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Pseudo-Walk: Imagined Walking and Its Influence on Urban Space

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This research examines how the walks that have never physically taken place can nonetheless produce tangible spatial and political effects in urban environments. It presents the concept of the "pseudo-walk," a narrated or imagined trajectory through space that functions without physical movement while producing social and spatial significance, informed by advancements in mobility studies, anticipatory geographies, and literary geography. While geographers have extensively theorised physical walking as a mode of urban knowledge production, the category of movement that is articulated but not enacted remains undertheorised. Building on recent work in psychogeography, virtual geographies, and imaginary spaces, it explores how walking, beyond physical mobility, functions as spatial storytelling in which memory and anticipation influence urban experience. Through discourse analysis, literary analysis, and thought experiments, it examines whether imagined or remembered walks can exert spatial agency comparable to actual movement. Two case studies illustrate this concept. First, through literary geography, Charles Dickens' insomnia-driven nighttime walks turned into stories that reshaped perceptions of London, producing new ways to think about places through memory and imagination. Second, the Hong Kong protests are a different case because they engage "anticipatory geographies" and "political mobilities." Protesters imagine a future "walk of return" through sites of resistance in a city that has just become independent. Though speculative, this imagined march influences political discourse and maps an alternative urban future grounded in deferred freedom. The paper contributes to geographic theory by demonstrating how non-enacted mobilities function as mechanisms of spatial production, advancing debates in cultural geography about the relationship between representation, imagination, and material urban transformation. **Key Words: anticipatory geographies, literary geography, spatial storytelling, urban imaginaries, walking.**

Over the past three decades, walking has emerged as a central concern in geographic scholarship, functioning simultaneously as a research methodology, an object of study, and a mode of spatial knowledge production (Ingold and Vergunst 2008; Middleton 2010; Wylie 2005). Geographers have investigated the ways in which walking creates space, generates meaning, and embodies political identities, encompassing psychogeographic *dérives*, protest marches, pilgrimage routes, and daily commutes (De Certeau 1984; Edensor 2000; Solnit 2001). This body of work has established walking not merely as movement through space but as a practice through which space itself comes into being, a "mobile dwelling" that simultaneously encounters and creates the landscape (Ingold 1993, 167).

Alongside advancements in walking studies, geographers have progressively focused on the temporal diversity of spatial experience. Research on anticipatory geographies (Adey and Anderson 2012; Anderson 2010) has illustrated how envisioned, computed, or dreaded futures

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actively influence contemporary spatial arrangements and practices. Similarly, research on memory and place (Legg 2007; Till 2005) has shown how memories of the past shape how people live in and fight over spaces. Drawing on Kant's insight that temporal perception organises events into succession (Kant 1965), this research understands and posits memory and imagination as fundamentally analogous; both are forms of mental time travel that reconstruct experience through current cognitive states (Gold 2008; Inda, Muravieva, and Alberini 2011). These temporal expansions have complicated any simplistic conception of the "present" in geographic analysis, illustrating how landscapes are perpetually influenced by the past and invigorated by potential futures.

Despite these rich engagements with walking as practice and with temporality as constitutive of space, a curious lacuna remains geographers have devoted relatively little attention to walks that are narrated, imagined, anticipated, or remembered but never physically enacted. While we have extensive analyses of actual walks such as their rhythms (Pafka 2020), socio-political layers (Songpetchmongkol and Tam 2026), and phenomenology (Irving 2017; Lynch 2019), there is substantially fewer accounts of mobility that circulate as ideas, promises, or stories without materialising as bodily movements. Recent work on Psychogeography in virtual environments (Belford 2021) and imaginary places (Heron et al. 2025) has notably begun to address this gap, yet the specific role of non-enacted walking in producing urban space remains undertheorised. This gap is particularly striking given Geography's recent "material turn" has been accompanied by equally robust attention to representation, affect, and discourse (Anderson 2019; Anderson and Harrison 2010). If spaces can be produced through images, texts, and affective atmospheres, as demonstrated by work on the "force of representations" (Anderson 2019), might they not also be produced through imagined trajectories, through walks that are spoken of but never taken?

Urban space is not produced solely through physical movement, it is also arguably shaped by movements that are imagined, narrated, promised, or deferred, walks that are spoken of, anticipated, or remembered despite never fully taking place. Social and cultural geography has long recognised that space emerges through representation, affect, and narrative as well as material practice. Yet, the role of non-existent movement, mobility that is articulated but not enacted, remains under-theorised and under-represented in the field.

This article addresses this gap by introducing the "pseudo-walk" to describe a form of mobility that does not exist empirically but nonetheless produces tangible social and spatial effects. In doing so, it contributes to three overlapping conversations in contemporary geography. First, it extends walking studies by demonstrating that the spatial agency of walking need not depend on physical enactment (that narrated trajectories can generate comparable effects to material movement). Second, it enhances anticipatory geographies by demonstrating that envisioned future mobilities operate not only as representations of forthcoming events but also as dynamic influences in contemporary spatial politics. Third, it contributes to literary geography by examining how fictional walks produce real geographic effects, collapsing boundaries between textual and material space-making.

A pseudo-walk, as theorised here, is neither a symbolic stand-in nor an incomplete version of a "real" walk. Rather, it is a narrated or imagined trajectory through space that operates in the absence of bodily movement; it occupies a mutual realm between fiction and experience, whereby the idea of walking performs political, cultural, or moral work without leaving a physical trace on the ground.

In our definition, pseudo-walks can be understood as sharing several provisional characteristics. First, they operate in the absence of empirical movement, relying instead on narration, imagination, or anticipation as their mode of existence. Second, they produce spatial meaning not through bodily presence but through circulation of stories, phrases, images, or expectations that move through social space (even as the walk itself does not occur in physical space). Third, despite their immateriality, pseudo-walks generate social and political effects, reorganising how space is perceived, inhabited, or contested, such as influencing public discourse, shaping community identities, or challenging existing power structures. These characteristics are not proposed here as a fixed definition but as an initial framework that will be developed and tested through the cases that follow.

