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SUMMARY

PhD Superviser,
Prof. univ. dr. emerit Carmen-Adina Ciugureanu

PhD Student,
Andreea Cosma

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Mapping Spaces: (Fe)Male Activism in the Works of the Beat Generation

PhD Superviser,
Prof. univ. dr. emerit Carmen-Adina Ciugureanu

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Contents

Keywords: cartography, geocriticism, Beat Generation, gender, space, place, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles.

This dissertation, *Mapping Spaces: (Fe)Male Activism in the Works of the Beat Generation,* has aimed to offer an approach to literary texts through the lens of activism and gender, as important cultural determiners in the people-place relationship. The research has also looked at the way in which activism is sustained through writing, an instrument that can impact social change, and the way in which protest (i.e. ideology) may be represented under the guise of literature by male and female writers alike. I have chosen the Beat Generation as a literary movement because I consider it is worth analyzing from this perspective, which combines gender with spatial studies.

The Beat Generation serves as a relevant case study in this context, because their work reflects not only their literary talent, but also their lifestyle and, more importantly, their political agendas. Generally, the post-war period is seen to be highly relevant as regards gender issues and activism, besides being marked by essential spatial changes in the development of cities. It is an era concerned with the status of women in society, the understanding of gender as distinct from biological sex and the rising interest that people showed in social problems, such as race and racism, discrimination, animal cruelty and pollution. It seems that the effects of World War II caused a paradigmatic shift in the United States, starting with the 1950s, which shaped the subsequent movements and changes during the next three decades: the Civil Rights and the Antiwar Movement, Second Wave Feminism and Liberation Movements connected to them.

The thesis has been divided into five chapters: the first two introduce the theoretical background and the development of the metropolises after World War II, while the subsequent three chapters are a close reading of the Beats' literary texts (both poetry and prose) through the lens of spatial studies looked at both as imagined places and as activist places, as maps of protest and revolt at individual and collective levels. In describing and analyzing the spaces of protest in literary texts, I have proposed a new concept which I have coined as "meta-manifest places." I have also noticed that the works of the Beat Generation are mapped with spatial or geographical details while, at the same time, they strongly convey messages of social interest. A second discovery in my research has been the fact that male and female Beat authors used mental maps to convey distinct messages, to focus on specific social issues, while sharing a similar lifestyle and a comparable writing style. The works of the male Beat authors seem to specifically focus on issues related to the status of the writer/ poet in society and on mental health, politics and notoriety that may affect the artist and his work. Beat women writers seem to be more concerned with the understanding of womanhood and try to clarify what the female experience actually is, as opposed to patriarchal expectations. While both male and female Beat authors write about pollution and industrialization, describing them as negative aspects of the post-war world, male authors tend to write more about animals and animal cruelty. At the same time, the works by female authors are centered more on environment and nature-related themes.

As mentioned in the thesis, the way in which writers use spaces and places to illustrate their community and their pattern of organization, their political agendas and their cultural views are included in the meaning of the term that I have proposed in the analysis: "meta-manifest place." This concept is based on the term "Thirdspace," coined by Edward Soja, but enriches it with the connotation of the author as activist and of the literary text as representative of the social and political context in which it was created. The omissions or unexpected spatial changes in the text have been interpreted as deliberate modifications of the city and as manifestations of the author's

disobedience or rebellion. Through this process, meta-manifest places manage to illustrate a sense of social progress and display revolutionary ideologies. Meta-manifest places also focus on the meaning of a place and its representations. They offer a deep, comprehensive understanding of a certain time-space context and aim to uncover the intentions and outcomes of social and cultural events and the atmosphere of the time in a manner as authentic as possible.

