

# **The Novel: an Ethico-Political Genre from a Bakhtinian Perspective / *O romance: uma forma ético-política na perspectiva bakhtiniana***

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper discusses some major categories presented in Bakhtin's texts, such as dialogism, carnivalization, polyphony with a focus on the novelistic genre, which was the object of exhaustive study by the Russian thinker. The discussion aims to achieve a better understanding of a methodological, theoretical and political perspective of discourse analysis in Brazilian novels. Throughout the paper, there are some examples of Brazilian novels that can be read from the Bakhtinian perspective. It is emphasized that, for the Russian thinker, language is central to the ontology of social being and reflection about language as a plural reality is the measure to achieve a democratic society.

**KEYWORDS:** Dialogism; Polyphony; Novel; Mikhail Bakhtin

## **RESUMO**

*Este artigo discute alguns conceitos presentes na obra de Mikhail Bakhtin, tais como dialogismo, carnavalização e polifonia, sobretudo, a partir do gênero romanesco, objeto de estudo exaustivo do pensador russo. A discussão dos conceitos visa melhor entendê-los a fim de construir uma perspectiva teórica, metodológica e política para análise discursiva dos romances brasileiros. Ao longo do texto, ocorre exemplificação de possíveis análises de obras nacionais sob a perspectiva bakhtiniana. Destaca-se que, para o pensador russo, a linguagem é central na ontologia do ser social e que a reflexão sobre a linguagem enquanto realidade plural é a medida para se alcançar uma sociedade democrática.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Dialogismo; Polifonia; Romance; Mikhail Bakhtin

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## Introduction

The aim of this article is to discuss some issues related to the novelistic genre based on the perspective of Mikhail Bakhtin. More specifically, we use the works which focus on the problematic nature of that genre. The Russian thinker fits into the philosophy of language since all his work turns to a discussion of the centrality of language in the ontology of social beings. For this theoretician, language is a central category in the human institution. This means that he investigates, above all, the literary corpus in close relation with the concrete historical reality in order to systematize his concepts of dialogism, monologism and polyphony, which are central to understanding his writings. Bakhtin writes in a particular sociopolitical context in which he observes both culture and politics with an ascending monologic character. The advent of the Russian Revolution in 1917 promised the establishment of a communist society where the materialistic utopia<sup>1</sup> would be established to supply not only the realm of necessity, but also the realm of freedom, pointing to a libertarian reality. However, in the implementation of the communist project based on the politico-economic vision of Marx and Lenin, this promise was dissolved and an authoritarian, monologic society was built based mainly on the text-praxis of Stalinist booklets. In that society, a central power was reinforced in the figure of the dictator and the single party and, in the artistic and symbolic fields including language, there was a clear tendency to neutralize whatever is contradictory, i.e., any dissenting voices. In literature, Socialist Realism prevailed, with its aesthetics of praise and glorification of Stalinist politics and economics. The industrial-technological model imported from the West sustained the economy and aimed to industrialize the country, and Taylorism-Fordism is established in industrial production. The workforce tended to adjust to the work that was both alienated and estranged, which was Marx's great concern in the nineteenth century and from which the German thinker wanted to free the working class. The sociopolitical context is one of dictatorship and purges.

Bakhtin writes in this context, and certainly the environment where his speech is produced also determines the thinker's position. For him, when we talk, our speech is

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<sup>1</sup>The creators of the Bolshevik revolution believed in the possibility of revolutionizing not only the material conditions of existence, but also cultural and political aspects, above all by following the teachings of Marx's work.

double-voiced, i.e., oriented both to what has already been said and to its replication and, as a result, inherently dialogical. His work is in dialogue with his time, fighting monology, the one single speech, the one official culture, the one single party, the restriction of contradiction, the oppression of a centralizing power and the socialist dictatorship of the state. There is a clear counterpoint dialogue with his time and immediate context. Bakhtin praises liberating laughter, in the category of carnivalization, dialogism, polyphony, emergence and strengthening of the plurality of social voices. Obviously, the work of Bakhtin is not limited to the immediate context, as it has its roots in ancient Eastern and Western culture, redeeming all of ancient Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian history. He builds its core concepts from rigorous historical research, which encompasses an ancient temporality, adding to his work numerous social discourses in which dialogue, carnivalization, polyphony and the plurality of voices are present, both in line with and clashing with social reality. His work arises, always, against the domination of one-dimensionality, and it is known that in the history of humankind, single-vision authoritarianism was not the exclusive prerogative of the Russian socialist model; rather, the formation of social beings has been accompanied by this model as a constant practice. Thus, we see that the Bakhtinian discourse is oriented towards responding both to its immediate context and to another, longer lasting and ancient context. The Russian philosopher provides us with a liberating and emancipating vision of the human plight, focusing his analysis on the language and envisioning there the possibility of building a more pluralistic and decentralized society. Besides the discussion of some issues related to the novelistic genre, in line with the journal's body of work, this article aims to demonstrate how the concepts of dialogism, polyphony, carnivalization and monology can be used in the discourse analysis of a literary corpus and in reflection on language.