The concept of the pseudo-walk thus builds on, while extending, existing geographic work. It shares with De Certeau (1984) an understanding of walking as a spatial practice that writes the city but asks, "What if that writing occurs without the walk itself?" It resonates with Wylie's (2005) account of walking as a form of narrative self-production but pushes further: can the narrative exist without the physical practice? It engages with Anderson's (2010) theorisation of how anticipation shapes space but specifies walking as a particular modality through which futures exert present forces. In this sense, the pseudo-walk is not a departure from geographic concerns, but an intensification of questions already present in the discipline: How do representations produce material effects? How do temporal modes (memory, anticipation) structure spatial experience? How does mobility generate meaning?

To explore how pseudo-walks function as mechanism of spatial production, this article develops two case studies, examined through speculative methods, that differ radically in form yet converge conceptually. These cases are not hypothetical constructs but empirically grounded examples, one drawn from Victorian literacy history, the other from contemporary political geography, through which the pseudo-walk concept is developed and tested.

The first case turns to the fictional wanderings of Pip in Charles Dickens' Great Expectations, where walking functions less as a physical practice than as a narrative means of tracing class aspiration, moral change, and social mobility. Analysed through the framework of literary geography, this case demonstrates how fictional walks produce real geographic imaginaries, as depicted in how Pip's narrated movements through Kent and London have shaped how these places are imagined well beyond the novel's pages. Contrarily, the second case turns to a phrase coined as part of the planned Hong Kong protests, in which walking is invoked as an idea, a demand, or a deferred possibility rather than an enacted event. Engaging with scholarship on anticipatory geographies and political mobilities, this case shows how imagined future walks function as forms of political action in the present. Here, the pseudo-walk functions politically: it names a form of collective movement that has not (yet) occurred, but whose very articulation reorganises public space, anticipation, and social alignment.

These two cases have been selected precisely because of their radical differences: one literary and individual, the other political and collective; one orientated toward the past, the other toward the future; one emerging from Victorian fiction, the other from contemporary protest. Yet, it is precisely through their differences that they illuminate the pseudo-walk as a recurring spatial condition rather than an exceptional phenomenon. Speculative methods are applied here to render the cases uncertain or hypothetical, but to bring into analytical focus dimensions of spatial practice, the imagined, the anticipated, the narrated, that conventional empirical methods may not fully capture (Last 2012; Whatmore 2013). By examining both fictional narrative and political discourse, the paper demonstrates that pseudo-walking operates across multiple registers of urban

TABLE 1
Distinguishing Pseudo-Walks from Related Concepts

Concept	Physical Movement	Primary Mechanism	Temporal Orientation	Example
Pseudo-Walk	**Absent**	**Narrative circulation**	**Past, present, future**	**Pip's fictional journey, "see you under the pot"**
Imagined Mobility	Absent	Individual cognition	Future	Daydreaming about a trip
Virtual Mobility	Simulated	Digital interface	Present	Video game navigation
Narrative Spatial Practice	Varies	Storytelling	Past	Oral history walking tour
Anticipatory Movement	Planned	Calculation/ preparation	Future	Escape route planning
Mental Mapping	Absent	Cognitive representation	Present/Atemporal	Sketch map from memory

Key distinction: Pseudo-walks require narrative circulation and generate material spatial effects through that circulation, distinguishing them from purely individual cognition (imagined mobility) or technologically mediated experience (virtual mobility).

life, pointing to the pervasive influence of movements that do not take place in material terms, such as social movements, cultural expressions, and psychological experiences that shape urban environments (Table 1).

LITERATURE REVIEW: WALKING, IMAGINATION, AND TEMPORAL GEOGRAPHIES

Walking as Geographic Practice and Object of Study

Walking has a unique place in geographic research because it can both create geographic knowledge and be studied on its own (Middleton 2010). The core idea, most famously expressed by De Certeau (1984), is that walking is not just moving through space that already exists; it is also a spatial practice that creates space. De Certeau posits walkers as "practitioners of the city," whose trajectories generate an "urban text" that is discernible solely from a subordinate perspective (De Certeau 1984, 93). Walking, in this sense, is a tactical appropriation of strategic space, a way that ordinary users inscribe their meanings onto the planned city.

This understanding of walking as a productive use of space has been developed in multiple directions. Phenomenological approaches, drawing particularly on the work of Ingold (1993, 2004), emphasise walking as a mode of embodied knowing, a "mobile dwelling" through which landscapes come into being through the walker's perception and movement. For Ingold (2004, 329), the landscape is not a backdrop against which activities occur but is itself constituted through movement: "It is in the very activity of moving along that the landscape is experienced." Walking, from this perspective, is ontologically primary; space emerges through the practice of

moving through it. In conjunction with these phenomenological narratives, critical geographers have analysed walking as a locus of political contention and social differentiation. Feminist geographers (Parsons 2000; Rose 1993) have shown how walking is gendered, with women's movements through urban spaces historically constrained, surveilled, and moralised. The *flâneur*, the detached, observing male walker of modernity, reveals a profoundly gendered and classed subject position (Wilson 1992). Work on racialised mobility (Browne 2015) has demonstrated how walking while Black, Brown, or immigrant subjects walkers to differential surveillance, revealing walking as always already political.

More recently, geographers have explored walking as a research methodology, a way of knowing cities and landscapes differently than conventional methods allow (Butler 2006; Evans and Jones 2011; Pink et al. 2010). "Walking interviews" and "walking ethnographies" have proliferated as techniques for accessing embodied, situated knowledge. As Wylie (2005) demonstrates, walking generates a particular form of narrative self-production, a mode of knowing that emerges through rhythmic, embodied movement.

Notwithstanding all this rich attention to walking, geographic scholarship has devoted less energy to walks that are merely imagined, narrated, or anticipated, rather than materially enacted. Although we have accounts of walking's phenomenology, politics, and methodology, we have relatively few analyses of how the idea of a walk, circulating without its physical enactment, might generate spatial effects. This gap is particularly curious given geography's sustained engagement with representation, discourse, and the non-representational (Anderson and Harrison 2010). If spaces can be produced through images, affects, and atmospheres, why not through imagined trajectories?

Literary Geography and the Production of Imagined Spaces

A body of work that has attended to imagination's role in spatial production is Literary Geography, a subfield concerned with the geographic dimensions of literature and the literary dimensions of geography (Daniels and Rycroft 1993; Hones 2008, 2014). Literary geography has shown that works of fiction don't just show places that already exist; they also help create them. As Hones (2014, 12) argues, literary texts are not "about" places but are themselves events that occur in space and time, reshaping how places come to be known, imagined, and inhabited.

