

***Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation (1929): Genesis of the Text and Bibliographic Sources / Problemas da criação de Dostoiévski (1929): gênese do texto e fontes bibliográficas***

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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this article is to arrive at a better understanding of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the polyphonic novel, proposed in the book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation* (1929), in the first place, by recovering the genesis of the text within the chronology of Bakhtin's works, and secondly, through Russian and Soviet interlocutors in two fields: Literary Theory/Criticism, and Philosophy. Bibliographic research, and cross-checking texts revealed, on the one hand, the sources of the concept of polyphony, and, on the other, Bakhtin's original formulations.

**KEYWORDS:** *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation*; Polyphony; Dialogue

**RESUMO**

*O objetivo deste artigo é buscar uma melhor compreensão do conceito de romance polifônico proposto por Mikhail Bakhtin no livro Problemas da criação de Dostoiévski (1929), por meio da recuperação da gênese do texto na cronologia da obra bakhtiniana, bem como dos interlocutores russos e soviéticos de duas áreas: crítica/teoria da literatura e filosofia. A pesquisa bibliográfica e o cotejo dos textos revelaram, por um lado, as fontes do conceito de polifonia, e, por outro, as formulações originais de Bakhtin.*  
**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Problemas da criação de Dostoiévski; Polifonia; Diálogo

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In 1929, Bakhtin's first book, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation*<sup>1</sup> [*Проблемы творчества Достоевского*] (heretofore *PDC*) was published; it went on to gain international recognition after the release of the second edition in 1963, retitled *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*<sup>2</sup> [*Проблемы поэтика Достоевского*] (heretofore *PDP*), which continues to enjoy a regular flux of new editions and translations. In 2000, volume II of *M. M. Bakhtin Collected Works*,<sup>3</sup> organized by Serguei Botcharov, L. Mielikhova, V. L. Makhlin and B. Pul, was released, and in it the 1929 edition, as well as material from the archives were included. In 2017, two new editions were released in Russia, both simultaneously developed from the 1929 and 1963 editions: the Center for Initiatives in the Humanities [Центр гуманитарных инициатив] is prefaced by a short presentation of the volume, with a preface by Natalia Konstantinovna Bonietskaia, doctor of Literary Theory from the Maxim Gorky Institute of Universal Literature, historian of Russian philosophy, cultural studies scholar, and translator; and the editor of "Э" publishers, who re-released *PDC* and *PDP* in the collection of the Library of World Literature, with an extensive afterword by Serguei Botcharov, one of the main editors of the *M. M. Bakhtin Collected Works*.

Given that this brief account of the recent Russian republications of the *PDC* and *PDP* attests to the current relevance of, and interest in, the propositions presented in the *PDC* and *PDP*, our objective in this article is to gain a better understanding specifically of the concept of the polyphonic novel proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin in the 1929 text

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<sup>1</sup> TN: Given there is no English translation specifically of the *PDC*, all translations from this text will be from Portuguese of the author's direct translation from Russian or the previously translated *PDP* when passages coincide. All direct references to *PDP* are from the following translation: a) BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson. University of Minnesota Press: Minnesota, 1984. English translations of direct references from essays in *M.M. Bakhtin: Collected Works* are found in: b) *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*. Translated by Vadim Liapunov. University of Texas Press: Texas, 1990. Other English language translations references include: c) BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Translated by Vadim Liapunov. University of Texas Press: Texas, 1993; d) BAKHTIN, Mikhail. Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity. In: *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*. Translated by Vadim Liapunov. University of Texas Press: Texas, 1990; e) VOLOSHINOV, Valentin. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik, Seminar Press: New York, 1973. All Russian and Portuguese citations are found in corresponding footnotes.

<sup>2</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a.

<sup>3</sup> TN: As of the publication of this article, there is no English version of the *M. M. Bakhtin Obras reunidas* (2003), per se, which we will refer to throughout this article as the *M. M. Bakhtin Collected Works*. However, many of the quotes in this article largely draw from essays found in English versions in the collection of essays by Bakhtin, entitled, *Art and Answerability* - for reference, see footnote 1b. Quotes from essays in the *Collected Works* that have not been previously published in English translation are translated from Portuguese by the author, who has translated directly from Russian, and Portuguese versions are presented in footnotes.

(PDC). We aim to achieve this, firstly, through the recovery of its genesis in the chronology of Bakhtinian works, and, secondly, through its Russian and Soviet interlocutors in the fields of both Literary Criticism/Theory and Philosophy.

## 1 Origins of the Text

Although we know the precise date of the work's publication, the debate regarding the initial writing of the text, and its relation to other texts produced by Bakhtin in the 1920s, rages on among Russian scholars, since these are two topics that are extremely relevant to the comprehension of the work's theoretical-methodological architectonics. News about the production of the book first appeared in 1922, in the Vitebsk *Жизнь искусства* journal [*The Life of Art*] (Figure 1), in a note stating the following: "The young researcher Bakhtin wrote a book about Dostoevsky and a treatise about the "Aesthetic of Verbal Creation" (1922, p.4).<sup>4</sup> This information highlights the relationship between the work on Dostoevsky, and the philosophical texts from the beginning of the 1920s, in particular "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" (1990 [1923-1924]),<sup>5</sup> since, according to what Nikolaev (1996) had already indicated, the approach to the relationship between author and heroes in Dostoevsky's novel is similar to a text about the author and the characters, even including a statement from the book by Pumpyansky, *Dostoevsky and Antiquity* (1922), in which "the hero becomes a competitor of its poet" (1922, p.16).<sup>6</sup> The editors of vol. I of *M.M. Bakhtin. Collected Works* (2003, p.505) also defend that the text about Dostoevsky "with all probability, refracted and concretized the problematic of the other works,"<sup>7</sup> meaning, the philosophical works from the beginning of the 1920s.

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<sup>4</sup> In Portuguese: "O jovem pesquisador Bakhtin escreveu um livro sobre Dostoiévski e um tratado sobre a 'Estética da criação verbal'." In Russian: "Молодым учёном М. М. Бахтиным написана книга о Достоевском и трактат 'Эстетика словесного творчества'."

<sup>5</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d. Date established in the editor's commentaries in *M. M. Bakhtin. Collected Works*. vol. I (БАХТИН, 2003, p.499).

<sup>6</sup> In Portuguese: "o personagem torna-se um concorrente do seu poeta". In Russian: "Герой становится конкурентом своего поэта."

<sup>7</sup> In Portuguese: "com toda a probabilidade, refratou em si e concretizou a problemática dos outros trabalhos." In Russian: "по всей вероятности, преломлял в себе и конкретизировал проблематику других работ."

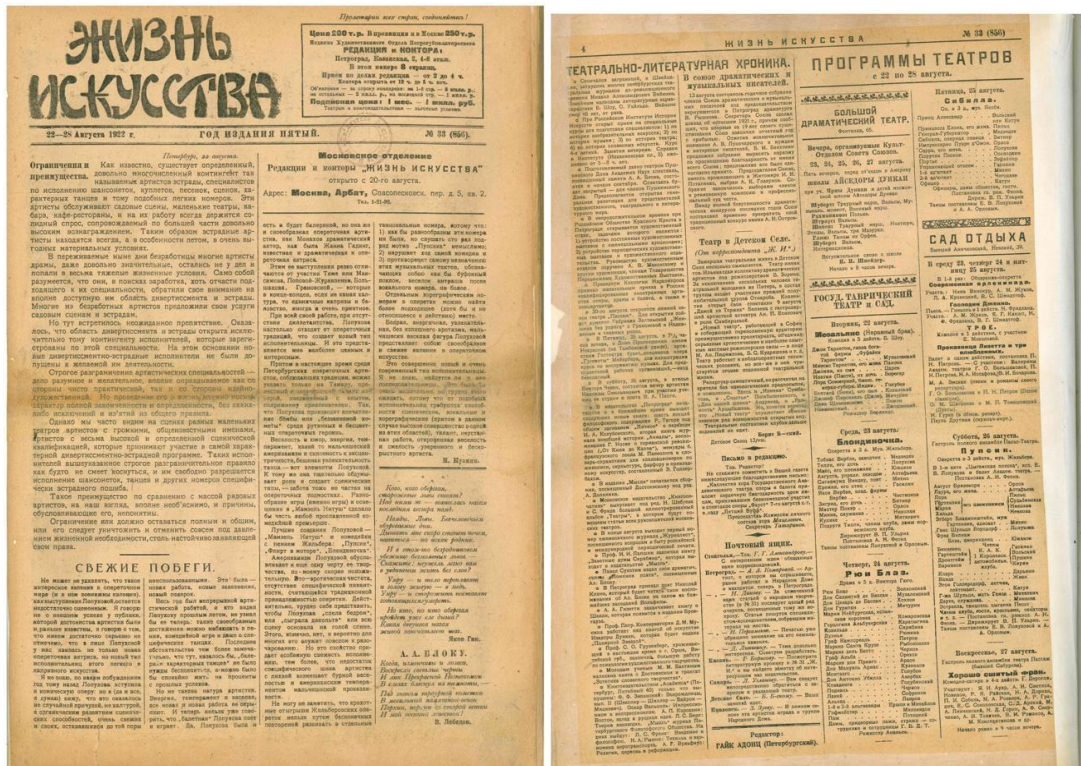


Figure 1. Copy of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> pages of the newspaper *The Life of Art* [Жизнь искусства] from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 1922

Nikolaev (1996) raises the hypothesis that, as the concept of polyphony does not appear in works from the 1920s, prior to the *PDC*, and despite indications that Bakhtin began writing it in 1922, this text was entirely rewritten in 1928.

