

**A Discursive Dive into *The Third Bank of the River* by Guimarães Rosa
/ *Um mergulho discursivo sobre A terceira margem do rio, de
Guimarães Rosa***

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to reflect upon the short story “The third bank of the river,” by Guimarães Rosa. In this work, there is a wealth of voices, marked by the image of the very river it describes. The reader is captured to the third riverside since his discursive memory reminds him of only two sides. In which time and space would there be the so called third riverside? When searching for this answer, he remains captive of his own inquiries, taking himself to the third river bank, unable to recognize it. This article intends to demonstrate how language is able to call the reader's attention to its various scenarios, promoting, as Brait (2010) stated, cooperative studies which articulate language and literature, as well as to present some ways to reveal the third riverside pointed out by Rosa, observing the dialogical richness of the text. This analysis is theoretically grounded on the studies of Bakhtin and his Circle, of Stylistics and on a Philosophical perspective.

KEYWORDS: Dialogism; Ideological Sign; Stylistics; Literature; Guimarães Rosa.

RESUMO

Propõe-se, neste artigo, uma reflexão sobre o conto “A terceira margem do rio”, de Guimarães Rosa. Há na obra uma riqueza de vozes, marcada pela imagem do próprio rio que ela descreve. O leitor é sequestrado para a terceira margem, já que sua memória discursiva o remete apenas a duas. Em qual tempo e espaço estaria a chamada terceira margem? Na busca de tal resposta, ele permanece prisioneiro de suas próprias indagações, transportando-se para a terceira margem, incapaz de reconhecê-la. Pretende-se com este trabalho demonstrar como a língua pode chamar a atenção do leitor para seus diversos cenários, promovendo estudos indissociáveis na articulação língua-literatura, e apresentar alguns caminhos para desvendar a terceira margem apontada por Rosa, observando a riqueza dialógica do texto. Para fundamentar a análise realizada, recorreu-se aos estudos de Bakhtin e seu Círculo, à Estilística e a um viés filosófico.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Dialogismo; Signo ideológico; Estilística; Literatura; Guimarães Rosa*

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How did I/we get like this?
Our – hard – gaze begs the question:
“What have you done to me?”
Me, Father? You are the one who slowly
Trespassed on me, wrinkle by wrinkle...
Mario Quintana¹

First Remarks

The present article aims to reflect upon the short story *The Third Bank of the River*, written by Guimarães Rosa. It is possible to observe that, in many works that deal with the same subject, in Rosa's text, there is a wealth of voices that can be heard and paths that can be taken as the reader interacts with the short story, which makes several interpretation nuances possible. The short story captures the reader, who becomes captive of what could be seen as the third river bank. That is due to the fact that his discursive memory takes him to the river and its two banks. In which time and space would there be the so called third riverside? As the reader does not find linguistic nor extralinguistic elements when he reads the short story's title, he becomes a captive of his own doubts and questions: It is as if he were transported to the third river bank, unable to recognize that place. The invitation to read this short story comes from its title, which, due to the ordinal number “third,” takes the reader from his comfort zone to a place where he questions and inquires after the meaning behind that third river bank. This article aims to show, thus, how language calls the reader's attention, as if it were a window, to the different scenarios of existence, promoting studies, as pointed out by Brait (2010), in which language and literature are intertwined. In *What is Language?, The Construction of the Utterance*, and other little known articles in Brazil, Voloshinov showed, as Brait (2010) asserted, the importance of such articulation in order to surpass the idea of language as dictionary, i.e., seeing language in its use, materialized in the subject who produces the artistic discourse. In this sense, this paper intends to show readers possible ways to find the third river bank pointed by Rosa, being aware of the dialogical richness of the text, which will help them to dive into diverse interpretations/assessments. For this analysis to be theoretically grounded, concepts

¹ Text in original: “Como pude ficarmos assim? Nosso olhar – duro – interroga: “O que fizeste de mim?” Eu Pai? Tu é que me invadiste, Lentamente, ruga a ruga...”

from the Dialogical Discourse Analysis (DDA), Stylistics, Phonostylistics, and the Philosophical view of Lorenzo Papette will be drawn upon.