This perspective contests the traditional dichotomies of "real" and "fictional" geographies. Daniels and Rycroft (1993), in their examination of Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, demonstrate how the novel's fictional representations of Africa significantly shaped (and continue to shape) the Western perceptions of the continent's geography. The text does not depict Africa; rather, it generates a specific conceptualisation of Africa that permeates cultural consciousness. This perspective posits that fiction is not separate from geographic reality; instead, it functions as a means of its production.

The case of Dickens' London is particularly illustrative. Dickens' novels not only depicted Victorian London, but also fundamentally shaped the imagination, experience, and memory of that city, as demonstrated by Keane (2013), Herbert (2001, 2021), Smith (2018), and Walkowitz (2015). The foggy, poor, and gothic architecture of "Dickensian" London is as much a work of fiction as it is a real place. Moreover, this imaginary London continues to exert force long after the material city it purportedly described has vanished. Tourists still seek out "Dickens' London," walking routes shaped by fictional narratives rather than historical facts (Herbert 2001). Literary geography becomes, in effect, the primary geography.

What literary geography has yet to fully theorise, however, is the specific role of imagined movement through these literary spaces. If fictional places can produce real spatial effects, what about fictional journeys? Can a walk that never occurred (that exists only in narrative) generate geographic knowledge or reshape spatial experience? The concept of the pseudo-walk extends literary geography's insights by focusing specifically on mobility as the mechanism through which fictional and real geographies interpenetrate, thereby allowing us to understand how imagined journeys can influence our perceptions of actual spaces and inform our geographic knowledge. Peterle (2023) demonstrates how movement in fictional spaces has been considered in literary contexts, showing how narrative mappings shape walking ethnographies.

Anticipatory Geographies and the Politics of Futurity

A second body of work relevant to theorising pseudo-walks is the emerging literature on Anticipatory Geographies, scholarship concerned with how futures shape present spatial configurations and practices (Adams, Murphy, and Clarke 2009; Adey and Anderson 2012; Anderson 2010). Anderson (2010, 778) defines anticipatory action as "interventions that take the form of calculating, imagining, and affectively apprehending what has not yet occurred but may happen." Crucially, such anticipation is not merely mental or ideational but has material effects, reorganising space, infrastructure, and social relations in the present.

Work on anticipatory geographies has examined diverse phenomena: preparedness planning for disasters, speculative real estate development, and climate change adaptation. Across these domains, the future is not simply awaited but actively produced, calculated, modelled, imagined, and prepared for. Moreover, different futures generate different presents: a future imagined as catastrophic demands different spatial arrangements than one imagined as progressive or profitable.

However, research on anticipatory geographies has concentrated less on the specific ways in which anticipated mobilities contribute to spatial production. Anderson (2010) discusses events that people expect to happen, but the idea of expected movement (of journeys that are promised, imagined, or put off) hasn't been studied as much. This is a significant gap, especially since much political discourse is about issues of future mobility.

The Hong Kong case, developed below, demonstrates how an anticipated walk, a collective journey that has not yet occurred, functions as a powerful form of political action in the present. The promise or threat of future movements reorganises spatial meaning, even in the absence of that movement's realisation; this extends anticipatory geography's insights by showing how mobility, specifically, operates as a modality through which futures exert present force. Lynch's (2019) work on augmented city tours demonstrates how planned routes that diverge from actual paths shape spatial understanding, while Irving's (2017) memory walks show how temporal engagement structures spatial practice.

Theorising the Gap: Non-Enacted Mobilities

The pseudo-walk addresses this gap; it provides a framework for understanding how narrated or imagined trajectories function as spatial practices. The pseudo-walk does not view these non-enacted mobilities as merely symbolic or metaphorical; instead, it acknowledges their potential

to produce tangible spatial effects. In doing so, it extends geographic theory in three key ways: First, it shows that the spatial agency of walking doesn't have to depend on physical action; imagination can do the work that is usually done by embodied practice. Second, it shows how temporality operates in spatial production, with imagined pasts and future possibilities shaping present spatial configurations. Third, it provides a methodological framework for examining phenomena that predominantly reside in discourse and imagination, such as cultural narratives and social constructs, thereby broadening geography's empirical scope beyond the materially existent.

Psychogeography and Virtual Geographies

Recent scholarship has begun to address how imaginary and virtual spaces produce geographic effects, though the specific role of non-enacted walking remains undertheorised. Heron, et al. (2025) demonstrate that imaginary places, from Middle Earth to fictional cities, develop their own psychogeographies that structure how people navigate both imagined and material urban spaces. Their work shows that fictional geographies are not separate from material ones but actively interpenetrate, shaping tourism routes, urban design, and spatial imaginaries.

Similarly, work on virtual environments has explored how avatar movement through game spaces produces genuine geographic knowledge and spatial practice (Belford 2021). Animal Crossing players develop spatial attachments and navigation skills that translate to material urban environments, suggesting that "walking" need not be physical to produce spatial effects.

However, these emerging literatures focus primarily on technologically mediated spaces (games, VR) or fan engagements with fictional worlds. The pseudo-walk concept extends this work by examining how narrated trajectories, whether in 19th-century novels or 21st-century protest slogans, function as spatial practices independent of technological mediation. Where virtual geography examines digitally simulated movement and fan studies examine community engagement with fictional places, pseudo-walk theory addresses the broader category of narrated-but-not-enacted mobility across diverse media and contexts.

METHODOLOGY

This research encounters a unique methodological dilemma: How can one investigate mobility that, by definition, has not transpired in physical space? What constitutes evidence for a walk that was not undertaken? This paper employs discourse analysis informed by speculative methods (Last 2012; Whatmore 2013). Discourse analysis enables the exploration of how pseudo-walks circulate through language, text, and imagery in how they are narrated, invoked, and mobilised even in the absence of material enactment (Foucault 1972; Rose 2016). Following recent calls for experimental geography, this approach treats speculation not as a departure from rigorous analysis but as a method for engaging phenomena (affects, potentials, imaginaries) that exceed conventional empirical capture (Lorimer 2005). The Kantian framework introduced above informs our analysis of both cases: understanding memory and imagination as analogous

forms of temporal engagement allows us to analyse Dickens' remembered walks and Hong Kong's imagined walks through a unified conceptual lens.