There are even traces of the relationship between *PDC/PDP* and *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*,<sup>8</sup> published by Voloshin in 1929. In preliminary drafts of *PDP*, written between 1961 and 1963, appearing in volume VI of *M. M. Bakhtin. Collected Works* (2002), Bakhtin approaches the metalinguistics of the philosophy of language and the stylistics of the Vossler School:

We speak of the word and not the language, given that we consider the concrete and varied life of the word in its entirety, and not language as a linguistic object, obtained through abstraction of some essential aspects of the concrete living word. *These aspects are studied within the philosophy of language and metalinguistics.* In our final analyses there is an essential metalinguistic character, that, certainly, does not

<sup>8</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d.

exclude in any way its direct relation to linguistics (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.355; our emphasis).<sup>9</sup>

Here we characterize a set of phenomena that for a very long time has drawn the attention of literary theorists, who focus on questions of *style (and also linguistics, for example, some from the Vossler School)*. From our point of view, *those from the Vossler school are concerned with not so much metalinguistics, that is they study phenomena not in the system of language but in the forms of their live functioning in diverse fields of culture (predominantly literary)*. These phenomena, if we study them in their essence, that is, as phenomena of a dialogic nature, extrapolate the limits of strictly linguistics, rather, they are metalinguistic (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.356; our emphasis).<sup>10</sup>

The editors of volume II, of *M. M. Bakhtin. Collected Works*, point out that one of the theoretical lines that informed the development of the book on Dostoevsky, between 1922 – the year news about the production of the work first appeared – and its publication in 1929, engaged in the problematics of linguistics, and the philosophy of language. These were objects of a series of works by Voloshinov, and reflected in the theory of dialogue, and the theme of the “The Word in Dostoevsky”<sup>11</sup> presented in *PDC*.

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<sup>9</sup> In Portuguese: “Falamos sobre a palavra e não sobre a língua, uma vez que temos em vista a vida concreta e variada da palavra em sua integralidade, e não a língua como objeto da linguística, obtida por meio da abstração de alguns aspectos essenciais da palavra concreta viva. *Esses aspectos são estudados pela filosofia da linguagem e pelas disciplinas metalinguísticas*. Nossas últimas análises têm um caráter metalinguístico essencial, que, certamente, não exclui mesmo suas relações estreitas com a linguística.” TN: Emerson sometimes translates *the word* as *discourse* in the 1984 version; for reference, see footnote 1a, p.181. In Russian: “Мы говорим о слове, а не о языке, так как имеем в виду конкретную и многогранную жизнь слова в его целокупности, а не язык как предмет лингвистики, полученный путём отвлечения от некоторых существенных сторон живого конкретного слова. Эти стороны изучаются философией языка и металингвистическими дисциплинами. Наши последующие анализы носят в основном металингвистический характер, что, конечно, не исключает и их теснейшей связи с лингвистикой.”

<sup>10</sup> In Portuguese: “Aqui caracterizamos um conjunto de fenômenos que há muito tempo têm chamado a atenção de teóricos da literatura, que se ocupam de questões de *estilística (e também de linguistas, por exemplo, alguns da escola de Vossler)*. Do nosso ponto de vista, *os vosslerianos ocuparam-se não tanto de problemas linguísticos, quanto de metalinguísticos, isto é, estudaram fenômenos não no sistema da língua, mas nas formas de seu funcionamento vivo nos diversos campos da cultura (predominantemente literários)*. Esses fenômenos, se os estudarmos em sua essência, isto é, como fenômenos de natureza dialógica, extrapolam os limites da linguística estrita, isto é, são metalinguísticos.” In Russian: “Мы охарактеризуем здесь ряд явлений, которые уже давно привлекали внимание литературоведов, занимавшихся вопросами стилистики (а также и лингвистов, некоторых, например, школы Фосслера). С нашей точки зрения, фосслеровцы занимались не столько строго лингвистическими, сколько металингвистическими проблемами, т. е. изучали явления не в системе языка, а в формах их живого функционирования в различных областях культуры (преимущественно художественных). Явления эти, если их изучать по существу, т. е. как явления диалогической природы, выходят за пределы строгой лингвистики, т. е. металингвистичны.”

<sup>11</sup> TN: Translated by Emerson in the English translation, 1984, of *PDP* as *Discourse in Dostoevsky*. For reference, see footnote 1a, p.181 and elsewhere.

Nikolai Vassiliev, in the text presented at the Colloquium commemorating 90 years of the “Problems of Dostoevsky’s Works”<sup>12</sup> (1929-2019), observed this link, and the similarity of Bakhtinian metalinguistics in relation to the philosophy of language, and to the stylistics of the Vossler School, areas that merit further and more in-depth research to better and more precisely understand the Bakhtinian proposal of establishing a metalinguistics.

We now move on to briefly compare the traditional approach to aesthetic activity in the texts *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity* (1990 [1923-24]),<sup>13</sup> and *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Creation* (1929). Botcharov and Nikolaev, the editors of volume I of *M. M. Bakhtin. Collected Works* (2003), considered that the genre of the text about the author and the hero must be considered a “treatise,” a type that, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dispensed with citations by opponents and predecessors of the theory. Thus, as stated in the text *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (1993),<sup>14</sup> the text about author and hero [Автор и герой в эстетической деятельности] covers the second part of the larger project of investigating the fundamental aspects of the architectonics of the real world of lived life, with the objective of analyzing the ethics of literary or artistic creation. At the very beginning of the text, Bakhtin defines architectonics as follows: “Architectonics—as the intuitionally necessary, unfortunate disposition and integration of concrete, unique parts and moments into a consummated whole—can exist only around a given human being as a hero” (BAKHTIN, 1993 [1923-24], p.209).<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, in the very same paragraph continues:

In order to become consummated, i.e., to assume the form of a finished work, prose must utilize the aestheticized process of the creative individual who is its author, that is, it must reflect within itself an image of the finished event of his act of creation, inasmuch as from within its own meaning, abstracted from the author, prose is incapable of finding

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<sup>12</sup> While the translation into Portuguese of this book was underway, the provisional title was “Problems of Dostoevsky’s Works”. From discussions carried out during the Colloquium with Russian and Brazilian researchers, we decided that the most appropriate translation for “творчество” should be “creation.”

<sup>13</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d.

<sup>14</sup> For reference, see footnote 1c.

<sup>15</sup> For reference, see footnote 1c, p.209. In Russian: “Архитектоника – как воззрительно-интуитивно необходимое, не случайное расположение и связь конкретных, единственных частей и моментов в завершенное целое – возможно только вокруг данного человека – героя.”

any consummating and architectonically integrating moments (BAKHTIN, 1993 [1923-24], p.210).<sup>16</sup>

In this text, the creative aesthetic activity results in the relationship of the creator author with his characters, one of the central aspects of the concept of polyphony. In the final pages of the manuscript “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” (1990),<sup>17</sup> Bakhtin takes up the concept of the architectonics once again, to defend that the composition is determined by the architectonics of the artistic world:

[...] the forms of an artistic vision and consummation of the world determine the external literary devices, and not vice versa; that the architectonics of the artistic world determines the composition of a work (the order, the disposition, the concatenation, and the consummation of verbal masses), and not vice versa (BAKHTIN, 1990, p.197).<sup>18</sup>

In short, the organizational center of the artistic architectonics is in the authorial activity in relation to the hero, which is constituted through an artistic vision, and in the closure of the world that determines the compositional construction of the literary work, and, more specifically, in what interests us here, the construction of Dostoevsky’s polyphonic novel.

The explicit reference to Dostoevsky is found in the following passages:

1. At the beginning of the section “The Problem of the Author's Relationship to the Hero” [Проблема отношение автора к герою] (1990 [1923-24], p.4)<sup>19</sup> Bakhtin characterizes this relationship as architectonically stable and dynamic, and proposes the following plan for its essay: “Beyond that, we shall only outline some of the modes and types of its individuation and, finally, we shall verify our conclusions by an analysis of this relationship in works by Dostoevsky, Pushkin, and others” (BAKHTIN, 1990 [1923-24],

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<sup>16</sup> For reference, see footnote 1c, p.210. In Russian: “Проза, чтобы завершиться и отлиться в законченное произведение, должна использовать эстетизованный процесс творческого индивидуума – автора её, отразить в себе образ законченного *события* творчества его, ибо изнутри своего чистого, отвлеченного от автора смысла она не может найти никаких завершающих и архитектурно упорядочивающих моментов.”

<sup>17</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d.

<sup>18</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d, p.197. In Russian: “Формы художественного видения и завершения мира определяют внешелитературные приёмы, а не наоборот, архитектоника художественного мира определяет композицию произведения (порядок, распределение и завершение, сцепление словесных масс), а не наоборот.”

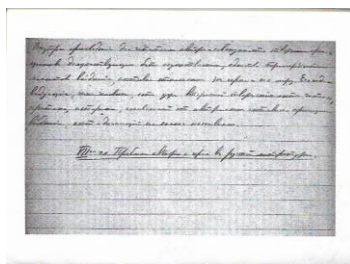
<sup>19</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d, p.4.

p.4).<sup>20</sup> We see that the analysis of the hero in Dostoevsky, among others, was in Bakhtin's work plan.

2. At the end of the last section of "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" (1990 [1923-24], p.203), Dostoevsky is again cited as one example of the crisis of the author:

The very position of the author's outsideness is shaken and is no longer considered essential: one contests the author's right to be situated outside lived life and to consummate it. All stable transgredient forms begin to disintegrate (first of all in prose—from Dostoevsky to Bely; the crisis of authorship is always of lesser significance in lyric Annensky, and so forth). Lived life becomes intelligible and obtains the weight of an event only from within itself, only where I live and experience it as an *I*, in the form of my relationship to myself, in the value-categories of my *I-for-myself*: to understand means to project myself into an object and experience it from within, look at it with its own eyes, give up my own situatedness outside its bounds as unessential (BAKHTIN, 1990, [1923-24] p.203).<sup>21</sup>

3. Finally, the last page is accompanied by a copy of the manuscript in which the title of the following section can be seen "The Problem of the Author and the Hero in Russian Literature" [Проблема автора и героя в русской литературе], which is not followed by any text, showing, on the one hand, the unfinished nature of the manuscript and, on the other hand, once again Bakhtin's intention of using examples from Russian literature to put his theses to the test, among which, most likely, Dostoevsky would appear.



<sup>20</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d. In Russian: "мы лишь вкратце наметим пути т типы её индивидуализации и наконец проверим наши выводы на анализе отношения автора к герою в творчестве Достоевского, Пушкина и др."

<sup>21</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d, p.203. In Russian: "Расшатывается и представляется несущественной самая позиция внеаходимости, у автора оспаривается право быть вне жизни и завершать её. Начинается разложение всех устойчивых трансгredientных форм (прежде всего в прозе от Достоевского до Белого, для лирики кризис авторства всегда имеет меньшее значение – Анненский и пр.); жизнь становится понятной и событийно весомой только изнутри, только там, где я переживаю её как я, в форме отношения к себе самому, в ценностных категориях моего я-для-себя: понять – значит вжиться в предмет, взглянуть на него его же собственными глазами, отказаться от сущности своей внеаходимости ему [...]"



