

SPACE AND REMEMBERING IN *REENCONTRO* TALE, BY OSMAN LINS

ESPAÇO E REMEMORAÇÃO NO CONTO *REENCONTRO*, DE OSMAN LINS

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Abstract: The tale *Reencontro* of the writer Osman Lins presents different spaces throughout the narrative. Such a category has fundamental importance in the text, so that from the moment the narrator and Zilda are in a train car, the place is shown as an essential element for the development of the facts. Therefore, the present work aims to analyze the space and the stories revived by the characters during a short trip. This work is based on Borges Filho's theory of Topoanalysis (2007). Corroborating the analysis and interpretation of the connection between memories and spaces, the theories of Hall (2005), Tuan (1980), Candau (2014), among others, are also used. The objective is to verify the spatial configuration of the story, as well as the way in which these characters remember the spaces where they carried out moments of childhood and youth. With this in view, besides the configuration of the space, its functions will be analyzed, as well as the way in which it is connected with the perception of the senses in the story by Osman Lins.

Keywords: Space; Memory; Tale; Topoanalysis.

Resumo: O conto *Reencontro* do escritor Osman Lins apresenta diferentes espaços ao longo da narrativa. Tal categoria tem fundamental importância no texto, de forma que, a partir do momento em que o narrador e Zilda se encontram em um vagão de trem, o lugar mostra-se como elemento essencial para o desenvolvimento dos fatos. Portanto, o presente trabalho tem por objetivo analisar o espaço e as histórias revividas pelas personagens durante uma curta viagem. Para fundamentar esta pesquisa, fez-se necessário dialogar com estudos realizados por teóricos da área da topoanálise, como Borges Filho (2007), e corroborando a análise e interpretação da ligação entre as memórias e os espaços, também são citados Tuan (1980), Candau (2014), Hall (2005), entre outros. O objetivo é verificar a configuração espacial do conto, bem como a forma com que essas personagens lembram-se dos espaços onde protagonizaram momentos da infância e juventude. Tendo isso em vista, além da configuração do espaço, serão analisadas suas funções, bem como será demonstrado o modo como este se liga com a percepção dos sentidos no conto de Osman Lins.

Palavras-chave: Espaço; Memória; Conto; Topoanálise.

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INTRODUCTION

The tale *Reencontro* by the writer Osman Lins presents a plurality of spaces throughout the narrative. In this way, the objective of this work is to verify how the spatial configuration of the story takes place, as well as the way in which the characters' memories resonate in the characteristics of the spaces, the places where they carried out moments of childhood and youth, as well as those already presented in adulthood.

This category has a fundamental importance in the text, because it represents the lived experience, so that soon after the narrator and Zilda are in a train car, the place becomes substantial for the effectiveness and development of the facts. This is clear when, from inside the car, the narrator watches the landscape as the train car begins to move, as the excerpt shows: "The houses began to move. Faces of curious and amazed appearance paraded with increasing speed through the window - and disappear: they are left behind, with their station, their quiet city and their dreams. (LINS, 2003, p.39). "

Rout, Memory and Space

With the departure of the locomotive, the narrator's dreams of still meeting the beloved person from his childhood single, and recover, with her, memories and loves from the past.

The text is narrated in the first person; therefore, we have an *autodiegetic*² narrator, which occurs when the narrative is told in the first person, so in addition to telling the story, it is part of it. This is, as Carlos Reis recalls in the Dictionary of Narratology, "the entity responsible for a specific narrative situation or attitude: the one in which the narrator of the story relates his own experiences as the central character of the story." (REIS, 1980, P. 251). Although they are facts that are reminiscent, and very young at the time of play and moments in childhood, the narrator still remembers how essential it was to see her again day after day.

²We use the classifications for narrator of Genette (1979), that are: *Autodiegetic* (one in which the narrator fuses with the role of the main character); *Homodiegetic* (narrator who participates in the story that is narrated as a character, but is not a protagonist) and *Heterodiegetic* (narrator who does not participate in the story that is narrated).

By an inexplicable decency, I abstained from revealing that, until then, had been able to find her again single, an idea mixed with an infinity of longings. (And that, in this way, the sense she had

attributed to the word *jealousy*, was by no means inaccurate). But I did not restrain the desire to confess that during a certain period of my childhood my first thought was devoted to her, and that at night I only endured them for being sure that the next day would meet us again. (LINS, 2003, p. 40, author's italics).