A Dive in the Meanings of *The Third River Bank*

The Third River Bank, a short story by Guimarães Rosa, from its title, presents different possibilities of interpretation. The author is able to impress, in the reader, one of the most valuable characteristics of the short story genre: the so-called instant hook. The reader is, thus, a captive of that third bank, of his own questions. And this is conflicting, for he does not have any reference of this third bank in extralinguistic background. In his world view, there are two banks only, and they do not refer to a third which defines a certain order: the first and second river banks. As to that, Galvão (1978, p.38) points to a meaningful use of ordinal numbers when he states that

The mere shift from cardinal to ordinal numbers takes the ground off the feet. The river has two equally important banks: they are not classified as the first bank and the second bank. The shift to ordinal numbers incurs seriation and a different temporality.²

In this sense, each word is equally important in the interpretation act, and this perspective allows revisiting the concept of *answerability* proposed by Bakhtin (2010, p.91)³, to whom

Every utterance must be regarded primarily as a *response* to preceding utterances of the given sphere (we understand the word “response” here in the broadest sense). Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account. After all, as regards a given question, is a given matter, and so forth, the utterance occupies a particular *definite* position in a given sphere of communication. It is impossible to determine its position without correlating it with other positions. Therefore, each utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other utterances of the given sphere of speech communication (emphasis in original).

² Text in original: “O simples deslocamento do numeral cardinal para o ordinal retira o chão de debaixo dos pés. O rio tem duas margens de igual estatuto, não uma primeira e uma segunda margem. A mudança para o ordinal incide ainda numa seriação e numa outra temporalidade”.

³ Reference of the English version of this work: BAKHTIN, M. The Problem of Speech Genres. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*. 12th printing. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010. pp.60-102.

Still under this perspective, which conceives words as expressions of meaning, it is necessary to observe what Ponchirolli (2006) proposes, when he emphasizes that the definite article “the” in the title, as an element of estrangement, singles out something that the reader cannot see.

Taking this analysis further, right in the first paragraph, one reads “My father was a dutiful, orderly, straightforward man” (ROSA, 1997, p.256).⁴ The verb “to be” in the past “was” points to a situation which does not exist anymore, for the man was, i.e., he is no longer, or to the fact that this man is dead, or to a totally different present situation which differs from the one related to a “dutiful, orderly” father. In this paragraph, the narrator states that he inquired “reliable people” who confirmed the aforementioned characteristics. The validity of the assessment is reinforced by the fact that these people are reliable, since reliability relates to the idea that the adjectives used in relation to the father come from reason, from truth.

Still in the first paragraph, the son, who is the narrator, characterizes the father as someone similar to others, a common person: “[...] he was neither jollier nor more melancholy than the other men we know” (ROSA, 1997, p.256). However, right after that, in the shortest utterance of the paragraph, one characteristic is praised: “a little quieter” (ROSA, 1997, p.256).

By means of a phonostylistics analysis, it is possible to bring the adjective *quiet* close to the ones already used: *dutiful*, *orderly*, *straightforward*. In both, which refer to the same person, *Meu pai (My father)*, the “u” and the “i” stand out.⁵ The first one reinforces the idea of sadness, related either to the son’s account or to a characteristic of the father, which refers directly to closure, exclusion, excessive introspection and explains the father’s quietness. The second one, on the other hand, refers to a moral acuteness, which portrays some agony, decline as if it prepared the grounds for what was to come in the last utterance of the paragraph, a watershed: “But it happened one day that father ordered a boat” (ROSA, 1997, p.257). Then, the father rowed to the

⁴ TN. The complete short story *A terceira margem do rio* in the original in Portuguese is available at http://www.releituras.com/guimmarosa_margem.asp. The English version used here, a translation by William L. Grosmann, was published in *The Oxford Book of Latin American Short Stories* (ECHEVARRIA, 1997).

