



Literature as a vital requirement: Michèle Petit's perspective on the importance of literary reading in times of crisis

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of literary reading as an instrument of resilience and transformation in times of crisis, drawing on the works of Michèle Petit, such as "The Art of Reading or How to Resist Adversity" (2008), "In Praise of Reading, the Construction of Self" (2002), and "Young People and Reading" (2008). The author argues that reading goes beyond entertainment, functioning as a space for inner freedom and identity construction, especially in contexts of adversity. The gap identified is the need for a deeper understanding of how literary reading contributes to human resilience in times of crisis. The objective of the study was to investigate how literature can support the redefinition of experiences and the reconstruction of identity, promoting self-knowledge and critical reflection. The methodology adopted was an integrative literature review of Petit's main works, organizing the data into thematic matrices for systematization. The results indicate that literary reading, in addition to providing emotional comfort, acts as a means of resistance and transgression, challenging social structures and promoting personal and collective emancipation. The study concludes that literature plays a vital role in building a more conscious and resilient identity, contributing to the development of active and critical citizenship. It suggests expanding research with other authors and empirical approaches to enrich our understanding of the topic.

Keywords: Michèle Petit; Literary reading; Vital demand; Resilience; Identity.

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This article explores the role of literary reading as a tool for resilience and transformation in times of crisis, based on the works of Michèle Petit, such as "The Art of Reading or How to Resist Adversity" (2008), "Praise of Reading: The Construction of the Self" (2002), and "Youth and Reading" (2008). Petit argues that reading goes beyond mere entertainment, serving as a space for inner freedom and identity construction, particularly in contexts of adversity. The identified gap is the need for a deeper understanding of how literary reading contributes to human resilience during crises. The study aimed to investigate how literature can support the reinterpretation of experiences and identity reconstruction, fostering self-awareness and critical reflection. The methodology adopted was an integrative literature review of Petit's main works, organizing data into thematic matrices for systematization. The results indicate that literary reading, besides providing emotional comfort, acts as a means of resistance and transgression, challenging social structures and promoting personal and collective emancipation. The study concludes that literature plays a vital role in building a more conscious and resilient identity, contributing to the development of active and critical citizenship. It also suggests expanding the research with other authors and empirical approaches to enrich the understanding of the topic.

Keywords: Michele Petit; literary reading; transformation; vital requirements; identity

1. INTRODUCTION

In a world constantly shaken by crises of different kinds – be they pandemics, social, economic or political – literature presents itself not only as a refuge, but as a fundamental resource for the reconstruction of individual and collective identity. It is in this context that highlights the reflections of Michèle Petit, a French anthropologist who dedicates his work to the study of literary reading as a vital necessity, especially in times of adversity. His research transcends the view of reading as mere entertainment, revealing it as an essential practice for human resilience, capable of providing a space for critical reflection and personal and social transformation.

Throughout her academic career, Michèle Petit argues that literary reading plays a crucial role in times of crisis, acting as a means for the reader can reframe her experiences and confront her own. For her, reading offers more than emotional comfort; it becomes a true exercise in self-knowledge and coping with adversity (Petit, 2008; 2002). In his works, Petit argues that literature enables a deep dialogue between the reader and the texts, promoting the construction of a more flexible and conscious identity, while at the same time that strengthens the ability to deal with the uncertainties and challenges of the contemporary world. The importance of this study lies in the need to understand how literary reading can shape human responses to the multifaceted crises we face.

Analyzing Petit's theoretical contributions and establishing a dialogue with other authors that approach reading as a cultural, psychological and social phenomenon, we seek to highlight the power of literature in emotional support and in building new perspectives for the individual.

In this article, we will analyze the main works of Michèle Petit: "The Art of Reading or How to Read" Resisting Adversity" (2008), "In Praise of Reading, the Construction of Self" (2002), "Young People and Reading" (2008), "Readings: From Intimate Space to Public Space" (1995) and "Reading the World: Experiences of Cultural Transmission Today" (2008). The analysis will be carried out through three central axes defended by the author. The first axis deals with reading as a space of freedom and construction of the self, exploring how literature allows reconfiguration identity and the encounter with different possibilities of being and acting. The second axis addresses the reading as a form of resistance and transgression, highlighting its subversive role in contexts of oppression and censorship. Finally, the third axis examines reading as a means of rescuing human dignity, emphasizing how it contributes to the appreciation of

diversity and the promotion of social justice. From this perspective, this study aims to expand the understanding of the relevance of literary reading in the formation of more individuals conscious and engaged, capable of transforming their realities in times of crisis.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Theoretical foundations for understanding literary reading in contexts of crisis

