

BETWEEN DREAMS AND REALITY: TRACES OF SPATIAL MEMORY IN SANDRA CISNEROS'S *THE HOUSE ON MANGO STREET*

HAYALLER VE GERÇEKLİK ARASINDA: SANDRA CISNEROS'UN *MANGO SOKAĞI'NDAKİ EVİNDE* MEKANSAL HAFIZANIN İZLERİ

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Abstract

This article explores textual spaces of dream and reality as spatial memories in Sandra Cisneros's semi-autobiographical work, *The House on Mango Street*, in detail. Through the memories and symbols that character's associate with the space, Cisneros allows each character to question their individual and social support ties. A space is prominent not only as a space to inhabit, but also as a vital unique device for exploring the emotional and psychological growth of the characters. Space as literary motivation in the luxury story, construction of identity and narrative techniques and symbols in that context. The permeability defined between the duality of dreams and reality allows Cisneros to take her readers along an incredible series into the inner spaces, the memoirs, of her characters. The subtle way this narrative balances the different domains allows the reader to see it with a critical eye. Cisneros is a writer whose stories are not only limited by the plot as a narrative unit, but its space between characters and humans is in a sense more important — that is why the article examines close-ups of Cisneros's characters, the revealed erosion of layers and rehearsal of meanings based on spatial elements, and the way that literature has to accommodate itself on spatial units. Also, it offers a rich viewpoint on the inner worlds of the characters belonging to the reader and the delicate structure of their search for identity.

Keywords: Spatial memory, Narrative Techniques, Symbols, Inner World, Ties of Belonging

Özet

Bu makale, Sandra Cisneros'un yarı otobiyografik eseri *Mango Sokağı'ndaki Ev*'de, evi mekansal anılar olarak rüya ve gerçekliğin metinsel alanlarını ayrıntılı olarak inceliyor. Cisneros, karakterlerin mekanla ilişkilendirdiği anılar ve semboller aracılığıyla her karakterin bireysel ve toplumsal destek bağlarını sorgulamasına olanak tanıyor. Bir mekan, yalnızca yaşanacak bir yer olarak değil, aynı zamanda karakterlerin duygusal ve psikolojik gelişimini keşfetmek için hayati ve benzersiz bir araç olarak da öne çıkıyor. Lüks hikayede edebi motivasyon olarak mekan, kimlik inşası ve bu bağlamdaki anlatı teknikleri ve sembolleri rüyalar ve gerçeklik arasındaki ikilik arasında tanımlanan geçişlilik, Cisneros'un okuyucularını inanılmaz bir seri boyunca karakterlerinin iç mekanlarına, anılarına götürmesine olanak tanıyor. Bu anlatının farklı alanları dengeleme şekli, okuyucunun bunu eleştirel bir gözle görmesini sağlıyor. Cisneros, hikayeleri yalnızca bir anlatı birimi olarak olay örgüsüyle sınırlı olmayan, aynı zamanda karakterler arasındaki ve insanlar arasındaki alanın bir anlamda daha önemli olduğu bir yazardır. Bu nedenle makale Cisneros'un karakterlerinin yakın çekimlerini, katmanların ortaya çıkan aşınmasını ve mekansal öğelere dayalı anlamların provasını ve edebiyatın kendisini mekansal birimlere yerleştirme biçimini inceler. Ayrıca, okuyucuya ait karakterlerin iç dünyalarına ve kimlik arayışlarının hassas yapısına dair zengin bir bakış açısı sunar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mekansal hafıza, Anlatı Teknikleri, Semboller, İçsel Dünya, Aidiyet Bağları

Introduction

The literature is all about group and individual identities, giving readers a sort of textured feel half universal half individual. In this theoretical framework, setting is regarded as the pivotal literary element to the establishment of an author's characters, theme, and narrative integrity. Setting is considered as an arena for cultural, social, and personal significance despite the idea that it is not just background. It is through the various layers of the setting that Sandra Cisneros shows her readers not only the struggles of her characters but their hopes, those dreams that lie within them. Her vibrant settings serve to thrill, yes, but likewise to enliven the challenges and the vibrancy of her characters' habitats, showing us how the experience of place shapes their identities. This perspective allows the readers to connect more with the narrative and for more broader social issues discussed by Cisneros to be explored.