⁵ TN. It is important to point out that the interjections “uh,” which sounds like /u:/, and “ih,” which sounds like /i:/, have the same sounds of the letters ‘u’ and ‘i’ in the Portuguese alphabet, respectively.

middle of the river, where he stayed for many years, and did not communicate with anyone: “Father did not come back. Nor did he go anywhere, really. He just rowed and floated across and around, out there in the river” (ROSA, 1997, p.257).

The narrator-character also characterizes the river, personifying it. As he does it, he keeps the same type of sentence structure: just like the father, the river is initially characterized with three adjectives: “[...] (big),⁶ deep, quiet” (ROSA, 1997, p.257). After these adjectives, just like in the father’s description, there is an adjective that is used in the center of the utterance: “[...] so wide you couldn’t see across it” (ROSA, 1997, p.257). It is important to remind the reader that, when characterizing the father, the narrator uses the adjective “quiet,” which stands out in the utterance. Such adjective is semantically close⁷ to the one used to describe the river, and they are both seen as innate: as to the father, he has been quiet “[...] since adolescence or even childhood” (ROSA, 1997, p.256); as to the river, it has been “always” quiet.⁸

These descriptions do not only bring the father and the river close: they practically create a fusion of both. In *A canoa e o rio* (The boat and the river), Papette (p.7) states that

[...] the father is the one who makes the revelation: he is in the river just like the river, for traveling is inside him: both are part of each other, inseparable elements in a unit. The father in his boat is “lonely, aimless” in the river; he becomes running water and is dissolved as a means of becoming free.⁹

According to the son/narrator, as the years pass by, the father becomes unhuman: “[...] his hair and beard must have been shaggy and his nails long. I pictured him thin and sickly, black with hair and sunburn” (ROSA, 1997, p.259). He does not

⁶ TN. William L. Grossman, the translator of this short story, omitted the third adjective *big*. However, to better understand the article authors’ idea, I inserted the third adjective and put it in parentheses.

⁷ TN. This sentence may sound illogical in English since the adjectives in Portuguese (*quieto* and *calado*) were translated as quiet by Grossmann. However, not to change the author’s sentence, I decided to keep the original sentence and explain our translation in this note.

⁸ TN. Grossmann does not use the adverb “always” in his translation. I inserted it due to the fact that it is an important idea in the article and that it is used by Guimarães Rosa in the short story (“calado que sempre” – quiet as always).

⁹ Text in original: “[...] o pai é depositário do revelável; ele está dentro do rio exatamente como o rio, o viajar, está dentro dele: ambos são parte dum do outro, elementos indissociáveis numa unidade. O pai com a sua canoa está “solto solitariamente” no rio; fez-se água corrente e este seu dissolver-se torna-se forma de liberdade”.

seem to have physiological needs nor does he seem concerned about his body, clothing, or food, as we see in the excerpt below:

He took only a small part of the food that I left in the hollow rock – not enough, it seemed to me, for survival. What could his state of health have been? (ROSA, 1997, p.258).

The physical absence of the father amongst his family members makes his presence of a different nature, for he becomes an image, a constant image in their minds. And the fact that the narrator always refers to his father with a possessive adjective “our father,” creates a dialogical relation with *Our Father*, from the Lord’s Prayer.¹⁰

As the reference to “our father” is more and more present in the short story, it becomes even more associable with the Lord’s Prayer. This association is created by other elements in the short story which create a unit of specific meaning. This father resembles the Father of the Bible, for he is in between two worlds and for having been given the power to change the lives of so many people even if they seem not to be there. He also resembles a god who needs offerings, as if the son were obliged to leave clothes and food to the divine being. The very triad of adjectives of which the father and the river are constituted echoes, in the reader’s memory, the biblical God, who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all in “one.” The son’s actions also contribute to such association, for they could be compared to a disciple whose mission is to spread the story of the Father.

Guilt and forgiveness are feelings which are present in relation to the son, and they also bring forth religious themes. The narrator/character refers to his guilt emphatically by means of the repetition, for example, of the adjective “great”: “What was my great guilt?” (ROSA, 1997, p.260). In the paragraph before last, the emphasis now is on forgiveness, which is done with the repetition of the verb “beg” in the present participle: “And I’m begging forgiveness, begging, begging” (ROSA, 1997, p.260).