This section aims to present the main theoretical foundations that support the understanding of the transformative role of literary reading in contexts of crisis. To this end, we will dialogue with authors such as Bourdieu (1983), Freire (1987), Vygotsky (1984) and Eagleton (1996), whose theories on culture, education, human development and sociology of literature enrich the critical analysis of Michèle Petit's contributions. These theorists offer different perspectives on how literary reading can act in the construction of identity, in the emancipation of the individual and in the contestation of power structures, aspects central to understanding Petit's work.

One of the authors who illuminates this discussion is Pierre Bourdieu, whose theory of cultural habitus reveals how cultural practices, including reading, are shaped by a set of dispositions incorporated throughout life. According to Bourdieu (1983), literary reading, when influenced by the reader's social and cultural conditions, can either reinforce power structures and act as a space of resistance and transformation. This perspective is relevant for understanding how reading becomes a practice that can challenge established norms, contributing to the construction of critical and reflective identities, especially in contexts adverse.

Another author who discusses this theme is Paulo Freire, whose pedagogy of autonomy highlights the importance of reading for the emancipation and awareness of the subject. Freire (1987) argues that reading the world precedes reading the word, highlighting the need for understanding the social and historical contexts that shape the reading experience. In this sense, literary reading becomes a political and transformative act, which enables the individual to interpret and intervene in the reality that surrounds it.

Furthermore, psychology also offers a valuable perspective for this discussion.

Lev Vygotsky's theory of human development (1984), which addresses cultural mediation in the process of forming thought, highlights the impact of cultural experiences, such as reading, in the cognitive and emotional construction of the subject. Vygotsky argues that interactions

with literary texts can expand higher psychological functions, such as imagination and language, enabling the reader to reframe their experiences and face challenges imposed by personal or social crises.

Finally, the sociology of literature, represented by authors such as Terry Eagleton (1996), provides a critical understanding of the role of literature in the formation of ideologies and in contesting power structures. Eagleton discusses how literature can reflect and question social conditions, contributing to the political and cultural awareness of readers. This view complements Michèle Petit's analysis by emphasizing the potential subversive and emancipatory literary reading, especially in contexts of oppression and marginalization.

Thus, the combination of the theories of Bourdieu (1983), Freire (1987), Vygotsky (1984) and Eagleton (1996) corroborates the premise defended by Michèle Petit, by showing how literary reading is a vital requirement for the construction of the individual, offering him the necessary plurality to survive in the chaotic world we live in.

2.2 Analysis of Michèle Petit's work: literature as a tool for resilience and identity construction

In this segment, the theoretical contributions of Michèle Petit, an anthropologist, will be explored. and French researcher whose career stands out for investigating the impact of reading on the lives of people, especially in vulnerable contexts. With extensive experience in cultural and social studies, Petit developed a sensitive view of how literature can serve as a fundamental instrument for resilience and personal reconstruction, offering readers a space for reflection that transcends the barriers of everyday life. Its work covers fundamental questions about the role of reading in the formation of the self and cohesion social, addressing topics ranging from the importance of reading for young people to the transmission cultural between generations.

The analyses of this study will be based on five of his main works: "The Art of Reading or How to Resist Adversity" (2008), which explores literature's ability to transform traumatic experiences into possibilities of overcoming; "In Praise of Reading, the Construction of Si" (2002), which investigates how reading contributes to the construction of identity; "Young People and Reading" (2008), which highlights the importance of literature in the education of young people in a world marked by crises of belonging; "Readings: From Intimate Space to Public Space" (1995), which discusses the transition from reading as a private experience to a space for dialogue

and cultural exchange; and “Reading the World: Experiences of Cultural Transmission Today” (2008), where he analyzes reading as a means of preserving and renewing collective memories. The choice of these works allows for a comprehensive and in-depth view of Michèle's perspectives Petit, revealing how literary reading can be a vital resource in times of crisis and transformation.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Reading as a Space of Freedom and Self-Construction

Literary reading opens up a vast field of possibilities for the reader to experience different realities and perspectives. Each narrative offers a new way of thinking and feeling, creating a space where the reader can confront their beliefs and reevaluate their certainties. Petit argues that this process of exploration, especially among young people, is fundamental to the formation of a flexible identity open to new things. Through immersion in literary universes, readers not only understand themselves better, but also become more capable of interact critically with the world around you.

