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;*

A theoretical survey of spatiality

Due in part to the contemporary practices of globalization, the study of space has come to be of great importance in each and every field of study. This so-called resurfacing is connected to the spatial turn, which has presented interest for some of the more recent scholars (Barney Warf, Santa Arias, Robert Tally Jr., Sten Pultz Moslund, and so on).

The constant transgressions that give rise to new means of interpreting, or looking at the world around us, have led scholars to examine, in great detail, the concept of space. According to Barney Warf, in "From Surface to Networks" (2009), there have been three significant movements in the development of the scientific view of space, leading to the idea that geography

is not territorial but something altogether more complex. Postmodern and post-structural theories accelerated the relational view of space (Warf 74). The first one, the *space of flows* (Castells), is represented by a society in which productivity is derived from knowledge and information (Warf 70-71). The second view is linked to *commodity chains* (Gereffi), which are effective tools to analyze the "spatiality of transnational corporations" (Dicken). They are made up of flows of goods and information, having to deal with the labor relations throughout the entire organism. Globalization is what has made commodity chains progress even further in unifying far-away places, making strangers come together in relying on one another (Warf 72). The third and final view is connected to *actor-networks* (Serres, Latour 61), which, like so many postmodern concepts, do not rely on dichotomies, but on their diverse possibilities to create anew. Barney Warf argues that in order to function, networks require the fluidization of rules, resources, and power to succeed in completing a task, stretching across the spatio-temporal boundaries of the said network. In order for this to function, actors must engage actively in performing with each other, by being able to understand and bring forward each of their respective behavior (73).

The meaning a place derives from its respective space is what makes it important for the understanding of literary works, as we shall see in the next section. But, in trying to link the discussions on space and literature, more precisely why space is important for the study of literature, one might encounter very diverse scholarly opinions. If one tries to analyze the space and timeframe in which a certain piece of literary creation emerges, one might be tempted to apply the new historicist approach to the literary work, as do Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt in their comprehensive study *Practicing New Historicism* (2000). This approach has been challenged by scholars such as Jan Mieszkowski, who states, in *Labors of Imagination*, that current literary criticism is focused on the idea that a "human act" is comprehended if one considers the timeframe and spatiality in which it develops. He then proceeds to question this approach by posing directed questions such as: "Is it really necessary to read a nineteenth-century novel taking into account its historical background?" Some of the preconceived ideas about a specific timeframe might intervene in one's understanding of a certain work. Finally, he encourages individuals to 'read' the acts out of their historical context (1-3). In advocating for a neutral approach to the study of literature he urges researchers to leave their preconceived ideas and start anew. But is this possible? Could scholars ignore their preconceived ideas and their already-acquired knowledge in order to chastely approach a literary work?

In this paper I will attempt not to engage any such arguments directly, but to analyze the different consumption places featured in Truman Capote's novel *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1958) from the perspective of twentieth-century

consumerism. The 1950s was time when the rise of industry left individuals alienated from themselves and from society. Such a crisis in identity led to the individuals' need to construct a 'new' one through their respective consumption practices. Research on the topic of positional consumption, or on the fact that the consumption pattern can be equivalent to an identity constructor-aid, or to class/pecuniary emulation, is vast.[1] These aspects of the consumption pattern are important because they enable one to understand how individuals of a particular time focused on consuming, what they were consuming, and, of course, where they were consuming. The "where" aspect of this equation is also important for this paper.

Breakfast at Tiffany's is synonymous with a capitalist representation of the 1950s in the United States. From its very title, the novel uses name-dropping in order to fixate the desire of those who become addicted by mere consumeristic endeavors. The reference to Tiffany's, which evokes luxury and expensive goods that people do not need in order to survive, is used precisely to underline the growth of consumerism in the New York of the 1950s. Tiffany's is a consumption space which caters to the very rich. Although Holly Golightly, the protagonist of Capote's novel, does not engage actively in the labor market, she manages to sustain herself financially by resorting to her charms. She is not financially potent, but this high-end store is a space she circles time and time again. Constantly surrounding herself with luxuries gives her the impression of safety, warmth, and achievement. Spaces and places become important for the development of this socialite.