## **2 Formation of an ideological-linguistic consciousness in Bakhtin and the novel**

The main concern in Mikhail Bakhtin's work is to investigate the history of the development of human being's linguistic-ideological consciousness. This research is conducted from a diachronic perspective that begins with the ancient Greeks and culminates in the novels of Fyodor Dostoevsky. Consciousness and language, for

Bakhtin, are intertwined: the external collective discourse becomes internal, thus developing consciousness. This is established by the word, and the word is always an ideological sign that acquires meaning in the social environment. Thus, consciousness is formed from the outside, being a social process. Such externality, however, is not passively but rather actively accepted, because the word is always perceived as an arena in which different visions debate. The word both subjugates and releases. Every communicative act is actually a translation, i.e., the speaker understands and reaccents the other's word based on their cultural, political and social matrices. This internal dialogism of language, which always drives the word by what was spoken in the past and by its future replication, does not necessarily lead to a harmonious situation in which there is always an agreement with the other's word. The dialogism inherent to the word does not prevent conflict but rather feeds from it. Bakhtin demonstrates this conflict especially from the discursive battle in which certain discourses are imposed and become nearly hegemonic in certain fields. We highlight the monologic structure that prevailed in the economy and culture in the period of dictatorship referred to herein.

The history of the development of linguistic and ideological consciousness, studied by Bakhtin, points to a confrontation in which certain speech genres are made official, supported by social institutions, while other speech genres coexist and work in unofficial social fields. Bakhtin neither establishes any rigid dichotomy between the speeches nor classifies them as true or false. He does highlight, however, the difference between monologic and dialogic discourse. The monologic discourse is built from an authoritarian, exclusivistic, definitive and closed attitude in relation to language. This type of speech wants to be instituted as the only and true speech and, through formal, compositional and political devices, it tries to stifle the open, ambiguous, imprecise and, especially, historical reality of language. In this type of speech, the attitude towards language is positive, in the sense that there is a belief that reality can be told, defined, explained from the clear and correct use of language. The monologic attitude contributes to strengthen various beliefs which actually help centralize, unify, simplify and master what is dispersed, contradictory and multiple in its social nature. The monologic attitude towards discourse is also a political attitude, in which the centripetal forces act to strengthen consensus. This attitude results in authoritarian positions that do not allow dissent, otherness, duplicity, plurality to occur. The monologic position

reinforces certain social beliefs such as the identity of one single national language; the homogeneity of popular culture; the correct interpretation of a text; right reading; objectivity and superiority in scientific language; proper translation and the good literature. The perception of this instance of monology is liberating in itself because, when framing the monologic discourse, seeing it as unilateral and making a formal analysis of all its components, we can face it and practice the dialogism of language as we deconstruct this instance of monology. The monologic discourse relies on various formal and institutional resources to impose itself. It is necessary to make a sound discursive analysis, demonstrating the monologic discourse, which is a construct.

In Brazilian literature of the nineteenth century, as asserted by Candido (1981), there is an *endeavor and an interest* in telling what is real, often idealizing it in order to build, via literary discourse, a positive national identity. Many novels, especially those of the Indianist genres, idealized relations between the colonizer and the indigenous people, building a Brazilian genealogy without conflict. These texts tend towards a monology that meets the purposes of the creation of the national state. This monology will only be deconstructed in the twentieth century by other writers in what is then a new, diverse historical context, that of an underdeveloped country. The recovery of romantic-nationalist texts occurs in a movement of criticism, thus building a literary discourse that responds to what had been already said, in opposition to it and reinforcing internal dialogism. Mario de Andrade's *Macunaíma* exemplifies this critical resumption of the discourse which was present in *Iracema* by José de Alencar. The issue of Brazilian regionalist literature could also be read in a new way, from a perspective focused on speech, observing the various regionalisms (of the nineteenth century, of the 1930s and of Guimarães Rosa) through the prism of stylization of the rural speech. Most analyses follow the economic approach, connecting the regional novels directly to certain periods of the national economy<sup>2</sup>.