¹⁰ TN. It is important to explain that, although the narrator in Rosa’s short story uses “our father” throughout the narration, Grossman preferred the use of “my father.” In order for the reader to see the dialogical relation between the narrator’s reference to his father and the Lord’s Prayer, I opted to use “our father” in the sentence.

As one observes the close relation between the text and the religious discourse, it is possible to refer to Ponchirolli (2006, p.106), who makes the following remark about the quotation:

[...] the word begging is repeated three times. This number is very meaningful and recurrent in the short story. The repetition of the verb “begging” and the alliteration remind one of the religious and ritualistic discourse, such as a prayer in a mass.¹¹

In the short story climax, which happens when the father accepts the son’s suggestion to swap places with him, there is also some stylistic element being used. In “He heard me. He stood up. He maneuvered with his oars and headed the boat towards me. He had accepted my offer,” it is possible to notice that the verbs “heard” and “maneuvered” promote closeness to the father: The first verb refers to the attention given by someone who wants to know the other person’s opinion, to take what he wants to say into account, and the second verb indicates the movement to the boat’s prow, which, along with the verb phrase “stood up,” produce the meaning effect that the action was smoothly done. Such tranquility is contrary to the despair that the narrator felt when he saw his father coming towards him: he ran.

Certainly, one is able to observe from this analysis that such reading is only made possible when certain language and world knowledge is acquired by the reader who uses his own experiences with text interpretation. Thus, the way he apprehends the world is always historically situated, as Fiorin (2008, p.55) pointed out: such consciousness is built “[...] in social communication, that is, in society, in History.”¹²

Understanding is historically situated, for the reader/subject guides his own process of reading in a discursive manner, listening to the social voices which are part of his own reality.

It is noticeable that the narrator’s escape and future illness reminds him discursively of the belief that no one can see the face of a god and come out of that experience unharmed. That is why the narrator, after fleeing from his father never to find him again, asks for a little boat which would not last for many years in the river as

¹¹ Text in original: “[...] a palavra pedindo é repetida três vezes, número bastante significativo e muito recorrente no conto [...] A repetição do termo “pedindo” e a aliteração lembram o discurso religioso e ritualístico, como a reza”.

¹² Text in original: “[...] na comunicação social, ou seja, na sociedade, na História”.

his father's did in order to shelter his dead body, for he fears that his life will be shortened in the unmarked plains of his life, hinting, thus, at the prospect of his suicide.

This final action of the narrator takes the reader back to the idea of offering, which is well explained by Papette (p.9):

The power and the poetry of this last action are remarkable, but they also show the limitations of such action: Because he is unable to give his soul to the river, as his last possible sacrifice, he offers it his tired and lifeless body, which still has some symbolic value. He chose a different path, but at the end he reached the bank that embraces all the other banks in a single universal plane. His action, despite its lack of a sacrifice-like consistency, as his father's, maintains the power of a symbolically efficient action.¹³

Thus, up to his last action, the son wants to follow his father's footsteps, to become the very river. This desire is clearly known in the last sentence of the short story, which shows, in its structure, another triad whose last element encompasses the others just like it happened when the father and the son were described:

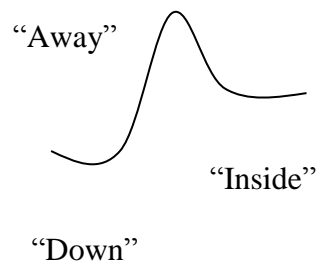
- The father's description: "My father was a *dutiful, orderly, straightforward* man" (ROSA, 1997, p.256; our emphasis).
- The river's description: "[...] (*big, deep, quiet*, and so wide you couldn't see across it" (ROSA, 1997, p.257; our emphasis).
- The son's constitution: [...] I, down the *river*, lost in the *river*, inside the *river...the river...*" (ROSA, 1997, p.260; our emphasis).