The concepts of space and place

One cannot further the discussion on the topic of spatiality and its importance without addressing the distinction between space and place. As stated before, space is self-explanatory geographically. Furthermore, in advocating for a more fluid interpretation of space, as opposed to earlier views which regarded space as being fixed or static, Barney Warf relates current scientific tendencies which view space as networks to the notion that geography itself is produced and not fixed. Geography is made up of

> chains of causality in which distance is relational, not absolute. Unlike surfaces, which have traditionally been portrayed as containers "outside" of society and thus "holding" it, networks explicitly admit to their human construction. (Warf 74)

Building upon the idea that geography is produced might help one understand why the author's choice of spatial setting is so important for the character

[1] To name some of the scholars who studied the subject: A. McRobbie, T. Veblen, C. Lury.

development of the protagonist. If one chooses to look at the big urban construct – New York in *Breakfast…* – as comprised of Warf's networks, it will produce the understanding that it developed as such, due to the chain of causation, where each and every moment in time (which is basically a link within the chain) produced an effect, and this, in turn, had further consequences, until the status quo is achieved: New York, a Northern American city, is the representation of progress. It attracts individuals who seek financial gain like a spider's web. It has also attracted this small-town housewife to leave her husband and children and reinvent herself as a New York socialite.

In order to understand the importance given to specific spaces – Holly's brownstone apartment building, New York City, the bar, and culminating with the jewelry store – one must dwell on the concept of place. Place is a cultural construct. Although there are a multitude of ways to address the complex concept of place so as to apply the theoretical aspects to literary constructs, I will draw on Sten Pultz Moslund's "The Presencing of Place in Literature," which illustrates some of the manifold approaches to place. The scholar describes place thus: "place as mapped by discourses and power; place as a transplatial contact zone; place as a dynamic process or event; place as emotional, imagined, remembered, or experienced by the senses" (30). Text analysis should bring all these approaches together, although the scholar may choose to focus on just one. Moslund further mentions a conflation of "language" and "land" or "landscape" in the *langscaping* of literature: leaving landscapes behind and starting to focus on langscapes, the scholar proceeds from a "detached contemplation of place as scenery and enter[s] into the complex cultural and sensuous experiences of place as a lived-in-world" (31). Moslund also introduces the concept of "topopoetics," which is "a mode of reading that moves away from the representation of place in literature to a direct presencing of place or sensation of place" (31). Place is present inside language and, at the same time, brought forth by it, "at times, making language possible at all" (31). Because this "involves an approach to literature and language not as meaning and discourse but as phenomena that are capable of triggering a disorganized intensity of sensory experiences or sensory memories of taste, color, smell, touch, warmth, cold, and so on" (31), "the notion of presence depends on an idea of language as something other than a medium of representation or a discursive conveyor or imposer of meaning" (32). In choosing to look at place as a sensorial representation, one will achieve a biased or subjective representation which is different, depending on the scholar undertaking the analysis.

Place is also important because it stands as one of the many ways in which individuals try to shape their identity. In "The Social Construction of a Sense of Place," Gerard Kyle and Garry Chick elaborate on how in trying to distinguish themselves from one another, and, at the same time, in trying to

position themselves as they desire, individuals affiliate themselves to places, which results in their adoption of a series of social constructs specific to those places (212).

For city dwellers of late modernity, the city becomes, according to Steven Miles, in *Spaces for Consumption*, "nothing more than a space for consumption in which we apparently express ourselves as citizens of a consumer society" (1) in "[s]hopping malls, theme parks, art galleries, museums, cinema complexes, designer apartments, casinos, sports stadia and public spaces of consumption" (2). Furthermore, western cities are not only the space for exerting consumption practices; rather, they are themselves "being re-branded as places to be consumed; as tourist destinations, centres of culture and as places worthy of the 'cultured' middle classes" (Miles 1). In short, living spaces have been turned into a commodity, i.e., have been commodified, according to Xavier Costa (181). Indeed,

> Spaces of consumption also refer to the consumption of places and spaces. It is increasingly difficult to distinguish those strategies that aim at defining spaces destined to promote consumption from those which favour the consumption of the spaces themselves. (Costa 181)

In both consuming spaces and consumption spaces, one can make use of the existent social constructs, which are characteristic for that particular place, in order to best position themselves. Pierre Bourdieu argues, in *Distinction*, that people construct their identities by consuming what is acceptable to their projected persona, according to their own habitus. Habitus is an individual's tendency to surround oneself with goods according to one's perception of the world (Bourdieu 170). Bourdieu's examination of taste and how it influences not only the "economy of cultural goods" (2), but the individuals' consumption patterns, can be applied fruitfully to a discussion of the eternal socialite, Holly.