The narrator attributes, in the tale *Reencontro*, a relation of dependence on the "friend" Zilda. In affirming that he tolerated the night to see her the next day, it is possible to perceive that, during the night period, added to the fact of being distant from the friend/beloved, the space constrained and transformed itself, becoming topophobic, not because it presented configurations that oppressed the character, but by the distance in which it was from Zilda.

It is noted, then, that "the connection between space and character can be so bad that the character feels disgust for space. It is an evil, negative, dysphoric space" (BORGES FILHO, 2007, page 158). It is important to point out that it is not necessarily some component of the place that makes him feel disgusted by the place. From what we realize, wherever he is, the distance from Zilda will make him feel anxious, which will make the spaces tight, dysphoric and gloomy.

But that feeling may vary depending on who focuses on the places and experiences. Antonio Candido (2002), when referring to the novel, states that the plot is made through "a certain type of relationship between the living being and the fictitious being, manifested through the character, which is the concretization of this." (CANDIDO, 2002, p.55). Note that the space is an element of categorical importance in the narrative, including the tale, after all, the character takes place in the plot and populate the places of the novel, imbuing in this context the values that animate them.

As you can tell, when he learns that Zilda will marry, the narrator/character is significantly shaken, because he hoped for some reason to find her single.

I never imagined her in a dress like that – he told her shortly. I only thought about you climbing trees, playing ball, playing with a slingshot, maybe that's why I was jealous when I heard you were getting married. (LINS, 2003, p.39).

One can see that there is a certain strangeness on the way to school; the narrator/character is affected because he sees the girl wearing clothes different from the ones she usually wore in her childhood, when they played in the backyards of houses or on the road. However, the memories and sensations of Zilda do not have the same affective tone that those of her interlocutor. It can be said that the diversification of the space in which the narrator and Zilda are inserted represents the affective mismatch and the emotional impact between the two. In the meantime, the statements made by the narrator show jealousy to know that Zilda plans to marry. However, she, without showing any feeling, replies that they were not in a courtship and that, therefore, there was no reason for such a feeling. "Jealousy?! - He exclaimed. But we never even dated!" (LINS, 2003, 39). As the train travels, the conversation goes through different paths, and the fate of the childhood friends takes completely different paths.

The tale does not show clearly how long the characters have been apart from each other. But from the narrative follows, we have the notion that the time lag between separation in childhood/youth was significant for changes in the evolution of bodies as well as in the way of acting. Thus reminiscences become part of identity. Hall explains that our identity is formed by our memory, and is therefore a "narrative of the self" (HALL, 2000, p.12). However, the memory that remains in the narrator's memory is still, until the (re)union, that brought from childhood, as a junction of the stories lived in the past that accompany him and remain being retold in the imaginary itself. These facts were kept in the mind and, over time, made dwelling in his life. From this consideration, we can affirm that: "Through memory the individual continually grasps and understands the world, expresses its intentions in this respect, structures it and puts it in order (both in time and space) giving it meaning. (CANDAU, 2014, p.61).

But as much as the facts of the past give reason for living, in fact, the expectation created around this remembrance, that is, the feeling of value over the moments experienced, is unilateral. As we can read here:

That's not it, "I explained. Is that we have so many memories in common! Besides, the fact that I had separated from you, and for so many years, and not having heard from you, kept you immutable. It was like in the tales: an Enchanted Kingdom. The

news broke the spell, that was it. You were not that girl I remembered anymore. (LINS, 2003, p.39)

When Zilda refers to the word jealousy, the interlocutor feels embarrassed and tries to explain the use of the word. According to him, he did not use it in the necessarily denotative sense of the term, but in a tender and sentimental way. In this way, we notice how enormous the difference in treatment of feelings and, in a way, the world in which both lived. In this case,

Remembrance is therefore something different from the past event: it is an image (*imago mundi*), but acts on the event (*anima mundi*), not integrating duration and adding the future past. (CANDAU, 2014, pp. 66-67, author's italics).