As Michel de Certeau notes in his *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) the experience of place may differ, depending on how one's interaction with a certain location happens and on the way by means of which the place is discovered. A specific perspective on the city, according to de Certeau, is when the viewer "discovers" the city from a higher point. This panoramic image places the individual either in a position of power, because the individual overlooks the space from above, or in a context that underlines the idea of unbelonging, when one can feel distant and isolated in observing the whole urban picture. Meta-manifest places are linked to experience and, therefore, a specific spatial representation cannot be reproduced elsewhere. As Robert Tally notes in his *Spatiality: The New Critical Idiom* (2013), the reader of a literary work becomes a geographer who, through the act of reading, will further create other "unforeseen mappings" (79). In this respect, the literary cartography and the literary geography of a place (as Robert Tally names the map-maker and the map-reader of a literary work) are not necessarily influenced by the identity of the real place that they represent. Rather, they create new identities of that particular place through the author's or reader's subjective prism of understanding. Meta-manifest places reflect such reconstructed locations in the literary work, while also uncovering political agendas, raising awareness and serving as acts of protest. Social imbalances are also emphasized by meta-manifest places through the incompatibility between places and people, as suggested by the text. A meta-manifest place serves, therefore, as an instrument of analysis of geographical descriptions found in texts that aim to portray subversive meanings.

The first chapter of the thesis, titled "Mapping and Social Activism in Literary Works" has been divided into two subchapters, each focusing on the intersections of space and place with the other topics tackled by the study: gender and activism. These conjunctions, people-place, gendered spaces and spaces of protest (or places that foster activism) are recurrent in the Beat works presented in the applicative chapters of this study (Three, Four and Five). The people-place relation has been analyzed substantially by spatial theories during the last century. More recent works include Robert Tally's *Spatiality,* which discusses the way in which maps are being produced and reproduced by the writer and the reader through literary cartography and literary geography. Tally's study reflects the fact that mental maps, besides being unique for each individual who reads the same text, carry the writer's intentions for the message that he or she would like to convey. These messages are then transposed through the reader's capacity of understanding and imagining and, as a result, a new map is produced in the process.

Michael Dear's essay "Creativity and Place" (2011) also discusses the city and the degree to which it is portrayed creatively, in terms of mapping, in a literary text. He uses the terms "hard city" to denote the physical space of the city and "soft city" to represent the imaginary mapping of the city. These two terms correspond to what Edward Soja calls "Firstspace," the real, physical dimension, and "Secondspace," the imagined city (*Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, 1996). Michael Dear, on the other hand, also discusses the phrases "creativity in place" and "creativity of place." While the former refers to the fact that places may inspire creative works, the latter regards the way in which descriptions of places can serve as a creative output. This differentiation between the way in which places may inspire writers and the role of creative maps as artifacts produced by literary works are also revealed in, and by, meta-

manifest places. Certain locations may inspire acts of protest and spatial descriptions in texts and, therefore, the produced maps may serve as self-standing examples of activism or manifestation. Meta-manifest places have equally been formulated in analogy to Soja's "Thirdspace," a concept that challenges the boundaries between lived and imagined space. Meta-manifest places are concerned with the dissonance between First and Second space and, more specifically, they follow the manner in which this dissonance is addressed by writers and the impact they manage to produce through the literary maps used.

Chapter One has tackled the theme of unbelonging as presented in Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1953). Heidegger mentions that the harmonious people-place relation refers to "Dasein" and the feeling of unbelonging and unhomeliness can be understood as the opposite. The people-place incompatibility between people and places can also be a consequence of "difference." Henri Lefevbre's *Writing on Cities* (1996) discusses that "difference" does not necessarily mean uniqueness, but it rather refers to social struggle. As regards revolutionary customs and patterns of organization, Homi Bhabha explains in his *The Location of Culture* (1994) that oppositional cultural practices have been most disruptive under the form of popular revolts. Local culture and grassroots effort lie, thus, at the core of social manifestations, as unifiers. David Harvey supports a similar view (in *Rebel Cities*, 2012) on the power of popular rebellion, which he calls the "thermite theory." He notices the fact that lower-class workers, when manifesting for a common cause, have the ability to "disrupt urban economies" (118). Michel Foucault explains in the fifth part of his *The History of Sexuality* (1976) that authoritarian structures try to fight the working class's disruption (Harvey's "thermite theory") through "bio-power," referring to indirect strategies of control and manipulation of the masses, such as consumerist patterns and financial dependency. In *The City and the Grassroots* (1983), Manuel Castells identifies the city as a trend-setter in what concerns social movements. He explains that the world changes when the role of the metropolises change. The city becomes, therefore, the locus and the focus of social restructuring.