If we find, however, the dialogic nature of language, we will see that the discourse is open, ambiguous, and bi-centered (the intersubjective relationship), because its essence is plural and historical, allowing various meanings and readings. This open attitude to the dialogicity of language and heteroglossia, or the perception of the

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<sup>2</sup>Candido (1995) perceives the connection between economy and literature (young nation/1930, dawning awareness of backwardness; underdeveloped country/1930 to 1970, acute and catastrophic awareness of backwardness), which is already a classical interpretation of regional novels.

existence of conflicting social voices within the statement, has been the line structuring the novelistic prose (according to Bakhtin); the Russian thinker places the dawn of the novel in ancient Greece, especially in the Socratic dialogues, in Menippean satires and comic genres. The ancient folk culture of laughter, familiar genres, everyday speech and social heteroglossia are elements structuring novelistic discourse. The novel is internally dialogic, as it is always in conflict with official genres and the official culture. Moreover, it is always an indirect discourse as the context of the narrator or narrators frames the other's speech, building an image for this speech. The formal framework of the other's speech in the narrative context is one of the most important issues for Bakhtin / Volochínov and is investigated in detail, especially in the works of the 1920's, in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929/1986)<sup>3</sup>, third part, the last three chapters, and in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929/1981)<sup>4</sup>, focused on the analysis of the Dostoevskian work. The dialogism occurs there as a composition of two or more voices within the same statement in the clash of discourse. The prehistory of the novel is a story of opposition to the serious official culture. The novel is a late genre and, as a genre that paradoxically unifies the plurality of discourse, it is more precisely defined in the Renaissance era, by Miguel de Cervantes and François Rabelais.

For Bakhtin, all discourse is situated both in a broader social context and in a more immediate social context. Thus we see that the novelistic genre brings with it an ancient verbal mass of laughter and opposition to the official, which constitutes a wide social context to be, especially in the seventeenth century, activated by the specific, more immediate historical context, resulting in the Western European novel. How does

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<sup>3</sup> The authorship of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* is controversial. Some assign it exclusively to Bakhtin; others assign it exclusively to Valentim Volochinov and there is also the possibility of a co-authorship. Once authorship is understood from a dialogic perspective, this work can be referenced with two authors, i.e., Bakhtin and Volochinov, as they belonged to the same group of language studies, sharing many premises regarding the object of research. This is the approach that we adopt in this article. There are many similarities between this work, especially regarding the interrelation between citing and cited context, and the work *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, which made us highlight the double authorship. Another pressing issue both in Volochinov and in Bakhtin is the materialistic perspective of language and its centrality in the ontology of the human being. However, there are theoretical differences that will not be analyzed here as they are not object of this study, especially the issue of overcoming conflict through dialectics, class struggle and the relationship between economic superstructure and infrastructure, which are directly related to Marxism and more present in Voloshinov, and the eternal agonistic and struggle for voice from Bakhtin's broader perspective. There is abundant literature regarding the issue of authorship.

<sup>4</sup>Em 1929, Bakhtin publica a obra com o título *Problemas da obra de Dostoiévski*; em 1963, revisada e ampliada, ela é novamente publicada com o título que conhecemos hoje, *Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski*.

this socio-historical context act and interact with this literary form that, in reality, aestheticizes and binds various real forms of communication? The historical reality of the seventeenth century involves structural changes in economy, politics, and culture. The closed and centralized feudal universe was to be dissolved in the face of another socio-political order. In order to become concrete, the new order needed to question and desecrate the existing one. In this sense, the historical moment of the paradigm shift provides a systematization of the novelistic discourse which was nurtured by controversy, by reply, by an attitude of protest:

I find three basic characteristics that fundamentally distinguish the novel in principle from other genres: (1) its stylistic three-dimensionality, which is linked with the multi-languaged consciousness realized in the novel; (2) the radical change it effects in the temporal coordinates of the literary image; (3) the new zone opened by the novel for structuring literary images, namely, the zone of maximal contact with the present (with contemporary reality) in all its openendedness.

These three characteristics of the novel are all organically interrelated, and have all been powerfully affected by a very specific rupture in the history of European civilization: its emergence from a socially isolated and culturally deaf semipatriarchal society, and its entrance into international and interlingual contacts and relationships. A multitude of different languages, cultures and times became available to Europe, and this became a decisive factor in its life and thought. (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.11)

The European context, especially mercantile capitalism, the decline of absolute monarchies, great navigators, colonialism, the forces of science and technology that entered the universe of material production and the sphere of ideas, spreading a new social order, separating from scholastic and religious tradition, provided a more plural and confronting social state. Centrifugal forces broke the power of what used to be centripetal forces. This economic, political and social dynamism had repercussions in the realm of language, which incorporated this multiplicity and new revolutionary order. The bourgeois-liberal order was established, the previous order was brought down both in terms of economy and ideas. Countless authors highlighted this new order as truly deconstructive and establishing new paradigms<sup>5</sup>. Bakhtin also sees in this perspective the bourgeois-liberal context and its relationship with the novelistic genre. Obviously