This methodological approach is based on recent calls for experimental and speculative methods in human geography (Last 2012; Whatmore 2013). These methods acknowledge that certain geographic phenomena, affects, potential, and imaginaries, transcend traditional empirical measurement and necessitate alternative analytical approaches. Lorimer (2005, 84) contends that geographic research must occasionally focus on 'what takes shape and unfolds in the productive tensions of the not-yet and the might-become.

The case study approach employed here is methodologically deliberate. Rather than attempting comprehensive empirical coverage, this paper develops two in-depth, theoretically informed case analyses that differ radically in context, temporality, and form. This strategy of "maximum variation" case selection (Flyvbjerg 2006) allows for theoretical insight precisely through contrast: if phenomena as different as Victorian fiction and contemporary protest both exhibit the logic of the pseudo-walk, the evidence suggests the concept identifies a recurring spatial condition rather than a context-specific anomaly.

CASE STUDY

Case Study 1: Pip's Aimless Wander, Literary Geography, and the Production of Place

Charles Dickens' The Great Expectations (1861) offers a rich example for analysing how fictional walks produce the "real" geographic imaginations. Dickens created a literary geography through the character of Pip, whose journey from the Kent marshes to London and back serves as the novel's main story. This geography has had a profound impact on how people perceive these places, not only Victorian readers but also people who read Dickens later on. Pip's walk, while entirely fictional, has produced spatial effects that endure over time, illustrating how narrated mobility can serve as a means of place-making.

Pip was initially introduced as a character portrayed as an ordinary individual who has nothing better to do than walk merely for the sake of walking himself to tiredness. Wandering the landscape of Kent without a rational motive, this protagonist's walk is neither transactional nor purposeful. The walk is banal; it is repetitive and unjust. What makes Pip's walking significant from a geographic perspective is precisely its aimlessness, its character as movement without predetermined destination or instrumental purpose. This quality aligns Pip's wandering with what Edensor (2000) terms "unreflexive" walking and what Wylie (2005) describes as walking's capacity to generate narrative through temporal unfolding rather than spatial goal-achievement. Pip's walks are not journeys from A to B but explorations of internal landscapes projected onto external ones.

As Dickens writes, "I was to walk in the same all the days of my life," laying me under an obligation always to go through the village from our house in one particular direction and never to vary it by turning down by the wheelwright's or up by the mill' (Dickens 1861, 49). This passage reveals walking as simultaneously a constraint and a freedom; Pip is "obligated" to follow a particular route, yet it is through this very constraint that his identity takes shape. The walk becomes, in De Certeau (1984) terms, a "spatial practice" that writes Pip's selfhood onto the

landscape, even as that landscape writes itself onto him. Kent's marshes serve not only as the setting for Pip's early life but are also shaped into a specific type of place, melancholic, formative, and morally ambiguous, through Pip's narrated movement within them.

Pip experiences a profound growth in his "walk of life" following two significant encounters: initially, his choice to assist the escaped prisoner Magwitch in his formative years and, subsequently, being recompensed throughout the subsequent course of his life. Though the convicted Magwitch was later reincarcerated and sentenced to death, this revelation led to the sociological "walk" of Pip, enriching the storyline. Pip declined Magwitch's financial assistance and subsequently went into debt, choosing to learn from the life lesson and walk the journey that is his own, yet he is grateful for the influence and blessing of others met along the way.

Pip's journey from Kent to London and back operates at multiple scales simultaneously; it is a literal journey through geographic space, a metaphorical journey of class mobility, and a moral journey of self-discovery. This multiplicity is crucial to understanding how the fictional walk produces geographic effects: because Pip's physical movement is inseparable from his social and moral transformation, the spaces he moves through become invested with meanings that transcend their material properties. London becomes not just a city but the site of ambition and corruption; Kent becomes not just countryside but the repository of authentic values and humbling origins. These imaginative geographies, produced through Pip's narrated mobility, have shaped how subsequent readers and visitors encounter these actual places.

Great Expectations chronicles Pip's life, inflated by the other characters' choices of actions, yet he sees the individuality that speaks of his own. Walking, for Pip, is not entirely of one's own volition but results from the steering of others' narrative (Wylie 2005). His delusions disintegrate, prompting an arduous odyssey of self-discovery and atonement. As the story goes, Pip eventually loses his fortune and is nursed back to health by his childhood friend. In both endings of the novel, Pip either comes back together with the woman of his dreams or it's unclear if they end up together romantically. However, Pip's change is clear: he has gone from feeling ashamed to feeling empathy and moral clarity. The presence of these two endings, both equally "real" within the textual universe, illustrates the distinctive ontology of fictional narratives: in contrast to physical journeys, which yield a singular outcome, narrated experiences can diverge into multiple futures, all of which coexist in the literary imagination. This diversity is not a constraint but a characteristic of fictional geographies; they create realms of possibility instead of singular realities.

Pip's story illustrates socio-economic and spatial phenomena, wherein walking is regarded and utilised not only as a means of travel or leisure but also as a form of emotional catharsis and punishment. For Pip, walking transforms into an ideological conflict, serving as a method to navigate internal turmoil rather than external environments. This perspective promotes a deeper analysis of how Pip's emotional landscape is perpetually shaped and reshaped through walking (Ingold 1993; Lefebvre 1991), mirroring both personal and communal struggles.

Dickens' Walks and Pip's Walks: The Collapse of Author and Character

However, it's important to acknowledge that Dickens was also famous for his own "walks" in London when he talked about Pip's walks. The connection between Dickens' real-life night walks and Pip's made-up walks shows an important point about fake walks: the line between

real and imagined movement can become useful and blurry, with each one affecting and making the other. Dickens' insomnia-driven night walks through London are well documented in his journalism, letters, and biographical accounts (Keane 2013). He would walk for hours through the city's poorest districts, observing life after dark such as the homeless, the workers, the criminals, the dispossessed. Dickens' walks were both real-life experiences and research for his writing, and they gave him ideas that he would later use in his fiction. Keane (2013, 47) says, "Dickens' walking was inseparable from his writing; the rhythms of his prose mirror the rhythms of his steps." Nevertheless, these "real" walks are solely accessible to modern audiences through textual mediation; we are aware of Dickens' nocturnal excursions because he documented them, converting lived experience into literary narrative. Dickens' nocturnal walk may or may not have existed, for, like Pip, the contemporary audience only learns about it from the writing. The boundaries between life experience and fictional construction became less clear when it came to walking, which became a part of its literary representation (De Landa 2000). Dickens walked in the city and in the stories he wrote.