Space is another factor that influences patterns of social organization, which can be used by power-structures to isolate certain groups. Doreen Massey notes in her *Space, Place and Gender* (1994) that women's immobility in patriarchal societies is directly linked to the way in which space is laid out. The fact that space is gendered and that private space is seen as feminine, while public space is looked at as masculine, not only segregates people and subordinates women, but can also create problems when one does not belong to either category. Judith Butler had emphasized this aspect in *Gender Trouble* (1990) and mentioned that a male who feels feminine or a woman who feels masculine could cause a sense of "inbetweenness" regarding both one's identity and their place in society. Butler also notes that with women's entrance in the working sphere, men felt challenged by a reversed gaze, as women started to feel more like being an agent rather than an object. Butler grounded her theory on Adrienne Rich's "Compulsory Heterosexuality" (1980) in which she argues that the image of the woman-woman relation has been distorted by patriarchal norms, portraying women as rivals. Rich believes in the power of a sisterhood and she encourages women to display positive relations between themselves and to raise awareness on the need for female support. Karlyn Campbell also underlines the same need for the existence of sisterhoods in societies and she discusses in her *Man Cannot Speak for Her* (1989) that women have been excluded from public spaces. No position of power has been given easily to a female because her "purity and piety" (13) depended on her distance from public agency or places. All these works mentioned above may be the answer to the 1950s confusion about women's social role and place. Thus, Jane Gerhard notes in her *Desiring Revolution* (2001) that the "new traditionalism" that urged women to leave work and go back to being housewives, together with

the increased display of female sexuality and "the pursuit of pleasure" (54) trend at the time, created a paradox that characterizes the post-war period. This paradox or confusion boosted Second Wave Feminism to take shape.

The revolutionary spirit after the 1950s in the United States marked the end of a long era of social repression. The first half of the twentieth century is characterized mostly by conformity and struggle, with three major events that represented the political and economic focus at the time: World War I, the Great Depression and World War II, followed by the Cold War. The shift in paradigm during the second half of the twentieth century was determined by people's need for representation, especially those belonging to discriminated groups (ethnics, women, LGBTQ+ and lower-class citizens). The movements that took place during this period found a way to become sustainable and to go worldwide, thus setting the floor for future important global activist groupings.

Chapter Two, "The Beat Epicenters: New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco," serves as an overview of the post-war period and tackles the main events during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s in the three metropolises analyzed by this study, in order to illustrate the context in which the works of the Beat Generation were produced. The chapter has focused on the organization of the urban space and on the post-war development of cities, as described in the "Reconfigurations of the City" section. The subsequent subchapter "Racial Problems and the Urban Space" has emphasized how the Civil Rights Movement marked the era under scrutiny by addressing important social inequalities present in the three cities. The racial tensions at the time caused by segregation and racist oppression determined people of color to revolt, in order to achieve social, economic and political rights. The next section of the chapter, "'Gender Trouble' and the Metropolis," presents the main feminist and LGBTQ+ manifestations at the time in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, which set the context for movements such as Pride or Second Wave Feminism. The last section, "From Beats to Beatniks," describes the relation between the Beats and the three neighborhoods that became Beat epicenters: Greenwich Village (New York), Venice (Los Angeles), and the North Beach (San Francisco). The subchapter focuses on the urban atmosphere in which the Beat movement emerged and developed during a time of revolution and social change.

New York's rapid development is marked in the 1950s by the settlement of the United Nations and the growth of the suburbs. While the impact of movements also intensifies in New York, Californian cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco seem to be more favorable to cultural alternatives. The social problems arising after the World War II, regarding power relations in the metropolis, can be translated into the way in which space was divided and shared. The struggle for space has been discussed on different levels. It may refer to the physical, built-in spaces, due to the segregation issues at the time. Thus, Greenwich Village, Venice, and the North Beach are examples of how physical spaces can become representations of cultural values and experience. Moreover, Harlem, Skid Row and SoMa are examples of neighborhoods which show that the trespassing of physical space expresses the social tensions of the period and emphasizes the oppression undergone by the discriminated groups. The period from the 1950s through the 1970s is marked by the growth of large cities like Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco, in which the social movements push the ruling authority to acknowledge the requests of the socially disadvantaged.