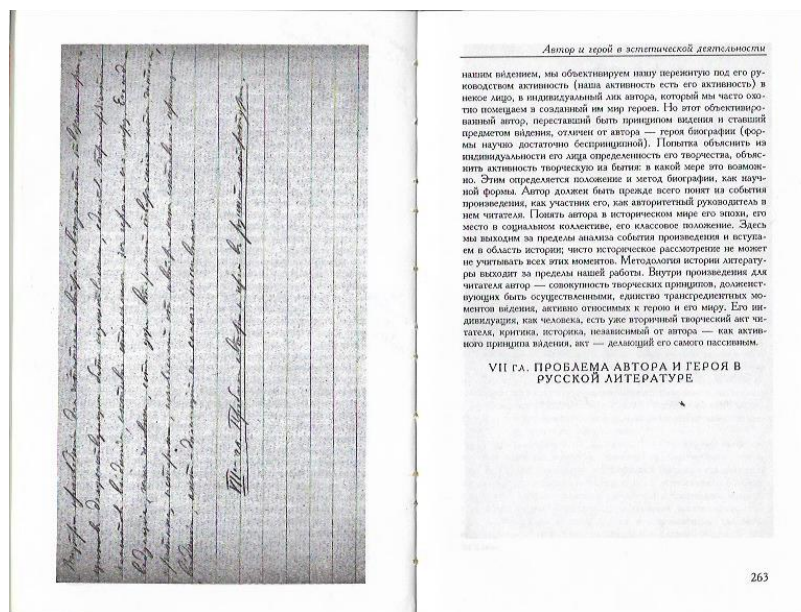


Figure 2. Copy of the two last pages of the essay, “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,” [Автор и герой в эстетической деятельности] (2003[1923-24]. pp.262-263)

Aside from these three explicit mentions, the rereading of “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” (1990 [1923-1924])<sup>22</sup> – in light of Botcharov’s and Nikolaev’s observations, which have a direct relationship to the work about Dostoevsky and the philosophical text from the beginning of the 1920s, in particular “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” (1990 [1923-1924])<sup>23</sup> – allowed for the identification of two common aspects to the approach of the aesthetic activity in the two texts mentioned: 1) the role of language and style in aesthetic activity; 2) Self-consciousness as a guiding principle of the construction of the hero in the polyphonic novel.

In relation to the first aspect, under the sway of controversy with the formalists, Bakhtin is concerned with situating the role of language, while a linguistic concept, as an aspect, a material means that must be taken over by aesthetic activity. This discussion, already present in the text “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,” in our view, guides the stylistic analysis in *PDC*,<sup>24</sup> and the metalinguistic proposal in the *PDP*,<sup>25</sup> since

<sup>22</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d.

<sup>23</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d.

<sup>24</sup> As we demonstrate in a recent article (GRILLO, 2019), the analyses of stylistics found in the last chapters of *PDC* was the more thoroughly evaluated aspect by Russian and foreign reviewers, shortly after the publication of *PDC* (1929) by Bakhtin.

<sup>25</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a. In the Russian version: *M. M. Бахтин Собрание Сочинений*. Vol. 6. Москва: Русские Словари /Языки Славянской Культуры, 2002.

language, as a linguistic object, is not sufficient to explain the role of the word in literary utterances.

And, in fact, the artist does work on language, but not on language as language. Language as language is something he surmounts, for language must cease to be perceived as language in its linguistic determinateness (its morphological, syntactic, lexicological, logical determinateness, etc.), and must be perceivable only insofar as it becomes a means of artistic expression. (Words must cease to be palpable as words.) (BAKHTIN, 1990 [1923-1924], pp.192-193).<sup>26</sup>

Verbal style (the author's relationship to language and the methods of operating with language as determined by that relationship) is a reflection in the given nature of the material of the author's artistic style (of his relationship to a life and the world of that life, and of the method of shaping a human being and his world as determined by that relationship). Artistic style works not with words, but with constituent features of the world, with the values of the world and of life; it could be defined as the sum total of the devices for giving form to and consummating a human being and his world. And it is this style that also determines the relationship to the given material (words), whose nature we must know, of course, in order to be able to understand that relationship (BAKHTIN, 1990, [1923-1924], p.195).<sup>27</sup>

Thus, stylistics nurtured on the soil of classicism recognizes only the life of a word in a single self-enclosed context. It ignores those changes that take place in a word during its passage from one concrete utterance to another, and while these utterances are in the process of orienting to one another. It recognizes only those changes that come about when a word is transferred from the system of language into a monologic poetic utterance. The life and functions of a word in the *style* of a concrete utterance are perceived against the background of its life and functions in *language*. The internally dialogic relationships between one word and the same word in someone else's context, on someone else's lips, are ignored. Within this framework stylistics has continued to operate up to the present time (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1929], pp.200-201).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> For reference, see footnote 1b, pp.192-193. In Russian: “Действительно, язык обрабатывает художник, но не как язык, как язык он его преодолевает, ибо он не должен восприниматься – как язык в его лингвистической определённости (морфологической, синтаксической, лексикологической и пр.), и лишь постольку он становится средством художественного выражения. (Слово должно перестать ощущаться как слово).”

<sup>27</sup> For reference, see footnote 1b, p.195. In Russian: “[...] Собственно словесный стиль (отношение автора к языку и обусловленные им способы оперирования с языком) есть отражение на данной природе материала его художественного стиля (отношение к жизни и миру жизни и обусловленного этим отношением способа обработки человека и его мира); художественный стиль работает не словами, а моментами мира, ценностями мира и жизни, его можно определить как совокупность приёмов формирования и завершения человека и его мира, и этот стиль определяет собою и отношение к материалу, слову, природу которого, конечно, нужно знать, чтобы понять это отношение.”

<sup>28</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, pp.200-201. In Russian: “Поэтому выросшая на почве классицизма стилистика знает только жизнь слова в одном замкнутом контексте. Она игнорирует те изменения,

In both texts, language, be it a “linguistic definition” or “system of language,” it is not sufficient to account for the word in the artistic style or in the artistic utterance. The stylistics proposed by Bakhtin must account for the relationship of the word among words, of the relationship of the author with the characters, of the reaction of the word to the word. While in the text “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,”<sup>29</sup> Bakhtin’s emphasis falls on the style as a relationship of the author with the material, as an expression of the relationship of the author with the world of others, in *PDC* the concept of artistic and concrete utterance comes to the first plane and the style is analyzed through the dialogical relationship among utterances.

The second aspect is the role of self-consciousness both in the aesthetic activity, and in the Dostoevsky’s polyphonic novel.

Form must utilize a moment or constituent feature which is transgredient to the hero's consciousness (transgredient to his possible self-experience and concrete self-valuation) and yet is essentially related to him, determining him from outside *as a whole*: the moment of the hero's “advertedness” outward, his boundaries, and his boundaries, moreover, as boundaries of the whole that he is. Form is a boundary that has been wrought aesthetically... Boundaries experienced from within, in one's self-consciousness, are experienced in a manner essentially different from boundaries experienced from without, in one's aesthetic experience of the other (BAKHTIN, 1990 [1923-1924], pp.90-91).<sup>30</sup>

Self-consciousness, as the artistic dominant in the construction of the hero's image, is by itself sufficient to break down the monologic unity of an artistic world—but only on condition that the hero, as self-consciousness, is really represented and not merely expressed, that is, does not fuse with the author, does not become the

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которые происходят со словом в процессе его перехода из одного конкретного высказывания в другое и в процессе взаимно-ориентации этих высказываний. Она знает лишь те изменения, которые совершаются в процессе перехода слова из системы языка в монологическое поэтическое высказывание. Жизнь и функции слова в *стиле* конкретного высказывания воспринимаются на фоне его жизни и функций в *языке*. Внутренне-диалогические отношения слова к тому же слову в чужом контексте, в чужих устах, игнорируются. В этих рамках разрабатывается стилистика и до настоящего времени.”

<sup>29</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d.

<sup>30</sup> For reference, see footnote 1b, pp.90-91. In Russian: “Форма должна использовать трансгredientный сознанию героя (его возможному самопереживанию и конкретной самооценке) момент, но имеющий к нему отношение, определяющий его – *как целое* – извне, т. е. его обращённость вовне, его границы, причём границы его целого. *Форма есть граница*, обработанная эстетически... Границы существенно различно переживаются: изнутри в самосознании и извне в эстетическом переживании другого.”

mouthpiece for his voice; only on condition, consequently, that accents of the hero's self-consciousness are really objectified and that the work itself observes a distance between the hero and the author. If the umbilical cord uniting the hero to his creator is not cut, then what we have is not a work of art but a personal document (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1929], p.51).<sup>31</sup>

In the text “Author and Hero” (1923-24), self-consciousness is the experience of the internal form of the hero, given that in *PDC* (1929) self-consciousness is the basic principle of construction of the character within the polyphonic novel, and allowed for the decomposition of the monological unity of the artistic world.

## 2 Polyphony and Its Precursors in Russian and Soviet Literary Criticism

Bakhtin elaborated his thesis about Dostoevsky's revolutionary transformation of the novel genre through interlocutions with a tradition of primarily Russian literary studies, among which he selected those closest to his own proposition, reviewed in the first chapter of his book: “Of all the new works on him, Russian and foreign, we only rely on some, namely those that come closest to the fundamental particularity of Dostoevsky as we understand it” (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.11).<sup>32</sup> In light of this proposition, it seems to us that the insufficiencies and criticisms highlighted by Bakhtin in the works reviewed did not eliminate or annul their successes and, with this, the fact that the Bakhtinian proposal have their roots, among others, in them.