Although the text has Cisneros to thank for its present form, what she provides is an imaginative vision coupled with descriptive power. This novel tells the tale of trapped within society, at the same time depicting identities and individuals. Cisneros writes stories of South American entablatures, hardship among immigrants and cultural timeliness, almost always based on the words of a Mexican American girl. Chicago gave birth to her in 1954, and she matured in full bloom with a pattern of life she has persisted in calling 'cycle' to mean that what usually goes around stays around. Cisneros masterfully weaves poetry and fiction, crafting a voice that speaks deeply to the heart of Chicana identity. Through her vivid characters, she sheds light on the universal struggle to find belonging and understanding in a complex world, making each story resonate with the reader on a personal level.

The author explores this issue by setting some common problems faced by teenagers in a city south of Rio de Janeiro. Besides providing the general background for developing his characters, these transitions also reflect characters in search of spiritual and physical freedom. At the same time, we will show how that space becomes more than a backdrop but an active force which is used to convey feeling and thoughts these means involving Cisneros's language and narrative technique throughout her book.

The House on Mango Street is the result of a skilled literary layering based on living experience. In addition to trying to dig deeper in Cisneros' art of storytelling, it will be seen how in the midst of our spatial discussions we make a connection with not only physical spaces, but also discussion over issues like belonging, roots and cultural identities. The story reveals through this lens how neighborhood, individual and collective histories flow around the same river, the same water. Cisneros's story encourages readers to consider the ways in which spaces shape and are shaped by the people in them, illustrating the complex interdependence between environment and identity. Also, the tale highlights the universal search for a place to call home, making it relatable to anyone who has ever felt the magnetism of their ethnic background.

In *The House on Mango Street* by Cisneros, space not only signify the characters' social lives but also express their world of imagination and aspirations for future. Through the author's metaphors and symbols, it will be felt these characters' internal conflicts, surrounded by physical or emotional partitions separating them from a larger world. In *Mango Street*, within those confines where the characters spend their daydreaming hours, this cramped space appears to be full of richness and vitality because Cisneros tells readers so with her words. In particular, this tale from the perspective of a young girl names Esperanza shows how complicated and layered is everyone's relation to where they live. Both Esperanza's bodily isolation in physical space and her striving to

escape that space equally all concern deep interrogations of hybrid identity and feelings of displacement. At the same time these inner journeys find space that serves as one beautiful model in literature how profoundly it might reflect social and cultural trends.

Spatial Memory: A Theoretical Framework

It is questioning the socialization of spatial memory as a versatile cultural structure, whether it would be internalized knowledge or experience of the past in a physical space or it would be once again revealed daily world. Such memory is located in the concrete environments like streets, buildings, or the cartographic maps of the cities. But this memory can only reach the level of physical connections, and in action, it expands cultural-social aspects and plays the most vital role in creating collective memory. In its material, relational state, spatial memory grounds the past underneath the surface alongside the present by conceptually recalling traces of the past from current experience. This process allows individuals to reconnect with the history around them, putting back the pieces of forgotten memories of the past and granting them a new hue through cultural and social interactions. Thus, the imposition of spatial memory appears as a significant aspect of the development and maintenance of a collective memory, a memory that is projected into the future as mnemonic biomes that others will remember or forget. Consequently, spatial memory, a memory for where things happen, becomes a site in which social memory is constructed and enhanced between temporary connections.

At first look, locations seem like modern housing. But if it is examined to its very roots, these spaces will produce powerful cultural and historic associations, casually as if a museum in place of the street. Places that see words used by great men, battlefields where there struggle for liberation has lost and has won, buildings with a past that haunts history in its space all are monuments to spatial memory. Through these spaces, spatial memory allows people an orientation of belonging and renews the values and tales that society hands down generation after generation. Aykaç included this in his study as follows.

This perspective on spatial memory resonates with the philosophical and spiritual explorations of Leo Tolstoy, who in *What Men Live By?* probes fundamental questions of human existence such as *What is there in a man? What is not given to man? What does man live by?* (Aykaç, 2023, p. 2405).