Building upon Bourdieu's research, one can clearly see that, in *Breakfast…*, Holly's habitus is comprised of objects that link her to her desired cultural capital, which is connected to an individual's status and social value (Bourdieu 1). Even more so, not only goods or objects are able to reflect an individual's habitus, but also spaces: the bar, the city (New York), the jewelry store (Tiffany's), and also, representative for this city, the brownstone apartment building. Furthermore, one must also mention the spaces that define the characters as these stand as places that hold identity constructs desired by a myriad of people, particularly by this socialite-aspirant protagonist.

Holly the socialite tries to construct the life she desires for herself, her habitus. In doing so she uses social constructs of her time and makes them the focus of her projection. Since, for her, New York stands as a representation of

American capitalism, she has left her hometown in order to live in the big city. Once there, she has quickly adapted to the challenges of a high-class society, and minutely "checks off" all the items found on her aspiring socialite list, thus following in the footsteps of her preset habitus.

Consumerism, space, and place: Ritzer's "cathedrals of consumption"

This paper tries to connect the importance given to specific spaces and finally to the places that give the former meaning to practices of consumerism. Consumerism is an omnipresent practice pertaining to the late capitalist society; it permeates all aspects of individuals' lives, modifying patterns of consumption, and manipulating the people into thinking they cannot live without certain items. In trying to explain this aspect one might recall Karl Marx's view on commodity fetishism, where individuals ascribe magical connotations to items (Marx 47-49). The reason why individuals consume is subjective, and owes to their own cultural background. What individuals consume starts with each individual's personal upbringing and is relative to the social connections one desires to keep or to obtain, to their past and would-be habitus. Developing on the idea that consumerism can be viewed as an identity-constructor-aid (McRobbie 32), my paper will further show how this particular practice influences what individuals chose to consume with the end goal of portraying themselves as they desire.

In this context space and place develop into something of importance, not on their own, but in connection to individuals' consumption practices. Here, one can mention Holly's desire to be viewed as a big city socialite. In order to portray herself as she deems fit, she leaves a rural family life in order to move to the big city, as I have already mentioned, thus emphasizing the importance given to a particular place in time. And in order to fit it, she entertains parties with numerous guests, drinks, smokes, dresses fashionably, and reads up on sports just to have discussion topics with her male counterparts; all this emphasizes the importance given to staging the preset protocols of the required habitus practices on their specific stage (or place). Space is underlined as important because, as stated before, she chose to come to New York and nowhere else. During her residence here, she ascribes meaning to another chosen place, Tiffany's, and deems it her safest haven, the center of her new life. She consciously follows the rigors of New York City high-class, and with the aid of class emulation, Holly choses to frequent bars (as everybody does), or high-end jewelry stores (Tiffany's), as a socialite is expected to.

As a practice, consumerism preceded the industrial revolution and was not related to the United States, either. Initially believed to be a new part of the new social developments emerging from the industrial revolution, consumerism, according to current research, actually stemmed before the

industrial revolution. In *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire* (2001), Peter N. Stearns argues that consumerism initiated in Western Europe and the so-called image of consumerism (the United States) only came to imitate it (viii). Consumerism has suffered big developments during the last decades, but, as one might clearly conclude, each market has developed its own consumeristic patterns (ix-x).

As argued by George Ritzer, who, in *The Globalization of Nothing* (2003), studies the later effects of consumerism, everything can be construed as consumption goods. Normally, individuals would not think of medicine or education as consumption goods. Although not the only ones, medical services and education have been absorbed by consumer culture, which renders them mere consumption goods (232-233). Presently there are more and more individuals who consider them thus, and adopt a consumeristic attitude towards them. This makes one look at some altogether new practices as "cathedrals of consumption" which one would normally overlook. Developing on Ritzer's insight, restaurants, bars, and the high-end jewelry store in *Breakfast…* become "cathedrals of consumption." In consuming spaces, individuals ascribe Marx's magical connotations to them, thus transforming them into meaningful places.

Narrowing down the discussion, space, place, and consumption represent the main discussion topics of this paper centered on Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1958). The novel focuses on the mid-twentieth century, more precisely on the decade of the 1940s and 1950s in New York City. Its first-person narrative about a bleak post-war American society illustrates places as sensorial perceptions of leisure consumption.