According to Michèle Petit, reading goes far beyond simply decoding words, becoming a space for deep reflection and identity construction, as exposed in her work *In Praise of Reading, the Construction of Self* (2002). For the author, this exercise offers the individual a unique opportunity to explore different facets of themselves, especially in times of crisis, when the search for meaning and stability becomes imperative. By engaging with stories that mirror their own experiences, the reader is invited to revisit your emotions and thoughts, developing new ways of coping adversity. Petit argues that this process goes beyond simple emotional comfort, configuring itself as a dynamic path of reconstruction of the self, in which the subject reframes your experiences and reconciles with your personal trajectory in the face of challenges represented in literary narratives.

Michèle Petit understands literary reading as an environment of inner freedom, where the reader can explore new ways of being and acting, without the limitations of everyday life. In this space symbolic, the individual has the opportunity to question his own beliefs and experiment different modes of existence, which promotes a deep process of self-knowledge and transformation. In *"In Praise of Reading, the Construction of Self"* (2002), the author emphasizes that the Reading offers a creative refuge, allowing the reader to dialogue with themselves, confront



its contradictions and thus develop a richer and more resilient identity. In this way, literature functions as a multifaceted mirror, reflecting both the forces and the vulnerabilities of the subject, encouraging him to create a more conscious personal narrative and integrated.

In addition to its introspective role, reading also promotes dialogue between the intimate and the external social, which Petit calls an experience of encounter with the other. She observes, in "Readings: From Intimate Space to Public Space" (1995), that even carried out in solitude, the Reading is never an isolated act. On the contrary, it always involves a symbolic interaction with other voices — whether that of the author, the characters, or the readers themselves who share the same works. This social dimension of reading facilitates the construction of shared meanings and creating community bonds, transforming the act of reading into a practice that enriches both the individual and the collective.

According to Petit, contact with literature is especially significant for young people, who see narratives as a symbolic space for experimentation and discovery. In "The Young People and Reading" (2008), the author addresses how literary works offer young people the opportunity to explore and affirm their identities in a rapidly changing and crises of belonging. Through engagement with literary texts, these readers find ways to test boundaries, challenge norms, and build a more inclusive sense of identity. autonomous and reflective. For Petit, this interaction with the literary universe is fundamental to promote active and conscious citizenship, where the individual not only absorbs information, but also critically engages with the social and cultural issues around it.

Petit's perspective also embraces reading as a means of preservation and renewal of collective and cultural memories. In "Reading the World: Experiences of Cultural Transmission in the Present Day" (2008), she explores how literature functions as a bridge between generations and cultures, transmitting knowledge and traditions that could be lost in a world increasingly dominated by globalization and cultural homogenization. By connecting the reader with diverse voices and historical contexts, literary reading contributes to the construction of a richer and more diverse cultural identity, where the plurality of experiences is valued and protected from oblivion.

Furthermore, Petit argues that literary reading also plays an important role in building more just and empathetic communities. In "The Pleasure of Reading: Against Desolation" (2009), she states that literature creates a space where different perspectives and experiences can be heard and recognized. This ability to transcend cultural barriers and social is fundamental to promote genuine intercultural dialogue, where respect and

mutual understanding are cultivated. Thus, literary reading not only strengthens the individual in your personal journey, but also contributes to the formation of a more inclusive, capable of welcoming and celebrating human diversity.

3.2 When reading fosters intercultural dialogue

The act of reading, in addition to providing a space for introspection and self-knowledge, plays a fundamental role in promoting intercultural dialogue. By immersing yourself in different narratives, readers come into contact with varied realities, expanding their perspectives and facilitating the understanding of the complex networks of meanings that involve the human experience. Michèle Petit, in "Reading the World: Experiences of Cultural Transmission in the Present Day" (2008), investigates how literature can act as a link between cultures and generations, offering fertile ground for the exchange of ideas and experiences. Through stories, readers are invited to transcend their own cultural boundaries, exploring ways of life that would otherwise be inaccessible.