These existential inquiries reflect not only individual internal journeys but also the collective memory embedded in spaces. As Tolstoy's philosophical narrative intertwines the spiritual quest with lived experiences, it parallels Sandra Cisneros's depiction of spatial memory, where environments both shape and reflect personal identities. This alignment between Tolstoy's inner spiritual landscapes and Cisneros's external physical landscapes demonstrates how space, whether tangible or abstract, carries the essence of human meaning-making across cultures and eras.

The Acropolis in Athens is not just a masterpiece of ancient Greek architecture but symbolically the cradle of Western civilization and democracy. It embodies the philosophical, artistic and political progress of ancient Greek society, forming a critical heritage point for the modern world. The Temple of Parthenon, specifically, is the prototype for forward-looking of the era regarding architecture as a sacred sanctuary dedicated to goddess Athena. Likewise, the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul represents the cultural merging of these civilizations, reflecting the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires into modernity. Hagia Sophia was initially built as a church, later a mosque and now a museum, it represents the artistic conception of two great empires both in the realm of architecture and interior decoration. Being signs of the spatial memory of societies, these structures

have a key role in the process of formation and preservation of cultural identities since each one represents the unique features of the period and the society to which he belongs and remain as an important component of cultural heritage for future generations.

The effect of spatial memory on identity can also be seen from an individual's perspective. It is when a person internalizes the traces of the places and environments where they grow up and live in the background of their life that this effect comes into play. These places have based on memories in personal historical narratives. She points out have come to play an increasingly important role over the last few years. They offer an individual the chance to link with their past and recall some of the most crucial turning points in their life. At the same time, they also help an individual understand how various environmental elements constitute her social settings and how those places have shaped her character and lifestyle. On a wider basis from the societal standpoint, shared spatial memory leads to communities with stronger internal cohesiveness and closer mutual connections. This communality between communities offers people the chance of synthesizing their past experience, traditional culture and objective conditions into a whole and unified way of life. In these circumstances place based memories have character of spiritual linkages, whisking communities to unity, so that culture will go on and harmony be established through social order. Spatial memory is not only a window to the past but also provides a platform for the transmission of future values and social norms in communities. In this way, spatial memory becomes a profound social and cultural phenomenon due to its essential roles in the individual identities of citizens as well as in the collective identity of communities. To sum up, spatial memory's effects are central to how people and societies shape themselves both as individuals or in an overall society or culture structure allowing for stability order.

Although it is a theoretical framework, through its spatial memory can be analyzed more extensively to illustrate the vital roles of spatial memory in forming the identities of people as well as their social air. Spatial memory determines the kind of relationships that people have with their world and also represents an important aspect of the organization of social institutions and communities. In this respect, the role of spatial memory is gaining importance in a wide spectrum ranging from current urban planning policies to cultural heritage conservation strategies. When that so-called maintenance and transfer to the future is looked through this lens, the efforts to preserve memory of the city and social spaces gain a more, deeper, meaningful, dimension. Furthermore, spatial memory underlies individual and social identity which may strengthen social partnerships and belongingness as well. As such, novel planning paradigms emerging from spatial memory research not only become helpful tools to meet the demands of day-to-day life but also serve the attainment of long-term strategic goals in the fields of cultural continuity and sustainable development. Thus, any attempt to grasp and improve spatial memory contributes to a deeper understanding and regulation of the social dynamics of the present and the future.

Mango Street: Space and Meaning

Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* offers an incredibly powerful narrative in this regard, closely exploring the relationship between spatial structure and identity. Through the characters' interactions with one another and the world around them, Mango Street becomes a frame in which relentless and changing social and cultural boundaries enter the play differentiating place, home, and space, at the physical level. Particular passageways become a reflection of the way in which the local neighborhood serves individuals working through their self-discovery process, but also the challenges that come with living within the shadow of patriarchal and economic power structures. In their work titled "Restrictions In *Snow Flower And The Secret Fan*

By Lisa See, Tanritanır and Avcı draw attention to the fact that the failure of patriarchal societies to break away from their past and move on with their lives results in material and psychological collapses in their lives.” (Tanritanır & Avcı, 2020, p. 560) Spatial meaning to the conflicts, dreams and longings of the characters’ lives comes from each house, street and structure. The interplay between space and identity invites the reader to a profound awareness of how personal development is entwined with environmental and social forces. This closely observes work is a thoughtful journey for Cisneros’s readers, highlighting the role of place in people’s search for identity and freedom. Though *Mango Street* is a place that causes Esperanza, the main character, to yearn for escape, it is also the heart of self-discovery and growth. To be related through this lens, in the article, “*More Room of Her Own: Sandra Cisneros’s A House of My Own, The House on Mango Street, and the Latinx Middlebrow,*” Doyle contends that “Esperanza’s desire to escape the street she lives on is a metaphor for her process of self-discovery,” asserting Calle Mango as a multilayered experience for the young girl. (Doyle, 1994, p. 24)