The basic difference in the triads is in the fact that the one related to the son is composed solely of nouns; better yet, it is composed of one definite noun, "the river," which is echoed and accompanied by words that define its sphere of action: "down," meaning a less high place; "away,"¹⁴ meaning expansion – it is related to the elevation of the former condition; and "inside," meaning the way back downwards – it hints at the idea that it is between "down" and "away," in an incomplete manner. It is as if the

¹³ Text in original: "A força e o carácter poético deste último acto é considerável, mas emergem também os limites do gesto: por não conseguir dar a alma ao rio ele, no último sacrifício possível, oferece-lhe o seu corpo, corpo esgotado, esvaziado de vida, mas que contudo possui ainda um valor simbólico. Ele escolheu um caminho diferente, mas no final chegou àquela margem que abraça todas as outras num único plano universal e o seu gesto, embora sem a consistência quase sacrificial daquele paterno, mantém o poder dum gesto simbolicamente eficaz".

¹⁴ TN. Although Grossman translated "a fora" as "lost," I opted to use "away," for it seems that the author wanted to emphasize the word "fora" when he separated the adverb "afora" into two words, "a" and "fora."

reader were able to visualize a sinuous line that goes up and tries to go down, but not in a full descent:



One can say that, as to the father and the river, the triad focuses on same-unit or same-referent characteristics and culminates in the biggest one, which is “quiet” and “wide,” respectively. As to the son, the triad focuses on the river: The “I,” which is the river, is followed by its spheres of action and culminates in the river, which encompasses both the son and the very river, becoming a symbol of interaction, of unity. From these triads, one can get to the head-triad of the short story: *father, son, and river*.

Although the son’s interaction with the river can be shown, that is, it can be represented by the moment when the son offers his dead body to the river, and although the father clearly interacts with his own actions, which delimit the third bank, it is not possible to show the son’s interaction with his father because it is more implicit and cannot be pinpointed in one specific event.

In order to limit the possibilities of interpretation, it is important to visit the concept of dialogism, present in the works of the Bakhtin Circle. When one states that the constitutive dialogism does not refer to speeches *per se*, for it refers to how the voices of others are incorporated in utterances, what is being discussed, thus, is that dialogism does not limit itself to the compositional forms of how the speech of others is absorbed, since, in the textual plane, it is connected to life and, therefore, to social-political-historical events. Such voices, however, may be inserted in the enunciator’s speech by means of objectified speeches (direct and indirect speech, quotation marks, negation) and of double-voiced speeches (parodies, stylization, open and hidden polemic, free indirect speech).

Based on some elements of the Bakhtinian theoretical propositions, this analysis of the short story aims to focus on, among other things, issues related to direct, indirect and free indirect speeches.

When the son, for instance, presents his mother's speech, which addresses the father on his decision to leave, it is possible to notice the voices behind the utterance, i.e., an *I* who gives voice to the *other*. In this case, the *enunciator-I* gives voice to the mother, and the *I* presupposed by the utterance gives voice to the son. This process allows the mother to be autonomous; however, the same does not happen to the father. The *enunciator-I* (the son) absorbs the father's speech, which is basically gestural due to the father's quietness. Below is the excerpt in which the son addresses the father, asking to join him:

Father showed no joy or other emotion. He just put on his hat as he always did and said goodbye to us. He took along no food or bundle of any sort. [...] I felt bold and exhilarated, so much so that I said: "Father, will you take me with you in your boat?" He just looked at me, gave me his blessing, and, by a gesture, told me to go back. I made as if to do so but, when his back was turned, I ducked behind some bushes to watch him. Father got into the boat and rowed away (ROSA, 1997, p.257).

One can say that, throughout the short story, the father's speech is always gestural. Thus, in order to describe the father's gestural language, the narrator-character materializes it as if it were indirect speech. This fact makes it impossible for the father's speech to be autonomous.

