

“Bakhtin and I Had Almost Been Colleagues...”: On the Specificity of the Last Wave of the First Russian Reception of *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art* / “Бахтин почти мой товарищ...”: о специфике последней волны русской рецепции Проблем творчества Достоевского / “Bakhtin foi quase meu colega...”: sobre a especificidade da última onda da primeira recepção russa do livro Problemas da criação de Dostoiévski

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ABSTRACT

The first book of M. M. Bakhtin on Dostoevsky has been the focus of researchers for over 90 years now. In this article, an analysis is carried out of the last wave of the Russian reception of *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art*. We show that the study of the reception of Bakhtinian ideas, contained in the work, remains relevant with respect to the development of the general framework of the intellectual history, and to the analysis of isolated components.

KEYWORDS: M. Bakhtin; *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art*; Reception; Critical discourse

АННОТАЦИЯ

Первая книга М.М. Бахтина о Достоевском более 90 лет привлекает внимание исследователей. В статье рассматривается последняя волна русской рецепции Проблем творчества Достоевского. Доказывается, что вопрос изучения рецепции бахтинских идей, заложенных в книге, не теряет актуальности как при создании общей картины интеллектуальной истории, так и при рассмотрении отдельных ее составляющих.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: М.М. Бахтин; Проблемы творчества Достоевского; Рецепция; Критический дискурс

RESUMO

O primeiro livro de M.M. Bakhtin sobre Dostoiévski é alvo de atenção dos pesquisadores há mais de 90 anos. No artigo é analisada a última onda da recepção russa de Problemas da criação de Dostoiévski. Provamos que a questão do estudo da recepção das ideias bakhtinianas, contidas no livro, não perde a sua atualidade tanto no que diz respeito à construção do quadro geral da história intelectual, quanto à análise dos componentes isolados.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: M. Bakhtin; Problemas da criação de Dostoiévski; Recepção; Discurso crítico

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Introduction

The book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* plays a special role in M. Bakhtin's scientific bibliographic production: for over three decades, this work has been nearly the only testimony of the scientist's presence in the field of literary criticism between 1930-1960, along with two articles on Leo Tolstoy (BAKHTIN, 2000, pp.179-184/185-205).

To date, a significant number of texts have been published, which are dedicated to the long and contradictory reception – on the part of the human sciences worldwide – of the ideas in the book. The study on the reception of Bakhtinian ideas has, nonetheless, remained relevant regarding both the development of the general framework of intellectual history, and the analysis of particular elements of the work. As we know, Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky – published when the author was awaiting sentencing in the Voskresenie case – caused a significant stir not only in the USSR, but also abroad, among the Russian diáspora. Issues regarding the reception of *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Art*, mainly its first wave in 1929-1930, were taken up in many articles and special reviews (BOCHAROV, 2000, pp.432-543; OSSOVSKY, 1990, pp.47-60; OSSOVSKY, 1992, pp.379-391; OSSOVSKY, 1997, pp.86-110; GRILLO, 2019, pp.176-196), as well as in book chapters (KONKIN; KONKINA, 1993, pp.275-299; EMERSON, 1997, pp.75-92). The general character of the initial discussion that took place within the great thinker's homeland, was based on some extensive reviews (I. GROSSMAN-ROSCHIN; A. LUNACHARSKY; M. STARENKOV) and some less extensive ones (N. BERKOVSKY; ARKADIY GLAGOLEV, among others), as well as on mentions of the book's relation to the analysis of particular scientific issues and problems. Thus, in *Articles on Turgenev* (1929-1930), L. Pumpyansky responds to *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Art* expressing his solidarity with Bakhtin's comprehension of *skaz* and, in particular, with *the word of the other* in Turgenev:

On the comprehension of *skaz* as a discourse of otherness, we primarily disagree with the Formalists and agree with M. Bakhtin: “*skaz* is, above all, an orientation to the discourse of an other, as a consequence, to oral discourse... a *skaz* is introduced precisely by the voice of the other (for

reference, see Bakhtin's study *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*, Leningrad, 1929, p.115)." (PUMPYANSKY, 2000, p.457).¹

The second reference to *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* is related to Pumpyansky's theory of the Russian novel, which he developed in his articles on Turgenev (BOCHAROV, 2000, pp.482-483):

A novel about the contradictions of the tactics to address the crowd was needed in the same way as Dostoevsky's novel about the contradictions of conspiracy tactics – but, in order to achieve this, the polyphonic methods of Dostoevsky were required (PUMPYANSKY, 2000, p.488).²

In the article The Main Problem of the Novel *Envy* [*Основная ошибка романа Зависть*] –given as a lecture by Pumpyansky in his cabinet on March 17th, 1931, during the Leningrad Club of Literati [*Доклад в кабинете писателя в Ленклублите*] – he quoted the most important thesis of the 1929 edition, without citing the author's name:

There does not exist that freedom of the characters' voices that, in Dostoevsky, collide as if world into worlds, comets into comets, as if unpredictable orbits from incompatible horizons (PUMPYANSKY, 2000a, p.557).³

¹ Translated from Portuguese: “Na compreensão de *skaz* como discurso alheio nós antes de tudo discordamos dos formalistas e concordamos com M. Bakhtin: ‘*skaz* é, antes de tudo, uma orientação para o discurso alheio e depois, como consequência, para o discurso oral... O *skaz* é introduzido justamente pela voz alheia (cf. o seu estudo *Problemas da criação de Dostoiévski*, Leningrado, 1929, pp.115).’ (PUMPIÁNSKI, 2000, p.457).” In Russian: “В понимании сказа как чужой речи прежде всего (а уж вторых речи устной) мы расходимся с формалистами и примыкаем к М. М. Бахтину: ‘сказ есть прежде всего установка на чужую речь, а уж отсюда, как следствие, на устную... Сказ вводится именно ради чужого голоса’ (см. его исследование *Проблемы творчества Достоевского*. Л., 1929. с. 115).’ (ПУМПЯНСКИЙ, 2000, с.457).”

² Translated from Portuguese: “Havia necessidade de um romance sobre as contradições da própria tática de ir ao povo, semelhante ao romance de Dostoiévski sobre as contradições da tática de conspiração, mas para isso eram necessários os métodos polifônicos de Dostoiévski (PUMPIÁNSKI, 2000, p.488).” In Russian: “Нужен был роман о противоречиях самой тактики хождения в народ, подобно тому как Достоевский написал роман о противоречиях тактики заговора, — но для этого нужны были «полифонические» методы Достоевского.”

³ Translated from Portuguese: “Não há aquela liberdade das vozes das personagens que em Dostoiévski colidem como mundo com mundo, cometa com cometa, como órbitas imprevisas dos horizontes incompatíveis (PUMPIÁNSKI, 2000a, p.557).” In Russian: “Нет той свободы голосов героев, сталкивающихся у Достоевского как мир с миром, комета с кометой, как неподвижные орбиты несовместимых кругозоров.”

The first wave of the Soviet reception to *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*, as observed by Bocharov (2000, p.473), occurred “precisely during the period in which the case was being judged: between July 1929, when Bakhtin was sentenced, on March 1930, when he was ready to leave to Kostanay”.⁴

In *The Duvakin Interviews* (Fifth conversation, March 22nd, 1973), in response to questions about his first book on Dostoevsky, Bakhtin states: “The book has been noticed, yes, notably” (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.245).⁵

It is worth noting that the second wave of Russian reception covers a wider period of time: delimited (to a degree) between 1940 and 2010. Likewise, it is necessary to underline its own specificity, due largely to Bakhtin’s living conditions. Two main *plots* in the book’s reception are highlighted, which reflect the positions taken up by different generations of researchers. The fact that the Russian scholar’s monograph, published in 1929, remained for many decades only in the memory of a small circle of specialists in the USSR and the Russian emigration, was brought up by V. Kojinov during his interview to N. Pankov, published in the journal *Dialog. Carnival. Chronotope*:

The first of his books on Dostoevsky, and probably the major work of his lifetime he finished at the age of Christ and published it in 1929, on turning 34. But, instead of communicating creatively with his craft mates, he was obliged to remain silent for some decades, as if he no longer existed publicly, and thus waited for over 30 years for his first book to be reissued (KOJINOV, 1992, p.112).⁶

The same was portrayed in V. Zdol’nikov’s article “Bakhtin’s book on Dostoevsky in the context of the literary debate of the 1920s”. Zdol’nikov, evaluating the level of theoretical innovation in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*, stated that those early

⁴ Translated from Portuguese: “bem na época em que o caso estava sendo julgado: de julho de 1929, quando foi dada a sentença, até o março de 1930, quando M. Bakhtin já estava de partida para Kustanai (BOTCHAROV, 2000, p.473).” In Russian: “в сроки, когда решалось дело: с июля 1929, когда был вынесен приговор, до марта 1930, когда М.М.Б. уже отбывал в Кустанай.”