To Esparanza, *The House on Mango Street* is more than just an actual space, it is a figurative space with significance. This house is where she embodies her hopes and disappointments. While performing from within these walls her own attempt to find a space on her own, Esparanza finds it all difficult, struggling, too, to find out who he is or what she's about. The house serves to display her confrontations with the pressures of social norms and expectations that surround her, but it also presents different dynamics within itself that lead her to search for deeper meanings and fulfillment. In one of his works, Tanritanır and Beşe state that “how the effort to belong to a place is an obvious and understandable situation.” (Tanritanır & Beşe, 2016, p. 53) Abstract from a broader perspective, this space emerges as one of the cornerstones of Esparanza's individual growth and the pursuit of her identity. Thus, *The House on Mango Street* is a realm for both external and internal struggle, and also for Esparanza’s fight to find her own voice. While Esparanza's own experiences in the house challenge her with the societal roles upon which she is otherwise dependent, they also prompt an internal exploration from which an authentic voice can arise; this is why the house serves as a battleground not only for Esparanza's conflicts within her environment but also those within herself, and thus, her struggle to find her voice. Saldívar explains about it in her study the following:

The dialectics of difference, when put into play with dynamic spaces, become a most effective reading comprehension strategy in literature and social fiction and that such power in the spaces of Cisneros's writings lie in their revealing conflicting areas between social forces and personal positions (Saldívar, 1990, p. 27)

As Saldívar additional notes, “this is a crucial observation because it is not simply a backdrop; as a matter of colonization, space has far-reaching impacts on individuals and a community's self-identity” (Saldívar, 1990, p. 27). To introduce it, in her writings, Cisneros delicately explores how individuals’ social and cultural positions turn their way into their personal living spaces. Nonetheless, that Saldívar’s works also present these same themes only emphasizes the prevailing discourse present in this context. According to Trauger’s article, “Saldívar and Cisneros describe the same space but brings their own cultural values and similar traits”. (Trauger, 2016, p. 8) This can be seen from the quote which shows that both writers discuss similar social and cultural themes in their writing and use space as a double-layered site where literary narratives are written on both cultural and personal levels. Saldívar and Cisneros see both sides and that combined perspective gives readers a rich understanding of the Chicano literary tradition and social issues. Space not only plays a part in the narratives but is a powerful force influencing the characters and

communities' existential struggles and search for identity in their work. Spatial narratives in this sense allow us to see the social dynamics and conflicts which the characters are experiencing as they construct their selves within a wider context. Consequently, Saldívar and Cisneros' works probe deeply into the ways space is critically involved in the construction of personal and social identities, and they direct readers toward the ramifications of these dynamics.

Sandra Cisneros's work gets to the heart of the matter, showing how individual and social context are always at play in the experience of *Mango Street*. The neighborhood embodies the lived tensions that characterizes the characters' lives and gives readers a chance to move beyond space. *Mango Street*, both a physical space — a stage for life — and an internal map for searches of identity and evolutions of self. Cisneros's novels show, through her characters, that the point of discovery entwined in cultural heritage and personal histories is often an individual's, or a group's, self-discovery, resting in what is rooted as space, not only as a physical property but also a social structure. Through her narrative, readers experience the concepts of identity, liberation, and independence, influenced by aspects of place. As Cisneros explores the inner journeys and complex relationships of her characters, she also reveals how their cultural inheritance and personal narratives shape and unification their identity. *Mango Street* acts as a space of self-discovery and questioning, for both the characters and reader. It will enable to reflect on the deep-inscribed dynamic forming relationship with the environment, how individuals inscribe and are inscribed and also the role of the social in individual life. Cisneros's work explores the impact of spatial components on social and personal identity while also granting the reader a chance to reflect on those components in their lives and presenting the multilateral relationship between space and identity.