In communities where there is a history of segregation and conflict, literature acts as a cultural mediator, enabling different groups to find a common language to express their experiences and aspirations. Petit emphasizes that, in reading programs in multicultural schools, students are encouraged to share their life stories, connecting through the narrated experiences. This intercultural dialogue enriches the mutual understanding and promotes social cohesion that goes beyond language barriers and cultural (Petit, 2008).

Petit argues that literary reading makes it possible to live with the "other," promoting a symbolic encounter with otherness that is fundamental to the development of empathy and critical awareness. In "The Art of Reading or How to Resist Adversity" (2008), she explores how this encounter with different narrative worlds allows the reader a form of "symbolic displacement," where geographical and temporal barriers are broken. This process of immersion and confrontation with diversity challenges the reader to reevaluate their prejudices and expand their ethical and cultural horizons. Thus, each book becomes a kind of travel to unknown territories, where the boundaries of the "self" are simultaneously questioned and expanded, contributing to the construction of a deeper understanding and inclusive of the multiple realities that make up the global social fabric.

This ability of reading to "open windows" to other worlds is essential not only for the personal growth, but also for the construction of more just and



comprehensive. When readers are exposed to a diversity of voices and contexts, they become more able to participate in discussions that require cultural sensitivity and global awareness. In “Readings: From Intimate Space to Public Space” (1995), Petit highlights how reading can transform intimate environments into arenas of dialogue, where the private and the public intertwine, promoting the exchange of experiences and the strengthening of social ties. In this sense, literature acts as a catalyst for the formation of more diverse communities, open to dialogue and diversity, where the plurality of perspectives is not only recognized, but valued.

In his work “The Pleasure of Reading: Against Desolation” (2009), Petit highlights that literature offers a unique platform to give voice to marginalized and underrepresented narratives.

By providing a space for often silenced stories and perspectives can be heard on a global scale, literary reading establishes itself as a powerful resource of social justice. Readers, when faced with experiences different from their own, develop a more complex and critical understanding of the dynamics of power and inequality that structure the world around them. This contact with the diversity of literary voices not only educates, but also empowers readers to act as agents of change in their own communities, promoting actions that challenge social and cultural injustices.

Furthermore, in “What is Reading for?” (2002), Petit discusses how literature can function as a repository of memories and knowledge that span generations and resist oblivion. By transmitting knowledge and cultural traditions, literary texts contribute to the preservation and appreciation of identities that are often threatened by globalization and cultural homogenization. Reading, therefore, assumes a role of cultural resistance, allowing the maintenance and renewal of the multiple stories and voices that constitute the richness of human societies. Every narrative read and shared helps to build a cultural mosaic where the past dialogues with the present, offering new generations a solid base of knowledge and experiences that can be reinterpreted and re-signified.

Reading literary texts, in this way, overlaps the connection of different cultures and generations, it contributes to the construction of a more inclusive collective imagination and diversified. By promoting a continuous reflection on the human condition from multiple perspectives, literature strengthens the social fabric, offering a space where differences can be celebrated and similarities recognized. In this context, reading becomes a fundamental pillar for building a more just and empathetic world, where mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity are core values.

3.3 Literary Reading as a Form of Resistance and Transgression

Michèle Petit, throughout her works, develops a complex vision of the role of reading literary in contexts of crisis. For the author, literature transcends its character of entertainment or leisure, assuming a vital function for psychological and social reconfiguration of individuals. In times of adversity, such as the ones we are experiencing, reading becomes an act of resistance and transgression, capable of challenging established norms and offering the reader a space for creative and reflective freedom. In "The Art of Reading or How to Resist Adversity" (2008), Petit argues that reading allows the individual a "creative distancing" from oppressive reality, enabling the construction of new narratives and meanings that subvert the current order and open space for personal and collective emancipation. By engaging with literary texts, the reader not only finds a refuge from the pressures external, but also a tool for inner transformation and the redefinition of one's experiences. Literary reading creates a symbolic environment where the subject can explore their emotions, question your certainties and, above all, reimagine your place in the world. In this sense, Literature is a transgressive practice, as it challenges the boundaries imposed by the historical, cultural, and social context. In "Readings: From Intimate Space to Public Space" (1995), Petit emphasizes that reading promotes an "inner dialogue" that transcends mere consumption of information and becomes a creative and challenging act, where the reader negotiates and reworks your perceptions of yourself and others. In contexts of censorship and political repression, literary reading becomes a subversive act because excellence. During authoritarian regimes, literary works are often banned for promote ideas that question the established order. Reading, in this context, becomes an act of resistance, allowing readers to keep the flame of critical thinking and contestation. Petit reminds us that by exploring alternative realities and narratives that break with the prevailing oppression, literature offers not only a refuge, but



also a fertile ground for political imagination and the conception of new possible futures (Petit, 2002).