These three metropolises are often seen as examples of free cities that portray the American "bastion of liberalism and progressive thought" (Latour xiv) due to their cosmopolitanism and to the ongoing struggle for consensus between the authority and the minorities. The Beats were often

labeled as a delinquent group; however, their impact on literature and their involvement in social demonstrations as well as their political beliefs reached the hearts of the young people of the 1950s and 1960s. Their position against the American traditional norms later influenced the hippie movement, through the promotion of an unconventional and bohemian lifestyle. Their cultural involvement in the three American cities did not only lead to a national literary and artistic renaissance, but also to urban regeneration, as the Beats paved the way toward a subculture that manifested itself in terms of both culture and spatial organization. The influence that the Beat generation had on Greenwich Village, Venice, and the North Beach, transformed the three neighborhoods into touristic destinations, while more and more Beatniks wanted to experience what the Beats' life was. Moreover, the culture created around the Beat venues emphasized an atmosphere of rebellion, combined with a sense of belonging to a certain community that fostered new philosophical, religious and literary ideas in an already changing society.

Chapter Three, "The Male Poet as Activist," reveals a number of meta-manifest places in Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" (1956), among other texts, and in a selection of poems from Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *San Francisco Poems* (1998) and *Wild Dreams of a New Beginning* (1988). The first edition of Ginsberg's volume, *Howl and Other Poems* (1956) was initially published in the Pocket Poets Series by the City Lights Books after Lawrence Ferlinghetti witnessed Ginsberg's performance of "Howl" at the Six Gallery reading. Ferlinghetti received an obscenity charge for printing the book, however, the fact that he won the trial marked an important milestone for the writers' freedom to express themselves creatively, without censorship. Both, Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti had been very vocal and active in what concerns the role of literature in society. In 1998, Lawrence Ferlinghetti became the first Poet Laureate of San Francisco, which signifies the victory of creativity over bigotry.

The subchapter "Beat Poetry and Activism" has raised the question whether the Beat Generation had indeed a role in the social movements after the 1950s. Due to the Beats' controversy, critics have debated whether the Beats could be considered an activist group or not. An example in this respect is offered by the *New York Times* in 1999, when two different authors of two distinct columns of the newspaper argued over this matter in their articles. While Michael Herz supports the fact that the Beat Generation "helped shatter the silence of the 1950s" (4), David Sterritt affirms that the Beats were more focused on a rebellious lifestyle rather than on a certain political agenda. The works of the Beat authors, however, reveal the inequalities at the time and offer a new perspective on the three important American metropolises present in their work, in which the marginalized were living and fighting for their rights. The Beats' rebellious spirit can also be understood as a form of manifestation against the system, as their unconventionality paved the way to successive social movements. Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *Poetry as Insurgent Art* (1975) is an example of poetry as activism, because it offers a "how-to" guide for aspiring writers and teaches them to write with a purpose: "Be subversive, constantly questioning reality and the status quo" (Ferlinghetti *Poetry as Insurgent Art* 8).

The second subchapter, "Spaces of Protest in the Poetry of Allen Ginsberg," presents Ginsberg's works and their role as forms of activism in "Howl," "Waking in New York," "Sunflower Sutra," "Continuation of a Long Poem of These States," "Fourth Floor, Dawn, Up All Night Writing Letters," and "Mugging." The bold disobedience that "Howl" presents through explicit images and subversive messages create meta-manifest places that aim to determine the young generation of the 1950s to disregard the conformity of the metropolis. Through the meta-manifest places used in "Howl," Ginsberg portrays New York as both a space of struggle and a space of creativity, "yacketayakking screaming vomiting whispering facts and memories and