The memories that the narrator carries with him do not have, to what is perceived, the same intensity of those that Zilda conserved. In this way, the space they traveled and occupied during the time they were far from each other has significantly transformed them. In other words, while the space occupied by Zilda provides new experiences and diverse possibilities, such as finding (new) love and scheduling marriage, the space that the narrator lives in does not promote anything different, especially with regard to the loving matter. He does not find or take any interest in any other woman in the illusion that when he meets Zilda again he will find himself again with the past, and that the girl's feelings would still be those that exist, at least in the memory of the narrator, in a distant past. This is expressed when they arranged to watch, in the movies, a movie titled "Lobos do Mar" (Sea Wolves). However, after meeting at the mass, Zilda's mother says she will not let the girl go watch the tape. Consequently, as it is common to most adolescents, this whole situation turned into a major setback. According to the girl, if her mother really forbade her, she would move to the narrator's house, who confesses: "At that time, your decision made me feel better. Today, nothing seems more derisory: we were neighbors "(LINS, 2003, 40).

It is notorious that from the time of childhood, even struggling to be so close, the relationship was already marked by obstacles, and therefore there was

no harmony. He, in many situations, was nervous and afraid of what might happen, especially, he feared that his physical integrity would be affected had he lost Zilda. She, however, just as she was in the train carriage, had already had a firm and calculating attitude since she was a child.

Fragile and high wall divided our yards. But it was not so tall or fragile that it would stop us from climbing it and we would be perched there: I was dreaming, telling stories, reciting verses, inventing projects; she was listening, making my plans more daring, my stories more exciting, standing up, sitting down, standing up again and following along the wall, with such confidence that still amazes me today. (LINS, 2003, pp. 40-41).

One can see that Zilda, spending hours and hours talking to her interlocutor on the wall dividing their residence, establishes within the latter the prospect of a possible life for two in the future. It is important to point out that the narrator states that the character made his plans more daring, being evident, only for himself, that they would form a couple. There is also an idealized and poetic view of the past when it is mentioned that he recited verses for the beloved. Although not fragile or so tall, it is noted that the dividing wall between the houses was so inopportune among the friends that they had to climb it up to be perched and together. It should also be pointed out that, even then, the girl Zilda was very sure and certain of what she wanted. It carries with it, for adult life, the idea of the security of a marriage and of a structured life, with fewer dreams and poetry; more certainties and concreteness.

However, the narrator / character observes a change in attitudes, especially in Zilda's features. The memories of the little girl in childhood made him bring of that time a thing of beauty and joy in Zilda's countenance. After the disappointments inside the train, as he approached her and started a conversation that did not correspond to what was happening in the narrator's memory, he explained how he sees her inside the closed space of the train:

Her singing voice, a little rough and yet pleasant, became paused; the laughter is less vibrant; and the eyes, though preserving the old gleam, no longer have the same life: how happy they were, now they have a thing of melancholy serenity. (LINS, 2003, p.40).

The spatial perspective is clear from the positioning, that is, from the close relationship between the two, when the narrator gives us characteristics that can be visualized only by being close to the observed. There, looking eye to eye, he can express, in a subjective and sentimental way, how Zilda's forms and features changed, highlighting the acts, the look and the tone of the voice. Tuan (1980) states that the feeling that one person has with the other is important with respect to the definition of the form of distance between humans. At first, personal and social forms are the most obvious. In the above section are the two: the personal, since those involved in the conversation inside the train, the narrator and Zilda, are face to face, dialoguing on the adventures of the past; and social, because they use an accessible tone of voice so that one hears and understands the other perfectly. However, he clings to Zilda's pausing voice, with this much more thought, and at the same time in her colorless laughter and eyes without the glare of before, still carrying a certain beauty.

After all, the narrator ends up believing that all the memories he had brought from childhood, and still carried, were only stored in his own mind:

The treasure that I suppose to be common is mine alone – I see. Although we had lived the same adventures for a long time, each one collected what they contained of themselves. To evoke them will never repeat the miracle of making them a link between us - If even at that time we were really ever united. (LINS, 2003, 44).

On one hand, the narrator/character conjectures about their memories and experiences, thinking of them as a treasure belonging to both. Imagines meeting her one day to revive every possible dream. But in fact he came to the conclusion that there was no connection at all, besides rethinking whether there had ever been any common feeling between them.

On the other hand, according to Borges Filho (2007, p.35), space can present functions within the narrative, being of vital importance within the literary text, besides serving a variety of purposes. Therefore, from this idea, we intend to discuss the structuring of the carriage space.

The train begins to move from the station where former friends or ex-boyfriends of childhood meet. Not only does the locomotive in motion leave behind the houses, the station and the city, but the days lived and the stories carried by the two are also back in a distant past. In this sense, according to Borges Filho (2007), space can be the psychological projection of the character or an intrinsic characteristic of the character or a momentary state. This link is formed when the landscape appears, in the movement between the world outside the wagon, but also in there, in a dimension that represents its intimate spaces and that summons the memories.

