied by an even greater fragmentation of political jurisdictions and a quickened decentralization (not only of industrial plants but also of corporate headquarters, retail, and other services) contributed further to the selective abandonment of the inner urban core. (1989, 181)

The gentrification of the outskirts has marked a picket fence kind of separation that led to the degradation and decentralization of old city centers, by creating new ones in other locations. These spatial changes also led to the development of capitalism and new trends of consumption. Social distancing affected the lifestyle of mainstream society, by reorganizing activities from collectivity to individuality and from public to private. Soja further adds that "[t]he contagious inner-city riots sparked by those groups who benefited least from post-war boom" (1989, 182). The significant difference between the wages of blue-collar and white-collar workers, due to the progression of technology and industry, which replaced human work with machinery, along with the devaluation of businesses, properties, and quality of life in the historical centers of cities, triggered an urban crisis which impacted the lower social classes the most. As Soja notes, the blueprint of city centers revealed a mix of luxury and touristic facilities on one hand and a poor community of workers on the other: "luxury shops and hotels, key agencies of the state and finance capital, remaining corporate headquarters, and a bloated irregular workforce comprised primarily of minorities and the poorest segments of the metropolitan population" (1989, 181). Postmodernity is marked by spatial confusion as produced by rapid development and change in many sectors that influence human life. The new trends of rationalization, efficiency, and commodification mark a shift in the social mindset and disrupt the traditions and principles of the 1900s community. Soja uses the "kaleidoscope" as a metaphor to describe the post-war period: "Never before has the spatiality of the industrial capitalist city or the mosaic of uneven regional development become so kaleidoscopic, so loosened from its nineteenth-century moorings, so filled with unsettling contrariety" (1989, 187). The effects of fragmentation and social and spatial confusion managed to recreate considerably, the image of the city, which is undergoing a complex set of struggles. As Soja notes, "First World cities are being filled with Third World populations that, in some cases are now the majority" (1989, 188). The new waves of immigrants challenge both, the local economy and the local cultural rules, through an influx of new cultural and economic trends.

Mobility, space, economy, and political agendas are the main factors in the organization of social movements. David Harvey points out in his *Rebel Cities* (2012) that "the second major point is that political protests frequently gauge their effectiveness in terms of their ability to disrupt urban economies" (118). He further exemplifies the relation between the economy and protests, through a more recent case, when the US Congress proposed to criminalize undocumented immigrants in 2006. The immigrants' strike affected the economic activity of big cities such as Los Angeles and Chicago at such a significant level that it turned out to be very relevant in stopping the implementation of the law (Harvey, 2012, 118). The powerful impact that the immigrants' protest had on the United States shows the weight that common action has in the development of a social manifestation. While using a city's economic vulnerability as a weapon against itself in a social movement is proved to be efficient, Harvey also notes that the spatiality of a city is an important aspect to be taken into consideration: "In the same way that, in military operations, the choice and shaping of the terrain of action plays an important role in determining who wins, so it is with popular protests and political movements in urban settings" (2012, 118). The outcomes of protests appear to be more effective when the location is somewhere central, such as a city square. However, the power structures of the city are many times reshaping space in order to discourage such practices: "Political power therefore often seeks to reorganize urban infrastructures and urban life with an eye to the control of restive populations" (Harvey, 2012, 117). The reconstruction of cities and the development of infrastructure aim, many times, at isolating poorer neighborhoods from richer ones. This kind of segregation makes it difficult sometimes for the discriminated and economically deprived groups to manifest against their oppressors. Highways had been used in the United States as "physical barriers" (Harvey, 2012, 117) that secluded the city centers of the 1960s, inhabited by poor communities, from the luxurious suburbs where higher-class people relocated.

Harvey asks himself whether urban space determines social changes and manifestations as consequences of global capitalist trends or if it is a natural anti-capitalist response triggered by urban life (2012, 120). The real answer may validate both questions, as the city is a social construct that functions based on the symbiosis of the two social classes. The lower classes keep the city running through the invested workforce, while the higher classes often represent big corporations that create necessary working positions in the urban space. However, Harvey considers that it is the higher classes that depend on the lower ones in the city, and not the other way around: "It is in fact in the cities that the wealthy classes are most vulnerable, not necessarily