Historically, an inclination toward leisure, as a consequence of having more free time on their hands, or the progressive focus toward social change brought forth by WW2 did not seem to be dampened by the Eighteenth Amendment. People kept going to parties: they consumed parties as much as they consumed large amounts of alcohol. They became focused on the identity-constructor aid of consumerism, and started adopting the "fashion" of the time. Mass-culture is important in the way people constructed their image in the 1950s: every young woman desired to be Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, or any other Hollywood celebrity. Also, individuals started to consume spaces. The spaces investigated in this research stand as representative for this practice: the bar, the brownstone apartment building, and the jewelry store. But the stage of it all is represented by the big city itself.

Truman Capote's novel stands as an illustration of how consumerism helped shape the geography of New York in the 1950s. Due to the rise of leisure consumption practices and the end of the prohibition, people started to consume spaces as well as commodities. This led to a rise in the numbers of bars, restaurants, and places where people wished to be in order to socialize, consume, or project their newly-constructed persona. Also, together with

consumerism, geography could be used as a way in which individuals minutely shaped their identities. In choosing to live in New York, in a brownstone apartment building, and by frequenting high-end jewelry stores, Capote's protagonist positions herself in a definite way: as a socialite.

The City: New York, a city upon a hill

As Lieven Ameel points out, in "The City Novel" (233), the living interests of individuals have shifted focus to the urban area. For one thing, many individuals now reside in cities. In this connection, one witnesses a development of literature on this specific subject, which has become a genre of its own: the city novel.

Due to this, the city (New York) is important when analyzing Capote's novel. Pamela K. Gilbert, in "Sex and the Modern City," argues that there is a shift away from the Western cultural fixation on the dichotomy between the perverted and corrupted city (associated with sexual license) and the morally pure rural village. With this shift, the United States have also shifted focus toward the utopian, shining "New World 'city upon a hill'" (110).

New York stands as a ubiquitous label in assessments of the twentieth century from the perspective of cultural studies. It is seen both as a space of consumption (as a consequence to the rapid development of industry) and as a representative place for this period's capitalist endeavor. New York comes to be seen as an end-goal for everybody who desires the "rags to riches" promise, even as a "Mecca."[2] It is certainly Holly's "Mecca": Holly has run away from her simple rural life, where she had a husband and children, to a life where, because of the given anonymity of the big city life, she can present herself as she desires. The idea that one could construct one's image, for example through consumeristic endeavors, is not new, as research by Angela McRobbie (1994), Celia Lury (1996), and Pierre Bourdieu (1979) demonstrates.

In Truman Capote's novel one can see a mid-twentieth century New York City, which is presented mainly from a sensorial perspective (even the first-person narrative contributes to this). It is portrayed as fast, rapid, full of bars, of parties, of people that may or may not know each other, which is juxtaposed with the tranquility of family-oriented life in the countryside of Holly's past life. Yet Holly experiences the full sense of safety, of homecoming, and of tranquility in the city only in the jewelry store: at Tiffany's. Here geography/space/place merge together with the effects of a consumeristic-oriented lifestyle in order to present Holly her desired home.

Regarding the novel's time-setting (the 1940s-1950s), this timeframe might be of great consequence when analyzing the representations of space

[2] From the consumeristic perspective individuals come to consume spaces, as they stand as the superlative in their specific fields of interest.

and place. Truman Capote's New York of the 1950s features spaces of consumption, how one comes to consume spaces, leisure spaces, and spaces of pleasure/displeasure. Because these are all linked to the pleasure principle, one could develop further on the aspect that the perception of place, which is linked to the senses (taste, smell, color, and touch), is constructed with the aid of the consumeristic endeavors of the time (which, in the mid-twentieth century, were in full bloom). The narrator uses the remembered place that represents the nucleus of a sensorial mapping of New York City from the very beginning. Let us see how the perception of space triggers sensorial remembering in the following excerpt from *Breakfast at Tiffany's*:

> I am always drawn back to places where I have lived, the houses and their neighborhoods. For instance, there is a brownstone in the East Seventies where, during the early years of the war, I had my first New York apartment. It was one room crowded with attic furniture, a sofa and fat chairs upholstered in that itchy, particular red velvet that one associates with hot days on a tram. The walls were stucco, and a color rather like tobacco-spit. (Capote 2)

Making use of place as emotional, imagined, remembered, or experienced by the senses (Moslund), the author sets here the bleak post-war 1950s tone. From the aspect of the brownstone building to the crowded interior and the colors described as sensorial perceptions (the red velvet is itchy; the wall color is organically described as "tobacco-spit"), all is bleak. Even more so, in linking the red velvet of the upholstery to an experienced event (the "hot days on the tram"), unpleasantness becomes omnipresent, indeed inescapable.