Reading these works, and the reviews written by Bakhtin with respect to them in chapter 1, “The Polyphonic Novel of Dostoevsky (Situating the Problem),” we verify that the term “polyphony” had already been used by a literary theorist, Vasily Komarovitch (1894-1942), on analyzing Dostoevsky's novel *The Adolescent*:

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<sup>31</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.51. In Russian: “Самосознание, как художественная доминанта в построении героя, уже само по себе достаточно, чтобы разложить монологическое единство художественного мира, но при условии, что герой, как самосознание, действительно изображается, а не выражается, т. е. не сливается с автором, не становится рупором для его голоса, при том условии, следовательно, что акценты самосознания героя действительно объективированы и что в самом произведении дана дистанция между героем и автором. Если же пуповина, соединяющая героя с его творцом, не обрезана, то перед нами не произведение, а личный документ.”

<sup>32</sup> In Portuguese: “Dos novos trabalhos sobre ele, russos e estrangeiros, nos deteremos apenas em alguns, justamente naqueles que se aproximaram mais da particularidade fundamental de Dostoevsky, como a compreendemos.” In Russian: “Из новых работ о нём, русских и иностранных, мы остановимся лишь на немногих, именно на тех, которые ближе всего подошли к основной особенности Достоевского, как мы её понимаем.”

Thus, the ideological coordination of elements (that is, plots) which are, from a pragmatic viewpoint, disunified parts, is the source of artistic unity in a Dostoevskian novel. And in this sense, it can be compared to the artistic whole in *polyphonic music*: the five voices of a fugue, entering one by one and developing in *contrapuntal harmony*, remind one of the 'harmonization of voices' in a Dostoevskian novel. Such a similarity —if it is correct—leads to a more generalized definition of the very source of the unity. In music as in the Dostoevskian novel there is realized that same law of unity we embody in ourselves, in the human *I*: the law of purposeful activity. In the novel *The Adolescent*, for example, this principle of unity is absolutely appropriate to that which is symbolically represented in the novel: the 'love-hate' of Versilov for Akhmakova is a symbol of the tragic outbursts of the individual will toward the supra-personal; the entire novel is correspondingly constructed on this model of the individual act of will (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.21, our emphasis).<sup>33</sup>

Komarovitch<sup>34</sup> finds in polyphony, the best analogy to explain how the 4 groups of the novel's plot, despite having weak links among them, form a unit in the “act of individual will,” which has a tragic dimension when it symbolizes the supremacy of the individual will over the collective, a recurring theme in the analyses of Dostoevsky's work. Bakhtin's criticism of this approach highlights three of its inadequacies: that it does not consider the combination of consciousnesses fully valent with their worlds, nor the fact that the voices remain autonomous, and finally that what occurs is the combination of many wills.

Taking a step back, we identify that the literary theory of Viatcheslav Ivanov had already used musical metaphors and counterpoint to analyze Dostoevsky's work. The editors of vol. II of *M. M. Bakhtin. Collected Works* (2000) affirm that “Without a doubt,

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<sup>33</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.21. In Russian: “Телеологическое соподчинение прагматически разъединенных элементов (сюжетов) является таким образом началом художественного единства романа Достоевского. И в этом смысле он может быть уподоблен художественному целому в полифонической музыке: 5 голосов фуги, последовательно вступающих и развивающихся в контрапунктическом созвучии, напоминают ‘голосоведение’ романа Достоевского. Такое уподобление, - если оно верно, - ведёт к более обобщенному определению самого начала единства. Как в музыке, так и в романе Достоевского осуществляется тот же закон единства, что и в нас самих, в человеческом ‘я’, - закон целесообразной активности. В романе же *Подросток* этот принцип его единства совершенно адекватен тому, что в нём символически изображено: ‘любовь-ненависть’ Версилова и Ахмаковой – символ трагических порывов индивидуальной воли к сверхличному; соответственно этому весь роман и построен по типу индивидуального волевого акта.” (КОМАРОВИЧ, В. Роман Достоевского “Подросток”, как художественное единство. In: ДОЛИНИН, А. С. *Достоевский: статьи и материалы*. с. 67-68).”

<sup>34</sup> Our thanks to Russian Professor Ekaterian Vólkova Américo, for helping us identify the syllable stress of the Russian proper names, and for revising some of the translations.

the article by Viatcheslav Ivanov ‘Dostoevsky and the Novel-Tragedy’ (1911) was the most important and primordial among the direct sources of the conceptions of *PDC*” (2000, p.435),<sup>35</sup> and what’s more, “the veiled influence of the impulses of the work of Ivanov about the book was broader and more important than the direct citation by his authorship in its pages” (2000, p.436).<sup>36</sup> Ivanov’s thesis about the “novel-tragedy” used the idea of “multi-vocality” to characterize the multiplicity of ideological points of view, orchestrated by Dostoevsky:

Schiller’s enthusiasm, “his kiss to the whole world,” the universal happiness in God and the Earth, that obliges Dmitri Karamazov to strike up the anthem, all this was, in the multivocal *orchestra of Dostoevsky’s work*, emitted uninterruptedly by the harp of mystic appeal (...) Is it possible to guess what Dostoevsky learned from George Sand’s composition, which he called the “precursor of a happier future”? As we would put it: above all, the “ideological character” in the composition of the novel, its philosophical and social sharpness that he approaches, in the very task of the novel-theorem type” (BAKHTIN, 1916, p.15; our emphasis).<sup>37</sup>

The idealist and self-sufficient individualism result in man’s isolation, aspects highlighted by Ivanov as revelations about Dostoevsky’s work for his contemporaries. The ideologue character – for example, the underground man or Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* – form their ideology in the isolation that leads them to hostility against others. In the text “Crisis of Individualism” (1990), Ivanov sees in the contemporaneity

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<sup>35</sup> In Portuguese: “Sem dúvida, o artigo de Viatcheslav Ivánov ‘Dostoiévski e o romance tragédia’ (1911) foi a mais importante e primordial entre as fontes diretas das concepções de *PCD*”. In Russian: “Безусловно, из прямых источников концепции *ПТД* статья Вячеслава Иванова ‘Достоевский и роман трагедия’ (1911) была важнейшим и первичным.”

<sup>36</sup> In Portuguese: “a influência velada dos impulsos do trabalho de Ivánov sobre o livro foi mais ampla e importante do que as citações diretas desse nome em suas páginas.”. In Russian: “Скрытое действие импульсов от работ Иванова в книге обширнее и значительнее прямого упоминания этого имени на её страницах.”

<sup>37</sup> In Portuguese: “O entusiasmo de Schiller, ‘seu beijo para o mundo todo’, a felicidade universal em Deus e na Terra, que obriga Dimítiri Karamázov a entoar o hino, tudo isso foi, *na orquestra multivocal da obra de Dostoiévski*, emitido ininterruptamente pela arpa do apelo místico [...] É possível adivinhar o que Dostoiévski aprendeu da composição de George Sand, esta chamada por ele de ‘precursora de um futuro mais feliz’? Diríamos: acima de tudo o ‘caráter ideológico’ na composição do romance, sua agudeza filosófica e social, que o aproxima, na própria tarefa, do tipo romance-teorema.” In Russian: “Шиллеров дифирамбический восторг, его ‘поцелуй всему миру’ во имя живого Отца ‘над звездами’, - та вселенская радость о Земле и Боге, которая нудить Дмитрия Карамазова воспеть гимн, и именно словами Шиллера, - всё это было, в многоголосом оркестре творчества Достоевского, непрестанно звучавшею арфой мистического призыва [...] Можно догадываться, что из сочинении Жоршь-Сандь Достоевский, назвавший её ‘предчувственницей более счастливого будущего’ учился – чему? – мы бы сказали: больше всего ‘идейности’ в композиции романов, их философической и общественной обостренности, всему, что сближает их, в самом задании, с типом романа-теоремы.”

of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the struggle between the principles of individualism and communion/community spirit (*соборность*), in which the first assimilates the second and creates a special type of spirit characterized by Ivanov as “demonic.”

Ivanov (1916) continues with the musical metaphor to characterize the architectonics of the novel through the technique of the “counterpoint,” in which two or more melodic lines resound simultaneously, forming a set polyphony in which the sonorous individualities are the base of the composition:

*Similar to the creator of symphonies*, he used this mechanism in the architectonics of the tragedy and applied in the novel the equivalent method to the thematic development and the counterpoint in the music – a method whose detours and transformations the composer uses to take us to the psychological perception and experience of the whole work, as a unit (IVANOV, 1916, p.20; our emphasis).<sup>38</sup>

The counterpoint technique is a mechanism of composition that Ivanov called the “novel-tragedy,” or rather, despite resounding together, the psychological experiences remain isolated and lead to the tragedy. The relationship between author and hero and among the characters are based on the realism of the affirmation of the foreign subjectivity:

Knowledge is not the base of the realism defended by Dostoevsky, but the penetration (p.33) (...) the penetration is the *transcensus* of the subject, as a condition before which it is possible to go on to recognize the other *I* not as an object, but as another subject (...) the symbol of this penetration consists in an absolute affirmation with all the will and the comprehension of the foreign existence: “you are” (IVANOV, 1916, pp.34-35).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> In Portuguese: “*Semelhantemente a um criador de sinfonias*, ele utilizou o seu mecanismo na arquitetura da tragédia e aplicou no romance o método equivalente ao desenvolvimento temático e *contrapontístico na música*, - método cujos desvios e transformações o compositor usa para levar-nos à percepção e à vivência psicológicas do todo da obra, enquanto unidade.” In Russian: “Подобно творцу симфоний, он использовал его механизм для архитектоники трагедии и применил к роману метод, соответствующий тематическому и контрапунктическому развитию в музыке, - развитию, излучинами и превращениями которого композитор приводит нас к восприятию и психологическому переживанию целого произведения, как некоего единства.”

<sup>39</sup> In Portuguese: “O conhecimento não é a base do realismo defendido por Dostoiévski, mas a penetração (p.33) [...] a penetração é um *transcensus* do sujeito, como condição perante a qual é possível passar a reconhecer o outro *eu* não como objeto, mas como outro sujeito. [...] O símbolo dessa penetração consiste em uma afirmação absoluta com toda a vontade e a compreensão da existência alheia: ‘tu és’.” In Russian: “Не познание есть основа защищаемого Достоевским реализма, а ‘проникновение’ [...] Проникновение есть некий *transcensus* субъекта, такое его состояние, при котором возможным становится воспринимать чужое *я* не как объект, а как другой субъект. Символ такого

The realism of the subjectivities in interaction, in which the relation of the *I-other* supplants the relationship *I-object*, is, according to Ivanov, Dostoevsky's faith in overcoming individualism.