anecdotes and eyeball kicks and shocks of hospitals and jails and wars" (Ginsberg, *Howl* 135). Ginsberg's "Howl" revolves around the motif of sacrifice, while the city is portrayed as a powerful evil force that invades nature, purity, creativity and beauty: "Moloch whose skyscrapers stand in the long streets like endless Jehovahs!" (230). New York becomes Moloch, a bull-headed idol, whose offerings imply sacrifice. Ginsberg considers that industries and technology have taken over the city and transformed it into a dystopian space. The meta-manifest places used in "Howl" and in other poems presented in the third chapter of this thesis depict New York both as an "Empire City" and as a decaying city, affected by racism, discrimination, excessive agglomeration, pollution and consumerism.

In the third section of the chapter, "Creative Cartographies of San Francisco in the Poetry of Lawrence Ferlinghetti," the study has aimed to reveal the degree to which Ferlinghetti's texts portray the city as a space of protest. Ferlinghetti manages to offer different representations of San Francisco, by pointing out both positive and negative features of the metropolis. He considers that San Francisco has an "island mentality," due to the easy-going pace of life and the rich cultural heritage preserved by the many ethnicities inhabiting it. Unlike other Beats, whose works reveal a sense of unbelonging to the city cartography, Ferlinghetti seems to consider San Francisco his home. He presents different problems of the city, such as irresponsibility towards animals, pollution, environmental destruction, social inequalities, and political conflicts. However, the way in which the author presents these raises awareness and challenges the reader to look for solutions. Ferlinghetti's texts can also be read through meta-manifest places that convey both a cultural route and a political journey. The poems "DOG" and "The Great Chinese Dragon" take the reader on two different routes of the city, whose meta-manifest places emphasize two distinct matters. While "DOG" offers the perspective of a dog that strolls around the city, encountering poor neighborhoods and seeing things that are "bigger than himself" (Ferlinghetti, *San Francisco Poems* 37), Ferlinghetti actually manages to offer the route of the "underdog" in San Francisco. "The Great Chinese Dragon" offers a cultural route of the city, which emphasizes the minorities' struggle to preserve their heritage and tradition in America. "The Old Italians Dying" and "Great American Waterfront Poem" follow one of Ferlinghetti's own rules of writing and, as he mentions in his *Poetry as Insurgent Art*, the poet should always question reality and the current state of affairs (8). Both poems present San Francisco as a multicultural heaven but, at the same time, reveal that the capitalist paths and globalist tendencies shatter the creative atmosphere of the place. "A North Beach Scene," on the other hand, portrays the beauty of simplicity, when the poetic voice observes the Bay. This image aims to raise awareness about the "autogeddon" (Ferlinghetti, *San Francisco Poems* 13) that invades the city. "Rough Song of Animals Dying," a poem from Ferlinghetti's *Wild Dreams of a New Beginning*, emphasizes the utter brutality of animal cruelty caused by humans. The poem uses very explicit images, constructing meta-manifest places that shock the reader with the obvious aim that action should be taken in this matter. Ferlinghetti's texts reveal a clear scope through the meta-manifest places of San Francisco he created: to educate, to raise awareness, to pinpoint problems and to make justice through the power of words, as he believes that "Words can save you where guns can't" (Ferlinghetti, *Poetry as Insurgent Art* 10).

Chapter Four, "The Female Poet as Activist" presents some of the works by Diane di Prima and Anne Waldman, looked at from a spatial and gender-specific approach. Both Beat poets manage to portray the importance of space ownership for women, through depictions of the city, through the female lens. Moreover, they link geography to womanhood by offering spatial representations of the female experience. The first section of the chapter has focused on Diane di Prima's *Revolutionary Letters* (1968), an on-going work of the poet, whose aim was to constantly