Each of the father's gestures/actions is filled with meanings, just like in the excerpt above, in which putting on his hat and making a gesture for the son to go back indicate farewell. The representation of the father's gestures/actions in the son's speech also takes place at the end of the short story: It is the moment when the father waves at the son, stands up, and rows towards the narrator-character, showing, thus, that he accepted the son's offer to replace him in the boat. The father's actions are described below:

He heard me. He stood up. He maneuvered with his oars and headed the boat toward me. He had accepted my offer. And suddenly I trembled, down deep. For he had raised his arm and waved – the first time in so many, so many years (ROSA, 1997, p.260).

As to the mother, the indirect speech is used only when the content of her speech echoes in the son's voice. When that happens, it is so stressed that it becomes a free

indirect speech. In this type of speech, there are no clear-cut boundaries between voices although one knows who is, in fact, speaking. It is as if it were a kind of shared utterance: the reported speech whose boundaries are maximally weakened, as Fiorin (2008, p.38) points out: “In this case, there are no clear-cut boundaries of the voices. They get mixed, but, despite that, they are clearly heard. That is why the words are double-voiced.”¹⁵

In the short story, this happens at the moment when the narrator expresses that he does not understand his mother, or himself, because he does not understand why his father built himself a boat. The enunciator-character and his mother are part of the same speech when a question is made: “Mother carried on plenty about it. *Was her husband going to become a fisherman all of a sudden? Or a hunter?*” (ROSA, 1997, p.257; our emphasis).

As a free indirect speech, as one can see, it has no quotation marks or dashes to indicate that the question is about to be made, separating it from the narrator’s speech. This fact differs from the mother’s prior speech, which is clearly seen as hers due to the use of quotation marks. The content of what was said explains the reason for the enunciator-character to be distant, for such content expresses the idea of departure, which is something the son does not expect from his father. One example of the fact that the son wants closeness and not distance is in the same paragraph of the mother’s speech, when the son asks to go along with the father in his boat. The idea of distance in the mother’s speech is reinforced by the use of the stylized pronoun *você* (you in Portuguese), which phonetically progresses from “cê” to “ocê” to “você” in “If you go away, stay away. Don’t ever come back!” (ROSA, 1997, p.257).¹⁶ To sum up, the son’s exhaustive search to be close to his father may be exposed in this word play.

Thus, the enunciator-character (the son) is accentuated in the time of the enunciation while the father is in the time of the utterance. As the son tells his father the story, he tries, at all costs, to bring his father to his time. In this search, then, other speeches are internalized by means of the indirect speech in which “they told me” and “there was some foolish talk” are present in the narrative:

¹⁵ Text in original: “Nesse caso, não temos demarcações nítidas entre as vozes. Elas misturam-se, mas apesar disso, são claramente percebidas. Por isso diz-se que as palavras são bivocais”.

¹⁶ TN. The sentence in Portuguese shows this phonetic progression from “cê” to “você” (as if it were from *u* to *you* in English): “*Cê* vai, *ocê* fique, *você* nunca volte!”

When I put the question to people bluntly and insistently, all *they told me* was that they heard that father had explained it to the man who made the boat. But now this man was dead and nobody knew or remembered anything. *There was just some foolish talk*, when the rains were especially severe and persistent, that my father was wise like Noah and had the boat built in anticipation of a new flood; I dimly remember people saying this. In any case, I would not condemn my father for what he was doing. My hair was beginning to turn gray (ROSA, 1997, p.259; our emphasis).

As an important element of this analysis, it is interesting to notice that the time of the utterance does not correspond to the time of the enunciation. The interaction between the work and the world enables the existence of connections between times and spaces/spheres in a dialogical way, as Bakhtin (1984)¹⁷ pointed out when studying the work of François Rabelais. In this sense, one can say that the chronology in the text does not correspond to the one in the enunciation. This can be seen in the following excerpt.

Now and then someone would say that I was getting to look more and more like my father. But I knew that by then his hair and beard must have been shaggy and his nails long. I pictured him thin and sickly, black with hair and sunburn, and almost naked despite the articles of clothing I occasionally left for him (ROSA, 1997, p.259).