The bar/s: the hybrid space

Moving on to focus more on the social aspect of consumption, one might dwell on the bar. I must underline, though, that the bar in Capote's novel surpasses its main characteristic of being a space of consumption and develops into something new: a functional place (an office for the tenants) that doubles as a space for consumption (of both alcohol and information). Thus, this hybrid space is represented as a functional place, as a space for consumption, and also as a place for socialization.

According to Thorstein Veblen (*The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899), the consumption practices of the so-called class-conscious individuals were premised on the belief that any sort of substance abuse (alcohol and stimulants) tends to offer a positively-enforced label for those individuals who can afford the luxuries of such consumption patterns (87). Simply stated, the capacity to spend a lot of money on alcohol or on other drugs represents a mark of high status. Although the habitual use of alcohol is present in the novel, the

drunkenness of characters is not illustrated as often as one might expect. This might be because a drunken state does not match, for example, the protagonist's desired image. Holly is presented as succumbing to alcohol just once, when she finally breaks off with Doc (88-89). Although it is early on a Sunday morning, "not yet noon" (86), both the narrator and Holly get drunk. The reasoning behind this early start of alcohol consumption is explained by Holly's perception of time, which is portrayed, not as fixed, but as fluid: "But it's Sunday, Mr. Bell. Clocks are slow on Sundays. Besides, I haven't been to bed yet" (84).

The unnamed narrator and Holly go to the bar on Lexington Avenue daily ("six or seven times per day"), not to drink, but to make telephone calls, as phones were so hard to come by during the war (3). Right after the prohibition, bars became socially acceptable places, spaces of consumption. The dualities of the bar in the age are best illustrated in the this excerpt about consumption: "'Let me build you a drink. Something new. They call it a White Angel,' he said, mixing one-half vodka, one-half gin, no vermouth" (5).

In further mapping Capote's New York, one must also observe the insertion of real place names into the narrative such as the P. J. Clark's Saloon, which was basically a bar. The following quote illustrates the social aspect that comes along with alcohol consumption:

> I noticed a cab-driver crowd gathered in front of P. J. Clark's saloon, apparently attracted there by a happy group of whiskey-eyed Australian army officers baritoning, "Waltzing Matilda." As they sang they took turns spin-dancing a girl over the cobbles under the El; and the girl, Miss Golightly, to be sure, floated round in their arms light as a scarf. (19)

Doubling as leisure spaces, bars have become "cathedrals of consumption."' When Holly and the narrator step out for a drink on a Sunday morning, societal strictness comes to play even if the effect of alcohol consumption is merely the looseness of the tongue: "It was not yet noon, according to the black mahogany clock behind the bar, and he'd already served us three rounds." Holly confesses: "'I haven't been to bed yet,' she told him, and confided to me: 'Not to sleep.' She blushed, and glanced away guiltily" (96-97).

The brownstone apartment building: a socialite's space

Starting from Abraham Maslow's research, in *Motivation and Personality* (1954), on the basic human needs, specifically regarding the need for self-esteem, one realizes that individuals desire the esteem of others (45). This idea, coupled with the need to portray the image one desires, results in consumption

patterns that lead to the identity constructor aspect of consumerism. The cultural context surrounding a certain time period is very much dependent on the understanding of why and how a practice so complex such as consumerism could affect, even change, society. Due to the status emulation design of habitus (in which they follow in the footsteps of the upper-middle classes), which individuals are susceptible to, their consumption patterns start following new trajectories. The fact that individuals focus their attention on leisure or on how to obtain leisure-oriented lifestyle affects their consumption patterns because they consume in order to boast a certain lifestyle and according to their respective habitus.

The sense of the perverted city, where anonymity reigns supreme, pervades the novel, in part, due to the various parties presented. The following quote describes the diversity of the individuals who gather at Holly's parties: "Except for a lack of youth, the guests had no common theme, they seemed strangers among strangers; indeed, each face, on entering, had struggled to conceal dismay at seeing others there" (46). Attending a socialite party appears to be no different from simply entering a bar or even walking in the big city: one feels alienated from the others, yet chooses to stay with them rather than leave the place.