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<sup>5</sup>In this respect, please refer to Marx (2003), Leroi-Gourhan (1964), Hobsbawm (1993) who highlighted the revolutionary character of the bourgeois liberal order in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

the new order became conservative *a posteriori*, which had monologic implications for language and culture. The novel-feuilleton of the nineteenth century follows a logic that is contrary to the bourgeois rationality. The Russian thinker analyzes this novelistic genre and shows no prejudice against it. Rather, he highlights the counterdiscourse which is materialized there, in opposition to the bourgeois-liberal order. But as we have pointed out here, there is a connection with the immediate context as well as with the long-term context. Bakhtin's work always refers to these two coordinates.

### **3 The novel-feuilleton according to Bakhtin: the liberal bourgeois counterdiscourse**

According to Mikhail Bakhtin, formal and architectural components of the novel-feuilleton in the nineteenth century did not constitute, in turn, one single specificity of the immediate context, for they also have roots in antiquity. Bakhtin, when investigating the prehistory of novelistic genre, focuses on the ancient Greek adventure novel, classifying it as a novel of trial, in which the main characters go through numerous adventures and shenanigans. These challenge the character, dignity, and virtue of characters who ultimately triumph, overcoming difficult obstacles. Here, Bakhtin emphasizes that the characters are rigidly built, i.e., they do not change throughout the novel, but rather reinforce their initial identity, which is confirmed with every challenge they survive. The plot, the space and the situations are fabulous and extraordinary, and do not belong to everyday life. This type of novel has a very long life and is constantly reprinted. We realize that such a structure in which the hero acts as a homogeneous and static unit always equal to himself, never changing over time, is present today, especially in Brazilian soap operas and it was present, in part, in romantic Brazilian novels and several novel-feuilletons in the nineteenth century. In Brazil, a typical example of this narrative would be part of romantic fiction, in which many characters go through numerous trials in time and space only to reinforce their initial character (kind, virtuous, manly, honest, decent). Thus we see that the roots of this kind of romance are far-reaching and not limited to the immediate context in which they arise.

Bakhtin continues his presentation on the novel of trials, noting that great writers like Balzac, Stendhal, Dostoevsky, Dickens, Flaubert and Zola also used it, albeit with a

different chronotopic vision. Here the hero undergoes some trials, but he modifies himself and changes the world as the adventures unfold in time and space. In the former a man is already formed, and in the latter a man is being formed: this is the major difference between them. Here daily life, national history, local culture, biological time all act on the characters, modifying them. The historicism<sup>6</sup> of the nineteenth century becomes a structuring element of narrative and the chronotope is given from another key.

Still on the feuilleton novel in Bakhtin, we emphasize that the Russian theoretician presents a positive outlook on the feuilleton narratives, quoting Ponson du Terrail several times in order to highlight the carnivalesque configuration of his work (Rocamboles, the main character who is present throughout Ponson's works, metamorphoses himself into numerous social roles ranging from criminal to vigilante, from noble to incarcerated). In the universe of the feuilleton, the multiplicity of adventures, tragedies, crimes, haphazard, unusual and extraordinary situations, exalted dialogues in the threshold of tragic situations (such as death), plot amplification, exalted sentimentality, the universe of the weak and wronged and the flexibility of the hero who takes on various social positions moves the narrative away from of a possible homology with the orderly, well behaved, logical and rational bourgeois universe. This separation makes the novel-feuilleton close to popular culture in which, according to Bakhtin, all the situations occur through the imbrication, leveling and dialogism of opposites (the serious and the comic; the low and the high; truth and doubt; good and evil; fasting and food; the spirit and the body; the poor and the rich; the noble and the beggar). Perhaps therein comes one of the possible explanations justifying the popular preference for feuilletonesque narratives. This approach of the popular universe is at the root of the novel itself as a genre because, for Bakhtin, the novel is rooted in popular culture and in the comic genres that have always stood against the seriousness and monotone of the official culture. In the universe of the novel-feuilleton, we stand far away from the poetics of the unity of time, space and Aristotelian action. In the novel-feuilleton, everything is inflated and perhaps that is the reason why the criticism of this novel variant is so compelling. The bourgeois universe, driven by rationality, seeks

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<sup>6</sup> In his work, Löwy highlights three currents of thought and action that prevailed in the nineteenth century, namely, historicism based on the formation of national states, Marxism and positivism. Please refer to this work for more details.