⁵ Translated from Portuguese: “O livro foi notado, sim, notado (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.245).”

⁶ In Portuguese: “O primeiro dos seus livros, dedicado a Dostoiévski, e, provavelmente, a obra principal da sua vida ele finalizou na idade do Cristo e publicou em 1929, ao chegar aos 34 anos. Mas ao invés da comunicação criativa com os irmãos de ofício ele foi obrigado a permanecer calado por alguns decênios, como se não existisse mais para os leitores, e esperou pela reedição do seu primeiro livro por mais de 30 anos (KÓJINOV, 1992, p.112).” In Russian: “Первую свою книгу, посвященную Достоевскому, возможно, главный труд своей жизни, он дописал в возрасте Христа, и напечатал в 1929 году, достигнув 34 лет. Но вместо творческого общения с собратьями по цеху, он вынужден был замолчать на несколько десятилетий, он как бы не существовал более для читателей и ждал переиздания своей первой книги более 30 лет.”

conflicting theoreticians, meaning the authors of the very first reviews, not only had not tried to align Bakhtin to its ideas, but also “completely ‘forgot’ about [...] book’s existence” (ZDOL’NIKOV, 2003, p.7).⁷ Nonetheless, it is necessary to stress that both Kojinov and Zdol’nikov speak on behalf of their generations, but forget about Bakhtin’s own contemporary generation, his burgeoning readership who read the book while young, and clearly remembered it. Some of them, in fact, kept up a dialogue with the author. The fact that between the 1930s and the beginning of the 1960s, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art* had not been forgotten is evidenced by serious factors: starting with an official mention (firstly in the rerelease of A. Lunacharsky’s article “On Dostoevsky’s ‘multivocality’: regarding M. Bakhtin’s book *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art*” [О ‘многоголосности’ Достоевского: по поводу книги М.М. Бахтина *Проблемы творчества Достоевского*]) in 1937, 1956 and 1957; moreover, along with the testimonies on the preservation of the memory of the book by the philological community: both by word of mouth and in private correspondence (E. Tarle’s response⁸; G. Gukovsky’s⁹ and N. Berkovsky’s letters), and in books, articles and lectures (V. Vinogradov, V. Shklovsky, G. Fridlender, among others).

The analysis of the last wave of the Russian reception to *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art* allows us to see more deeply specific plots of the process of the Bakhtinian book’s reception, as well as to outline the current picture regarding the topicality of Bakhtin’s heritage.

⁷ In Russian: “вовсе ‘забыли’ о [...] существовании книги”.

⁸ According to M. Yudina, Tarle “‘loved’ the works of M. Bakhtin on Dostoevsky” (БАКHTИH, 2002, p.468). Translated from Russian: “был ‘без ума’ от работ М.М. Бахтина о Достоевском...”

⁹ On August 1st, 1943, G. Gukovsky wrote to D. Maksimov: “Of course I know Bakhtin’s book on Dostoevsky very well; I consider him to be one of the most brilliant minds that have arisen in our science in the last decades. It is not about agreeing with his theories, but about the kind of his scientific thought, its depth. In its own time, this book had great repercussions. Almost everyone rated it highly (БАКHTИH, 2002, p.487).” In Portuguese: “É claro que conheço muito bem o livro de Bakhtin sobre Dostoiévski e o considero um dos fenômenos mais brilhantes da nossa ciência dos últimos decênios. Aqui não se trata de concordar com as suas teses, mas do tipo do pensamento científico, da sua profundidade. Em sua época esse livro causou muita repercussão. Quase todos avaliam-no muito bem (БАКHTИH, 2002, p.487). In Russian: “Ну конечно, я очень хорошо знаю книгу Бахтина о Достоевском и считаю ее одним из самых блестящих явлений нашей науки за последние десятилетия. Тут дело идет не о согласии с его положениями, а о типе научного мышления, о глубине его. Эта книга в свое время вообще очень шумела. Ее ставят высоко почти все.”

“To the Victor-Master...”: Initial Remarks

Among the reactions to Bakhtin’s first book, A. Lunacharsky’s review deserves special attention as it caused, according to S. Bocharov’s precise definition, “a certain polyphony” of the voices in the Soviet press. In his extensive response to the Bakhtinian reading of Dostoevsky’s novels as polyphonic, and sharing the researcher’s opinion, Lunacharsky stressed:

Bakhtin not only succeeded in establishing more clearly the enormous importance of multivocality in Dostoevsky’s novel, as well as multivocality’s role as its essential and distinctive trace, but also sharply defined the full autonomy and appreciation of each one of those “voices” – which are absolutely unthinkable for most writers though splendidly developed by Dostoevsky (LUNACHARSKY, 2001, p.163).¹⁰

It is known that, in margins of his personal copy of the book, Lunacharsky *gave his blessings* to Bakhtin’s research on the origin of polyphony, that is, to search for the historical foundation regarding the main thesis of the book (BOCHAROV, 2000, p.477), which is precisely what occurred in the second edition of Bakhtin’s monograph on Dostoevsky.

A. Lunacharsky’s name is related to one of the longest biographical and scientific “plots”, temporally speaking, and one of the most intensely manifested. Firstly, his review played an important role in changing Bakhtin’s sentence (BOCHAROV, 2000, p.479); secondly, precisely because of this help of Lunacharsky’s review, Bakhtin “reinforced” positions necessary to defend his thesis (letter to B. Zalesky on October 19th, 1946)¹¹;

¹⁰ Translated from Portuguese: “Bakhtin não só conseguiu estabelecer, com mais clareza que anteriormente, a enorme importância da multivocalidade no romance de Dostoiévski e o papel dessa multivocalidade como um traço mais essencial e característico do seu romance, mas também definiu com precisão aquela extrema autonomia e valorização plena de cada ‘voz’, totalmente impensáveis na obra da maioria dos demais escritores, e que é desenvolvida de modo esplêndido em Dostoiévski” (LUNATCHÁRSKI, 2001, p.163). In Russian: “Бахтину удалось не только установить с большей ясностью, чем это делалось кем бы то ни было до сих пор, огромное значение многоголосности в романе Достоевского, роль этой многоголосности как существеннейшей характерной черты его романа, но и верно определить ту чрезвычайную, у огромного большинства других писателей совершенно немыслимую, автономность и полноценность каждого “голоса”, которая потрясающе развернута у Достоевского.”

¹¹ “Dear Boris Vladimirovich! I now send you the thesis of [my work] the dissertation, the scholar A. Lunacharsky’s review on my Dostoevsky and the review of E. Tarle on Rabelais (BAKHTIN, 2008, p.972).” Translated from Portuguese: “Prezado Boris Vladimirovitch! Envio-lhe as teses para a [meu

thirdly, in the eyes of the State Lunacharsky's article served for many years as a reassurance of the quality of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*. Due to the publication of the article-review in many issues, Bakhtin's book did not leave the spotlight of Soviet literary criticism, serving as a type of guide on the evaluation of the book on Dostoevsky. Suffice it to remember that, in 1937, the circulation of Lunacharsky's collection of articles *Classics of Russian Literature* [*Классики русской литературы*] totaled 10,000 copies. While *Dostoevsky in Russian Criticism* [*Достоевский в русской критике*, 1956] and Lunacharsky's collection *Articles on Literature* [*Статьи о литературе*, 1957] were published in a run of 75,000 copies. As one of the earliest reviewers, Lev Chubin, wrote about *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*,

[...] for many, many years (when M. Bakhtin himself was "excommunicated" from literature and his book became a bibliographical rarity), Lunacharsky's article was practically the only source for information on the book (CHUBIN, 1965, p.80).¹²

The reference A. Belkin made to Bakhtin (through quoting Lunacharsky) in his introductory essay to the book *F. M. Dostoevsky as per Russian Criticism* [*Ф. М. Достоевский в русской критике*] is characteristic:

Lunacharsky notices typical traces on Dostoevsky's aesthetics: his 'lyricism', subjectivity, the structure of 'confession', so common in Dostoevsky's novels, his 'multivocality'. Lunacharsky dedicated a special article in the form of a review of the *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*. Multivocality (or polyphony) manifests itself in the way "Dostoevsky's characters live, struggle and, above all, argue, confess to each other etc., without being pushed by the author in the slightest". That is the reason "Dostoevsky's novels are actually very well memorized dialogues" (BELKIN, 1956, pp.XXXIV-XXXV).¹³

trabalho] dissertação, a resenha do acadêmico A. Lunatchárski sobre o meu Dostoiévski e a resenha de E. Tarle sobre Rabelais" (BAKHTIN, 2008, p.972). In Russian: "Многоуважаемый Борис Владимирович! Направляю Вам тезисы к [моей работе] диссертации, отзыв акад. А. В. Луначарского о моем Достоевском и отзыв акад. Е. В. Тарле о Рабле."