Furthermore, Holly attributes meaning to the specific space of her apartment. Following the implicit protocols of high-class New York society, she organizes parties in order to best position herself socially. The apartment is for Holly a cover letter, a statement piece she keeps in order to better construct her own identity, or rather how she desires to be regarded by society. This is further sustained by the fact that an individual's pattern of consumption basically stands as an identity constructor, as Angela McRobbie argues in *Postmodernism and Popular Culture* (30-32).

Also, name-dropping underlines the lengths Holly goes to in order to "play the part" of the New York socialite. The enclosed private apartment comes to double as a consumption space of leisure. By contrast, the functional aspect is limited: more often than not, Holly goes out to eat (e.g. breakfast). The apartment space is both a showroom (for her to be regarded as a socialite) and a stage for the parties she organizes.

Since Holly is so concerned with keeping up appearances, I must also dwell on her desire to construct her own identity so as to be seen as someone worth looking up to. What she consumes and what she does is done to detach her from her real identity, that of a rural housewife and mother, and is part and parcel of her reinvented self:

> I noticed that the mailbox belonging to apt. 2 had a name-slot fitted with a curious card. Printed, rather cartier-formal, it read: Miss Holiday Golightly; and, underneath, in the corner, traveling. (Capote 13)

In constantly making use of the upper-middle class appendage in order to emulate them, she achieves a detachment from reality in this hybrid space. She has become Holly-the-socialite.

The jewelry store: Holly's home place

Another space that has a dual function is the jewelry store, Tiffany's, where sometimes Holly has breakfast. As a space it stands as a spatial landmark in New York. As a place it is a capitalist representation for the consumption practices of the well-off and the class-conscious. Holly also elevates this place as her very own "Mecca" by means of the homecoming aspect, as she currently is without a dwelling place, for she has left her previous home and family. The following excerpt underlines how place triggers emotional responses within the protagonist: "to still be me when I wake up one fine morning and have breakfast at Tiffany's" (51). Holly does not care about the jewelry (or so she claims) because she considers she is too young to wear diamonds (Capote 52). The jewelry store functions as a "home" (or a haven), for it represents the roots Holly doesn't seem to have. The sensorial aspect of perceiving place is so vivid when it comes to the jewelry store. Even when she is down and depressed, the only thing that calms Holy is to return "home"; she yearns for this feeling as a goal in life. In clarifying how Holy responds emotionally to growing roots, Capote writes:

> What I've found does the most good is just to get into a taxi and go to Tiffany's. It calms me down right away, the quietness and the proud look of it; nothing very bad could happen to you there, not with those kind men in their nice suits, and that lovely smell of silver and alligator wallets. If I could find a real-life place that made me feel like Tiffany's, then I'd buy some furniture and give the cat a name. (Capote 52)

Maybe the best example with place as experienced by the senses is this particular perception of space within the jewelry store. In viewing it as a haven Holy puts all the consumeristic endeavors of a capitalistic society into play. A place that is traditionally for consuming luxurious items, which one does not need, but desires, is specifically the sort of place Holly would choose to transform in order to have her fairy-tale ending.

One can clearly see how Holly transgresses the real into an imagined place. The real space (the jewelry store) is a consumption place, but what it represents for her is a place of desire, a place of dreams, and of wishes. This, in turn, makes her feel secure and safe. She may be scared of reality. She is scared of her real identity; thus, she needs to reinvent herself. Her home becomes an imagined representation of a real place, indicative of what

Moslund names the *presencing* of place. There are also intersections between the notions that Holly struggles with: home is a place she could never aspire to achieve, it is imagined, and constructed from the aspects that make Holly feel safe. For convenience, I sum up these aspects in the following table:

TIFFANY'S	HOME
REAL SPACE	IMAGINED
DESIRES, DREAMS, WANTS	QUIET (RURAL LIFE)
GETAWAY FROM THE PERVERTED NOISY CITY	REAL-LIFE PLACE
SMELL OF LETTHER, SILVER	UNATTAINABLE
NICE PEOPLE	SAFE
SAFE	

Conclusion: Holly's quest for her "home away from home"