This subversive dimension of reading is particularly evident in the work "The Young and the Reading" (2008), where Petit explores how young people use literature to confront social expectations and affirm their identities in an increasingly complex world and interconnected. She observes that by appropriating literary narratives, young people find ways to question the stereotypes and norms imposed on them, developing a critical stance towards the structures of power and control that permeate their lives. Reading, therefore, becomes a strategy of resistance, allowing these readers challenge predetermined identities and explore alternatives of existence that confer greater autonomy and agency.

In the context of social, political and cultural crises, literature takes on an even more important role. crucial as a form of resistance. In "What is Reading for?" (2002), Petit argues that literary reading can be a powerful ally in the fight against alienation and despair, as it offers individuals the opportunity to reconnect with deep aspects of their humanity and its capacity for imagination and creativity. Through fiction, readers are invited to experience different realities and perspectives, which allows them to build a broader and more critical view of the world. This process of "displacement" symbolic", as she calls it, is essential to overcoming the limits imposed by adverse context and for the construction of new possibilities for action and transformation. Literature, as Michèle Petit points out, offers the reader much more than a mere escape or form of leisure. It creates an environment of introspection where the subject can, in times of crisis, explore new narratives that challenge oppression and social limitations. This process is not only a practice of resistance, but also a form of subversion that allows readers, especially young people, to question social and cultural norms, as Petit points out in "Young People and Reading". In this way, literature acts as a tool that does not not only welcomes, but also empowers.

Furthermore, reading does not occur in isolation, but within a network of social interactions. and cultural. Petit notes that literary mediators—educators and librarians—play an essential role in encouraging critical reading that is not limited to absorption



passive content. In "The Art of Reading or How to Resist Adversity," she discusses how these professionals facilitate readers' engagement with the texts, allowing them to see how literature becomes an emancipatory practice that enables the individual to interpret and transform their reality.

3.4 Literature: Refuge and Psychological Reconfiguration

Michèle Petit invites us to see literature as a space of welcome and renewal, especially in times of personal and social tension. For the author, literary reading offers a safe territory where the individual can take shelter from the adversities of the world external, while reconfiguring their own experiences. In "The Art of Reading or How to Resist Adversity" (2008), Petit highlights that literature not only provides a temporary escape, but also enables the creation of new narratives that help the reader to reorganize their emotions and face difficulties with a renewed perspective. By engaging with characters and stories, the reader is able to distance themselves from the pressures of everyday life and reflect on their own experiences, finding, in literary plots, a mirror where their anxieties and dilemmas gain new meanings. In "In Praise of Reading," the Construction of Self" (2002), Petit argues that this dialogue between the reader and the text is not restricted to entertainment; it is a profound means of personal exploration, where one can be experiencing different aspects of one's own identity, expanding one's understanding of oneself and others.

Literary reading, therefore, becomes a space for introspection, where the reader allows you to revisit your certainties and emotions, creating a "space of inner freedom," as defines Petit. In times of uncertainty, this space for reflection becomes vital, as it allows the individual to develop new ways of facing their internal and external challenges. It is in this protected environment in which the reader can, through narratives, recreate himself, experiencing new ways of being and existing in the world.

In addition to functioning as an individual refuge, literary reading plays a significant role in building community support networks. In reading groups, discussions about texts in literary spaces often become spaces for listening and empathy, where

participants share their own stories and experiences. Petit notes that, in crisis situations, these literary encounters can function as true therapies collective, where the written word becomes a link of solidarity and resistance shared (Petit, 2008).

In addition to its transformative role in individual life, reading also connects the reader to a broader symbolic network. Petit, in "Readings: From Intimate Space to Public Space" (1995), explores how the act of reading, even when solitary, establishes a dialogue with a community of readers. This symbolic interaction creates bonds of belonging and exchange, essential to strengthen the sense of collective identity and the appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives and social. Literature, therefore, functions as a link between the individual and the collective, helping to forge a shared understanding of human experiences.