add letters that document the problems of the current world. The volume is dedicated to di Prima's grandfather, whom she considers her main guidance and inspiration for her relentless drive to fight for a better world. The letters shift between utopian and dystopian spaces, alternating from places where the poetic voice feels paranoid, afraid of, and anxious to, feeling hopeful and dreamy. Diane di Prima's revolution involves the empowerment of women, the impact of words and the fact that it is a revolution expressed through civil disobedience and one's choices in life, rather than a violent battle. The meta-manifest places in di Prima's texts reveal the final objective of her revolutionary agenda: to rekindle the connection between people and the environment. The poetic voice believes that once this link has been restored, all the other current social problems, such as poverty, greed, discrimination, and pollution will disappear. Diane di Prima's letters, which represent her constant dedication to creativity and growth throughout her life as a poet and as an activist, serves as both, a "how-to" guide for surviving the "cybernetic civilization" and as a book of teachings not only on how to appreciate the environment with all that it comprises, but also to contribute to the "tribe" (i.e. the community where one lives).

The second section of the chapter, "Anne Waldman's *Journals and Dreams*," focuses on one section of Waldman's volume, first published in 1976, which is dedicated to the city of New York. Through the meta-manifest places used, the poet conveys the idea that the efforts to keep up with the city are overwhelming, as the life in the metropolis for a woman becomes quite difficult. The volume section tackled by this subchapter contains seven poems dedicated to the city of New York: "Girls," "Frames," "Brinks of Fame: Monologue," "Malachite," "Corridor," "City Suite," and "Divorce Work." Waldman approaches the same topics of unbelonging, subversivism and environmental protection, like the other Beat writers. Just like Diane di Prima, Waldman gives special importance to nature as a theme related to womanhood and femininity. Female experience is portrayed in relation to love, marriage, divorce, loss and sisterhood. City life is presented as both exciting and challenging, while the meta-manifest places used reveal the imbalances of the urban lifestyle. One such issue refers to the apartment buildings that serve as "foam" bubbles (Sloterdijk 236) which aims to isolate and unite at the same time. The intertwinement of private and public spaces, as presented by Waldman in "Brinks of Fame: Monologue," creates confusion and raises awareness on the meaning of postmodern life in the urban space.

The third section of the chapter, "Gender, Light, and Shadow with Anne Waldman and Diane di Prima," describes the themes of femininity, womanhood and gender, as well as the motifs of light and shadow in relation to space. The two authors focus on New York and San Francisco, depicting positive and negative sides of the two cities through meta-manifest places. Through "light," the poets describe the two metropolises as creative places that inspire their work, however, "shadow" and "darkness" are used in conjunction with the problems of the cities, such as "sad dogs" (Waldman, *Helping the Dreamer* 150) and "homeless faces" (di Prima, *The Poetry Deal* 17). The use of "thoughtful shadow" also creates a meta-manifest place, that emphasizes the struggle of the artist in the creative process. Anne Waldman and Diane di Prima associate creativity, mystery and nature with femininity. Besides their dedication to environmental protection, their works contain meta-manifest places that aim to offer a complete picture of womanhood. Both Anne Waldman, in her *Marriage: A Sentence* (2000), and Diane di Prima, in *Loba* (1973), look at "woman" from various points of view, such as woman as wife, woman as mother, woman as sister, woman as a mystical creature, and woman as nature. Their feminist views are clearly underlined in their works, in their straightforward writing about women's status in society and the role of female beings (human or animal) in the world, that is to protect and nurture.

Their meditative and chant-like style of writing invites readers to imagine maps and to take a journey into the women's world, as seen by them.

Chapter Five, titled "The City as Character with Joyce Johnson, Jack Kerouac, and Lawrence Lipton," discusses the three cities referred to in this study, New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, represented in three Beat novels that managed not only to portray the Beat Generation as a cultural group, but also to point out some of the issues that writers, artists and young people were confronted with during the 1950s and 1960s. While Kerouac's *Big Sur* (1962) and Lipton's *The Holy Barbarians* (1959) offer a male perspective on American metropolises and the society at the time, Johnson's *Come and Join the Dance* (1961) portrays the city from the perspective of a young woman. She stresses out, in this semi-autobiographical novel, the fact that the girls of the 1950s felt disenfranchised or even left out due to restrictive social norms if they refused to comply.