¹² Translated from Portuguese: "[...] por muitos, muitos anos (quando o próprio M. Bakhtin foi "excomungado" da literatura e o seu livro se tornou uma raridade bibliográfica), o artigo de Lunatchárski foi quase a única fonte de informação sobre o livro (CHÚBIN, 1965, p.80)". In Russian: "[...] долгие, долгие годы (когда сам М. Бахтин был 'отлучен' от литературы и книга его стала библиографической редкостью) статья Луначарского была почти единственным источником информации о книге."

¹³ Translated from Portuguese: "Lunatchárski observa traços típicos da estética de Dostoiévski, o seu 'lirismo', a subjetividade, a forma de 'confissões', tão comuns nos romances de Dostoiévski, a sua 'multivocalidade'. À 'multivocalidade' do artista Lunatchárski dedicou um artigo especial em forma de resenha do livro de Bakhtin *Problemas da criação de Dostoiévski*. A multivocalidade, ou polifonia,

Lunacharsky's article plays a no less relevant role in the 1964 *Literaturnaya Gazeta*¹⁴ controversy surrounding *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*. Soviet critic A. Dymchits begins his critical review *Monologue and dialogue* as follows:

The book has been read... I read it for the first time thirty-five years ago. It is M. Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*, reissued some time ago with additions and corrections. In Bakhtin's book there are plenty of ideas, reflections and relevant observations. It is indeed the work of a scientist. A great deal of what he has discovered will remain as gold in science. The very definition of Dostoevsky's novel as polyphonic has already been consolidated in literary science; it had already been fairly acknowledged by Lunacharsky. Literary Science will always be grateful to M. Bakhtin for the richness of his most refined observations on the poetics and language of Dostoevsky (DYMCHITS, 1964a, pp.4-5).¹⁵

However, the entire remaining content of the article contradicts those introductory considerations on Bakhtin, with the aim *demeaning* him (also in regard to the typology of the novel genre). I. Vassilevskaya and A. Miasnikov – two of Dymchits opponents – in their article “Analysis of the Essence” [*Разберемся по существу*] also turned to Lunacharsky as an argument in defense of Bakhtin's theory:

manifesta-se no modo como ‘as personagens de Dostoiévski vivem, lutam e, principalmente, discutem, fazem confissões mútuas etc., sem serem em absoluto forçados pelo autor’. É por isso que ‘os romances de Dostoiévski são, na verdade, diálogos muito bem decorados’ (BIÉLKIN, 1956, pp.XXXIV-XXXV)”. In Russian: “Луначарский отмечает характерные черты эстетики Достоевского, его ‘лиризм’, субъективность, форму ‘исповедей’, столь частых в романах Достоевского, его ‘многоголосность’. ‘Многоголосности’ художника Луначарский посвятил специальную статью в форме рецензии на книгу М.М. Бахтина *Проблемы творчества Достоевского*. Многоголосность, или полифонизм, проявляется в том, что ‘действующие лица Достоевского живут, борются и в особенности спорят, исповедуются друг другу и т. д., несколько не насилуемые автором’. Вот почему ‘романы Достоевского суть великолепно обставленные диалоги’”.

¹⁴ TN: Weekly cultural and political newspaper published in Russia and the Soviet Union.

¹⁵ In Portuguese: “O livro foi lido... O li pela primeira vez há trinta e cinco anos. É o livro de M. Bakhtin *Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski*, que há pouco tempo foi reeditado com acréscimos e correções. No livro de M. Bakhtin há muitas ideias, reflexões e observações verdadeiras. Trata-se de uma obra de um cientista. Muito daquilo que ele descobriu permanecerá como riqueza da ciência. A própria definição do romance de Dostoiévski como um romance polifônico já faz parte da ciência. Ela foi reconhecida com justeza ainda por A. Lunatchárski. A ciência literária sempre estará grata a M. Bakhtin pela riqueza de observações mais refinadas sobre a poética e a linguagem de Dostoiévski (DYMCHITS, 1964a, pp.4-5)”. In Russian: “Прочитана книга... Впервые я читал ее тридцать пять лет назад. Это книга М. Бахтина *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, переизданная с дополнениями и поправками не так давно. В книге М. Бахтина немало верных мыслей, соображений и наблюдений. Это труд ученого. И многое из добытого им для науки останется ее достоянием. Самое определение романа Достоевского как романа полифонического уже вошло в науку. Его по справедливости признал еще А.В. Луначарский. Литературная наука всегда будет обязана М. Бахтину за множество тончайших наблюдений над поэтикой и языком Достоевского.”

The first edition of M. Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky enjoyed a positive reception by A. Lunacharsky, who published the extensive article "On Dostoevsky's "Multivocality". Right at the peak of the struggle against Formalists, Lunacharsky detached Bakhtin from them and, more than that, he saw through the book and unriddled its anti-formalist trace (VASSILEVSKAYA; MIASNIKOV, 1964, pp.4-5).¹⁶

In response to his opponents, in the article "Praise or criticism?" [Восхваление или критика?], Dymchits revisits Lunacharsky's review to support the points that *reinforce* his earlier observations and the author's position.

In M. Bakhtin's scientific biography, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* plays a special role: for over three decades it actually served as the only proof (among two other articles on Lev Tolstoy) of his participation on the literary scene between 1930 and the early 1960s. Curiously, L. Dymchits gave M. Bakhtin his book *Four Stories on Writers (Четыре рассказа о писателях)* (DYMCHITZ, 1964b) as a gift and wrote the following inscription on the back cover: "To the Victor-Master, from his defeated pupil; to M. Bakhtin, from A. Dymchits."¹⁷ The photographic copy of this inscription allows the visualization of the original handwriting, as well as the corrections made by the book's donor. (ZEMKOVA, 2018, p.65).

V. Vinogradov: "... I Propose the Scientific Title 'Professor' Is Conferred to M. Bakhtin"

What we are calling the "last" wave of reception began to gain ground a few years before the "symptomatic" and explicit reactions to Bakhtin's first book on Dostoevsky, that is, long before the second half of the 1950s/early 1960s. We relate this *last wave* with the period in which Bakhtin was preparing to defend his thesis on *Rabelais in the History of Realism [Рабле в истории реализма]* and to his following discussion in VAK

¹⁶ Translated from Portuguese: "A primeira edição do livro de M. Bakhtin sobre Dostoiévski obteve uma recepção positiva de A. Lunatchárski que publicou um artigo grande *Sobre a 'multivocalidade' em Dostoiévski*. Bem no auge da luta contra o formalismo Lunatchárski separou Bakhtin dos formalistas. Mais do que isso, ele adivinhou, enxergou o caráter antiformalista do livro (VASSILIEVSKAIA; MIASNIKOV, 1964, pp.4-5)". In Russian: "издание книги М. Бахтина о Достоевском было сочувственно встречено А.В. Луначарским, опубликовавшим большую статью *О 'многоголосности' Достоевского*. В самый разгар борьбы с формализмом Луначарский отделили Бахтина от формалистов. Более того, он угадал, увидел антиформалистический характер книги."

¹⁷ In Russian: "Победителю учителю от побежденного ученика; М.М. Бахтину от А.Л. Дымшица."

[Высшая Аттестационная Комиссия]¹⁸ in 1949. We remember its main moments as follows.

In the summer of 1945, Bakhtin was preparing the presentation of his manuscript on Rabelais for his doctoral¹⁹ defense (at first, in the defense though later in a letter to A. Smirnov²⁰ he was pursuing the Professorship²¹). Meanwhile, the choice of the experts he would defend his work against (members of the panel) was being discussed. On July 14th, 1946, at the request of M. Iúdina, Bakhtin's thesis was submitted to scholar E. Tarle. E. Bojnó, who submitted Bakhtin's work, described E. Tarle's opinion on *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* as follows:

T. [arle] [...] made several questions about M. B.; said he was enthusiastic about the book on Dostoevsky, which he had already read twice, that it was a shame that M. B. would not keep on working on Dostoevsky and how good it would be if M. B. returned to this subject (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.908).²²

Tarle's enthusiasm about the great scientist and his book was also expressed in his own letter to Bakhtin, of August 19th, 1946:

It pleased me greatly, by means of your letter, that in time you Sir intend to retake your work on Fyodor Mikhailovich. In case you do not mean to follow the chronological order, then you should analyze *Bobok* [...]. There is so much to be exploited by historians and literary critics there.

¹⁸ TN: Higher Attestation Commission.

¹⁹ TN: “кандидатская диссертация”.