Spatial Elements Reflecting Dreams and Reality

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The concept of space in literature is not only about describing the immediate external environment in which the characters find themselves, but rather these very spaces also act as clues for the characters to better understand their psychological and emotional worlds. In the case of *The House on Mango Street*, space is not just a setting but a state of mind and the nature of the spaces and how the characters respond to them is of the utmost importance in understanding their struggles and desires for freedom. This narrative device illustrates the struggle between the capacity for wild imagination relative to the strictures of physical existence. Space is their existential entrapment for the main character Esperanza and those around her in the novel. Though *Mango Street* exposes their bodily constraints and social barriers, it also activates their yearning for a freedom that blossoms in that limitation. For Esperanza, the house and neighborhood of her childhood are both a refuge and a metaphor for constraint and deprivation. Psychologically, these are places keeping her tied, but they also intensify her desire to be untethered from these places. Esperanza's reflections on her home, for instance, encapsulate a yearning for individual liberation and self-realization. Tanrıtanır and Yıldız give examples of the expression that "a woman's heart still beats for freedom even if she suffers on the path to freedom, in their articles, from Harriet Ann Jacobs's book *Incidents In The Life of A Slave Girl*." (Tanrıtanır & Yıldız, p. 161) Her childhood streets are narrow, and her elegant architecture is simple, but she craves wide horizons. That space, however, appears to keep Esperanza always imagining a bigger world inside her head. It has been, in the words of Cisneros in *The House on Mango Street*, "The creaking of wooden floors and the restricted sky seen through narrow windows are indicative not only of the physical environment but also of limited social and economic opportunities." (Cisneros, 1984, p. 54) In this way, in *The House on Mango Street*, space can be used as a device to both represent for the characters the

current status of their lives and their dreams for the future. In their work, Tanrıtanır and Demirel mention that “the blindness of the character in the book David Brine’s *The Postman and José Saramago’s Blindness* is not a physical blindness, but a blindness associated with hope.” (Tanrıtanır & Demirel, 2023, p. 93) Through this, the spatial constructs help us understand the characters take-measures in-out the dream land/real world, making transitions from one world to another. This kind of representation allows the reader to feel personal and social obstacles more intensely and deepens Esparanza’s story of personal growth.

All of the characters have dreams that want to escape the physicality of their surroundings. This space is in some sense the symbol of their limited reality, but it is also the engine of their escape fantasies. This concept is embodied in the sentence that rises to the top, which is for Esparanza, the house is not just a place to live but a manifestation of their hopes to leave their home and their current life behind. In her work, Eysturoy addresses this state, writing following:

The aspiration to remain in the time and place of the present and go to the future and a different place is, which a person undergoes in her life, facing contradictions, ongoing in metamorphic and material from across the lines of borders, distances, the physical and emotional boundaries are one and the same in *Mango Street* (Eysturoy, 2010, p. 67).

These lines define the features according to which the characters are located at their own internal states and nearness to the social background. For instance, as Anzaldúa asserts in her book *Borderlands/La Frontera*, “Boundaries are both abstract and concrete; they enclose the cultural and emotional on one hand and frame the physical on another.” (Anzaldúa, 2004, p. 32) Therefore, rather than being a door to freedom, *The House on Mango Street* becomes a figurative wall in the dreams and aspirations of Esparanza, and of the other characters.

It offers a deep get into content not just as a setting but as a metaphor where in the intersection of dreams and reality serve as a theme. Though *Mango Street* may seem confining at first sight, it is within *Mango Street* that Esparanza and those with her flourish and study their growth. This narrative emphasizes how space works on the inner journey of an individual manifesting through Esparanza escape from the neighborhood where she is raised and her quest for destination. Through characters that tell their stories in space, Cisneros manages to find the universal significance in small moments and big dreams. Tanrıtanır and Boynukara describe this in their article *Richard Wright's Black Boy*, “where they explain how indifferent the women in the book, including the neighbors, are to the main character's dreams, and even how issues such as traditional family values place limitations on the main character.” (Tanrıtanır & Boynukara, 2010, p. 117) The fantasy world and temptation to escape the real world of the Esparanza contributes to the quest to redefine herself and find her own identity while highlighting the lives of other boys and girls in the neighborhood. Through an exploration of the characters’ own aspirations and challenges, Cisneros describes the versatile effects of space on the lived experience. So, it has been shown the reader the way space is not just physical but a social/emotional construct creating individual inner journeys. Esparanza’s stories, as well as those of others, illustrate how hopes and dreams for the future can transcend space, despite the limitations imposed by environmental conditions, and enable us to rethink the role that space plays in the human condition.