In young people, especially, literature plays a crucial role in building identities amidst the complexities of the contemporary world. In "Young People and Reading" (2008), Petit discusses how engagement with literary texts offers this audience a space to question norms, explore new possibilities and develop critical awareness about your place in the world. Reading, in this context, becomes a tool for empowerment, enabling young people to experience different roles and ways of existence, promoting personal growth that is reflected in their social actions.

In times of social and cultural confrontation, literary reading offers a means of preserving emotional integrity and expand the symbolic repertoire of readers. In "What is the Purpose of Reading?" (2002), Petit highlights the importance of literature as a resource for resistance, helping the reader reconnect with the complexity of their own humanity and transcend the challenges of everyday life. By engaging with the stories, the reader is invited to explore realities that would otherwise be inaccessible to you, enriching your vision of world and strengthening your ability to face adversity.

3.4 Subverting social paradigms through reading

Reading literary text, in Michèle Petit's reflections, goes beyond the simple act of aesthetic appreciation. It is a powerful tool for questioning and subversion of established social paradigms, offering the reader the opportunity to challenge norms, confront prejudices and expand their cognitive boundaries. Literature, by



presenting multiple perspectives and narratives, creates a symbolic space where it is possible to revisit concepts and question the status quo, allowing the individual to move away from conventional thought structures to explore new ways of seeing and being in the world.

In "The Art of Reading or How to Resist Adversity" (2008), Petit argues that reading literary plays a role of resistance, as it allows the reader a critical distance in relation to the norms and values imposed by society. By immersing yourself in narratives that problematize everyday life and reveal cracks in absolute certainties, the reader is invited to reflect on the social rules that govern their behavior and beliefs. This movement is not restricted to passive reflection; it involves the active construction of new meanings that challenge and reconfigure dominant representations.

This process of subversion is especially evident when it comes to literature that addresses themes such as identity, gender and power. Petit, in "Young People and Reading" (2008), highlights how literature can serve as a vehicle for young readers to question stereotypes and norms social conditions that limit their possibilities of existence. When faced with characters who break with traditional expectations, young readers find in the literary text a safe space to confront social impositions and develop a more critical and pluralist of themselves and the world. This contact with subversive narratives contributes to the formation of a more autonomous and emancipatory consciousness, preparing them to act in a more assertive and transformative way in the social context.

Another relevant aspect that Petit addresses in his works is the role of reading in promoting a critical view of discourses of power and control. In "What is Reading for?" (2002), she argues that literature offers an alternative to alienation, allowing the reader escape from the homogeneous narratives that are often imposed by the media and educational system. Reading then becomes an act of transgression, where the individual can resist the simplifications and manipulations of the dominant discourse, developing an interpretation more complex and multifaceted aspect of reality. In this sense, engagement with literary texts that explore injustices, marginalizations and exclusions becomes a form of intervention critical, enabling the reader to question and act in favor of effective social change.

In "Readings: From Intimate Space to Public Space" (1995), Petit expands this discussion to analyze how literary reading can break down the barriers between the private and the public, transforming personal reading experiences into political acts of resistance. What is read in the intimacy of home or in the solitude of a library can reverberate in public debates, influencing collective perception on issues such as freedom, justice and equality. This power subversive literature is essential for the construction of a more critical and engaged, where reading experiences become catalysts for debates and transformations social.

Reading's ability to subvert paradigms is not limited to the personal context; it also operates on a broader cultural level. In "Reading the World: Experiences of Transmission Cultural in the Present Day" (2008), Petit explores how literature can challenge narratives hegemonic and give voice to histories and cultures that are often silenced or marginalized. By exposing the reader to a plurality of views and experiences, literary reading promotes the appreciation of diversity and the deconstruction of prejudices. In this way, it contributes to the creation of a more inclusive and plural collective imagination, where different ways of being and thinking are recognized and respected.

Furthermore, the act of reading fictional texts allows the individual to reconnect with their own history and identity in a critical way. In "In Praise of Reading, the Construction of Self" (2002), Petit highlights that the act of reading not only transforms the individual, but also questions the narratives imposed on them. When coming into contact with characters and contexts that resignify their own experiences, the reader begins to understand their experiences in new ways lenses, rejecting the limitations imposed by stereotypes and restrictive social categories. This ability to reappropriate one's own personal narrative, redefining it and challenging the discourses that circumscribe it, is one of the most profound powers of literary reading.