²⁰ On June 24th, 1945, Bakhtin wrote: “I have decided – not without hesitating (...), advised by some important staff members of Gorky Institute, to present the book on Rabelais in the Institute in support of Professorship. I humbly ask you, Aleksandr Aleksandrovich, if you Sir, of course, approve of this endeavor and would help me with it – that would be essential for me. I ask You to be my oponent” (BAKHTIN, 2008, p.958). Translated from Portuguese: “Decidi (não sem dúvidas) [...] aconselhado por alguns funcionários de peso do Instituto Górkí apresentar o livro sobre Rabelais no Instituto como tese de livre-docência. Peço encarecidamente, Aleksandr Aleksándrovitch, se o Senhor, é claro, aprova essa empreitada, me ajudar nisso, o que para mim seria essencial. Lhe peço ser o meu oponente (BAKHTIN, 2008, p.958).” In Russian: “Я решил (не без колебаний) < . > по совету некоторых влиятельных работников Института им. Горького, представить книгу о Рабле в Институт в качестве докторской диссертации. Я очень прошу, Александр Александрович, если только Вы конечно одобрите это дело, оказать мне в нем Вашу очень для меня существенную помощь. Я прошу Вас быть моим оппонентом.”

²¹ TN: “докторская диссертация”.

²² Translated from Portuguese: “T. [arle] (...) fez várias perguntas sobre M. B., disse que estava entusiasmado com o livro sobre Dostoiévski, o qual havia lido duas vezes, que era uma pena M. B. não trabalhar mais com Dostoiévski e que seria muito bom se ele voltasse a abordar esses temas” (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.908).” In Russian: “Т.(арле) [...] расспрашивал о М.М., сказал, что в восторге от книги о Достоевском, прочитал ее два раза, говорил, как жаль, что М.М. не работает теперь над Достоевским и как хотелось бы, чтоб он вернулся к этим темам.”

My best wishes. I hope that you defend your thesis soon and come to Moscow, to Lenin Library! (BAKHTIN, 2008, pp.970-971).²³

Bakhtin defended his thesis on November 15th, 1946, in the Gorky Institute of World Literature. During his defense, one of the experts proposed to grant him the title of Professor²⁴, which provoked a discussion with a mass participation of almost everyone present (BAKHTIN, 2008, pp.1017-1068). Thus, literary historian, N. Piksanov, on explaining why he had not read Bakhtin's thesis, stated: "a doctoral thesis does not demand such responsibility, as to make one worry too much about it, *especially regarding Bakhtin, a figure we already know from the press*" (BAKHTIN, 2008, p.1035; emphasis added).²⁵ It is most likely that Piksanov had the popularity of Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky in mind when he made the statement about the reputation of Bakhtin's works.

Almost three years later, on May 21st, 1949, and following Piksanov, V. Vinogradov made a statement during the Higher Attestation Commission. Precisely at the moment, Vinogradov, M. Bakhtin's contemporary, Russian linguist and literary scholar, whose scientific exchange with Bakhtin lasted for over a decade, on referring to Bakhtin's level of erudition as a researcher, reminded participants of the discussion that²⁶ revolved around the 1929 book. A phrase from this speech became a part of the title of our lecture. The complete quote follows:

²³ Translated from Portuguese: "Fiquei muito contente em saber, por meio da sua carta, que o Senhor pretende com o tempo retomar a obra sobre Fiódor Mikháilovitch. Se não for seguir a ordem cronológica, analise *Bobók* (...). Para um historiador e crítico da literatura há ali uma grande vastidão. Meus melhores votos. Defenda a tese logo e venha para Moscou, para a Biblioteca de Lenin! (BAKHTIN, 2008, pp.970-971)." In Russian: "Очень рад был узнать из Вашего письма, что Вы собираетесь со временем снова приняться за Федора Михайловича. Если будете работать не в хронологическом порядке, – разберите 'Бобок' [...] Для историка литературы и критика большой простор. Примите наилучшие пожелания. Поскорее защищайте диссертацию и переезжайте в Москву, в Ленинскую библиотеку."

²⁴ TN: "доктор наук."

²⁵ Translated from Portuguese: "A tese de doutorado não é um assunto de tanta responsabilidade assim para se preocupar em demasia com ele, *principalmente quando se trata de Bakhtin, o qual nós já conhecemos há muito tempo devido à imprensa* (BAKHTIN, 2008, pp.1035; grifos meus)." In Russian: "Кандидатская диссертация – дело не такое уже ответственное, чтобы очень беспокоиться о ней, *а особенно, когда дело касается Бахтина, которого мы давно знаем в печати.*"

²⁶ See also the works of V. Alpatov, Nina Perlina and A. Chudakov. M. Bakhtin used to follow attentively V. Vinogradov publications: in Bakhtin's archives one can find, among reviews on *On Fictional Literature* [*О художественной литературе*, 1930] (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.544), *The Russian Language. A Science of Grammar of the Word*. [*Русский язык. Грамматическое учение о слове*, 1947], *On the Problem of Authorship and Theory of Styles* [*Проблема авторства и теория стилей*, 1961] with Bakhtin's marginalia. Moreover, for many years Bakhtin received the scientific journal *News From USSR Science Academy* [*Известия АН СССР. Отделение литературы и языка*]; *Russian Literature* [*Русская литература*]; *Literary Issues* [*Вопросы литературы*]; *Linguistic Issues* [*Вопросы языкознания*], amid others. In Vinogradov's publications themselves there are Bakhtin's marginalia, particularly in articles dedicated to Dostoevsky (KLIUEVA; LISSUNOVA, 2010).

Bakhtin and I had almost been colleagues at Leningrad University; he was a figure of enormous erudition and vast knowledge. Bakhtin had basically an extraordinary talent but, as it shows, also poor health. One of his works, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*, instigated an enthusiastic article from Lunacharsky back in the day. Obviously, had Bakhtin defended it today, he would not be granted the Ph.D²⁷. That is why his sternest opponents (Smirnov, Aleksev) suggest to grant him the Professorship²⁸. In the present time it is nonetheless impossible to confer him such title for a work defended ten years ago; for this reason, my suggestion is we confer him the full professor²⁹ title: it is well deserved (BAKHTIN, 2008, p.1100).³⁰

The book on Dostoevsky was, not only for Vinogradov, but also for all those present, the most powerful argument in favor of Bakhtin.

“To the Author of the Best Book on Dostoevsky...”

The new wave of interest on *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* in the mid 1950s was due mostly to the “‘resurrection’, in our own social and literary fields, of Dostoevsky himself” (BOCHAROV, 2000, p.501). Thus, in the collection of studies and articles on the work of Fyodor Dostoevsky, which resulted from a commemorative session promoted by the Gorky Institute of World Literature in honor of the 75th year of the writer’s death, the interest on Bakhtin’s 1929 book was declared in many of those papers. The *epicenter* of the controversy was the matter of the polyphonic word in Dostoevsky’s novel, and,

²⁷ TN: “степень кандидата.”

²⁸ TN: “степень доктора.”

²⁹ TN: “ученое звание профессора.”

³⁰ Translated from Portuguese: “Bakhtin foi quase meu colega na Universidade de Leningrado, uma pessoa de enorme erudição, de grandes conhecimentos, em suma, uma pessoa de um talento extraordinário, mas, como podem ver, muito doente. Um dos seus trabalhos – *Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski* – resultou, em sua época, em um artigo entusiasmado de Lunatchárski. Obviamente, se ele se apresentasse agora, não seria possível lhe atribuir o título de doutor. É por isso que os oponentes mais sérios – Smirnov, Aleksiév – propõem a atribuição do título de livre-docente. No entanto, atribuir agora o título de livre-docente por aquilo que foi feito há dez anos não é possível, por isso proponho atribuir-lhe o título de professor titular: ele o merece (BAKHTIN, 2008, p.1100)”. In Russian: “Бахтин – почти мой товарищ по Ленинградскому университету, человек очень большой культуры, очень больших знаний, ну, необыкновенно талантливый, но, как видите, очень больной. Одна из его работ – *Проблемы творчества Достоевского* – вызвала в свое время восторженную статью Луначарского. И естественно, что, если бы он выступил теперь, степень кандидата невозможно было бы дать. Поэтому самые серьезные оппоненты – Смирнов, Алексеев – предлагают дать степень доктора. Но дать сейчас степень доктора за то, что сделано девять лет тому назад, нельзя, поэтому я предлагаю присвоить Бахтину ученое звание профессора: он этого заслуживает.”

therefore, the issue of the author. G. Abramovich, in his article “On the Matter of Nature and the Characteristics of Dostoevsky’s Realism” [*К вопросу о природе и характере реализма Достоевского*], points out the “inner lyricism of representation”³¹ that belongs to Dostoevsky’s writing style and stresses that it was precisely the author’s “subjectivity” that “greatly determined the direction and the strength of his realistic frames and images”³². Abramovich states:

It is impossible to agree that each and every character in the work of Dostoevsky actually lives an autonomous life, as according to M. Bakhtin in his conception of polyphony in the great author’s novel; it is no less impossible to acknowledge that Dostoevsky is only the “landlord” that knows how to treat well the wide plurality of his guests, and that he never has the need to give the last word, as O. Kaus tried to convince us (ABRAMOVICH, 1959, p.60).³³

A. Chicherin, in the article, “The Poetic Order of Language in Dostoevsky’s Novel” [*Поэтический строй языка в романах Достоевского*], firstly focuses on isolating the author’s particular stylistics, in the description of his language and in generally, in the discursive framework of his novels. The controversy with Bakhtinian ideas takes place within this field of problematization that:

M. M. Bakhtin, in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art*, brought about in the day a very original conception of Dostoevsky’s novel as polyphonic, that realize a specific kind of linguistic and ideological multivocality: Bakhtin noticed, above all, “words with a double orientation, necessarily related to another’s utterance” [...] Therefore, Bakhtin brings up definitions such as “bivocal word to multiple directions”, “inner dialogical word”, “a discussion of two voices presented in a

³¹ Translated from Portuguese: “lirismo interior da representação”. In Russian: “внутренний лиризм изображения.”

³² Translated from Portuguese: “‘subjetividade’ do escritor que ‘determinou, em grande parte, a direção e a força dos quadros e das imagens realistas criados por ele’.” In Russian: “субъективность (...) в значительной мере определяет направление и силу создаваемых им реалистических картин и образов.”

³³ Translated from Portuguese: “É impossível concordar que cada personagem das obras de Dostoiévski viva uma vida autônoma, como afirmou M. Bakhtin ao desenvolver a concepção da polifonia dos romances do grande escritor; tampouco é possível reconhecer que Dostoiévski, como tentava mostrar O. Kaus, é apenas o ‘dono da casa’ que sabe tratar bem os seus mais variados convidados e que não precisa pronunciar a última palavra (ABRAMÓVITCH, 1959, p.60).” In Russian: “Нельзя согласиться с тем, – продолжает исследователь, – что каждый герой произведений Достоевского живет якобы только своей самостоятельной жизнью, как это утверждал, развивая концепцию полифоничности романов великого писателя, М. Бахтин, или что Достоевский, как пытался показать О. Каус, лишь ‘хозяин дома’, умеющий хорошо обойтись со своими различными гостями и не нуждающийся в произнесении последнего слова.”

single dominant word” [...] In this paper, we rather start a controversy regarding such statements; we rather highlight the author’s role in the monologue, the dialogue, the multivocality and stand up for the decisive relevance of the “author’s consciousness” (TCHITCHIÉRIN, 1959, p.443).³⁴

G. Fridlender, a Soviet literature scholar, and one of the main researchers on F. Dostoevsky’s work, states in the article *The Novel The Idiot* [Роман *Идиот*]:

In his famous book on Dostoevsky, M. Bakhtin described Dostoevsky as a type of creator of a new kind of ‘polyphonic’ novel, in which there is no ‘monological’ point of view and each character has its own independent ‘voice’, very independent from the author’s. Despite the abundance of valuable points presented in Bakhtin’s book, his analysis on *The Idiot* clearly reveals factual inconsistencies in his overview of Dostoevsky’s novels. The author’s ‘voice’ and his authorial point of view on described events are not at all hidden – on the contrary, they are sharply and definably expressed, although in a very peculiar manner (FRIDLENDER, 1959, p.211).³⁵

³⁴ Translated from Portuguese: “M. M. Bakhtin em seu livro *Problemas da criação de Dostoiévski* sugeriu, à época, uma concepção bastante original dos seus romances como polifônicos, que realizam um tipo específico da multivocalidade linguística e ideológica. Na linguagem dos romances Bakhtin via, antes de tudo, ‘palavras duplamente orientadas que incluem, como um elemento necessário, a relação com um enunciado alheio’ (...) Devido a isso, surgem em Bakhtin as seguintes definições características: ‘palavra bivocal de múltiplas direções’, ‘palavra internamente dialógica’, ‘discussão de duas vezes em uma única palavra pelo domínio sobre ela’ (...) Ao longo do nosso artigo, polemizamos constantemente com afirmações desse gênero. Evidenciamos o papel do autor no monólogo, no diálogo, na multivocalidade, defendemos a ideia da importância decisiva da ‘consciência do autor’ (TCHITCHIÉRIN, 1959, p.443).” In Russian: “М. М. Бахтин в своей книге *Проблемы творчества Достоевского* выдвигал в свое время оригинальное понимание его романов как полифонических, реализующих особый вид и языковой и идейной многоголосицы. В языке романов Бахтин видел прежде всего ‘двойко-направленные слова, включающие в себя, как необходимый момент, отношение к чужому высказыванию...’ У Бахтина появляются поэтому такие характерные обозначения: ‘разнонаправленное двуголосое слово’, ‘внутренне диалогизированное слово’, ‘спор двух голосов в одном слове за обладание им’ [...] На протяжении нашей статьи мы постоянно полемизировали с утверждениями этого рода. Мы показывали роль автора в монологе, в диалоге, в многоголосице, мы отстаивали мысль о решающем значении ‘сознания автора’.”

³⁵ Translated from Portuguese: “No seu famoso livro sobre Dostoiévski, M. Bakhtin descreveu Dostoiévski como uma espécie de criador de um novo tipo ‘polifônico’ do romance em que não há um ponto de vista ‘monológico’ do autor e cada uma das personagens possui sua própria ‘voz’, bastante independente da do autor. Apesar da abundância das observações valiosas no livro de Bakhtin, a análise de *O idiota* com toda evidência revela a inconsistência fática da sua visão geral dos romances de Dostoiévski. A ‘voz’ do autor, o ponto de vista autoral sobre os acontecimentos descritos, não estão de forma alguma ocultos, mas, pelo contrário, expressos com bastante nitidez e definição, embora de modo bastante peculiar (FRIDLENDER, 1959, p.211).” In Russian: “В своей известной книге о Достоевском М. Бахтин высказал взгляд на Достоевского, как на создателя нового будто бы типа ‘полифонического’ романа, где нет ‘монологической’ авторской точки зрения и каждый из героев обладает своим собственным ‘голосом’ вполне независимым от автора. Несмотря на обилие ценных наблюдений в книге Бахтина, анализ *Идиота* с очевидностью вскрывает фактическую несостоятельность его общего взгляда на романы Достоевского. Авторский ‘голос’, авторская точка зрения на изображаемые события здесь отнюдь не скрыты, а напротив, выражены весьма резко и определенно, хотя и очень своеобразно.”

G. Fridlender addressed more than once the questions that concerned him. In his monograph *Dostoevsky's Realism* [*Реализм Достоевского*, 1964], it is noteworthy that once more he criticizes the Bakhtinian idea of polyphonic traits in Dostoevsky's novels, developing a critique of some of his theses (FRIDLENDER, 1964, pp.188-198). Nonetheless, the *finesse* with which that criticism was introduced in Fridlender's reflections is also noteworthy: "... as the author of the present book has already had the opportunity to state, the interpretation on the artistic nature of Dostoevsky's polyphony that Bakhtin proposed does not seem to be perfectly convincing³⁶ (FRIDLENDER, 1964, pp.188-189)."³⁷

As we can see, Fridlender did not limit himself to writing monographs or articles. He is the author of chapters on F. Dostoevsky's work in two academic issues: *History of Russian Literature* [*История русской литературы*, 1956], and *History of Worldwide Literature* [*История мировой литературы*, 1991]. In 1956, the literary critic discussed the traits of Dostoevsky's work and directly quoted the book, recalling Bakhtin's view on Dostoevsky's novel as a misconception, "as if it was from the 'polyphonic' kind in which there is no ideological and artistic union, and the author's role is reduced to harmoniously

³⁶ Translated from Portuguese: "...como o autor do presente livro já teve oportunidade de escrever, a interpretação da natureza artística da polifonia em Dostoiévski, proposta por Bakhtin, não lhe parece de tudo convincente".