Nevertheless, from Ivanov's reflections, Bakhtin reformulated the concept from the novel-tragedy to the polyphonic novel, as he assessed that Ivanov had tried "to reduce a new artistic form to an already familiar artistic will" (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.16).<sup>40</sup> Before Bakhtin, however, Pumpyansky (1922), in his libretto *Dostoevsky in Antiquity* [*Достоевский и античность*], had already rejected the thesis that Dostoevsky's novel was akin to Greek tragedy, as it would constitute a set memories of facts that had already occurred, in the past, or, in other words, a totally fictitious last wave of what has transpired, while Dostoevsky's poetry is a prophecy, an anticipation of a time in the future, therefore the novelist is not a tragic poet. However, the nucleus of Bakhtin's criticism of Ivanov's approach is in the fact that he performs an analysis from an ethical-religious perspective, and did not demonstrate how this perspective assumed a concrete literary form or a "principle of artistic construction of the entire verbal realization of the novel" as we see in the following excerpt:

Vyacheslav Ivanov did not show how this principle of Dostoevsky's worldview becomes the principle behind Dostoevsky's artistic visualization of the world, the principle behind his artistic structuring of a *verbal* whole, the novel. But it is only in this form, as a principle governing concrete literary construction and not as the ethico-religious principle behind an abstract worldview, that it is essential for the literary scholar. And only in this form can it be objectively dissected, using empirical material from concrete literary works (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1929], p.11).<sup>41</sup>

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проникновения заключается в абсолютном утверждении, всю волю и всем разумением чужого бытия: 'ты еси'."

<sup>40</sup> In Portuguese: "reduzir uma forma artística nova a uma vontade artística já conhecida." In Russian: "Свести новую художественную форму к уже знакомой художественной воле."

<sup>41</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.11. In Russian: "Иванов, к сожалению, не показал, как этот принцип мировоззрения Достоевского становится принципом художественного видения мира и художественного построения словесного целого-романа. Ведь только в этой форме, в форме принципа конкретного литературного построения, а не как этико-религиозный принцип отвлечённого мировоззрения, он существенен для литературоведа. И только в этой форме он может быть объективно вскрыт на эмпирическом материале конкретных литературных произведений."



Similarly, Askoldov (1922,1925) would attribute an ethical-religious worldview of Dostoevsky directly to the content of his novels, without analyzing how this content assumes a literary form, understood as specific artistic procedures in constructing the novel. However, Bakhtin himself acknowledges Askoldov's formulations with respect to the great inner autonomy of Dostoevsky's characters, who are represented as "personalities" [личность].<sup>42</sup>

Personality – is the formation of an innermost and more individualized origin. In it we always feel clearly an immutable center in relation to all of the exterior and insurmountable influences of the "I" in the world, unique and humanly unrepeatable. This center is potentially present in each person, but there are not many who are conscious of it, preserve it and discover it. The conflict of characters with exterior circumstances is dramatic. It is a struggle from which there is normally a way out and appeasement. The conflict of personalities, of their inner and outer antinomies is tragic. Faced with the external pressure, the personalities distance themselves and bury themselves underground, or get locked in a struggle in which the way out, in any case, is not a peaceful one. Life cannot change them to fit its model. This does not mean they are immutable. The personality frequently undergoes essential instances of metamorphosis. Its flexibility is inherent to some degree. However, these instances of metamorphosis occur from the inside. In this sense, the development is more organic, which, however, does not exclude the more poignant crises in their lives (ASKOLDOV, 1922, pp.2-3).<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Russian word that covers a spectrum of concepts and can be translated to Portuguese as: *personalidade* - personality, *pessoa* - person, *indivíduo* - individual.

<sup>43</sup> In Portuguese: "Personalidade – é a formação de uma origem mais interior e mais individualizada. Nele sempre sentimos claramente um centro imutável em relação a todas as influências exteriores e insuperável do 'eu' único no mundo e humanamente irrepitível. Esse centro está potencialmente presente em cada pessoa, mas não são muitos que têm consciência dele, conservam-no e o descobrem. O conflito de caracteres com as circunstâncias exteriores é dramático. É uma luta para a qual normalmente há saída e pacificação. O conflito de personalidades, de suas antinomias exteriores e interiores, é trágico. Diante de uma pressão exterior, as personalidades se afastam e se fecham no subsolo, ou travam uma luta, cuja saída em todo caso não é a pacificação. A vida não pode transformá-los a seu modo. Isso não significa que elas são imutáveis. A personalidade frequentemente sofre metamorfoses essenciais. A flexibilidade lhe é própria em algum grau. Contudo essas metamorfoses ocorrem a partir do interior. Nesse sentido, o seu desenvolvimento é mais orgânico, o que, porém, não exclui as mais agudas crises na vida deles." In Russian: "Личность – это оформленность наиболее внутреннего происхождения и наиболее индивидуализированная. В ней всегда явственно ощущим неизменяемый, для всяких внешних воздействий непреодолимый стержень единственного в мире и неповторяемого человеческого 'я'. Потенциально этот стержень заложен во всяком человеке, но далеко не многие его осознают, сохраняют и раскрывают. Столкновения характеров с внешними условиями драматичны. Это борьба, в которой обыкновенно есть исход и примирение. Столкновение личностей, их внешние и внутренние антинomie трагичны. При внешнем давлении они или сторонятся и скрываются в подполье, или вступают в борьбу, исход которой во всяком случае не примирение. Жизнь не может перековать из на свой лад. Из этого не следует, что они неизменны. Личность часто претерпевает коренные метаморфозы. Ей в высокой

This definition of “personality” helps, in our view, in understanding the way Dostoevsky constructs his characters and is not denied by Bakhtin in his chapter on “The Hero in Dostoevsky”:<sup>44</sup>

The author constructs the hero not out of words foreign to the hero, not out of neutral definitions; he constructs not a character, nor a type, nor a temperament, in fact he constructs no objectified image of the hero at all, but rather the hero's *discourse* about himself and his world (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1929], p.53).<sup>45</sup>

Askoldov also describes the three modalities of fictional characters – character, type or temperament – to show that “personality” is one of Dostoevsky’s specialties. In this passage, Bakhtin takes advantage of Askoldov’s classification, and does not include “personality” among the modes of character construction that fail to facilitate an understanding of Dostoevsky. On the contrary, this “personality,” in our view, seems to be one of the components in the construction of the Dostoevsky’s characters.

Although the editors of volume II of *M. M. Bakhtin, Collected Works* state that Viatcheslav Ivanov has been the most important source of the ideas in *PDC*, Bakhtin himself attributed great value to two works by the literary theorist Leonid Grossman, and literally quotes him not only in chapter 1 “The Fundamental Particularity of Dostoevsky’s Work and Its Elucidation in Critical Literature” [Основная Особенность Творчества Достоевского и её Освещение в Критической литературе], but also in chapter 4 “The Function of the Adventure Plot in the Works of Dostoevsky” [Функция авантюрного сюжета в произведениях Достоевского] and in chapter 3 of the second part “The Hero’s Word, and the Narrator’s Word in Dostoevsky’s Novels” [Слово героя и слово рассказа в романах Достоевского] (1925),<sup>46</sup> Grossman states that “in the person of Dostoevsky,

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степени свойственна гибкость. Но эти метаморфозы идут изнутри. В этом отношении их рост наиболее органичен, что, однако, не исключает в их жизни самых острых кризисов.”

<sup>44</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.53.

<sup>45</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.53. In Russian: “Автор действительно оставляет за своим героем последнее слово. Именно оно или, точнее, тенденция к нему и нужна автору для его замысла. Он строит героя не из чужих слов, не из нейтральных определений, он строит не характер, не тип, не темперамент, вообще не образ героя, а именно слово героя о себе самом и о своём мире.”

<sup>46</sup> The 1962 edition of Bakhtin’s book, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* practically reproduces the title of one of the books by Grossman. *Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (1925). TN: Emerson translates ‘word’ as ‘discourse’ in the 1984 edition of the *PDP*, and there are other divergences. The titles translated here are directly from the Portuguese as Dr. Grillo has translated them from the Russian, presented in the body of the text: [A particularidade fundamental da obra de Dostoiévski e sua elucidação na literatura crítica], [A função do

the evolution of the European novel lived one of the most revolutionary stages based on traditions, practices and secular traditions” (1925, p.1),<sup>47</sup> in other words, like Bakhtin, Grossman pointed out that Dostoevsky innovated the European novel.

In *PDC* Bakhtin quotes a passage in which Grossman correctly analyzed the meaning of the dialogue for the construction of the multiplanarity of Dostoevsky’s novel:

The form of a conversation or quarrel, where various points of view can dominate in turn and reflect the diverse nuances of contradictory creeds, is especially appropriate for embodying this philosophy, forever being shaped and yet never congealing. To such an artist and observer of images as Dostoevsky, there must have occurred in a moment of profound contemplation on the meaning of phenomena and the secret of the world, this particular form of philosophical conceptualization, in which every opinion becomes a living creature and is expounded by an impassioned human voice (GROSSMAN, 1924 *In*: BAKHTIN, 1984, p.16).<sup>48</sup>

In this excerpt, many of Bakhtin’s ideas are anticipated, especially, the embodiment of ideas, the voices that express points of view about the world and the dialogue in which these two former proposals occur. The evaluation of Dostoevsky as an artist and, consequently, literary innovator was a controversial theme of the time, according to Grossman:

Is Dostoevsky an artist? Until only recently, critical Russian thought was inclined to answer no to this question. Recognizing the enormous importance of Dostoevsky as a thinker, Russian critics frequently rejected the purely artistic value of his pages (GROSSMAN, 1925, s. p.).<sup>49</sup>

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enredo de aventura nas obras de Dostoiévski], [A palavra do personagem e a palavra na narração nos romances de Dostoiévski].

<sup>47</sup> In Portuguese: “na pessoa de Dostoiévski, a evolução do romance europeu viveu uma das etapas mais revolucionárias com base em tradições, práticas e tradições seculares.” In Russian: “в лице Достоевского Эволюция европейского романа пережила один из своих самых крупных революционных этапов, в корне преобразивших ее вековые традиции, навыки и предания.”