Spatial Memory and Identity Formation

The space of literature is crucial for the formation of identity of its characters, and this is an effective situation in the case of literature. One fundamental aspect of shape that mind of the character is this structural, how do the characters see where they fit in their cultural space and how

do they fit into their geographical space. Number of citizen Canadians walk through strip malls, and in Sandra Cisneros's works, spatial dynamics are salient as structural elements to represent distribution of lives and inner journeys. Cisneros, the place in the functions instead it only holds the distribution of the plan of a background element, the characters self-perception and identification bind in a place that happens to select an active role. This allows for an exploration of and surveillance of the space as well as their identities through the lives of the characters. The narrative, in this way goes beyond the construction of the space and builds a narrative language embellished with elements that intervene in the emotional worlds and social bodies of the characters. As a result, Cisneros' manipulation of space enables the reader to more fully understand the social and psychological landscape of the world in which the characters reside, while simultaneously understanding the impact of these worlds on their individual quests for identity and self-actualization. The spatial context in Cisneros' works thus operates as a complex and rich interface between identity and space, constructing a quasi-physical and quasi-abstract locus in which characters' self-conceptions evolve.

Sandra Cisneros's celebrates narrative vision of the protagonist Esperanza through space and spatial perception in *The House on Mango Street* illustrates this magnificently. By exploring the struggle of its inhabitants and the dreams they hold, the house on Mango Street is shown as more than a physical space. In this context, as the literary critic Saldívar-Hull and the higher education scholar Gano put it, "The house becomes a metaphor for Esperanza's ambitions and her struggle to overcome the fragility of her cultural and social space." (Saldívar-Hull & Gano, 2024, p. 28) This metaphorical use of space in the work strongly underscores the protagonist's internal struggle between her present reality and an alternative life she envisions. Esperanza's memories of her own home and the neighborhood where she lives greatly shape how she views her own identity and the direction she plans to head in the future. If the home instinct contributes to a sense of belonging then, a sense of going beyond the home is reinforced by that very home. Investigating this link between spatial memory and belonging helps reader to appreciate the dynamics that influence Esperanza's identity and to discover how she creates an identity. It also helps reader see how Esperanza battles with her inner demons and social stigmas. Ultimately, the way in which dreams of space become metaphors of space within *The House on Mango Street* is additionally impressive for how it defines the process of identity formation in terms of spatial memory, just as it uses this reveal to show Esperanza's struggle to find her own place in the wider world.

Similarly, Cisneros's spatial language reinvigoratingly encapsulates the very essence of the space that molds the characters' lives and identities. Descriptive language is used to develop the setting and the characters in order to provide a clear and visceral link between the character and their environment which is so clearly reflective of the impact that it can be seen that the environment has on the people involved in the story. As Cristian puts it, "Cisneros sketches her characters' psychological landscapes with precision and detail against the urban spaces in which they live, rendering the city not merely a backdrop to their lives but an active engine of personal transformation." (Cristian, 2015, p. 6) By integrating these spatial images constantly with identity development to create a reciprocal bond between inner situations and environmental variables makes characters much more believable.

Also, the split in the narrative is not just geographically based but also represents cultural and emotional boundaries. For example, different rooms and streets Esperanza crosses represent the emotional and psychological spaces she has to pass through. As Díaz-Pérez stresses, "Only the language of space enables Cisneros not only to describe physical boundaries but also the

abstract boundaries of class, gender, and ethnicity that the characters negotiate.” (Díaz-Pérez, 2014, p. 327) Such spatial frontiers are used as a main narrative device, a safe environment for characters to face social challenges and construct their own identity. Cisneros’s use of spatial figurations also renders the obstacles that the characters face more visible through physical spaces, rendering these limitations tangible to the reader. This spatial narrative language lends a poignancy to the characters’ individual character arcs and helps the reader align. So, these spatial compartments essentially become structuring features of social problems and identity building and figuring in the story.