Dostoevsky's Realism was given to M. Bakhtin by G. Fridlender with the inscription: "To the most respected Mikhail Bakhtin, from the author in 8. V. 1964" [Глубокоуважаемому Михаилу Михайловичу Бахтину от автора 8.V.1964] (ZEMKOVA, 2018, p.189). Bakhtin used to be very appreciative of Fridlender's contribution to studies on Dostoevsky. During the interview to Z. Podgjets, Bakhtin declared: "I very much appreciate the works of the late Dolinin, of Fridlender, Kirpotin, Bursov, Evnin. All of them approach different aspects of Dostoevsky and, generally speaking, I find it impossible to be just one way of approaching literary studies. (...) I particularly praise Fridlender's work, his theoretical book on the realism in Dostoevsky (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.460). Translated from Portuguese: "O livro *O realismo de Dostoiévski* foi apresentado por G. Fridlender a M. Bakhtin com o seguinte autógrafo: "Para respeitadíssimo Mikhail Bakhtin do autor em 8. V. 1964" [Глубокоуважаемому Михаилу Михайловичу Бахтину от автора 8.V.1964] (ZEMKÓVA., 2018, p.189). Bakhtin apreciava muito a contribuição de Fridlender aos estudos dostoiévskianos. Na entrevista com Z. Podgjets ele diz: "Considero muito valiosos os trabalhos do finado Dolínin, de Fridlender, Kirpótin, Búrsov, Evnin. Todos esses trabalhos abordam aspectos diferentes de Dostoiévski e, de modo geral, acho impossível uma única abordagem nos estudos literários [...] Valorizo principalmente o trabalho de Fridlender, o seu livro teórico sobre o realismo de Dostoiévski (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.460). [Я считаю очень ценными – говорил он в интервью З. Подгужецу, – работы покойного Долинина, Фридлендера, Кирпотина, Бурсова, Евнина. Все эти работы рассматривают разные грани Достоевского, но я вообще не считаю, что в области литературоведения возможен какой-то один подход [...] Особенно я ценю работу Фридлендера, его теоретическую книгу о реализме Достоевского]."

³⁷ In Russian: "как имел уже возможность писать автор настоящей книги, предложенное Бахтиным истолкование художественной природы полифонизма Достоевского представляется ему убедительным далеко не во всем."

be the conductor of those independent ‘voices’ from isolated characters” (FRIDLENDER, 1956, p.104).³⁸ Regarding his disagreement with Bakhtin, Fridlender explains:

isolated characters’ ‘voice’ independence is only relative and does not imply the loss of ideological and artistic integrity of the novel. Dostoevsky in no way renounces an authorial evaluation of his characters and of the ideas expressed through them; he does not look into the inner world of each of them as to something that is closed and separated from outer reality and other characters’ psychology. In his novels, human individuality is inserted in the external world, among its objective conflicts and contradictions; human individuality carries experiences, ideas and opinions whose content is not only subjective, personal and strict, but also objective and important. In the discussions between characters are revealed many points of view that are either already concrete or possible in society, related to objective problems that life itself presents (FRIDLENDER, 1956, p.104).³⁹

Notwithstanding the previously mentioned opinion on the Bakhtinian interpretation on Dostoevsky’s poetics, Fridlender used to appraise Bakhtin as an international level scientist. In co-authorship with V. Zhirmunsky and B. Meilakh, he wrote the article, “Issues on Poetics and Theory of the Novel in M. Bakhtin’s Works” [Вопросы поэтики и теории романа в работах М. М. Бахтина] and reviewed the

³⁸ Translated from Portuguese: “como se ele fosse do tipo ‘polifônico’ no qual não existe uma união ideológica e artística e o papel do autor se reduz à condução harmoniosa das ‘vozes’ independentes dos personagens isolados (FRIDLENDER, 1956, p.104).” In Russian: “[...] как на особый якобы ‘полифонический’ тип романа, в котором не существует идейного и художественного единства и роль автора сводится к гармоническому ведению самостоятельных ‘голосов’ отдельных героев.”

³⁹ Translated from Portuguese: “a independência das ‘vozes’ das personagens isolados é apenas relativa e não resulta na perda da integridade ideológica e artística da obra. Dostoiévski de forma alguma renuncia a uma avaliação autoral das suas personagens e das ideias por elas expressas, não olha para o mundo interior de cada um deles como para algo fechado, separado da realidade exterior e da psicologia das outras personagens. A individualidade humana em seus romances e novelas está inserida no mundo exterior com suas contradições e conflitos objetivos, ela é portadora das vivências, ideias e opiniões cujo conteúdo não é somente pessoal e estrito, subjetivo, mas também objetivo e de importância geral. Nas discussões entre as personagens em Dostoiévski são revelados diversos pontos de vista presentes (ou possíveis) na sociedade acerca dos problemas objetivos que a própria vida apresenta (FRIDLENDER, 1956, p.104).” In Russian: “самостоятельность ‘голосов’ отдельных героев в них лишь относительна и не ведет к утрате идейной и художественной целостности произведения. Достоевский отнюдь не отказывается от авторской оценки своих персонажей и высказываемых ими идей, не смотрит на внутренний мир каждого из них как на нечто замкнутое, оторванное от внешней действительности и психологии других персонажей. Человеческая индивидуальность в его романах и повестях включена во внешний мир с его объективными противоречиями и конфликтами, она является носителем переживаний, идей и взглядов, которые имеют не только узко личное, субъективное, но и объективное, общезначимое содержание. В спорах между героями у Достоевского раскрываются различные складывающиеся в обществе (или возможные) точки зрения на объективные проблемы, которые выдвигаются самой жизнью.”

collection of Bakhtin's articles which were posthumously published as *Literary and Aesthetic Issues* [*Вопросы литературы и эстетики*]. This review partially integrated Fridlender's article *The Real Content of the Quest* [*Реальное содержание поиска*], published in 1976 in the journal *The Literary Panorama* [*Литературное обозрение*].

In 1991, Fridlender chose to speak in a conclusive tone, while avoiding the use of the concept of polyphony tone:

[...] despite all apparent “multivocality” in Dostoevsky's novels (in Bakhtin's terms), they always tend to a certain core, which is noticed by the reader, and to a set of moral, social, historic and philosophical matters that join the ideological and artistic web of the novel (FRIDLENDER, 1991, p.122).⁴⁰

In this sense, the articles of the collection repeat the objections against the theory of the polyphonic novel contained in N. Berkovsky's review, which inaugurated the 1929 critical campaign. We shall compare:

The most injurious to Bakhtin's book are his totally insubstantial and erroneous statements about the supposed “polyphonic” character of Dostoevsky's novels. [...] In reality, Dostoevsky's novels are extremely unified precisely by the author's idea and sense; the author judges the characters' “voices” by means of the demonstrative revealing of a fable; at the end of the fable, that puts to test – and also “instigates”, according to Bakhtin's successful expression – the character's world and its point of view on it, the author gives his first instance verdict (BERKOVSKY, 1989, pp.186-187).⁴¹

⁴⁰ Translated from Portuguese: “[...] apesar de toda a ‘multivocalidade’ aparente dos romances de Dostoiévski (termo de Bakhtin), eles tendem sempre a um determinado núcleo que é percebido pelo leitor, a um conjunto de questões morais, sociais, filosófico-históricas que une o tecido ideológico e artístico do romance (FRIDLENDER, 1991, p.122).” In Russian: “...при всей внешней ‘многоголосости’ романов Достоевского (термин М. Бахтина) они тяготеют всегда к определенному, ощущаемому читателем внутреннему ядру, к объединяющему идеологическую и художественную ткань романа комплексу нравственных, социальных, философско-исторических вопросов.”

⁴¹ Translated from Portuguese: “O mais nocivo para o livro de Bakhtin são suas afirmações totalmente insubstanciais e errôneas sobre esse suposto caráter ‘polifônico’ do romance de Dostoiévski. (...) Na realidade, o romance de Dostoiévski é extremamente unificado e justamente pela ideia do autor, pelo senso do autor; o autor julga as ‘vozes’ das personagens por meio da revelação demonstrativa da fábula; no final da fábula que põe em teste (e ‘provoca’, segundo a feliz expressão de Bakhtin) o mundo da personagem e a sua visão sobre ele, o autor dá o seu veredito em primeira instância (BERKÓVSKI, 1989, pp.186-187).” In Russian: “Всего же губительнее для книги Бахтина, ее совершенно несостоятельные и в корне ошибочные основные утверждения об этой будто бы ‘полифоничности’ романа Достоевского [...] В действительности роман Достоевского чрезвычайно объединен, и именно авторской мыслью, авторским смыслом; через показательное раскрытие фабулы автор судит ‘голоса’ своих героев; к концу фабулы, на которой испытывается (‘провоцируется’, по удачному выражению Бахтина) и мир героя и его мировоззрение, выносятся по первой инстанции авторский приговор.”