<sup>48</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.16. In Russian: “Форма беседы или спора, где различные точки зрения могут поочередно господствовать и отражать разнообразные оттенки противоположных исповеданий, особенно подходит к воплощению вечно слагающейся и никогда не застывающей философии. Перед таким художником и созерцателем образов, как Достоевский, в минуту его углубленных раздумий о смысле явлений и тайне мира, должна была представить эта форма философствования, в которой каждое мнение словно становится живым существом и излагается взволнованным человеческим голосом.”

<sup>49</sup> In Portuguese: “Dostoiévski é um artista? Até os dias atuais o pensamento crítico russo estava inclinado a responder negativamente a essa questão. Reconhecendo a importância enorme de Dostoiévski como pensador, a crítica russa frequentemente rejeitava o valor puramente artístico de suas páginas.” In Russian: “Художник ли Достоевский? До последнего времени русская критическая мысль была склонна

In this context of the rejection of Dostoevsky as an artist, Bakhtin's position of reiterating the objective of his work becomes even more evident – the objective of revealing the “principles of representation and construction of the entire novel” (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.39), the “artistic vision” (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.47) or the “new principles of artistic composition of the elements and of the construction of the whole” (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.51)<sup>50</sup> of the Russian novelist, in detriment, in our view, to his philosophical, religious, sociological and psychological ideas.

Not cited by Bakhtin, but developed by Grossman, shortly after this quote follows a thesis that one of the central axes of Dostoevsky's philosophy was the “problem of personality and society” (GROSSMAN, 1924, p.11).<sup>51</sup> The polyphonic architectonics of Dostoevsky's novels proposed by Bakhtin, in our view, attempts to resolve the conflict between a principle of collectivity on the brink of collapse, and the emergence of an individualistic society. In the following section we analyze some of Bakhtin's philosophical interlocutors in *PDC*.

### 3 Russian Philosophy and the Polyphonic Novel

If, on the one hand, the concept of the polyphonic novel was developed by Bakhtin in dialogue with the Russian and Soviet literary critic cited and reviewed by him in the first chapter of *PDC* (1929), on the other hand, the interlocution with Russian religious philosophers mentioned briefly by Bakhtin also constitutes preceding links in the chain of development of the concept of polyphony:

The path of philosophical monologization has been the fundamental path followed by critical literature on Dostoevsky. It was the path taken by Rozanov, Volynsky, Merezhkovsky, Shestov, and many others. In

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отвечать на этот вопрос отрицательно. Признавая великое значение Достоевского, как мыслителя, она отвергала обычно чисто художественную стоимость его страниц.” Available at: [http://az.lib.ru/g/grossman\\_1\\_p/text\\_1925\\_poetika\\_dostoevskogo.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/g/grossman_1_p/text_1925_poetika_dostoevskogo.shtml) .Accessed: 30 Oct.2019.

<sup>50</sup> In Portuguese and Russian: “princípios de representação e construção do todo do romance” [принципы изображения и построения всего романа] (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.39); “visão artística” [художественное видение] (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.47); “novos princípios de composição artística dos elementos e da construção do todo” [новые принципы художественного сочетания элементов и построения целого] (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.51).

<sup>51</sup> In Portuguese: “problema da personalidade e a sociedade.” In Russian: “Одним из центральных узлов философии Достоевского была проблема личности и общества.”

their attempt to squeeze the artist's demonstrated plurality of consciousnesses into the systemically monologic framework of a single worldview, these researchers were forced to resort either to antinomy or to dialectics. Out of the concrete and integral consciousnesses of the characters (and of the author himself) they surgically removed ideological theses, which they either arranged in a dynamic dialectical series or juxtaposed to one another as absolute and irreducible antinomies. The interaction of several unmerged consciousnesses was replaced by an interrelationship of ideas, thoughts, and attitudes gravitating toward a single consciousness (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1929], p.9).<sup>52</sup>

Although Bakhtin highlights the inadequacy of the philosophical approach, by considering it monologic, we feel, on reading the works of the Russian philosophers with different perspectives on Dostoevsky – Shestov, Berdiaiev, Soloviov, these two last cited by the Russian researcher, Natalia Konstantinovna Bonietskaia (2017) – that Bakhtinian thought holds these thinkers as interlocutors in the development of the concept of the polyphonic novel, in which immiscible consciousness, and dialogue are essential elements. In the preface referred to, of volume II *Mikhail Bakhtin. Selection. Dostoevsky's Poetics* [Михаил Бахтин. Избранное том II. Поэтика Достоевского] published by Center for Initiatives in the Humanities, the previously cited Russian Natalia Konstantinovna Bonietskaia declares:

When we read Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky, having in mind how Russian philosophers conceived of Dostoevsky's work, we constantly find in Bakhtin their intuitions and senses, translated beyond this as if in one another, in principle, by train of thought, and refracted in one another, by matter of principle, discourse (BONIETSKAIA, 2017, p.8).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.9. In Russian: "Путь философской монологизации – основной путь критической литературы о Достоевском. По этому пути шли Розанов, Волинский, Мережковский, Шестов и др. Пытаясь втиснуть показанную художником множественность сознаний в системно-монологические рамки единого мировоззрения, эти исследователи принуждены были прибегать или к антиномике или к диалектике. Из конкретных и цельных сознаний героев (и самого автора) вылущивались идеологические тезисы, которые или располагались в динамический диалектический ряд или противопоставлялись друг другу как не снимаемые абсолютные антиномии. Вместо взаимодействия нескольких неслиянных сознаний подставлялось взаимоотношение идей, мыслей, положений, довлеющих одному сознанию."

<sup>53</sup> In Portuguese: "Quando lemos o livro de Bakhtin sobre Dostoiévski, tendo na memória as concepções da obra de Dostoiévski elaboradas por filósofos russos, encontramos o todo o tempo em Bakhtin as intuições e os sentidos deles, traduzidos além disso como que em um outro, por princípio, plano de pensamento, e refratados em um outro, por princípio, discurso." In Russian: "Когда мы перечитываем книгу Бахтина о Достоевском, имея в памяти концепции творчества Достоевского, созданные русскими философами, мы постоянно встречаем у Бахтина их интуиции, смыслы, переведенные при этом как бы в совершенно иной мыслительный план, - преломленные в принципиально другом дискурсе."

After reading the Russian philosophers cited, we feel they constitute a layer of formulations recovered and reformulated in Bakhtin's own terms, and therefore, the analyses of these authors in this article has been fundamental in deepening – so we hope – the understanding of the concept of polyphony. According to our reading of the preface by researcher Natalia Bonietskaia, the elements of the reformulation itself, and the original by Bakhtin stemming from the literary theory and Russian religious philosophy, are the following: the ethical existence developed in the work at the beginning of the 1920s, the heightened ethical dialogue, the carnivalized comic line of popular culture in the 1963 text, the predominance of the Menippean- satirical spirit.

Moving on, next, we examine the formulations of the three Russian philosophers previously mentioned – Vladímir Sergieevitch Soloviov, Nikolai Aleksandrovitch Berdiaev and Liev Shestov – who seem to us important to a broader understanding of the Bakhtinian theoretical approach.

Beginning with the oldest text among those we read, Vladimir Sergieevitch Soloviov (1853-1900) proposes in *Three Discourses in Memory of Dostoevsky* [*Три речи в память Достоевского*] (1884), in which the “social movement” is the object of Dostoevsky's artistic world, that:

Dostoevsky's artistic world. In it everything is fermenting, nothing is established, everything is still evolving. The object of the novel is not *being/existing*, of society, but the social *movement*. Of all our notable novelists, only Dostoevsky, took up social movement as the main object of his work (SOLOVIOV, 1884, s. p.).<sup>54</sup>

This object, theme or question is transformed in Bakhtin's work on Dostoevsky in the very mode of existence of the word that, on being a means of social communication, and, therefore, situated among consciousnesses, personalities, collectives, and even generations, is always in movement:

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<sup>54</sup> In Portuguese: “o mundo artístico de Dostoiévski. Nele tudo está em fermentação, nada se estabeleceu, tudo está ainda evoluindo. O objeto do romance não é o *ser/existir* da sociedade, mas o *movimento* social. De todos os nossos notáveis romancistas, só Dostoiévski tomou o movimento social como objeto principal de sua obra.” In Russian: “художественный мир Достоевского. Здесь все в брожении, ничто не установилось, все еще только становится. Предмет романа здесь не *быт* общества, а общественное *движение*. Изю всех наших замечательных романистов один Достоевский взял общественное движение за главный предмет своего творчества.” (Available at: <http://www.vehi.net/soloviev/trirechi.html> Accessed: 10 Feb. /2020)

The problem with orienting discourse to the random word has a primordial sociological importance. The word is social by nature. For the word is not a material thing but rather the eternally mobile, eternally fickle medium of dialogic interaction. It never gravitates toward a single consciousness or a single voice. The life of the word is contained in its transfer from one mouth to another, from one context to another context, from one social collective to another, from one generation to another generation (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1929], p.202).<sup>55</sup>

Although we also see here the idea of *energy* of the work of the famous German linguist Wilhelm Humboldt, cited by Valentin Voloshinov in *Marxism and the philosophy of language* (1973 [1929]),<sup>56</sup> and by Mikhail Bakhtin in *Speech Genres and other late essays* (1986 [1952-53]),<sup>57</sup> the social movement of Soloviov is reread by Bakhtin in terms of its theory of dialogue. The recovery of this source sheds a little more light on the centrality of the concept of dialogue in Bakhtin, the essence of language that is all flux, and oriented toward alien discourse. For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky's novel is not a tragedy of individualism, of the self-sufficiency, and of the isolation of man at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as Ivanov had proposed, but rather polyphonic, as it is based on the flow of dialogue that is always transforming, and that, without forgetting the past, looks to the future.