uniformity, sameness, order, monotone, balance, prudence, and everything else that subverts this order is devalued. The feuilleton does not fit in that order and is repelled. Bakhtin's work, in its entirety, always recovers the discourses and practices that were marginalized and left apart from what was canonical and official. In this sense, the novel-feuilleton will also be seen by Bakhtin from a non-canonical perspective, being saved especially due to its power to carnivalize the culture of order, the rational, the monotone. Bakhtin points to a whole feuilletonesque universe present in the work of Fyodor Dostoevsky, exalting his creation of a universe that is not measured, not ordered by the bourgeois monotone. From the Bakhtinian perspective, the novel-feuilleton responds to a context of rational planning, thus becoming another voice counterpoint.

Hence, we highlight the importance that Mikhail Bakhtin attributes to Menippean satire as one of the sources of constitution of the novelistic genre and novel-feuilleton as a variant. Menippean satire dates from the third century B.C. and, in short, is made up of discourses that seek truth from a comprehensive and carnivalized vision. This is achieved through a multiplicity and simultaneity of situations, environments and speech genres. The structure and themes of Menippean satires are close to the novels of adventure and trial that are contained in the novel-feuilleton. This approach allows us to conclude that the novel-feuilleton is not only connected to the context of the nineteenth century, but is also linked to a higher temporality:

8. In the menippea there appears for the first time what might be called moral-psychological experimentation: a representation of the unusual, abnormal moral and psychic states of man – insanity of all sorts (the theme of the maniac), split personality, unrestrained daydreaming, unusual dreams, passions bordering on madness, suicides and so forth.

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10. The menippea is full of sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations: the virtuous hetaera, the true freedom of the wise man and his servile position, the emperor who becomes a slave, moral downfalls and purifications, luxury and poverty, the noble bandit and so forth. The menippea loves to play with abrupt transitions and shifts, ups and downs, rises and falls, unexpected comings together of distant and disunited things, mésalliances of all sorts (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.116-118).

Moreover, Bakhtin emphasizes the publicistic<sup>7</sup> character of the Menippea, i.e., the connection with the contemporary universe of the text. This characteristic is fundamental in the novelistic genre since, for the theoretician, the novel deals with the present, carnivalizing it, as opposed to the epic that praises the past. Publicistic writing constitutes the contingent and historical aspect of the Menippean and we can verify that the novel-feuilleton, by resuming this feature, also incorporates the writer's contemporary era. Even though the novel-feuilleton has repeated structural elements, it cannot be understood as a structure that stands above contingency. Each era revitalizes it, modifying it according to the social, historical, political, literary and reading context:

14. Finally, the last characteristic of the menippea: its concern with current and topical issues. This is, in its own way, the 'journalistic' genre of antiquity, acutely echoing the ideological issues of the day. The satires of Lucian, taken as a group, are an entire encyclopedia of his times: they are full of overt and hidden polemics with various philosophical, religious, ideological and scientific schools, and with the tendencies and currents of his time; they are full of the images of contemporary or recently deceased public figures, "masters of thought" in all spheres of societal and ideological life (under their own names, or disguised); they are full of allusions to the great and small events of the epoch; they feel out new directions in the development of everyday life; they show newly emerging types in all layers of society, and so on. They are a sort of *Diary of a Writer*, seeking to unravel and evaluate the general spirit and direction of evolving contemporary life. Just such a *Diary of a Writer* (with, however, a sharp preponderance of the carnivalistic-comic element) are the satires of Varro, taken in their entirety. We find the same characteristics in Petronius, Apuleius and others. A journalistic quality, the spirit of publicistic writing or of the feuilleton, a pointed interest in the topics of the day are characteristic to a greater or lesser extent of all representatives of the menippea (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.118-119).

#### **4 The issue of polyphony as a democratic and decentralizing utopia in Bakhtin**

The genealogy of novelistic discourse finds its point of maturity in the prose of Fyodor Dostoevsky, whose polyphonic architecture mirrors an advanced stage of the linguistic-ideological consciousness of man. Here, the language fully holds Otherness, ambivalence, ambiguity, doubleness, irony. The author-narrator's discourse no longer

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<sup>7</sup> The term publicistic extracted from Bakhtin, refers to the immediate and contingent character that is related to the literary form. Henceforth, we will use the term in this sense.