In the context of the 1950s, Truman Capote depicts a New York that is in full expansion, that is as perverted as any big capitalist city can be, that is a promising space for the promiscuous protagonist, who will do just about anything to make it in the big city and escape the rural life. In this connection, I would like to mention Robert Tally Jr., who argues that:

> The act of writing itself might be considered a form of mapping or a cartographic activity. Like the mapmaker, the writer must survey territory, determining which features of a given landscape to include, to emphasize, or to diminish; for example, some shadings may need to be darker than others, some lines bolder, and so on. The writer must establish the scale and the shape, no less of the narrative than of the places in it. (*Spatiality* 45)

When mapping his/her narrative space, the writer might choose either to represent real spaces in the fictional space, for the sake of authenticity, or to select those features that best underline what the narrative aims to achieve.

Although the twentieth century was a time of change, a time of economic development, which led to social, cultural, and class progress, one can see how space came to shift from its fixed original meaning to a more organic and fluid understanding. This is due to the effects of globalization,

which slowly led to a shift from the traditional interpretation of space to its borders being blurred. In consuming space individuals ascribed meaning to it. Individuals started to consume spaces for leisure purposes, and thus spaces of consumption came to stand for places of exhibition, places where people must be seen, or else they will not be a part of a social hierarchy.

The organic descriptions of places in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* are based on sensorial experiences. Capote's is not an accurate representation, but a biased one, which transforms space into something new, a hybrid of the real and the perceived. His map of the New York City is fluid, not a fixed representation of an ordinary city chart; it is full of descriptions of or references to "made-up places" and real ones alike. The bleak tone is due to the time being right after the war. Yet, the fact that the prohibition had ended adds to the social aspect of the substance consumption and finally contributes to a less gloomy atmosphere.

As Lieven Ameel concludes, space, more precisely, the city (with all its urban elements) is important for the development of the novel: "It enables the plot to develop, the protagonist to reach his/her destiny, the language of the novel to take shape" (239). The big city helps the protagonist to reach her desired "home," even if it is imaginary, and also changes (corrupts) the morality of individuals, thus turning them into something they are not, a hybrid of their old selves and their made-up persona.

A class-conscious protagonist, Holly carefully struts within the mid-twentieth-century New York City society. As consumerism focuses on desire and the anticipation of pleasure, Holly adopts this philosophy and wants to construct a new and improved identity, far from her small-town one as a housewife. Thus, Holly's desired habitus projects her lifestyle: to be a part of the leisure class. Finally, she manages to support herself without having to do any actual work, and manages to be a part of the leisure class, which is traditionally for the financially-able.

At her parties there is a mixture of various social groups: people who do not know each other, very wealthy individuals, and artists. Class-boundaries become blurred as the parties unfold. By positioning herself center-stage, Holly successfully manages to be perceived as a mysterious socialite, which is far from the reality she tries so hard to escape.

The apartment space further helps Holly in this quest for "looking the part." It is important as it is a space representative for the historical aspect of New York City due to its construction out of brownstone, a material which was used extensively for the urban development in the Northern Cities of the United States. Her brownstone apartment not only makes Holly an educated resident of this city, giving her the status of an heir of this historical place. It is also important because it helps her present herself. It becomes a place as it is given importance in the general scheme of things (that of achieving status).

Even more so, Holly's version of New York City stands as the space where she has found "her home away from home," which is also her new life's "real" home: Tiffany's. To understand this, let us remember the cultural and identity alienation engendered by rapid industrialization in the twentieth century. This crisis of identity spurred individuals on to fill this void with the cheap, rapid gratifications of popular culture, hence the solace offered by spaces of consumerism. Space is important for Holly; so is place, which stands as the defining aspect in desiring to settle down (maybe for good this time).

In trying to construct her own identity, the protagonist "checks off" the overall index of a socially-constructed list. These are all the social constructs that are of aid when trying to present herself as the eternal socialite of the 1950s. The bar is where she must be seen in order to socialize and be admired. Also, this heterotopic place doubles as her office (one must have an office as this represents an emulation of the upper-middle classes). The brownstone apartment building is where she chooses to live, as it is the representation of her version of New York City. The high-end jewelry story, a place of wealth, luxury, and desires, is where she projects her growing roots, her home. She does not try to ascribe meaning to these places, for they already stand as the ultimate representations of pecuniary and leisure interests of the 1950s in America.

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