The dialogue between the two literary scholars continued for fifteen years: in the mid 1950s, N. Berkovsky sent M. Bakhtin the collection *Scientific Notes from Leningrad Pedagogical State Institute (Ученые записки Ленинградского государственного педагогического института)*, tome IX, 3rd edition, 1954, with the following inscription on the first page of his article: “To Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, with deepest respect. April 4th, 1955. Author. Leningrad, Kolomenskaya street, 35, apt. 62”⁴² (ZEMKOVA, 2018, p.29)⁴³. After receiving Bakhtin’s reply, Berkovsky wrote him a letter on January 18th, 1956, which registered a change of opinion about the book *Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Art* and its author:

You are obviously well known and remembered by all who are interested in good, honest books [...] the language – that one presented in the book on Dostoevsky – is such a memorable, philosophical and impressionistic one. About your *Rabelais*: so far I have only heard of it; I have not yet had the opportunity to acquire a copy. It has been praised here in Moscow as well, though. [...] Would Dostoevsky’s anniversary not be the appropriate occasion to manifest yourself to the press? (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.514)⁴⁴

⁴² Translated from Portuguese: “Para Mikhail Mikháilovitch Bakhtin, com o mais profundo respeito. 4 de abril de 1955. Autor. Leningrado, rua Kolómenskaia, 35, apto 62.” In Russian: “Михаилу Михайловичу Бахтину с глубочайшим уважением. 4 апр.1955. Автор. Л-д, Коломенская, 35 кв. 62.”

⁴³ See Estifeva, V. Memories on Bakhtin (The first decade in Saransk): “M. Bakhtin was never forgotten by a restrained circle of scientists. Among his books, some of them were gifts from L. Timofeev, B. Purichev. I recall my visit to the Foreign Literature Department of the Leningrad Pedagogical State Institute. When the deputy chief of the department, N. Berkovsky’s, heard I was coming from Saransk, he made me several questions about Mikhail Mikhailovich. Before my departure, he entrusted me with a letter to Bakhtin and a collection of scientific works from his department staff, autographed by all the authors. (ESTIFEVA, 2000, pp.146-147). Translated from Portuguese: “Cf.: Estifíeva, V. *Memórias sobre Bakhtin* (O primeiro decênio em Saransk): ‘M. Bakhtin nunca foi esquecido por um círculo estrito de cientistas. Entre os livros havia os presenteados, de L. Timofiéev, B. Púrichev. Lembro nessa relação a minha visita ao Departamento da Literatura Estrangeira do Instituto de Pedagogia de Leningrado. Quando o vice chefe do departamento, N. Berkóvski, soube que eu era de Saransk, me fez várias perguntas sobre Mikhail Mikhiálovitch. Antes da minha partida ele me entregou uma carta para Bakhtin e uma coletânea de trabalhos científicos dos membros do seu departamento autografada por todos os autores’ (ESTIFIÉVA, 2000, pp.146-147).” In Russian: “Узкий круг учёных не забывал М.М. Бахтина. Среди книг имелись дарственные – Л.И. Тимофеева, Б.И. Пуришева. Вспоминаю в этой связи своё посещение кафедры зарубежной литературы Ленинградского пединститута. Зав. кафедрой Н.Я. Берковский, узнав, что я из Саранска, долго расспрашивал меня о Михаиле Михайловиче. Перед моим отъездом он вручил мне для него письмо и сборник научных трудов членов его кафедры с автографами всех авторов.”

⁴⁴ Translated from Portuguese: “Obviamente, você é bem conhecido e lembrado – por todos aqueles que buscam livros bons e verdadeiros (...) a linguagem, aquela presente no livro sobre Dostoiévski, é uma linguagem muito memorável, filosófica e impressionista. Sobre o seu *Rabelais* apenas ouvi falar, não tive oportunidade de tê-lo em mãos, mas aqui em Moscou ele foi também elogiado. (...) Será que o aniversário de Dostoiévski não poderia lhe servir como motivo para manifestar-se na imprensa? (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.514).” In Russian: “Вас, конечно, хорошо помнят и знают – все искатели хороших, настоящих книг [...] язык, что в ‘Достоевском’, – очень памятный язык, философски-экспрессионистический. О

It is impossible to ignore the matter that resonated in the letter, as well as the following commentary: “While I was organizing the Moscow Military Institute’s collection, issued in 1946, I strongly desired you could have taken part in it, but in Moscow no one could give me your contact information” (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.515).⁴⁵

To be fair, it is necessary to state that the classic literature on Soviet Dostoevskian studies had not only accepted Bakhtin’s ideas but also expressed gratitude towards him (KLYUEVA; LISSUNOVA, 2010; ZEMKOVA, 2018). On October 8th, 1963, Leonid Grossman made a typical inscription in his biography on Fyodor Dostoevsky, issued as part of the series *Life of Remarkable People* [*Жизнь замечательных людей*]: “To Mikhail Bakhtin, author of the best book on Dostoevsky, as a manifestation of my deepest admiration of his work” (ZEMKOVA, 2018, p.57).⁴⁶

L. Chubin’s 1965 article-review evaluation on *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art* is noticeable, as it introduces the new book to the public, granting special attention to the controversial character and academic value of the 1929 version:

M. Bakhtin, through his book that openly opposes itself to vulgar formalism and sociology, moves from a multivocal word analysis in Dostoevsky to an integrated conception of the world and thus reveals the deep binding between structural elements in Dostoevsky’s poetics and his artistic thinking. Bakhtin’s point of view therefore resulted more important than the polemics regarding the methodology. Bakhtin evinced the relations between Dostoevsky’s poetics and the humanistic *pathos*, alongside other related issues approached by the novelist⁴⁷ (CHUBIN, 1965, p.94).⁴⁸

Вашем *Рабле* только наслышан, сам его в руках не держал, – были ему хвалы и здесь и в Москве [...] Не дает ли Вам юбилей Достоевского повода и возможности выступить в печати?”

⁴⁵ Translated from Portuguese: “Quando organizava a coletânea do Instituto Militar de Moscou, publicada em 1946, quis muito que você participasse, mas em Moscou ninguém poderia me comunicar o seu contato (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.515).” In Russian: “Устраивая сборник московского Военного Института, вышедший в 1946 г., – продолжает Берковский, я хотел непременно Вас привлечь к участию, но в Москве никто не мог мне дать направления к Вам.”

⁴⁶ Translated from Portuguese: “Para Mikhail Bakhtin, autor do melhor livro sobre Dostoiévski, como manifestação do profundo amor pela sua obra (ZEMKOVA, 2018, p.57).” In Russian: “Автору лучшей книги о Достоевском Михаилу Михайловичу Бахтину в знак глубокой любви к его творчеству.”

⁴⁷ On the first page of his article, L. Chubin writes: “To the dearest Mikhail Mikhailovich, with deepest respect and affection. L. Chubin” [Дорогому Михаилу Михайловичу с безграничным уважением и любовью Л. Шубин]. The said copy of the journal *Literary Issues* [*Вопросы литературы*] is at the M. M. Bakhtin Centre at the Ogarev Mordovia State University. In Portuguese: “Na primeira página do seu artigo L. Chubin escreveu: ‘Para caro Mikhail Mikhailovitch com imenso respeito e amor. L. Chubin’ [Дорогому Михаилу Михайловичу с безграничным уважением и любовью Л. Шубин]. Este exemplar da revista *Questões da literatura* [*Вопросы литературы*] encontra-se no Centro de Bakhtin da Universidade Estadual de Mordóvia.”

⁴⁸ Translated from Portuguese: “M. Bakhtin, por meio do seu livro que se opõe abertamente ao formalismo e sociologismo vulgares, ao mover-se da análise da palavra multivocal em Dostoiévski para uma concepção

“Bakhtin’s Book is of Great Interest...”

One of the most active *advertisers* of Bakhtin’s work was probably V. Kojinov. As we know, he did everything possible, and even impossible, to rerelease the book on Dostoevsky (KOJINOV, 1992); and he also wrote an article on Bakhtin in the *Short Literary Encyclopedia* [*Краткая литературная энциклопедия*] after which, in Autumn 1962, a “massive pilgrimage”⁴⁹ to Saransk took place (KOJINOV, 1993, p.122). Furthermore, in the preface for *The Fundamentals of Literary Theory. Brief Outline* [*Основы теории литературы. Краткий очерк*], published in 1962, V. Kojinov announced Bakhtin’s book and included it in a special section among works that analyze “the artistry of the writer in uniting form and content”.⁵⁰

In them, language, plot, the system of images and the artistic thinking of the novelist are covered in a holistic way. These works are based on well-developed theories about the essence of literature and, at the same time, enrich and deepen those theories (KOJINOV, 1962в, p.45).⁵¹

Kojinov informed Bakhtin about his advertisement in a letter written on May 25th, 1962:

I am sending you a booklet that I published by the way. It is very popular and, therefore, because of this is probably especially bad. It’s better you don’t not read it, except for page 47, in which your book is mentioned

do mundo integra e revela a profunda ligação dos elementos estruturais da poética com o pensamento artístico do escritor. O conteúdo do livro resultou, dessa forma, mais importante de que a polémica metodológica. Foi evidenciada a relação da poética de Dostoiévski com o *pathos* humanista e questões levantadas em sua obra (CHÚBIN, 1965, p.94).” In Russian: “М. Бахтин своей книгой, открыто противопоставленной формализму и вульгарному социологизму, двигаясь от анализа разноголосого слова у Достоевского к целостной концепции мира, обнажает глубочайшую связь структурных элементов поэтики с художественным мышлением писателя. Содержание книги оказалось, таким образом, значительнее методологической полемики. Выявилась связь поэтики Достоевского с гуманистическим пафосом и проблематикой его творчества.”