manipulates the voice of the other (character), making it objectal<sup>8</sup>. The author, utopically, no longer expresses a desire for power over the speech of his characters. The voices, interrelated, maintain the autonomy and power of resistance in relation to each other. There is no monopoly or hegemony of one over other. The polyphonic-oriented novelistic discourse aesthetically formalizes an ideal linguistic stage in which dissent, doubleness and inconclusiveness are the only possible reality. Through the novelistic discourse Fyodor Dostoevsky achieves Bakhtin's utopia: the development of the Western human being's ideological-linguistic consciousness in which conflict, contradiction and multiplicity are structuring elements. The polyphonic novel, thus, is the formal configuration of an extraliterary reality as it formalizes social pluridiscursivity with realism in its heterogeneous entirety. In the polyphonic novel, Bakhtin sees the solution to the reification of social relations since in this type of novel relationships between author and hero are of another nature. The author does not objectify the hero from the outside, building the hero as a closed and finished entity. It is as if the author spoke of the hero always in his presence, urging him to defend himself and discuss what was said about him. In monologic novels, the author talks about the hero. The hero is absent and cannot discuss what is said about him. However, between the full polyphonic novel (Dostoevsky) and monologic novel, there is a wide range of narratives that combine these two extremes.

Bakhtin's work can be apprehended as an emancipatory<sup>9</sup> discourse. The authoritarianism in official culture and in high genres, which denies pluridiscursivity,

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<sup>8</sup> We make use of Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981) term for those whom the narrator and the reader have a surplus of seeing with regard to the narrated fact, as the narrator is the fable's mediator who can criticize, change, praise or distort facts, depending on his discursive intentions. Exotopy is built from various formal devices. Such exotopy, however, is formalized under diverse degrees. The distance from the other does not always occur without conflict, as this resists the narrator's discursive framing. An example is the use of free indirect speech in which discourse boundaries dissipate, forming a complex dialogic construct. The hero becomes objectal when the narrator gets distant and represents it in a monologic fashion. However, when giving the hero voice and interacting with him in a dialogic enunciative context, exotopy decreases. It is possible to read the conflicting relationship between Rodrigo, the narrator, and Macabea, the main character in *A hora da estrela* by Clarice Lispector from this category, as there the intellectualized narrator feels the difficulty in narrating the story of his heroine and making her objectal because she resists, even in the realm of words. Most metafictional fiction in Brazilian literature can be read from this category, which involves the complex articulation between the narrator's narrative context and the framing of the other's voice in this scope.

<sup>9</sup> Please refer to the work of G. Tihanov, *Reification and Dialogue: Aspects of the Theory of Culture in Lukács and Bakhtin*. The author establishes an interesting parallel between Lukács and Bakhtin, remarking that both have an emancipatory and utopian speech: for the Hungarian philosopher, the liberation hero is in the working classes, while for the Russian philosopher it is in the novelistic genre. The latter, especially in its polyphonic variant, captures the heteroglossia in its constant agonistics, thus

should be carnivalized. The roots of this carnivalization that destabilize the closed character of serious discourse can be found, especially, in popular comic culture and comic genres. All this centrifugal force of discursive-cultural attitudes that promote criticism to the culture of center is triggered by the novelistic genre. This works as the great hero of Bakhtin's emancipatory narrative. Thus we see that life pervades art from the literary development of heteroglossia and art illuminates life as it recovers all its secular unofficial entirety of the popular culture of laughter and carnival, which has been neutralized by the culture of seriousness. External and internal articulate, illuminating and building one another.

Although considering the differences, we can establish some meeting points between Bakhtin and Lukács, especially in relation to the novel. In *Theory of the Novel* (2000), the Hungarian theoretician highlights that the novelistic discourse recounts the vicissitudes, conflicts, and the dichotomy between man and society. Similarly, Bakhtin asserts that "One of the basic internal themes of the novel is precisely the theme of the hero's inadequacy to his fate or his situation. The individual is either greater than his fate, or less than his condition as a man" (1981, p.37).

For Lukács, the novel is both biography and social chronicle. The world is fragmented and the hero cannot tune into the social experience and experience wholeness (the exact opposite occurs in epics). For Bakhtin, the difference between the novel and the epic also occurs in this fashion. Here, the hero does not see himself apart from the community, but linked to it by a discourse in which everyone is recognized. In the novel, in turn, the hero confronts the community. For Lukács (2000), the hero, imbued with individualism, romanticism and abstract bourgeois idealism, individually seeks *authentic values in a degraded world*. Both abstract ideas and isolation make this search fruitless. Nevertheless, in this journey, the hero becomes conscious of himself, and he is sometimes more aware of himself than he is of others and sometimes less. This awareness, however, has no power to reverse reality, for this reversal is only possible in a collective scope and this occurs partly in Tolstoy's novels, when the characters, interconnected, reach moments of epiphany and possible transformation of reality and themselves. Would this observation about the isolated being not approach