In Sandra Cisneros’s writings, space operates on both literal and metaphorical planes, as a multilayered canvas on which the characters’ identities are formed. And while space’s physical elements create an environment that surrounds the characters’ daily lives, they are also suffused with deep symbols of cultural and social values. As Olivares also stated in her work, "Cisneros presented her literary language to the reader in a different way in her work and went beyond a simple narrative." (Olivares, 1987, p. 161) This multi-layered structure is of major importance to the characters’ individual journeys of development and seeking identity. In this sense, the spatial content in Cisneros’s narrative augments the emotional weight of the story, serving as an expensive backdrop for the inner struggles, aspirations and lives of the characters. In tracing the connection between space and characters, the author learns that spatial memory, that is, certain places and environments, have a powerful and pervasive influence on individuals’ identities and self-perception. The spaces where the characters live neighborhoods, houses and cities become inextricable from their interior worlds and identities. These settings speak to the characters’ connection to the past, their aspirations for the future and ultimately their identity; they exemplify how place can play a significant narrative role in the cycle of human experience. For ultimately, Cisneros’s invocation of place asks readers to explore how her characters see themselves and their world in new, deeper ways, shedding light on the complicated and textured interplay of place and identity.

Between Society and the Individual: Integration and Conflict

The complex interweaving and enrichment of social memory and individual experiences lead to the detailed interaction between the society and individual. In a society where space is saturated with physical and symbolic meanings, this complex network of relationships influences the social as well as the individual at different levels. One of the most salient factors influencing individuals' social identities and sense of belonging is spatial memory. Halbwachs comments that social memory favors spatial images, that they express a reality that ensures continuity: “The collective memory prefers the spatial image, because space is a reality that endures.” (Halbwachs, 2020, p. 45) This perspective of Halbwachs is interesting regarding the permanence of space and the meanings that can be assigned to the individuals who share it. There's no space between time, and space as a place where experiences and memories become a space that makes individuals part of a collective memory of the past, at the same time helping them form their own individual stories. However, this symbiotic relationship between space and memory further grounds people’s perception belonging in society and rewrites the boundaries between individual and community identities. In addition to enriching individuals’ understanding of their past and society through space, this relationship lays a foundation on which social criticism stands.

Social memory serves as a required tool of individuals becoming a part of the social structure and promotes their adaptation to the environment. This is where Assmann's assertion "Cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of

its unity and peculiarity" is very significant. (Assmann, 2011, p. 18) Assmann's idea focused on the significance of cultural memory for a society, as this memory is crucial for the social group to keep and transfer the learning process required by the group to create a common identity and a different feature. Due to the fact that space offers the ground for people to correlate their memories, narrate their stories and sustain connections with the past, spatial factors significantly affect this social memory. These elements gain a rich meaning with the content of social memory that contributes to individuals' awareness of their own identities and the society to which they belong. By entering a spatial context, the collective narratives of society and the personal stories of individuals in society can be accepted into the larger social emotions. Thus, space is more than just a physical reality but an abstract system allowing personal memories and experiences to become social ones, and in this transition, individuals become parts of a bigger symphony bridging their own identity with the whole of the social structure.

Space as a versatile narrative not only has the ability to invoke a sense of cultural memory and serving as a repository of individual experiences, but also to enact social critique and work as a means of change. This concept is supported and explained by some theorists like Harvey, whose work is one of the most important contributions to interpreting the social and political functions of the space in a comprehensive way, and Harvey discusses the value of the land and the structure of the cities. The fundamental premise running through Harvey's work is how space might function as an instrument for social transformation. In other words, it is important to note that the phrase "The geographic imagination informs how the world gets studied, represented, and, in turn, changed" emphasizes how space is not simply an area in which geographic interdictions take place, but a medium for shaping our worldview, shaping the way of text representation and ultimately an area for employing strategies that can effect change. (Harvey, 2005, p. 227) Space is a location to live for people, and it is also a mirror of inequalities and injustices existing in society. Such reflections enable individuals and societies to cultivate a critical reflection on their inner worlds, structural issues and social realities. Thus, this function of space to mirror their situation is extremely important, in this drive towards heightened social awareness and questioning of the existing order. Using space as a key platform illustrates not only how people transmute their personal perceptions into generalized social problems but also how it is constructed our pursuit of justice within broader social contexts. So, it is an important element of spatial dimension that provokes critical thinking and makes social transformation possible.