3.5 Reading and the Rescue of Human Dignity

Literary reading, according to Michèle Petit, represents a profoundly humanizing act, capable of restoring the dignity of those who, in crisis situations, feel deprived of their own humanity. For the author, literature offers a symbolic space where the individual can rebuild himself, recovering the ability to imagine and dream, even when everything around seems to fall apart. In his works, Petit explores how reading



provides human beings not only with a refuge, but also with a way to reconstitute your identity, find meaning in the midst of chaos and, above all, reestablish self-respect same.

In “The Art of Reading or How to Resist Adversity” (2008), Petit highlights that reading allows the individual to maintain a connection with fundamental aspects of their humanity, even in the most adverse circumstances. When living conditions become unbearable and reality is marked by violence or suffering, literature offers a space where human beings can reaffirm their subjectivity and dignity. By identifying with characters who face challenges and injustices, the reader finds the strength to confront their own difficulties and to resist the dehumanization that surrounds him.

In addition to providing a space for introspection and refuge, literary reading also acts as an instrument for valuing the diversity and uniqueness of each human being.

In “In Praise of Reading, the Construction of Self” (2002), Petit argues that literature has the power to give a voice to those who are often silenced or made invisible by society.

By exploring narratives that bring to light experiences of marginalization and exclusion, reading allows the reader to reconnect with their own identity and recognize their value and dignity, even in the midst of oppressive contexts.

This dimension of rescuing and valuing human dignity is also present in “Readings: From Intimate Space to Public Space” (1995), where Petit explores how reading can transform environments marked by helplessness into spaces of strengthening and reconstruction. In vulnerable contexts, such as prisons, refugee camps or communities needy, literary reading proves to be a practice that revitalizes hope and confidence in future. It gives readers a new perspective on themselves and their circumstances, allowing them to see themselves as protagonists of their stories, capable of imagining and seeking a different tomorrow.

The relationship between reading and human dignity is also manifested in the power of literature promote empathy and recognition of others. In “Young People and Reading” (2008), Petit reflects on how literature helps young people put themselves in other people's shoes, understanding their pains, dreams, and aspirations. By reading about lives and experiences different from their own, young people learn to value human diversity, to recognize the dignity present in each story and combat prejudices and stigmas. In this way, literary reading contributes to the construction of a sense of justice and solidarity, essential for the formation of conscious citizens

and committed to social transformation.

For Petit, reading also plays a crucial role in preserving memory and reaffirmation of the dignity of historically marginalized peoples and cultures. In “Read the World: Experiences of Cultural Transmission Today” (2008), the author discusses how literature can function as a repository of stories and traditions that resist erasure and oblivion. By transmitting the knowledge and experiences of communities that struggle to keep their identities and cultures alive, reading becomes an act of resistance and valuing collective dignity. It allows these voices to continue to exist and be heard, strengthening the self-esteem and pride of those who, many times, were deprived of your own history.

In “What is Reading for?” (2002), Petit emphasizes that the ability to read and interpret world around is a fundamental right that must be guaranteed to everyone, as reading is a instrument of empowerment and claiming one's own dignity. By providing the individual access to different perspectives and knowledge, literature broadens its possibilities of understanding and action, enabling you to fight for your rights and build a fuller and more meaningful life.

Thus, reading, for Michèle Petit, shines as a pleasurable activity, an instrument educational, a cultural and intellectual practice, but, above all, a deeply ethics. It acts as a means of restoring human dignity in its multiple dimensions, offering the individual not only the recognition of his own humanity, but also the strength needed to face and overcome adversity. In this sense, literature becomes an indispensable ally in building a more just world, where every person can see himself as a worthy being, capable of creating and transforming his own story.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of Michèle Petit's works from the perspective of literary reading as an instrument of resilience and transformation reveals a deep understanding of the role of literature in moments of crisis. The author explores how reading can serve as a refuge, a space of resistance and a catalyst for the reconstruction of identity, especially in contexts of adversity. His reflections, when put into dialogue with theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu, Paulo Freire and Lev Vygotsky offer an enriching overview of the multifaceted functions of reading in the personal and social development of individuals.

Petit conceives of reading as a territory where the reader not only distances himself from reality, but

finds, in words, fertile ground to reinterpret their experiences and resignify their own history. This perspective aligns with Bourdieu's (1983) notion of habitus cultural, considering that reading, influenced by the reader's social dispositions, can both perpetuate and question current norms. Through literature, the individual is able to confront your beliefs and values, promoting critical reflection that is essential for formation of a resilient and reflective identity.

