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## **BELLES-LETTRES' CITIES: AN APPROACH OF LITERATURE AND URBAN STUDIES**

### **Abstract:**

There are many possibilities for Literature to be an instrument of study reflection; multiple are also the methodological paths to the understanding of urban complexities. Both – literature and city – are filled by a plurality of voices, authors, discussions and themes. From this perspective, an effort emerges to scrutinize, through an interdisciplinary transfer of ideas, the methodological possibilities of dialogue between these epistemic fields in which Literature can play an essential role in reflecting the diachronic evolution of cities. In this paper, considerations on the urban topics into narratives are differentiated into three distinct approaches: the first, mostly commonly found, occurs through the spatial description of cities in literary works, thus giving them the role of scenario builder (real or not) for the events narrated. That was Paris to Victor Hugo; London to Dickens; Buenos Aires to Borges; Lisbon to Eça de Queirós; Rio de Janeiro to Machado de Assis. The second form of insertion of the city in the literature resembles the previous one, but the importance given to the described space is deepened. In this sense, it is no longer just a geographical setting, but the narrative ambience that becomes inextricable from the story, conditioning it. Thus, the narrated events could not occur at a different time, in any other way and, especially, anywhere else. Examples of this are: A tale of two cities by Dickens; Ulysses by Joyce, and; Down and out in Paris and London by Orwell. The third and last form to be analyzed corresponds to technical works of Urbanism whose objects of study are closely related to cities morphology and development. Here, it may or may not limit the study to one or another city specifically, however, the priority of analysis is given to the context, habits and socioeconomic attributes of these urban spaces. Some examples of this scientific literature are: The Death and Life of Great American Cities by Jacobs, with her New York and its compartments; The City in History by Mumford, excluding some specific cities as the author himself declares; Storia della città by Benevolo, focusing on classical western history; and many other titles. In this perspective, the article tries to validate the approach of the scientific fields through an unconventional perspective that allows to impel themes that, at first sight, did not arouse interest or due to the fact they have been forgotten in the scientific production on cities.

### **Keywords:**

Literature; City; Transfer of ideas; Interdisciplinarity.

**JEL Classification:** N01, R00, Z11