This collapse of the author and character, as well as the real and fictional walks, shows a key feature of pseudo-walks: they happen in a space of ontological uncertainty where the differences between real and imagined are less important than the results they produce. Did Dickens walk the routes he describes? Did those walks shape Pip's fictional journeys? Do readers walking through London today follow Dickens' actual routes, Pip's fictional ones, or some hybrid imaginary that blends both? The answer is "all and none." The pseudo-walk exists precisely in this space of indeterminacy, where multiple modes of mobility (actual, remembered, imagined, and narrated) converge and interpenetrate.

Critical to understanding this collapse of author and character is recognising the profoundly gendered and classed nature of Dickens' walking practice. As a relatively privileged white male, Dickens enjoyed spatial freedoms unavailable to women or working-class men of his era (Parsons 2000; Wilson 1992). His nocturnal wanderings through London's poorest districts constituted a form of urban tourism unavailable to female walkers, whose nighttime movement was heavily constrained and moralised. The pseudo-walk that emerges from Dickens' nocturnal observations thus carries the marks of this privileged male gaze; it is a particular kind of pseudo-walk, shaped by who could walk, when, where, and under what conditions.

Moreover, readers do not simply "become Pip" when reading Great Expectations. Following Hones (2011) theorisation of reading as an event, our engagement with Pip's walk is mediated by our own positionalities, experiences, and contexts. A contemporary female reader in Bangkok encounters Pip's walk differently than Dickens' Victorian male contemporaries. The pseudo-walk is thus not a fixed entity but emerges differently through each reading event, shaped by the hermeneutic encounter between text and reader. This raises critical questions about whose pseudo-walks circulate, whose get remembered, and whose spatial experiences become narratively mediated into geographic effects.

In considering Dickens' Pip not as a character but as a mode of being, if Pip is an aimless wanderer, a pseudo-walker, then the reader, following his movement across pages, becomes equally implicated in the walk. The reader does not merely observe Pip's walk; they perform it in their own imagination. If we believe in Pip's walk, we become part of it. This raises a critical question about reader participation in pseudo-walk constitution: aren't we all just a bunch of Pips? By reading cities through fiction, we participate in their reimagination. Readers thus become co-participants in the pseudo-walk's constitution through their imaginative engagement

with Pip's trajectory. The pseudo-walk is thus not a solitary act; it is social, collective, and deeply ideological.

Moreover, this convergence generates geographic effects that exceed either the actual or fictional walk alone, leading to a richer understanding of the city's cultural significance and its impact on how people experience and interpret urban spaces. Dickens' London exists as a powerful geographic imaginary that shapes tourism, urban conservation, literary geography, and popular imagination (Herbert 2001). Visitors take "Dickens walking tours" that follow routes constructed from fictional narratives and biographical fragments, treating the city as if it were simultaneously material and textual. In this sense, the pseudo-walk (a composite of Dickens' actual wanderings, Pip's fictional journeys, and the readers' imaginative reconstructions) has produced a persistent urban geography that continues to organise spatial practice and perception. The geographic effects of Pip's fictional walk extend far beyond tourism. Annual economic impact assessments show Dickens-related tourism generates approximately £4.2 million for Rochester and the Kent marshes region, supporting forty-seven jobs and influencing municipal decisions about heritage conservation (Herbert 2021). Urban planning documents for Rochester explicitly reference Dickens' literary geography when designating conservation areas, with city councils citing the need to "preserve the Dickensian character" of specific streetscapes (Smith 2018). Literary geography has become embedded in university curricula, with Great Expectations serving as a standard text for teaching how fiction produces space (Walkowitz 2015). These concrete mechanisms (economic flows, policy decisions, pedagogical practices) demonstrate how Pip's fictional walk generates material spatial effects.

Case Study 2: "See You Under the Pot"

Due to the increasing encroachment of Mainland China upon Hong Kong's promised political autonomy, large-scale protests emerged in 2014 and later intensified during the 2019 Anti-Extradition Bill Movement. Under the persistent influence of the Chinese government, the legitimacy of Hong Kong's sovereignty has remained a contested subject. The protests can therefore be read as an attempt by Hong Kong people to assert a degree of independence both politically and socially.

As a part of the protests, the storming of the Legislative Council Complex on 1 July 2019 marked a critical moment: following the occupation, the site became inaccessible to activists, symbolising the withdrawal of the freedom to physically move through, and lay claim to, the city (Choi 2020, 177). From the outset of various social movements, access routes were systematically obstructed, rendering the site both physically and symbolically off-limits. Surrounded by layers of barricades and strict security protocols, the Complex has been transformed into a fortified space, one that admits only those with authorised clearance. This spatial exclusion mirrors a broader political marginalisation (Merrifield 2013), underscoring the increasing detachment of decision-making processes from public accountability and inclusion.

Numerous aspirations for the future coalesce in a single imagined gesture: 煲底見 (literally "see you under the pot"), which translates to "meet under the Legislative Council Complex," so called because the building's distinctive form resembles a pot. This phrase, repeated and visualised across various media, connotes more than just a gathering point; it signifies the removal of barriers and the restoration of public access. The act of physically reaching the Legislative

Council Complex embodies a reclamation of the right to move freely through urban space. This act is not merely symbolic; it represents a tangible reassertion of the citizens' presence and ownership of the city. The absence of obstruction is not merely logistical; it is profoundly political. It affirms the public's autonomy over the city and the re-establishment of civic presence. As such, this imagined convergence becomes a potent conclusion to a long trajectory of conflict, struggle, and collective pain.

The imagined act of walking toward the Legislative Council Complex has come to symbolise the reclamation of Hong Kong by its people. Although such a walk has never physically occurred, it persists as a powerful collective imagination among Hong Kong activists. The aspiration to "meet under the Legislative Council Complex" functions as a powerful motif, emblematic of a hoped-for moment in which the public reclaims its spatial and political agency in Hong Kong. This phrase transcends metaphor; it embodies a concrete spatial and political assertion. It asserts a concrete vision of freedom of movement and participation in civic life.

Interpersonal communication among citizens constitutes a central element in the collective imagination of urban space. Artists have transformed the phrase into a shared visual and symbolic imagination. Political illustrator Ah To, for instance, has created artwork envisioning this future act of public reclamation. Similarly, musician Tommy Yuen Man On has released a song and accompanying music video that reinterprets the envisioned gathering through an audio-visual narrative. Through such cultural production, the phrase gains resonance, illustrating how collective longing is mediated through aesthetic representation.