Furthermore, Michèle Petit's proposal that reading acts as an act of emancipation and transformation resonates deeply with Paulo Freire's pedagogy (1987). Freire advocates that reading the world precedes reading the word, and Petit complements this view by showing that literary engagement allows the individual not only to understand, but also to intervene in their context. Reading, for both, is a political act that enables the reader to become aware of their own reality and act upon it. Thus, by proposing that literature can subvert and challenge oppressive structures, Petit reinforces the idea that reading is a tool powerful for personal and collective emancipation.

On the other hand, when analyzed in light of Vygotsky's theories (1984), Petit's work acquires a new layer of interpretation. Vygotsky argues that cultural mediation is fundamental for cognitive and emotional development, and reading, as an experience cultural, plays a central role in this process. Literature, by enabling a symbolic dialogue with the other — be it the author, the characters or other readers —, expands the functions higher psychological abilities, such as imagination and critical thinking. In this sense, Petit sees in reading an opportunity for the reader to explore different aspects of themselves and the world, the which, in turn, enriches your ability to face crises with more creativity and resilience.

The study of Michèle Petit's works demonstrates that the author sees reading as a active and transformative process, which goes beyond simple aesthetic pleasure. She argues that, when come across narratives that reflect their own experiences or that present realities distinct, the reader is invited to reevaluate their experiences and broaden their horizons of understanding. This process, which Petit describes as a “symbolic displacement,” is essential for strengthening identity and social cohesion, especially in times of uncertainty and change.

The discussion presented here confirms that reading, from Petit's perspective, is a space where the individual not only encounters himself, but also the other. It is a terrain where meanings are constructed and deconstructed, where the subject rediscovers himself and, at the same time, at the same time, reconfigures their worldview. Ultimately, literary reading, for

Michèle Petit, is a practice that unfolds in multiple dimensions — personal, cultural, social and politics —, and which proves to be indispensable for the construction of a more just society, empathetic and resilient.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study sought to explore the role of literary reading as an instrument of resilience and transformation, especially in contexts of crisis, based on the theoretical contributions of Michèle Petit. Throughout the analysis, it was possible to verify how the author conceives of reading not just as an act of pleasure or an intellectual activity, but as a process profoundly vital for the reconfiguration of identity and the strengthening of social cohesion. The research has shown that, by enabling the resignification of experiences and the construction of new narratives, literature acts as a foundation to face adversity, offering the individual a space for freedom, self-knowledge and intercultural dialogue.

Based on the dialogue established with theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu, Paulo Freire, Lev Vygotsky and Terry Eagleton, it became evident that literary reading, from Petit's perspective, is a complex practice that transcends the simple consumption of texts. It is configured as a means of emancipation and resistance, capable of challenging social, cultural and political structures, promoting critical awareness and a reflective stance towards the world. Literature, thus, it becomes a powerful tool for building resilient identities and for the development of active and transformative citizenship.

The fulfillment of the objectives of this research, by critically and argumentatively analyzing the works by Michèle Petit, reveals that literary reading can be understood as a requirement vital, especially in times of crisis. His main theoretical contributions — reading as a space for freedom and construction of the self, as a form of resistance and transgression, and as a means of rescuing human dignity — were discussed and explored in depth, showing that literature can, in fact, provide emotional and cognitive support essential for facing contemporary challenges.

However, some limitations should be mentioned. The analysis was restricted to the works of a sole author, which, despite providing a detailed and coherent view of the thinking of Michèle Petit, limits the understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon of literary reading in adverse contexts. It is therefore recommended that future studies include perspectives of other authors and comparative approaches that can broaden and diversify understanding



of the theme.

Furthermore, it is relevant to highlight the importance of empirical research that investigates, in practice, how literary reading impacts people's lives in different crisis contexts, such as marginalized communities, refugee camps or public disaster situations.

Direct observation and the collection of reports from readers who find in literature a means of resilience and transformation can significantly enrich the field of study, offering new evidence and expanding the possibilities of applying the theories discussed.

In short, this article reaffirms that literary reading, as defended by Michèle Petit, is an essential instrument for the construction of a more conscious subject capable of face adversity with courage and creativity. Its transformative potential and emancipatory, when crossing different dimensions of human life, it proves to be indispensable for the formation of more just, critical and inclusive individuals and societies

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