

The representation of urban space and the isolation of the subject in contemporary literature.

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ABSTRACT: This essay analyzes the configuration of urban space as a structuring element and active in contemporary fiction prose, investigating how the metropolis ceases to be merely This scenario can become an agent of isolation and psychic fragmentation for the individual. The objective The central point is to discuss the dialectic between the architecture of large cities and the construction of interiority. of the characters, marked by anonymity and deterritorialization. Methodologically, this This work is based on a bibliographical research of a qualitative and hermeneutic nature, anchored in concepts of Literary Theory and Cultural Criticism. The discussions reveal that the hostility of The contemporary urban environment is reflected in a fragmented language, in which isolation It is not only a social condition, but also an ontological characteristic of post-subjectivity. modern. It is concluded that recent literature operates as a mirror of the identity crisis, in which The individual, immersed in the incessant flow of the masses, paradoxically experiences a void. incommunicable, reaffirming the inseparability between the locus and the self.

Keywords: Urban Space. Contemporary Literature. Isolation of the Subject. Criticism
Literary.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, the representation of urban space in literature transcends the function of mere illustration.

geographical backdrop and takes on a psychological and political dimension. If, in the 20th-century novel

In the 19th century, the city was the stage for social achievements and the rise of the flâneur—a figure analyzed by

Benjamin (1989) in his reflections on Baudelaire and capitalist modernity—, in fiction

In recent times, the metropolis is often portrayed as a concrete labyrinth that imprisons and

atomizes the individual. This essay proposes a reflection on the "shattering of the subject".

a phenomenon in which personal identity is fragmented by the demands of a space saturated with

Stimuli, but devoid of interpersonal meaning.

The problem lies in the transition from the urban experience of community living to a...

coexistence of anonymous individuals. Simmel (2005) already warned, at the beginning of the 20th century, about the way in which the

The intensification of hectic life in large cities produced a type of human being marked by reserve.

and by indifference. Space, far from being a passive receptacle, acts as a force in the narrative.

A centrifugal force that separates subjects from themselves and from others. The aim of this essay is to map the...

narrative strategies employed by contemporary authors to express this isolation,

demonstrating how the city's topography shapes the topology of the literary protagonists' minds.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical category of "Space" in literary studies has been revisited beyond its definitions.

In the narrative genre, space encompasses time, place, and the characters involved.

answering fundamental questions about the context in which the plot unfolds. The

Contemporary novels, as complete and believable texts, use the setting to define the trajectory.

of their heroes and the punishments that reality imposes on them. The production of space, according

Lefebvre (1974/2006) argues that space is never a neutral process: it is the result of social practices and,

At the same time, it conditions them, which explains why the literary metropolis cannot be read

as a simple scenario.

2.1 The Phenomenology of Space and the Chronotope

To understand the relationship between the individual and the city, it is essential to evoke the concept of chronotope.

formulated by Bakhtin (1993), which establishes the intrinsic interdependence between the dimensions

Spatial and temporal dimensions in literature. Bachelard (1993) already pointed out that inhabited space carries...

Protective or hostile values that directly influence the psyche. In the literature

In contemporary times, this inhabited space often becomes a "non-place," a term coined by Augé (1994) to describe transition spaces — airports, bus stations, shopping centers — which do not generate identity or relationships, contributing to a feeling of uprooting from individual.

2.2 Isolation in Post-Modernity

The condition of anonymity is a hallmark of postmodern subjectivity. The contemporary subject is experiencing an identity crisis resulting from social acceleration and the impersonality of institutions, a process widely discussed by Harvey (1992) when analyzing cultural transformations engendered by late capitalism. Self-knowledge, which historically was the key to Wisdom becomes a challenge when the external environment is characterized by indifference. Candide (1972) reminds us that literature, in giving form to human experience, has precisely the function to make communicable that which, in lived life, remains opaque and incommunicable. In fiction, the detailed description of urban sensory environments — exploring sight, hearing, and touch — It serves to emphasize the coldness of metal and glass in relation to the warmth of human contact.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This essay is characterized as an exploratory and qualitative bibliographic research. The path The methodological approach consisted of selecting and analyzing critical essays, works of literary theory, and... References to contemporary prose. The approach adopted is hermeneutics, which seeks... to provide greater familiarity with the problem and to build interpretive hypotheses about it. representation of isolation. The material analyzed includes texts that discuss typologies and genres. textual aspects, as well as reflections on the role of the narrator and the plot structure in the construction of urban verisimilitude.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of recent literary production demonstrates that urban hostility is not merely described, but also incorporated into the narrative form itself. The description of places and objects, using a Sensory language seeks to create a vivid image that appeals to the reader's emotions, often to evoke discomfort.

4.1 Urban Hostility and Language Fragmentation

In many contemporary narratives, the city is presented through a "description."

"Subjective," in which the sensations of the person describing prevail over objective reality.

fragmentation of language — short sentences, lack of traditional connectives, and interruptions in

Stream of consciousness — mirrors the sonic and visual chaos of the metropolis. Simmel (2005) observes that the

The intensity of external stimuli in the big city forces the individual to develop an attitude.

Blasé, a psychic defense that, taken to the extreme, results in incommunicability. Isolation.

The protagonist's inability to establish a coherent dialogue is thus reflected, resulting in...

in characters who, although surrounded by masses of people, remain in a state of "deafness".

social".

The relationship between narrative form and urban space is, in this sense, inherently chronotopic:

The syntactic disorder of the text is inseparable from the spatial disorder of the city. Bakhtin (1993) had already

It should be noted that the chronotope is not merely a stylistic device, but the way in which historical time is measured.

This becomes perceptible and visible in literature. In contemporary urban fiction, this principle is...

It radicalizes: the metropolis is not only the place where history happens, but also history itself.

The substance from which the text is made.

4.2 The Protagonist as a Survivor of the Concrete

Literature of an existentialist and post-apocalyptic urban nature places the protagonist in situations

minimal resistance to dehumanization. Loneliness becomes the central theme, in which conflict does not

It is not necessarily against an external antagonist, but against the emptiness of existence itself in the midst of it all.

urban. This process interacts with what Harvey (1992) calls "space-time compression": the

The acceleration of capitalist exchanges destroys identity and community references, producing subjects

disoriented and fragmented.

Narrative, in recounting real or fictional stories that occurred at a specific time and place, ultimately...

to document the breakdown of emotional bonds in favor of technical and pragmatic survival. In this

In this sense, it fulfills the humanizing function that Candido (1972) attributes to literature: by making legible the

In the face of the suffering of others, literary works play an ethical role that transcends the merely...

aesthetic. Augé's (1994) non-place thus becomes a narrative category: the

The contemporary urban protagonist inhabits, existentially, a space of permanent transit.

Without roots or destiny.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study of the representation of urban space in contemporary literature reveals a profound crisis. In the identity of the modern subject. The inseparability between the concrete scenario and isolation. The psychological perspective points to a literature that not only narrates life in cities, but is, in essence, shaped by spatial tensions. The "non-place" (AUGÉ, 1994) and anonymity have ceased to be mere... byproducts of progress to become pillars of a new literary subjectivity. In short, the isolation portrayed in the pages of recent fiction serves as a critical warning. about the risks of urban dehumanization. Literature, by giving voice to loneliness, fulfills its role of to promote historical awareness and critical reflection (CANDIDO, 1972), allowing the reader to recognize the contradictions of one's own life in society. Urban space, therefore, remains the definitive chronotope of the contemporary crisis (BAKHTIN, 1993), a territory where The subject is produced and dissolved simultaneously.

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