The relationship between imagined and material walks manifests differently in political contexts. Lynch's (2019) work on augmented city tours shows how planned routes that diverge from actual paths can shape spatial understanding; sometimes the routes are designed specifically not to converge, creating productive tension between imagined and enacted movement. In Hong Kong's case, the emergency escape routes protesters plan (such as which streets to use if certain areas are closed or which directions to flee if attacked from particular sides) function as proto-pseudo-walks. These routes exist as shared knowledge, circulating through messaging apps and protest training sessions, yet many are never actually used. When they remain unwalked, they nonetheless shape spatial tactics and collective preparedness (Irving 2017). This connects to walking as punishment: both Victorian constrained walking and contemporary protest route-planning demonstrate how anticipated necessity structures spatial imagination.

No Longer a Thought Experiment

This paper proposes a critical reorientation: this thought experiment is already true, and the imagined civic future born out of the 2019 movement is, in fact, already unfolding. We are living within the very future that was envisioned during the height of Hong Kong's social unrest (Ku 2019). This vision, grounded in civic imagination and collective autonomy rather than institutional governance, is enacted through cultural practices and collective organising. Rather than awaiting top-down political reform, citizens have enacted a form of spiritual and cultural liberation through the shared adoption of this imagined future. For instance, over 120 self-organised events occurred between May and July, during the commemorative period marking the anniversary of the protests (Flow HK Editorial Board 2024, 73–83). These events, including exhibitions,

concerts, film screenings, and memorial services, were coordinated independently by grassroots collectives, without any central organising authority.

Amidst the current political climate, this civic vision is not merely aspirational but actively "lived." It manifests in the refusal to accept imposed authority and in the collective decision to engage in dialogue and mutual problem-solving. Such behaviours reflect a decentralised political ethos, wherein individuals consciously disregard coercive external orders. This act of disengagement from centralised power, in turn, fosters a feedback loop that reinforces individual autonomy and community-based governance. One could argue that the gathering has already taken place, emotionally and symbolically. This disposition reflects a paradox: the walk never physically happened, and yet the visuality of the imagined event has rendered it emotionally and politically real.

By resisting external mandates, people cultivate a sense of self-determination, enabling them to participate more fully in public life. This collective autonomy, as characterised by civic participation, resistance to censorship, and cultural self-definition (Parsons 2000), is the foundational force sustaining the shared civic imagination. Rather than being a passive by-product of political circumstance, this is an active social product: the outcome of individuals consciously striving toward an imagined and collectively envisioned future. Freedom, in this context, is not conferred by state institutions; it is achieved through the active engagement of ordinary people in shaping their communal life.

This leads us to a fundamental paradox: if the imagination is experienced as real, then the ideal world it envisions is effectively already realised. In such a case, the act of imagining becomes redundant. Put differently, imagination becomes unnecessary once the social reality it anticipates has been actualised (Anderson 2010). Paradoxically, the imagination is most powerful at the very moment when it undermines the need for its own existence. It reaches its fullest potential precisely when it exceeds the conditions that necessitated it.

This civic imagination also underpins the emergence of a distinct Hong Kong psychogeography. It is a psychogeography defined by historical awareness, artistic expression, and critical inquiry into established norms. Citizens position themselves as active agents in history, endowed with the agency to reshape its trajectory. The imagined future becomes a guiding framework through which participatory democracy, decentralised self-governance, cultural production, and historical preservation are envisioned and enacted. Civic imagination thus operates not only as a political force, but also as a mode of reorienting urban experience.

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS: COMPARING LITERARY AND POLITICAL PSEUDO-WALKS

Comparing Dickens' Pip and Hong Kong's "see you under the pot" shows both similarities and differences that help us understand how pseudo-walks work as spatial phenomena. Although these cases originate from vastly disparate contexts (Victorian literature contrasted with modern political protest, personal imagination juxtaposed with collective expectation, and nostalgia focused on the past versus hope directed towards the future) they exhibit essential traits that indicate pseudo-walking as a persistent spatial phenomenon rather than a context-specific aberration.

First, both cases demonstrate that pseudo-walks produce spatial effects through circulation rather than enactment. Readers of all ages picture Kent and London through Pip's made-up

journey, not by actually walking there. Similarly, "see you under the pot" reorganises Hong Kong's political geography not through physical convergence at the Legislative Council but through the phrase's circulation in protest discourse, artwork, and song. In both cases, the walk's spatial agency derives from its narrative presence, not its material occurrence. This suggests that circulation such as the movement of stories, images, and ideas through social space can substitute for bodily movement through physical space in generating geographic effects.

Second, both cases demonstrate pseudo-walks are inherently temporal phenomena, which complicate the understanding of geography in the simple present tense. Pip's walk exists in many different times: it takes place in the early 19th century, was written in the middle of the 19th century, and still affects how people think about space in the 21st century. The Hong Kong case also breaks down time barriers: a future walk that is imagined shapes current political practice, which is already being remembered and honoured as if it has already happened. This shows how these practices affect how people think about history and how society works right now. Both cases thus demonstrate that pseudo-walks function as temporal bridges, connecting past, present, and future in ways that exceed conventional chronology.

Third, both cases show that pseudo-walks gain force through collective adoption and reproduction. However, this does not mean all pseudo-walks require collective amplification. More precisely: pseudo-walks can operate at multiple scales. An individual's private imagined walk can shape that person's spatial practice and perception; this is an individual-scale pseudo-walk. However, broader spatial reorganisation, the kind that affects tourism economies, urban planning, or protest tactics, requires social amplification through circulation. The difference is scalar, not categorical. Pip's walk became geographically significant not merely because Dickens wrote it but also because readers, critics, tourists, and other writers reproduced and elaborated it across time. "See you under the pot" similarly derives power from its collective embrace from being repeated and performed by thousands. Individual pseudo-walks matter, but collective ones transform space at larger scales. This points to a crucial characteristic: pseudo-walks require social amplification to generate spatial effects. An imagined walk that remains private or idiosyncratic lacks the circulatory force to reshape space, as it does not engage a community or audience that can amplify its impact and create a shared experience. It is collectivisation, whether through readership or political movements, that transforms imagination into spatial practice.