This reinforces the notion that space is an important factor in the shaping of relationships between societal individuals and society, and functions as a collective relational memory and criticality by integrating individuals' experiences through communal temporalities. Space constructs a structure for our memories, is directly tied to our identity, and formats how the individual process his/her experiences amid the chaos of everyday living. These are hardly only individual processes, mind you, they have powerful resonance for phoenixes and social bodies alike. People are under a constant state of negotiation and re-definition of identity both personally and socially through their physical spaces and environments. These deep interactions require an understanding of layers of culture and society, as space holds both traces of the past and is an ever-evolving site of transformation. This inevitable variability and versatile function of space is, when examined from this perspective, the way to understanding how dynamics work in society, and how individuals relate to those dynamics. Thus, if possible, studying this topic on a wider spectrum that could also intrigue individual's lecturer will help to take an evaluation with a theoretical depth and academic intensity. On this basis, the interaction of space and identity acquires a much deeper

personal and intellectual significance, as the process will also reveal the archetypes of space in the formation of individual and social identities.

Conclusion

To summarize this paper dealing with spatial memory, I would like to stress how spatial memory influences both individual cognition and social structure. One of the key functions of the brain, spatial memory is far from playing a background role in human activities and relationships — no passive screen against which experiences are recorded but rather an active player in how such memories is conjured, perceived, and encoded in bodies and the wider world. It has liberated us to traverse elaborate contexts, define personal and collective milestones, and turn into a part of the fabric of human interaction that changes with time.

Spatial memory, which can be considered as an influential factor on the individual and social perception processes, can not only be restricted to the field of psychology, but also has profound effects on the issues related to other different fields including urban planning, architecture and cultural studies. It allows to scrutinize the phenomena of urban development, the organization of social structures and the impact of spatial narratives of urban space on the collective memory, proposing new angles to the academic literature. Research on the internalization of how environmental information takes place in memory can lead us to a better understanding of human memory but can also help derive significant implications for practical applications. For example, designing cities in such a way that they offer better navigation solutions can be something that help our everyday life, creating environments that not only are good for cognitive health but also stimulate social interaction. This demonstrates that studies regarding spatial memory are actually an essential component in generating new design concepts and protocols across various fields. Moreover, the research on spatial memory can inform not only more inclusive and sustainable urban planning and public policy projects; it can also help create new knowledge about inter-societal variability and about cultural diversity. So, studies that provide insight into spatial memory are therefore both key to augmenting our theoretical comprehension of the subject and allow us to improve how we perceive and interact with space.

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Further research could be done to explore the relationship between spatial memory and technological advances. At the same time, new technologies like virtual reality and augmented reality pose new questions about how these technologies are shaping our spatial perception and memories in new ways. In addition, interdisciplinary approaches integrated with neuroscience, architecture, and digital technology can create new synergies into the reciprocal impacts between spatial environments and psychological well-being and social dynamics.

Furthermore, it will be beneficial to study the diversity and cross-cultural and socioeconomic aspects of the spatial memory. Still, those studies can collect evidence on diverse spatial experiences and even improve spatial design and public policies to respond to all citizens, including those with disabilities. Understanding these diverse connections to place will ultimately allow planners and policymakers to better incorporate the voices of those who use these spaces, leading to more welcoming sites for all. It also emphasizes the need for schools to engage in participatory design processes, where members of the school and the wider community are actively involved in deciding how to plan and develop their surroundings. In addition, by examining spatial memory, the readers can gain deeper insights into how historical and cultural narratives are preserved or transformed in one's environment.

To summarize the key points, spatial memory is fundamental to human cognition, allowing for deep exploration and cross-disciplinary research. In fact, this entails something far deeper than just our individual experiences but also has far-reaching implications within collective spaces as well. The influence of spatial memory could not only change the theoretical framework but also our engagement with our living spaces. As we head into the future, embracing the data destabilized nature of spatial memory will prepare us to navigate the potentially intricate world of the modern. As technology advances, spatial memory is becoming increasingly important across diverse fields such as nature, art, education, urban planning, and architecture, and ongoing research in this area promises to enrich both our daily lives and professional practices.

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