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'Futures Past', Pasts Future? The experiences and the semantics of historical time in global novel

Literature expresses the way different persons from different societal configurations feel the world and translate these feelings into written language. That is how traditionally historians and sociologists analyse cultural productions in general, trying to understand human interpretation, circulation, and the reception of a thought in different historical contexts. Koselleck (1983) breakthrough work about the past (experience) and the future (expectation) tried to get the semantic of the historical time by looking at how human interpretation changed in a specific historical context that he called the Neuzeit – modernity understood as the situation in which the expectation of a better future became detached from the past experiences. Twentieth century novels, such as Stefan Zweig (18811942) Brazil, Land of the Future (1941), expresses the meaning of this new semantic of historical time in which the horizon of expectation diverged from the past experiences. However, this paper develops the hypothesis that there is an important transformation going on since the last decades of the twentieth century. When it started to appear a new semantic of historical time in which the future became the new dark age, and the past became something to be recuperated for the sake of the future. To develop this analysis, we will look at novels such as Parable of the Sower (1993) by Octavia Estelle Butler, The Year of the Flood (2009) by Margaret Atwood, and Huaco Retrato (2021) by Gabriela Wiener. They will be discussed considering the quest about how to understand the new semantics of historical time that is present in the contemporary global novel.

Short List of References:

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