

## **Spatial Element Importance and Its Relation to Characters' Emotions and Self Awareness in Michela Murgia's Collection of Short Stories Tre Ciotole. Rituali per Un Anno DI Crisi**

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**Abstract :** Published in 2023, "Tre ciotole. Rituali per un anno di crisi" is a collection of short stories completely disconnected from one another in regard to topics and the representation of characters. However, these short stories complete and somehow continue each other in a particular way. The book happens to be Murgia's last book, as the author died a few months later after the book's publication and it appears as a kind of summary of all her previous literary works. Namely, in her previous publications, Murgia already stressed certain characters' particularities, such as solitude and alienation from others, which are at the center of attention in this literary work, too. What all the stories present in "Tre ciotole" have in common is the dealing with characters' identity and self-awareness through the challenges they confront and the way the characters live their emotions in relation to the surrounding space. Although the challenges seem similar, the spatial element around the characters is different, but it confirms each time that characters' emotions, and, consequently, their self-awareness, can be formed and built only through their connection and relation to the surrounding space. In that way, the reader creates an imaginary network of complex relations among characters in all the short stories, which gives him/her the opportunity to search for a way to break out of the usual patterns that tend to be repeated while characters focus on building self-awareness. The aim of the paper is to determine and analyze the role of spatial elements in the creation of characters' emotions and in the process of self-awareness. As the spatial element changes or gets transformed and/or substituted, in the same way, we notice the arise of the unconscious desire for self-harm in the characters, which damages their self-awareness. Namely, the characters face a crisis that they cannot control by inventing other types of crises that can be controlled. That happens to be their way of acting in order to find the way out of the identity crisis. Consequently, we expect that the results of the analysis point out the similarities in the short stories in characters' depiction as well as to show the extent to which the characters' identities depend on the surrounding space in each short story. In this way, the results will highlight the importance of spatial elements in characters' identity formation in Michela Murgia's short stories and also summarize the importance of the whole Murgia's literary opus.

**Keywords :** Italian literature, short stories, environment, spatial element, emotions, characters

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