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representing the human consciousness in its highest degree of maturity, freed from the monologue that has imprisoned it. Thus, Bakhtin sees a possibility of liberation from the authoritarianism of the official culture through language, apprehending it in its inherent dialogicity.

the fundamental criticism that Bakhtin makes against the "idealistic subjectivism" that imprisons man in himself when he considers himself as the source of knowledge and meaning? Lukács ends his wonderful essay, written in highly lyrical and poetic language, emphasizing that Dostoevsky's work is a new approach that could perhaps fully configure this collective world in which the hero can reach the lost totality (the world of Greek epics mirrored a hero adapted to the whole and the collective). It is interesting to note that Mikhail Bakhtin's work seems to begin where Lukács left off. Bakhtin focuses precisely on Dostoevsky's production, seeing, from the polyphonic architecture, that only by and in collectiveness can heroes come in contact with the pluridiscursive totality of the world, a solution to the reification of human beings and for the redemption of heterogeneous totality. Both theoreticians saw in Dostoevsky a new form for new times. This new form, both for Bakhtin and for Lukács, mirrors and illuminates a better reality in which man does not exist isolated from the other, consisting of an important political-utopian value present in their works.

For Bakhtin, the question of totality and collectiveness finds its best representation in Dostoevsky's work. In the Russian writer's polyphonic novel, there is a literary representation of the disintegration of hierarchical relationships, which somehow recovers, in another historical time, the old social relations of an agrarian and essentially collective community in which everyone enjoys what they produce. In polyphony, recovering collectiveness is achieved through language in which the other is a constant presence, since language is an essentially intersubjective reality. Here, isolated and private beings are always permeated by collectiveness just as agrarian societies used to be. In those societies man was pure externality. This means a certain return to that agrarian world in which everything is experienced collectively and the isolated being "does not exist yet." Bakhtin's "idealization" of the primitive agrarian societies in contrast to industrial societies, in which social class division is structural, is present mainly in the chapter "The Folkloric Bases of the Rabelaisian Chronotope" (1981).

For Bakhtin, the novel as a genre is in conflict with other genres, since it integrates them, in a dialogical attitude, revealing their limited, historical character. The novel is an indirect speech as it fits other discourses and genres, representing them. However, to the extent that it represents them, it is also represented by them, as they are

internally dialogical in the novel. Furthermore, the novel not only draws other genres of discourse but it is also self-critical, representing itself in its limitation and relativity. Here we should specify that, for Bakhtin, there are two moments in the novel's trajectory toward the polyphonic novel when is at the apex of the aesthetization of formation of linguistic-ideological consciousness. These two points in time define two kinds of novel: "first-line" novels and "second line" novels.

The "first line" novels recover social heteroglossia and internalize it; however, a kind of juxtaposition of these discourses occurs. The author exhibits them as if they were museum pieces, since they do not make a dialogized whole but are instead placed side by side, already giving us the idea of a non-homogeneous whole. In addition, Bakhtin emphasizes that, in this novelistic variant, the framing speech seeks to ennoble the discourses in the novel. A type of "literaturization" occurs in the speeches which are contained in the novel. Such ennoblement creates a type of literary language which is both ennobled and homogeneous. This novelistic discourse sets the cultural tone as it is in the "first line" novels that readers will find information about how to act in everyday life: for example, how to behave at parties, how to write love letters, how to relate socially. This variant becomes a guide to acting in an elegant, refined and well-disciplined fashion in society. "First line" novels tend to monology. The heteroglossia penetrates the "first line" novel, whereas heteroglossia is the very raw material of the "second line" novel. This, in fact, constitutes Bakhtin's object of study.

"Second line" novels have an exemplary model in *Don Quixote* by Miguel Cervantes, because then the "first line" novels are incorporated and presented in their limitation and historical relativity. *Don Quixote* regains chivalric romance to show its inability to read the world due to centripetal forces that act in this variant, unifying languages and juxtaposed genres from a center that ennobles them. The hero, Don Quixote, lives in search of a lost, idealized, ennobled, literaturized world. This discourse is parodied and desecrated in *Don Quixote*. In Brazilian Literature, Candido highlights *Filomena Borges*, by Aluisio Azevedo, as a novel that can be analyzed in this light as the realist writer carnivalizes and reveals the limitations of the romantic and idealizing discourse as a major component of formal work<sup>10</sup>. "Second line" novels inevitably

