

Spaces of Consumption in Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's*

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Abstract: *Focusing on concepts such as space, place, globalization, and consumerism, this study examines how a 1950s American aspiring socialite, Holly, the protagonist of Truman Capote's Breakfast at Tiffany's (1958), constructs her identity in order to position herself among her desired peers (Lury, 1996). Capote's novel illustrates the various connotations of 'place': as emotional, imagined, remembered, or experienced by the senses (Moslund, 2011), and features New York as a bleak, post-war setting which combines the emotional, imagined and remembered past and present places. In this context, both space and place become important. Space – both the city and its landmarks (the spatial setting) – furnishes the necessary tools for Holly to undergo a transformation into the 1950s socialite; place gives her the meaning behind the importance attributed to these specific spaces. This paper analyzes the bar on Lexington Avenue, which the narrator and Holly Golightly visit daily, as not only a space of consumption, but also a functional place, which thus serves a dual purpose: a functional office for the tenants who live nearby, and an area where consumption happens. Alongside the bar and the city as a whole, the brownstone apartment building and the jewelry store stand as places of consumption, or "cathedrals of consumption" (Ritzer, 2003). It is in relation to such consumption places that Holly stages her New York life in order to be perceived, not as she is, but as what she desires to be. In consuming spaces, these become mere commodities, and individuals ascribe Karl Marx's magical connotations to them, transforming them into meaningful places.*

Keywords: *consumption places; mid-twentieth-century New York; the bar; the city; the brownstone apartment building; Tiffany's;*