The second interlocutor we analyze is Nikolai Aleksandrovitch Berdiaiev (1874-1948), eminent philosopher and Christian thinker and politician, who published the books, *The Revelation of Man in Dostoevsky's Works* [*Откровение о человеке в*

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<sup>55</sup> TN: The first part of this quote is significantly different in the 1963 version. Therefore, I have done a free translation from the Portuguese of the first part and relied on the previously published 1984 English version for the second part, which is the same. In Portuguese: "O problema da orientação do discurso para a palavra alheia possui uma importância sociológica primordial. A palavra é social por natureza. A palavra não é um objeto, mas um meio de comunicação social em eterno movimento e em eterna mudança. Ela nunca satisfaz uma única consciência, uma única voz. A vida da palavra está na passagem de uma boca a outra boca, de um contexto a outro contexto, de uma coletividade social a outra, de uma geração a outra geração." First part of 1963 version is as follows: "Stylistics must be based not only, and even *not as much*, on linguistics as on *metalinguistics*, which studies the word not in a system of language and not in a 'text' excised from dialogic interaction, but precisely within the sphere of dialogic interaction itself, that is, in that sphere where discourse lives an authentic life." For the full reference, see footnote 1a, p.202. In Russian: "Проблема ориентации речи на чужое слово имеет первостепенное социологическое значение. Слово по природе социально. Слово не вещь, а вечно поджиная, вечно изменчивая среда социального общения. Оно никогда не довлеет одному сознанию, одному голосу Жизнь слова – в переходе из уст в уста, из одного контекста в другой контекст, от одного социального коллектива к другому, от одного поколения к другому поколению."

<sup>56</sup> For reference, see footnote 1e.

<sup>57</sup> BAKHTIN, M. M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee. University of Texas Press: Austin, 1986.

творчестве Достоевского] in 1918<sup>58</sup> and *Dostoevsky's Worldview* [Мирозерцание Достоевского] in 1921, an epoch in which Bakhtin was developing his philosophy of the act, his theory of the relationship between author and characters, and beginning his work on Dostoevsky, as the article of 1922 announced in the Vitebsk *The Life of Art* [Жизнь искусства] newspaper (Figure 1). In our view, Bakhtin fixated on the article by Nikolai Berdiaiev, more direct dialogue that we divided into four interrelated aspects: the representation of movement of the character's inner world, the ethical principle for the human responsibility with regard to liberty, embodied ideas, personalism and the difference between platonic dialogue and dialogue in Dostoevsky.

The artistic principle that, in Dostoevsky's creation, everything is in flux, as Soloviov had already pointed out, the proposal for the representation of society, is internalized in the proposal by Nikolai Berdiaiev, or rather, the movement is characteristic of the character's inner world, which is dynamic and is in constant conflict:

Dostoevsky was given to know the man in an impassioned movement, impetuous and phrenetic, in an exceptional dynamic. There is nothing static in Dostoevsky. Everything is in the dynamic of the spirit, in the ardent element, in the phrenetic passion (BERDIAIEV, 2018 [1921], p.16).<sup>59</sup>

In his anthropology, Dostoevsky discovers that human nature is dynamic to the highest degree, in its depth there is an ardent movement. The tranquility and the ecstatic state only exist on the surface, on the most superficial layer of the human being (BERDIAIEV, 2018 [1921], p.51).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> The year of the first publication of this book was not available on the edition acquired and read by us. We found the date 1918 on the site of the collected works by N. Berdiáiev: <http://www.vehi.net/berdyaev/>. Accessed on: April 20, 2020.

<sup>59</sup> In Portuguese: "A Dostoiévski foi dado conhecer o homem em um movimento apaixonado, impetuoso e frenético, em uma dinâmica excepcional. Não há nada estático em Dostoiévski. Tudo está na dinâmica do espírito, no elemento ardente, na paixão frenética." In Russian: "Достоевскому дано было познать человека в страстном, буйном, иступленном движении, в исключительной динамичности. Ничего статического нет у Достоевского. Он весь в динамике духа, в огненной стихии, в иступленной страсти."

<sup>60</sup> In Portuguese: "Em sua antropologia, Dostoiévski descobre que a natureza humana é dinâmica em alto grau, na sua profundidade há um movimento ardente. A tranquilidade e o caráter estático só existem na superfície, na camada mais superficial do ser humano." In Russian: "В своей антропологии Достоевский открывает, что человеческая природа в высшей степени динамична, в глубине её огненное движение. Покой, статичность существуют лишь в верхнем, в самом поверхностном пласте человека."



The Bakhtinian thesis about the polyphonic principle of Dostoevsky's creation, especially in the novels, attributes self-consciousness as one of its fundamental pillars. Here again, Bakhtin rereads these propositions by Berdiaiev in his own terms in which the self-consciousness and the word/discourse of the characters is the nucleus of their characterization, revelation and development:

Dostoevsky's hero is not an objectified image but an autonomous discourse, *pure voice*; we do not see him, we hear him; everything that we see and know apart from his discourse is nonessential and is swallowed up by discourse as its raw material, or else remains outside it as something that stimulates and provokes.[...] The epithet "a cruel talent," applied to Dostoevsky by N. K. Mikhailovsky, has some justification, although not as simple as it seemed at the time. The special sort of moral torture that Dostoevsky inflicts upon his heroes, in order to force out of them that ultimate word of a self-consciousness pushed to its extreme limits, permits him to take all that is merely material, merely an object, all that is fixed and unchanging, all that is external and neutral in the representation of a person, and dissolve it in the realm of the hero's self-consciousness and self-utterance (BAKHTIN, 1984, [1929], pp.53-54).<sup>61</sup>

Bakhtin conceives the word/discourse of the self-consciousness as the guiding principle of the instability, and the dynamism, of the world and the characters in Dostoevsky's artistic project. The word of the self-consciousness is responsible for the "inconclusiveness, the non-closure and irresolution"<sup>62</sup> Bakhtin locates in the incessant movement of the constitution of the inner world of the characters, in the word/discourse and in the self-consciousness. The word is the means by which the internal and the external, the psychological and the ideological, in Voloshinov's terms (1973 [1929]),<sup>63</sup> are found and revealed in a continuous process in which nothing is static, finalized, concluded.

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<sup>61</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, pp.53-54. In Russian: "Герой Достоевского не образ, а полновесное слово *чистый голос*; мы его не видим, - мы его слышим; всё же, что мы видим и знаем помимо его слова, - не существенно и поглощается словом, как его материал, лил остаётся вне его, как стимулирующий и провоцирующий фактор. [...] Эпитет 'жестокий талант', данный Достоевскому Михайловским имеет под собою почву, хотя и не такую простую, какою она представлялась Михайловскому. Своего рода моральные пытки, которым подвергает своих героев Достоевский, чтобы добиться от них слова самосознания, доходящего до своих последних пределов, позволяют растворить все вещное и объектное, всё твёрдое и неизменное, всё внешнее и нейтральное в изображении человека в чистом *medium'e* его самосознания и самовысказывания."

<sup>62</sup> In Portuguese: "sua inconclusibilidade, não fechamento e irresolução. (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.63)." In Russian: "своей незавершённой, своей незакрытостью и нерешенностью."

<sup>63</sup> For reference, see footnote 1e.

The liberty and the autonomy of the characters stem from the principle of the word of self-consciousness. In the reading Berdiaiev on Dostoevsky, freedom plays a central role in the struggle against the pre-determinisms elaborated by positivist theories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to explain the human being. This freedom brings another key concept – responsibility – as free beings are beings with choices, who must bear their consequences.

Dostoevsky was “austere,” because he didn’t want to take from the human being the uniform of Liberty, he didn’t want to free the human being from the suffering at the cost of the loss of his liberty, deposited in the human an enormous responsibility, corresponding to the value of free beings (BERDIAIEV, 2018 [1921], p.61).<sup>64</sup>

Freedom in Bakhtin’s theory is in the relation between the author and the characters, and in the principle of the word self-consciousness. Through self-conscience, the character always has the last word about him or herself:<sup>65</sup>

Dostoevsky's works are in this sense profoundly objective—because the hero’s self-consciousness, once it becomes dominant, breaks down the monologic unity of the work (without, of course, violating the artistic unity of a new and non monologic type). The hero becomes relatively free and independent, because everything in the author’s design that had defined him and, as it were, sentenced him, everything that had qualified him to be once and for all a completed image of reality, now no longer functions as a form for finalizing him, but as the material of his self-consciousness... (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1929], p.52).<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> In Portuguese: “Dostoiévski foi ‘austero’, porque não quis retirar do ser humano o fardo da Liberdade, não quis livrar o ser humano do sofrimento às custas da perda da sua liberdade, depositou no ser humano uma responsabilidade enorme, correspondente ao valor dos seres livres.” In Russian: “Достоевский был ‘жесток’, потому что не хотел снять с человека бремени свободы, не хотел избавить человека от страданий ценою лишения его свободы, возлагал на человека огромную ответственность, соответствующую достоинству свободных.”

<sup>65</sup> It is important to highlight that the idea of “responsibility,” so precious to the philosophy of the ethical act, developed by Bakhtin at the beginning of the 1920s, does not appear explicitly in *PDC*. In our hypothesis it is that the responsibility is an ethical principle of life, and not of the literary world of fictional characters.

<sup>66</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.52. In Russian: “Произведения Достоевского в этом смысле глубоко объективны, и потому самосознание героя, став доминантой, разлагает монологическое единство произведения (не нарушая, конечно, художественного единства нового, не монологического типа). Герой становится относительно свободным и самостоятельным, ибо все то, что делало его в авторском замысле определённым, так сказать, приговоренным, что квалифицировало его раз и навсегда как законченный образ действительности, - теперь всё это функционирует уже не как завершающая его форма, а как материал его самосознание.”

In our view, the third concept developed by Bakhtin from the exchange with the work of Berdiaiev is Dostoevsky's personalized world. Berdiaiev connects personalism to the divine nature, and, therefore, the immortality of human beings, and to their freedom. Freedom to choose between good and bad, and to take responsibility for their choices lead the way to suffering, from which they can only escape at the cost of losing their freedom. However, according to Berdiaiev, human freedom is not synonymous either with voluntary acts – which leads to the annihilation of freedom, since the lack of limits characteristic of voluptuousness turn a person into its slave – nor acts of revolt, which lead to the negation of the individual in favor of a limitless collectivism. This refers to Berdiaiev's criticism of the ideas of the October Revolution of 1917. We see the expression of personalism in the following excerpt:

Dostoevsky had a *phrenetic feeling about personality*. His entire worldview is permeated with personalism. With this was related even the problem of immortality. Dostoevsky is a genius critic of contemporary eudaemony,<sup>67</sup> on revealing its incompatibility with the *free and dignified personality* (BERDIAIEV, 2018 [1921], p.49, our emphasis).<sup>68</sup>

Bakhtin re-reads the personalism of Dostoevsky's world in light of his theory of the dialogic, in which ideas are embodied and personalized, for this the dialectic, on fixing itself in the plane of the logical relations in the limits of an isolated consciousness, does not account for the personalized and dialogic universe of Dostoevsky:

Both dialectics and antinomy are in fact present in Dostoevsky's world. The thinking of his characters is indeed sometimes dialectic or antinomic. But all *logical* links remain within the limits of individual consciousnesses, and do not govern the event interrelationships among them. *Dostoevsky's world is profoundly personalized. He perceives and represents every thought as the position of a personality.* Therefore, even within the limits of individual consciousnesses, a dialectic or antinomic series can be no more than an abstract element, indissolubly

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<sup>67</sup> Doctrine that preached happiness as the goal of human life.