Yet the cases also reveal important differences. Most significantly, they differ in their relationship with possibilities and realisations. Pip's walk can never be fully realised; it is ontologically fictional and belongs to a narrative world that cannot converge with material reality. The Hong Kong walk, by contrast, could potentially occur; it names a future event that might materialise if political conditions change. The permanently fictional pseudo-walk derives power from impossibility from being endlessly reimaginable. The delayed pseudo-walk generates political urgency precisely because realisation remains possible.

Finally, both cases demonstrate that pseudo-walks are never merely representational or symbolic; they have material consequences. Pip's fictional journey has shaped urban conservation, tourism economies, and literary industries in Kent and London. Hong Kong's imagined walk has organised protest strategies, cultural productions, and embodied political practices. In both instances, imagination translates into material effect, not because the walk occurs but because its narration reorganises spatial meaning and practice. This insight challenges conventional geographic distinctions between representation and materiality, suggesting that, at least in the case of pseudo-walks, the boundary between these categories dissolves.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: CONTRIBUTIONS TO GEOGRAPHIC THEORY

This paper has presented the pseudo-walk as a framework for understanding how non-enacted mobilities generate spatial and political effects. Through analysis of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* and Hong Kong's "see you under the pot" protest phrase, we have demonstrated that imagined, narrated, or anticipated trajectories function as mechanisms of spatial production. These cases reveal that urban space is shaped not only by material movements but also by mobilities that circulate as stories, promises, and collective aspirations.

Representation as Practice: The Central Contribution

Our central theoretical contribution lies in demonstrating that representation *is* practice (Anderson 2019). When thousands of Hong Kong protesters circulate "see you under the pot," they are not merely representing an imagined future; they are enacting political practice in the present. The phrase reorganises protest strategy, shapes spatial tactics, and constitutes collective identity through its very circulation. When readers imagine Pip's journey through Kent, they do not simply consume a representation of place; they actively participate in producing Kent and London as particular kinds of geographic imaginaries, complete with affective atmospheres, moral geographies, and spatial meanings that persist across generations.

This challenges the persistent dualism between materiality and representation in geographic scholarship. Recent work has increasingly recognised that representations have material force that images, texts, and narratives do things in the world (Anderson 2019; Rose 2016). Buildings, urban designs, and infrastructure are simultaneously material objects and representations that can be read, interpreted, and contested. Our contribution specifies how *mobile* representations (narrated trajectories, imagined walks) function as particularly potent forms of spatial practice. Mobility is simultaneously material and symbolic, individual and collective, practice and representation. This simultaneity makes pseudo-walks powerful: they operate in the productive tension between what is and what might be, between absence and presence, between individual imagination and collective circulation.

The Dickens case demonstrates this dynamic across temporal scales. Pip's fictional walk generates £4.2 million in annual tourism revenue, influences urban conservation policy, and structures how millions of readers encounter Victorian London (Herbert 2021; Smith 2018). These are not symbolic effects; they are material reorganisations of economic flows, planning decisions, and embodied movement through space. The Hong Kong case demonstrates the same dynamic in political time: the phrase "see you under the pot" has organised 120+ commemorative events, shaped protest choreography, and constituted a decentralised political subjectivity among activists (Flow HK Editorial Board 2024). In both cases, circulation transforms imagination into spatial practice.

Advancing Geographic Theory

The pseudo-walk extends existing mobility theories by demonstrating that spatial agency need not depend on physical enactment (De Certeau 1984; Ingold 2004; Massey 2005; Wylie 2005).

This does not claim that pseudo-walks operate identically to material walks; the absence of embodied experience constitutes a significant difference. Rather, both material and imaginary mobilities contribute to spatial production through distinct but equally consequential mechanisms. Material walks produce space through embodied presence, sensory engagement, and physical trace. Pseudo-walks produce space through narrative circulation, collective amplification, and imaginative participation.

This insight advances three overlapping literatures. First, for walking studies, it demonstrates that narrated trajectories can generate spatial effects comparable to actual movement. The extensive literature on walking methodologies (Evans and Jones 2011; Pink et al. 2010), phenomenologies of walking (Ingold 1993; Wylie 2005), and politics of walking (Browne 2015; Parsons 2000) has established walking's centrality to geographic practice. The pseudo-walk concept reveals that this spatial agency operates even when bodily movement is absent, provided narrative circulation occurs.

Second, for anticipatory geographies, the concept specifies walking as a particular modality through which futures exert present spatial force. Anderson (2010) and others have shown that anticipation shapes space through preparedness planning, speculative development, and affective atmospheres. Our contribution demonstrates how anticipated mobilities specifically function: imagined future walks reorganise current spatial meanings, political practices, and embodied experiences. The Hong Kong case illustrates this vividly; the anticipated walk structures present-tense activism, collective identity, and spatial imagination despite (or perhaps because of) its deferral.

Third, for literary geography, the research demonstrates how fictional walks generate tangible geographic impacts across prolonged temporal scales. Literary geography has established that texts are spatial events that reshape how places are known and inhabited (Hones 2014; Peterle 2023; Singleton, Brookes, and Slatter 2025). The Dickens case specifies the mechanisms through which this occurs literary mobilities mold urban imaginations across generations, impacting tourism economies, conservation policies, pedagogical practices, and popular spatial imaginaries. These effects are not ephemeral or merely cultural; they demonstrate material durability and political consequence.

Scalar Dimensions: Individual and Collective Pseudo-Walks

Pseudo-walks operate at multiple scales, from individual imagination to collective spatial reorganisation. An individual's private imagined walk can shape that person's spatial practice and perception; this constitutes an individual-scale pseudo-walk. However, such individual effects remain phenomenological rather than geographic in the broader sense; they do not reorganise shared urban space unless circulation amplifies them beyond the individual. A reader imagining Pip's journey develops a particular geographic imaginary of Kent and London that may influence how they subsequently encounter these places. A Hong Kong resident privately imagining the "walk of return" cultivates hope, political identity, and spatial belonging.

However, broader spatial reorganisation that affects tourism economies, urban planning policy, or protest tactics requires social amplification through circulation. The difference is scalar, not categorical. Pip's walk became geographically significant not merely because Dickens wrote it but because readers, critics, tourists, literary scholars, and subsequent writers reproduced and

elaborated it for more than 160 years. "See you under the pot" derives power from collective embrace from being repeated, visualised, performed, and embodied by thousands of activists across multiple media platforms.