⁴⁹ In Russian: “настоящее паломничество.”

⁵⁰ In Russian: “искусство писателя в единстве содержания и формы.”

⁵¹ Translated from Portuguese: “Neles, são abordados de forma íntegra a linguagem, o enredo, o sistema das imagens e o próprio pensamento artístico dos escritores. Esses trabalhos apoiam-se nas ideias teóricas bem elaboradas sobre a essência da literatura e, ao mesmo tempo, enriquecem e aprofundam essas ideias (KÓJINOV, 1962в, p.45).” In Russian: “В них, целостно исследуется речь, сюжет, система образов и само художественное мышление писателей. Такие работы опираются на хорошо разработанные теоретические представления о сущности литературы и в то же время обогащают и углубляют эти представления.”

as already published (reality needs to be created by all means!) (PANKOV, 2009, p.541).⁵²

Publicizing *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* as published in 1962, is in line with Kojinov's tactics of presenting Bakhtinian texts to the scientific community: by means of article publications, especially in the journal *Literary Issues* [*Вопросы литературы*], in which Kojinov *declared* the existence of Bakhtin's innovative works and the evident importance of the ideas manifested in them for modern literary studies in the USSR (as, for example, in the article *Scientificity Is the Link to Life* [*Научность – это связь с жизнью*] (KÓJINOV, 1962a).

The former controversy of the idea of the polyphonic novel was recaptured in 1957 by V. Shklovsky, who suggested his own version of “multivocality” emerged in the book *Pro et Contra: Notes on Dostoevsky* [*За и против: заметки о Достоевском*]. In the book, as Shklovsky emphasized, he tried to explain:

what was the cause of the discussion that left Dostoevsky's literary form as a trail and, also, what actually is that universal character of Dostoevsky's novels – that is, who is interested in this discussion nowadays (SHKLOVSKY, 1960, p.98).⁵³

In the early 1960s, during preparations of the second edition of the book on Dostoevsky, Bakhtin attentively reads Shklovsky's collection *Pro et Contra*. In his copy of the book, Bakhtin writes the important passages down in the margins (the quantity of vertical lines, which was very typical work for Bakhtin as a reader, varies from one to three or four). The passages to be quoted are also stressed by little horizontal dashes. With the same precision, Bakhtin studies Shklovsky's controversial issue *Contra (Против)*, in

⁵² Translated from Portuguese: “Envio um pequeno folheto que publiquei por acaso. Ele é muito popular e, é provável, que por isso seja especialmente ruim. É melhor o Senhor não lê-lo, a não ser a página 47 em que o seu livro aparece como já publicado (a realidade precisa ser criada com todos os meios!) (PANKOV, 2009, p.541).” In Russian: “Посылаю Вам брошюрку, которую я случайно издал. Она ужасно популярная и потому, вероятно, особенно плохая. Вы ее лучше не читайте – разве только стр. 47, на которой Ваша книга уже издана (надо творить действительность всеми способами!).”

⁵³ Translated from Portuguese: “qual foi a causa aquela discussão que deixou como rastro a forma literária de Dostoiévski e, ao mesmo tempo, no que consiste o caráter universal dos romances de Dostoiévski, ou seja, quem está interessado nessa discussão no momento (SHKLOVSKI, 1960, p.98).” In Russian: “чем вызван тот спор, следом которого является литературная форма Достоевского, и одновременно, в чем всемирность романов Достоевского, то есть кто сейчас заинтересован этим спором.”

response to R. Jakobson's criticism of the book on Dostoevsky.⁵⁴ We add that this kind of marginalia was typical for the preparation phase in Bakhtin's work (OSSOVSKY, 2002, pp.24-35).

In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*' literature review, Bakhtin presents a brief analysis on the collection *Pro et Contra*, stressing its relevance to understanding the peculiarities of Dostoevsky's poetics and for the polyphonic form of the novel. This remote dialogue is important for Bakhtin, as a means of formulating more sharply the thesis on the absolute dialogicity of the polyphonic novel and its unfinished main trace (BAKHTIN, 2002, pp.48–51).

V. Shklovsky persists in the discussion with Bakhtin not only regarding Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel, but also Bakhtin's comprehension of Rabelais' work. S. Bocharov (BOTCHAROV, 2000) and L. Chubin (CHUBIN, 1987) both present a critical analysis on Shklovsky's opinions.

Despite the scientific disagreement, in the early 1960s Shklovsky signed a letter supporting the reissue of the book on Dostoevsky. The letter was written by Kojinov and was addressed to the head of the publishing company *Sovetsky Pisatel* [Советский писатель], N. V. Lesiuchevsky (PANKOV, 2009, p.510). V. Kojinov preserved this move in his narrative (KOJINOV, 1992).

One of Shklovsky's last manifestations on Bakhtinian studies of Dostoevsky's novelistic word is somewhat peculiar. In the early 1980s he writes:

I do not consider myself capable of writing a great book on Dostoevsky at once and straight away understand it.
I appreciate Bakhtin's statement of him being a great novelist that portrays so many voices that seem to argue with one another and understands it all his way (SHKLOVSKY, 1983, p.567).⁵⁵

Thus, the history of the assimilation and appropriation of Bakhtinian ideas presented in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* is composed of relatively independent

⁵⁴ As part of the special collection M. Bakhtin's Personal Library, *Pro et Contra*, as well as the journal *Literary Issues* and *Contra*, are now in the National Pushkin Library of Mordovia (Saransk).

⁵⁵ Translated from Portuguese: "Não acho que eu consiga escrever de repente um livro grande sobre Dostoiévski e que eu o entenda de repente. Tenho consideração por Bakhtin que disse que é um grande escritor com muitas vozes que parecem discutir uma com outra, entender tudo do seu jeito (CHKLÓVSKI, 1983, p.567)." In Russian: "Я не думаю, что я вдруг напишу большую книгу о Достоевском, что я его вдруг пойму. Уважаю Бахтина, который сказал, что этот великий писатель с многими голосами, которые как будто оспаривают друг друга, по-своему понимают свое."

incidents in the field of literary studies' historiography between 1930 and 1960: from the discussions and debates up to the acknowledgment and productive dialogue.

It is impossible not to mention the relatively recent updating of Bakhtin 1929. N. Bonetskaya dedicates a series of studies to the particular historical and philosophical features of Bakhtin's first book on Dostoevsky (BONETSKAYA, 1994; 1996; 2017). In the preface to the second tome of M. Bakhtin's collected works, Bonetskaya recaptures the Russian philosophical background at the time of *Problem of Dostoevsky's Art* publication and observes:

Bakhtin succeeded in revealing from within what his predecessors – the religious philosophers – already knew: whilst discussing Dostoevsky it is possible to simultaneously reflect on ethical existence. It could be that this realization inspired the book, first published in 1929 (BONETSKAYA, 2017, p.11).⁵⁶

The theory of the polyphonic novel according to *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* is analyzed by literary critic Anatoly Korchinsky as “an explanatory model that allows for studying the new form of novel created by Dostoevsky considering the writer's social imagination and its political implications” (KORCHINSKY, 2019)⁵⁷.

Thus, when taken in their entirety, the responses to *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* allow for the elucidation and clarification of details, completing and detailing episodes of the dialogue between Bakhtin and his opponents.

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⁵⁶ Translated from Portuguese: “Bakhtin conseguiu revelar do interior aquilo que os seus antecessores, os filósofos religiosos, já sabiam: ao discutir Dostoiévski é possível ao mesmo tempo refletir sobre a existência ética. É possível que essa descoberta tenha inspirado o livro, publicado em 1929 (BONIÉTSKAIA, 2017, p.11).” In Russian: “Бахтину изнутри открылось то, что уже знали его предшественники – религиозные философы: рассуждая о Достоевском, можно в то же самое время философствовать об этическом бытии. На волне этого открытия была написана книга, опубликованная в 1929 году.”

⁵⁷ in Russian: “объяснительная модель, позволяющая анализировать созданную Достоевским новую форму романа в свете социального воображения писателя и его политических импликаций.”

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