It is noted that the psychological state of the narrator, at that particular moment, presented itself in a very marked and melancholy form. While narrating the story, he informs the reader about the landscape through which the train passes and recalls pleasant and innocent passages when describing the space traveled:

A stony barrier rises to the sides of the train. Lively edges follow each other. Suddenly, the panorama opens itself. We discover a wide pasture, which extends to the top of a hill, surpasses it. (LINS, 2003, pp. 41-42).

Hence, we understand how space is similar to the relationship between the narrator and Zilda. Through this description, barriers and ordeals are evidenced, diverse paths with sharp, pointed edges. Likewise, it follows the existential course of the two. The vision opens to a broad pasture, which, in fact, is a representation of distance of the abyss that separate them.

The narrative follows and, as the train moves on, the narrator understands through the context of the conversation the sequence of Zilda's thoughts. He also discovers that the memories contained in her mind do not evoke, in any way,

feelings similar to what he still possessed. In fact, for Zilda, all those facts were just commonplace, things of no importance. "At first you ran ahead. I was chasing you. There in the middle of the climb, you threw yourself to the ground and I stretched out beside you "(LINS, 2003, 42). The idea of chasing pervades the narrative even inside the train car, because the narrator always follows, even if it is in memory, the steps of the beloved. As is shown in his account, he was willing to do anything to stay with his beloved, and tells her that, without even hesitating, he threw himself at the girl's side as she lay on the floor, and they stood there, stretched out on the ground.

However, it is perceived that the disparity is very great in relation to the way in which both perceive the space that surrounded them. "Then we saw a spring. – A water source. - Whatever. The important thing is that I drank water in your hands and you in mine. - Warm, brackish water "(LINS, 2003, p.42). The sensations exposed in the excerpt are different. He considers the fact that they laid together on the ground, tired by the ascent of the hill, emphasizing, with caring and appreciation, the practice of drinking water in each other's hands: an act of complicity and, why not, of love. But Zilda, more centered and rational, evokes memories, which seem, devoid of sentimentality. Where the narrator saw a spring, she saw only a water source. We can therefore say that if a deeper evaluation of the words spring and water source is made, it will be seen that the sense and the effect of perception are distant from one another.

After the reunion, the narrator, saddened and more rational, begins to think that Zilda since then did not perceive the relationship between the two as well as him. The girl's view of the situation is impartial, and at no time it is touched by a nobler feeling. The narrator's affective world is very far from hers. While he was taken by emotion, the respective interlocutor is positioned by rational optics. Thus, the narrator comes to the following conclusion:

We are, no doubt, different temperaments. It is seen that these evocations are not of equal value to us. She has an unbiased view of what happens to her in life. Her memory, too faithful, does not change nor choose. And if she forgot something, it's not for any reason. She just forgot it. (LINS, 2003, p.42).

In such a way, the memory of the past times on the part of the narrator / character presents itself in a sentimental way, whereas the memories of Zilda are superficial and impartial. However, he dedicates to Zilda such affection that, in particular, he struggles with himself through the narration, trying to clear her from the fact of having forgotten the moments lived in the past. So much that he somehow believes that she keeps reminiscences without great desires, but because that is the way of being inherent to her personality.

Final considerations

Indeed, the text by Osman Lins is filled with imagined spaces. The past integrates the being of the character, because it does not fail to accompany him, it is a dynamic matter of consciousness, therefore it becomes a motivation for actions. The narrator/character brings to the scene the force of past experiences, and with them wants to reinvent a possible reality in the present. Thus, from the personal memories, he produces meaning for his own life.

All memories were built through Zilda's participation in childhood. Therefore, they were established together with another person, but are remembered individually and with such intensity. These traces of yesteryear accompany him and are still present in the life of the character.

As regards the connection with space, it is verified that the narrator character gives great importance to both the places occupied at the time of the meeting and the recalling of the places where they walked in childhood. However, it seems that Zilda cares neither for spaces nor for memories, none of this emotionally affects her. She follows the path she thinks is safe, as a woman who lives the present, but who looks towards the future in order to accomplish plans, as exemplified by her scheduled marriage. The past does not represent attachment, it only brings simple memories of when she was a child.

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