This raises critical questions about inclusion and exclusion. Pseudo-walks are not neutral or universally accessible. They require cultural capital to engage with textual narratives, access to protest networks and digital platforms, shared linguistic and cultural frameworks for circulation, and material resources such as literacy, education, and leisure time. These requirements create systematic exclusions. Who cannot participate in pseudo-walks? Those without access to dominant literary traditions, those excluded from activist networks, those whose spatial imaginations remain unnarrated or privately held, those whose imagined mobilities never achieve circulatory force.

The politics of pseudo-walks thus centres on questions of circulation: whose imagined mobilities achieve narrative presence? Whose get remembered, reproduced, and amplified across time and space? Whose remain private, erased, or forgotten? Dickens' privileged position as a white male walker enabled his spatial imaginations to circulate widely, while women's and working-class imaginaries from the same period remain largely unrecorded (Parsons 2000; Wilson 1992). Contemporary protest phrases circulate differentially based on digital access, linguistic dominance, and political networks. Pseudo-walk theory must attend to these asymmetries of circulation.

Boundaries and Limitations

Not all imagined movements constitute a pseudo-walk. Our definition specifies that pseudo-walks must circulate and thereby reorganise space beyond individual cognition. Purely private imaginative exercises such as therapeutic visualisation, personal fantasy, and individual daydreaming fall outside this framework. The pseudo-walk emerges at the point of narration and circulation: when Dickens publishes Pip's journey, when protesters coin and share a phrase, when an imagined trajectory enters social space and begins reorganising spatial meanings.

Pseudo-walks also have temporal boundaries. They emerge at narration points and dissolve when circulation ceases. Many have ambiguous temporal limits: When exactly did "Dickens' London" crystallise as a coherent geographic imaginary? When will "see you under the pot" cease circulating among Hong Kong activists? These temporal ambiguities are features rather than flaws; pseudo-walks exist in narrative time, not clock time, and their lifecycles reflect the social dynamics of memory, forgetting, and collective imagination.

The concept could potentially extend to other movement forms; imagined train journeys, anticipated flights, narrated boat voyages. However, walking retains particular theoretical significance. Walking operates at human scale, connecting directly to embodied experience in ways that mechanised mobility does not (Ingold 2004). Walking carries specific political valences (protest marches, flânerie, pilgrimage) that make it a privileged site for examining how movement generates meaning (Edensor 2000; Solnit 2001). Walking's slowness and directness create narrative possibilities that faster, mediated mobilities may not afford. Whether "pseudo-cycling" or "pseudo-driving" function identically to pseudo-walking requires further empirical investigation, though our theoretical framework suggests that the human-scale, embodied character of walking makes it particularly generative of narrative circulation.

The pseudo-walk concept serves dual purpose. For those who engage in them, whether readers imaginatively traversing fictional landscapes, protesters sustaining collective political identity through shared imagery, or diaspora communities maintaining spatial belonging through remembered or anticipated return, the concept names and validates a form of spatial agency that operates without physical movement. For scholars, it offers an analytical framework for examining how narrated mobilities produces geographic effects across diverse cultural, historical, and political contexts, connecting walking studies, literacy geography, and anticipatory geographies through a shared concern with non-enacted mobility. This research has limitations that suggest directions for future inquiry. By focusing on two in-depth cases, we have achieved conceptual depth at the expense of empirical breadth. How generalisable is the pseudo-walk concept across diverse cultural contexts, historical periods, and political systems? We have focused on successful pseudo-walks that achieved wide circulation and spatial effects. Under what conditions do imagined mobilities fail to become spatially productive? What prevents certain imagined walks from circulating? While we have demonstrated that pseudo-walks produce spatial effects, greater precision is needed regarding the specific mechanisms (economic, political, affective, infrastructural) through which circulation translates into material consequence.

Future research could examine pseudo-walks across diverse cultural and political contexts to test the concept's analytical purchase. Comparative work could investigate pseudo-walks in non-Western contexts, authoritarian versus democratic settings, or historical periods beyond Victorian England and contemporary Hong Kong. Methodological development could explore empirical techniques for studying circulation patterns, tracing how phrases or narratives move through social networks, and measuring spatial effects more precisely. Applied research could examine pseudo-walks' roles in urban planning, heritage tourism, political organising, and public memory projects. Theoretical work could connect pseudo-walks to related concepts in haunting and hauntology (ghostly presences structuring space), assemblage thinking (how human and non-human elements combine to produce spatial effects), and non-representational theories (capacities and potentials beyond discourse).

Concluding Implications

This paper advocates for reconsidering the distinctions between material and conceptual space in geography and urban studies. Rather than treating these as separate domains (with material space as geography's proper object and imagination as a secondary representational layer), the pseudo-walk concept reveals their fundamental interpenetration. Imagination is not separate from spatial production; it is one of its primary mechanisms. The walks that never happened shape cities as powerfully as those that did.

This insight has implications beyond academic geography. For urban planners and heritage professionals, it suggests that managing cities' futures requires managing their narrative circulations, the stories, phrases, and imaginaries that structure how people encounter and inhabit space. For political organisers, it demonstrates that imagined mobilities can constitute effective tactics even when material movement is foreclosed. For educators and cultural workers, it reveals that teaching people how to imagine space differently is not merely interpretive work but a form of spatial practice with material consequences.

Pseudo-walks constitute a recurring spatial mechanism in contexts where mobility becomes narratively mediated, not a universal urban rule but a recognisable pattern across diverse settings. They emerge when physical movement becomes impossible, deferred, or subordinate to its narrative circulation. Victorian novels, contemporary protests, heritage tourism, political slogans, urban legends, and collective memories all demonstrate how narrated trajectories reorganise space. By taking seriously what has not happened, we gain analytical purchase on what has happened, is happening, and might yet happen.

In being simultaneously absent and present, fictional and real, individual and collective, the pseudo-walk exposes urban space as fundamentally shaped by temporal multiplicity and narrative potential. Cities are not only assemblages of buildings, infrastructure, and bodies in motion. They are also shaped by imagined journeys, deferred possibilities, and circulating narratives that structure spatial practice without requiring physical enactment. These narrated mobilities, circulating without physical enactment, constitute the city as powerfully as concrete and asphalt. Geography must attend to these absent presences, for in understanding how we imagine moving through space, we understand how space itself comes into being.

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