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<sup>10</sup>Refer to A. AZEVEDO, *Filomena Borges*. São Paulo: Martins Editora, foreword by Antonio Candido, 1977, p.4. A large part of Aluisio Azevedo's feuilletonesque work can be reread from this perspective, i.e., from a confrontation between the well-behaved bourgeois universe and the carnivalization of the

criticize the literary hero and are self-critical in the sense that they problematize the literary creation. They are always indirect speeches that create parodies of conventional, crystallized and reified discourses. They are dialogically organized speeches as they build themselves through the critical representation of another speech. Bakhtin remarks that, in the nineteenth century, “second-line” variant oriented narratives prevail:

Novels of the First Stylistic Line approach heteroglossia from above, it is as if they *descend* onto it (the Sentimental novel occupies a special position here, somewhere between heteroglossia and the high genres). Novels on the Second Line, on the contrary, approach heteroglossia from below: out of the heteroglot depths they rise to the highest spheres of literary language and overwhelm them. In both cases the starting point is the point of view heteroglossia takes toward literariness. (1981, p.400)

“First line” novels, which can be exemplified by the novels of chivalry, in fact, constitute themselves as an encyclopedia of the good and fair way of saying things, of how language should be spoken and written. In these novels a monologic attitude prevails, because in this variant the various discourse genres are cosmetically ennobled, reinforcing the idea of a center that dominates everyone and gives them the same direction. “Second line” novels, in turn, make a parody, irony and desecration of such ennobled style. Here we have a dialogical attitude that does not unify, but establishes the conflict. Within the same statement, we have the noble and the parodic speech clarifying each other. Both retain their autonomy, which is dialogically interrelated. In this variant, instead of centripetal forces acting to homogenize language, there are centrifugal forces that are always working to preserve discursive war, multiplicity, otherness. In the “first line” variant an epic, monologic and official drive prevails: there is monotone speech construction; in the “second line” variant, however, the attitude towards heteroglossia is carnivalization, in which the opposite and the contradictory are always present, undermining uniformity. This perspective allows one, for example, to analyze the work *The Alienist* by Machado de Assis, in which scientific discourse and practice that shape the main character, Simon Bacamarte, are carnivalized and discredited by the narrator through other characters’ speech. The scientific discourse here is a stylization, represented in its limitations and drastic interference in reality.

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romantic language. In this sense, this category under Bakhtin would allow rereading in the field of Brazilian Literature, especially the feuilletonique one.

Much of nineteenth-century Brazilian real-naturalistic fiction can be seen in this light, as it incorporates the prevailing scientific discourse emerging at the time, sometimes praising it, sometimes criticizing it. Scientific language and literary language form a dialogical hybrid that can be investigated from the category mentioned. Bakhtin sees in the "first line" a commitment to unified totality always equal to itself; in the "second line", he sees a commitment to the whole, even though it is established from multiplicity which is in constant conflict and agonistics:

We are touching here only fleetingly on the extremely importante category of the "general literariness of language." We are not concerned with its significance in literature in general or in the history of literary language, but only as it plays a role in the history of novelistic style. And its importance here is enormous: it has a direct significance in novels of the First Stylistic Line, and an indirect significance in novels of the Second Line. Novels of the First Stylistic Line aspire to organize and stylistically order the heteroglossia of conversational language, as well as of written everyday and semiliterary genres. To a significant extent this impulse to order determines their relationship to heteroglossia. Novels of the Second Stylistic Line, however, transform this already organized and ennobled everyday and literary language into essential material for its own orchestration, and into people for whom this language is appropriate, that is, into "literary people" with their literary way of thinking and their literary ways of doing things—that is, such a novel transforms them into authentic characters. (1981, p.383)

Based on this Bakhtinian approach to language and the novelistic genre, we investigated novels of Brazilian literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, aiming to understand the architectural vision constituted there and the formal and compositional elements that build that vision. Immediate context, long term history, of long, monologic or dialogic narrative context, voice hierarchy, object-made heroes, discursive framing of heroes' voices and social voices (direct discourse, indirect discourse, quasi-direct discourse), "first and second line" novels are categories that have been observed in the reading of novels. The theoretical foundation in Mikhail Bakhtin is, above all, a political position from which research could promote a debate among undergraduates and graduates on the centrality of language in the ontological constitution of social beings and the possibility of emancipation through a more dialogic, polyphonic and carnivalized stance before centripetal forces of single speech. We can read the Brazilian novelistic production considering these Bakhtinian categories

and investigating the critical, self-critical, libertarian, conservative capability, which is the reproducer of hegemonic values in our literary production. This is what we have aimed at when reading novels with our students and researchers in our research group, based on the Bakhtinian theory and other theories that dialogue with it.

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*Received December 05, 2012*

*Accepted June 21, 2013*