The first subchapter, titled "'The Stone City:' New York in Joyce Johnson's *Come and Join the Dance*," presents Susan's struggle with decision making, during an important moment in a young person's life, the college graduation. Her identity crisis is strongly linked to place and to the way in which she perceives the city. Therefore, Johnson creates a map of meta-manifest places of New York that emphasizes the development of the protagonist. It seems that the description of the city is directly linked to her state of mind. When Susan, the protagonist, feels as if she belonged to New York, she takes the role of the stroller. Yet, she is only the distant observer of the city, looking at it as a stranger, not as someone who interacts with the metropolis.

The following section of the chapter, "'Eerie City:' San Francisco and its Surroundings in Jack Kerouac's *Big Sur*," follows Jack Duluoz, the character of Kerouac's novel. Both characters are semi-autobiographical and are in search of their identity as writers and human beings. It seems that just like Susan, Jack is trying to run away from his dark side, which he inevitably cannot escape. For this reason, Jack seems to be always happier when he is on the road rather than when he stays in the city. Jack's journey takes place in San Francisco and Big Sur and his mental health seems to be in direct correspondence to the way in which the city is presented. The meta-manifest places used by Kerouac reveal the city as a place of struggle, emphasizing the writers' need for support and guidance when facing notoriety. The novel also presents meta-manifest places that invite readers to be aware of ecological problems and animal protection through the recurrent descriptions of the decaying natural environment in Big Sur. Kerouac's novel underlines the idea that one's mental health is vital for a functioning society and for the well-being of the city, as a social construct.

The third section, "'Slum by the Sea:' Venice, CA in Lawrence Lipton's *The Holy Barbarians*" presents Venice as a bohemian mecca for the Beats and Beatniks. In his *The Production of Space* (1974), Lefebvre mentions that space is a way to validate social encounters (129) and therefore Venice, just like the other Beat neighborhoods, helped at marking the Beat group on the cultural map of the United States. The meta-manifest places of Venice, used by Lipton, emphasize the differences between one's expectations of the place, that is a bohemian enclave, and what the real, built-in environment looks like: a neighborhood featured by degradation and poverty. Lipton calls it "sea-rotten," "waterfront slum," and "land's end" (12). It seems that the meta-manifest places found in Lipton's text also portray the neighborhood as the end of western civilization, where people have to go to as a last resort. What the writer points out through his literary cartographies is the fact that just like the bohemian community living there, Venice is underestimated, because its beauty, creative potential and united society can become, as Lipton implies it, the American Paris of the nineteenth century.

The three cities, New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles (Venice) are presented by the literary works included in this study, from the perspective of the Beat writers and are based on the values and political position that their generation held during the post-war period. The efforts of the female Beat authors to expose real problems that women dealt with, and to offer a comprehensive image of women's lives in the city was meant to empower the feminist movements at the time and to give a voice to those unrepresented in society. Moreover, the texts of the male authors do not offer enough visibility to gender issues and, sometimes, they may misrepresent women in their writings, due to the patriarchal influences in which they had been brought up. However, they managed to raise awareness on urban regeneration, quality of life, mental health and the importance of freedom, art and creativity in society. The analysis of meta-manifest places in the Beat works presented in this study has also revealed the demand and the hope of the Beat Generation to live in a freer and more accepting society. The space that the Beats sought was an urban location in which people can pursue artistic careers and unconventional lifestyles, irrespective of their gender and unrestrained by norms, in which there is a clear balance between constructed and natural spaces, in which nature thrives and consumerism declines.

While this study has followed a comprehensive analysis of the Beat culture by looking at their literary works, political views and their relation to space and place, a more thorough understanding of the "meta-manifest places" concept could be achieved in a future study by applying it to works belonging to other writers who lived and wrote in different time periods. Such an approach could reveal how meta-manifest places work in relation to different styles, circumstances and paradigms. Due to the fact that the topic I have chosen for analysis has discussed writers whose works are not easily accessible, compared to canonic writers' texts, in a future study I would like to offer a more in-depth perspective of gender relations inside the Beat group and to focus on autobiographical works, letters, interviews and other media that complete the image of the Beat Generation and have turned it into a Beat continuum.

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