In the excerpt above, the enunciator-character's resemblance to his father is not confirmed by the enunciation that is marked mainly by the temporal deixis "by then."

In the short story's last paragraph, there is a greater simulacrum of a time which is to happen. It is the moment when the narrator asks for his body to be put in the river. This request provokes the illusion that that is to be done at that very moment, mainly because he says "it is too late":

I know *it is too late*. I must stay in the deserts and unmarked plains of my life, and I fear I shall shorten it. But when death comes I want them to take me and put me in a little boat in this perpetual water between the long shores; and I, down the river, lost in the river, inside the river...the river... (ROSA, 1997, p.260; our emphasis).

¹⁷ Reference of the English version of this work: BAKHTIN, M. *Rabelais and his World*. Translated from Russian by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984.

It is important to highlight that, even before this last request, when he looks for closeness to his father and the river, time is also an issue. It is when the narrator describes what he said to his father in order to replace him in the boat:

And I said what I was so eager to say, to state formally and under oath. I said it as loud as I could: “Father, you have been out there long enough. You are old...Come back and I’ll go instead. Right *now*, if you want. Any time. I’ll get into the boat. I’ll take your place (ROSA, 1997, p.260; our emphasis).

The temporal deixis “now” in the excerpt above does not correspond to the time of the enunciation and is, thus, different from the time in the prior excerpt, when he says, “it is too late” now. This “now” in the excerpt above is attached to a fact in the past in which the *I* enunciator-character gives voice to another *I*, the son. If one follows this chain of events, one finds the presupposed *I* of the enunciation.

As it has been pointed out, strong dialogical relations can be established between the Lord’s Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer

Our *Father* which art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom *come*, thy *will be done*, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen (BIBLE, KJV, Mathews 6: 9-13; our emphasis).

and an excerpt of the short story:

- Father, you have been out there long enough. You are old...Come back and I’ll go instead. Right now, *if you want*. Any time. I’ll get into the boat. I’ll take your place (ROSA, 1997, p.260; our emphasis).

Once again, this fact evokes the father as a mythical being. Such as the prayer, the son refers to his father as *Father* and uses the command “come,” which, due to his using “if you want,” makes the command more colloquial, more intimate. The word “will” (want) is also present in the son’s speech, but unlike the prayer, it is used in the plural (*vontades*), showing he felt capable of replacing his father. Thus, the son’s capability and the possibility of an agreement are emphasized.

Final Remarks

By means of a discursive analysis, this article pointed to some aspects related to the voices that echo in Guimarães Rosa's short story. It also showed that the speech time created a distance between the father and the son, for, while the son's representation is in the time of the enunciation, the father's is connected to the utterance *per se*. Stylistic factors also contributed to confirm this distance from the father; that was exemplified with the phonetic progression of the subject pronoun *você* (*you* in Portuguese): from *cê*, *ocê* to *você*.¹⁸

In the never-ending search of the son for his father, it was possible to notice that, besides his willingness to replace him, there was a clear head-triad in the short story: father, son, and river. This fact can lead to other interpretations that tend to find a unity, such as the case of Papette ([20--]), who sees the relation between the father and the river as if it were a merging process.

Going back to Fiorin (2008, p.59), one reads that

The concept of dialogy contributes for the historical analysis of texts not to be the description of an era, the narrative of an author's life so that it becomes a fine and subtle semantic analysis that shows approval or disapproval, acceptance or refusal, polemic and contract, meaning slide, deletion, etc.¹⁹

Based on the concepts discussed by Bakhtin and his Circle, it is possible not only to think of new reading procedures and strategies, but also to show the fundamental cooperation there must be between language and literature in order to deepen language studies.

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¹⁸ Please refer to footnote 16.

¹⁹ Text in original: "Com a concepção dialógica, a análise histórica dos textos deixa de ser descrição de uma época, a narrativa da vida de um autor, para se transformar numa fina e sutil análise semântica, que vai mostrando aprovações ou reprovações, adesão e recusas, polêmicas e contratos, deslizamento de sentidos, apagamentos etc."

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