<sup>68</sup> In Portuguese: “Dostoiévski tinha um *sentimento frenético da personalidade*. Toda a *visão de mundo dele é atravessada pelo personalismo*. Com isso estava relacionado ainda o problema central para ele da imortalidade. Dostoiévski é um crítico genial da eudaimonia contemporânea, ao revelar a sua incompatibilidade com a *personalidade livre e digna*.” In Russian: “У Достоевского было иступленное чувство личности. Всё его мирозерцание проникнуто персонализмом. С этим была связана и центральная для него проблема бессмертия. Достоевский – гениальный критик современного эвдемонизма, он раскрывает несовместимость его со свободой и достоинством личности.”

interwoven with other elements of an integral and concrete consciousness (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.9; our emphasis).<sup>69</sup>

In our view, the theory of dialogism that guides the relations between author/characters, narrator/characters, characters/characters, stems from the vision of the human being as self-conscious, self-determined, free, inconclusive. A being of this nature cannot be explained by dialectics, but understood by dialogue.

Ultimately, stemming from the personalized world of Dostoevsky, it is a distinction made by Berdiaiev and Bakhtin, with regard to Plato's dialogue, and in the Russian writer. Berdiaiev recognizes that, in Dostoevsky, there is an intense inner conflict of the characters, which is absent in Plato's contemplative universe:

Dostoevsky's perspective is very distinct from Plato's reflections, and many other mystical ones. A tempestuous conflict of polar oppositions does not only occur on the bodily and emotional plane, but also on the spiritual (BERDIAIEV, 2018 [1921], p.52).<sup>70</sup>

Bakhtin also highlights the differences between Plato and Dostoevsky on the plane of his theory of dialogue and dialogic relations:

The idea in Dostoevsky is never cut off from the voice. For this reason, it is radically wrong to claim that Dostoevsky's dialogues are dialectical [...] It is not the idea as a monologic deduction, even if dialectical, but the event of an interaction of voices that is the ultimate given for Dostoevsky.

This is what distinguishes Dostoevsky's dialogue from Platonic dialogue. In the latter, while it is not a thoroughly monologized pedagogical dialogue, all the same the multiplicity of voices is extinguished in the idea. The idea is conceived by Plato not as an event, but as existence [...] The very juxtaposition of Dostoevsky's dialogue with Plato's dialogue seems to us in general superficial and unproductive,<sup>7</sup> for Dostoevsky's dialogue is not at all a purely

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<sup>69</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.9. In Russian: “И диалектика и антиномика, действительно, наличны в мире Достоевского. Мысль его героев, действительно, диалектична и иногда антиномична. Но все логические связи остаются в пределах отдельных сознаний и не управляют событийными взаимоотношениями между ними. Мир Достоевского глубоко персоналистичен. Всякую мысль он воспринимает и изображает как позицию личности. Поэтому даже в пределах отдельных сознаний диалектический или антиномический ряд лишь абстрактный момент, неразрывно сплетенный с другими моментами цельного конкретного сознания.”

<sup>70</sup> In Portuguese: “Dostoiévski é muito distinto da contemplação de Platão e de muitos outros místicos. Não só no plano corporal e emocional ocorre um conflito tempestuoso de oposições polares, mas também no plano espiritual.” In Russian: “В этом созерцание Достоевского очень отлично от созерцания Платона, от созерцания многих мистиков. Не только в телесном и душевном плане происходит бурные столкновения полярных противоположностей, но и в плане духовном.”

cognitive, philosophical dialogue (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1929], pp.279-280).<sup>71</sup>

In Bakhtinian theory, Dostoevsky's dialogue is characterized by the coexistence of embodied, personalized, ideas, in which there are personal and social voices interacting. In this sense, Bakhtin highlights, in the sequence of excerpts above, that the Biblical dialogues of Job and some of the evangelisms are closer to Dostoevsky's world.<sup>72</sup>

In the field of Russian philosophy, the third interlocutor we analyze is Liev Shestov (1866-1938). We decided to present him last, because it seems to us that the dialogue between Liev Shestov and Bakhtin is less evident and more subtle. Just as Berdiaiev moved to France in 1921, fleeing the October Revolution. He is considered an existentialist philosopher. In his text *Dostoevsky and Nietzsche* [*Достоевский и Ницше*] (2016 [1903]), Liev Shestov's general thesis is that Dostoevsky represents a radical change in the view of man with the beginnings of a philosophy of tragedy.<sup>73</sup> We envision a veiled dialogue between Liev Shestov and Bakhtin in the proposal that there are two ruptures in Dostoevsky's works: the first is a radical rupture that the work of Dostoevsky represents in the view of man, and the second is a qualitative transformation on the evolution of Dostoevsky's work itself, beginning with the novella, *Notes from the Underground*:

[...] the millennial reign of "reason and consciousness" ends for man; a new era begins – of "psychology," which in Russia Dostoevsky discovers for the first time. However, the open antagonism between "reason and consciousness," on the one hand, and "psychology" on the other, up until that moment few dared to recognize openly. Most propose the possibility of maintaining the old hierarchy, in which

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<sup>71</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, pp.279-280. In Russian: "Идея у Достоевского никогда не отрешается от голоса. Потому в корне ошибочно утверждение, что диалоги Достоевского диалектичны. [...] Не идея как монологический вывод, хотя бы и диалектический, а событие взаимодействия голосов является последнею данностью для Достоевского. Этим диалог Достоевского отличается от платоновского диалога. В этом последнем, хотя он и не является сплошь монологизованным, педагогическим диалогом, всё же множественность голосов погашается в идее. Идея мыслится Платоном не как событие, а как бытие.[...] Самое сопоставление диалогов Достоевского с диалогом Платона кажется нам вообще несущественным и непродуктивным, ибо диалог Достоевского вовсе не чисто познавательный, философский диалог."

<sup>72</sup> Although it is not our objective here to compare the 1929 and 1963 versions, it is worth noting the change in Bakhtin's opinion with respect to Socratic dialogue in the 1963 edition, as Botcharov (2017) observes. One possible explanation for this change is that Berdiaiev's text has less influence in Bakhtin's text in the 1963 edition.

<sup>73</sup> Considering that Ivanov (1911) characterized Dostoevsky's work as novel-tragedy, and that his text comes after Liev Shestov's (1903), there may have been dialogue between these two authors.

psychology tended to occupy a subaltern position (CHESTÓV, 2016 [1903], pp.52-53).<sup>74</sup>

Dostoevsky's literary activity can be divided in two periods. The first begins with *Poor Folk* and ends with *The House of the Dead*. The second begins with *Notes from the Underground* and ends with the *Pushkin Speech*,<sup>75</sup> this apotheosis shades the entire works of Dostoevsky (CHESTÓV, 2016 [1903], pp.25-26).<sup>75</sup>

Liev Shestov sees a deep alteration in the vision of the world from Dostoevsky to which he associates the ideas of the German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, who clarified many aspects that had been anticipated by the Russian writer. In both, there is a philosophy of contradictions, in which stability and balance are absent, causing estrangement. In the chronology of Dostoevsky's works, Liev Shestov defends that in *Notes from the Underground* what occurs is a passing from the era of "reason and consciousness" to that of "psychology," with all its contradictions and instabilities.

Bakhtin, on the other hand, rereads these two radical changes in terms of a rupture in the "artistic vision" (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.47)<sup>76</sup> and in the establishment of "new principles of artistic composition of the elements and construction of the whole" (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.51).<sup>77</sup> Just as Liev Shestov, Bakhtin also recognizes a radical change carried out by Dostoevsky, but sees this change in the artistic principles of his work, rejecting on the one hand, "a strict ideologism, which seeks above all an understanding

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<sup>74</sup> In Portuguese: "[...] acaba para o homem o reino milenar da "razão e da consciência"; começa uma nova era – da "psicologia", que na Rússia Dostoiévski descobriu pela primeira vez. Contudo, o antagonismo aberto entre "razão e consciência", por um lado, e "psicologia", por outro, até o momento poucos atrevem-se a reconhecer abertamente. A maioria propõe a possibilidade de manter a velha hierarquia, em que a psicologia tende a ocupar uma posição subalterna" (ШЕСТОВ [CHESTÓV], 2016[1903], pp.52-53)." In Russian: "[...] кончается для человека тысячелетнее царство "разума и совести"; начинается новая эра – "психологии", которую у нас в России впервые открыл Достоевский. Между прочим, прямой антагонизм между "разумом и совестью", с одной стороны, и "психологией", с другой, до сих пор мало кто решается признать открыто. Большинство предлагает возможным сохранить старую иерархию, при которой психологии приходится занимать подчинённое положение."

<sup>75</sup> In Portuguese: "A atividade literária de Dostoiévski pode ser dividida em dois períodos. O primeiro começa com *Gente pobre* e termina com *Memórias da casa dos mortos*. O segundo começa com *Memórias do subsolo* e termina com o *Discurso de Pushkin*, essa apoteose sombria de toda a obra de Dostoiévski." In Russian: "Литературная деятельность Достоевского может быть разделена на два периода. Первый начинается *Бедными людьми* и кончается *Записками из Мёртвого дома*. Второй начинается с *Записок из подполья* и заканчивается *Пушкинской речью*, этим мрачным апофеозом всего творчества Достоевского."

<sup>76</sup> In Portuguese: "visão artística." In Russian: "художественное видение."

<sup>77</sup> In Portuguese: "novos princípios de composição artística dos elementos e da construção do todo." In Russian: "новые принципы художественного сочетания элементов и построения целого."

and revelation that is purely philosophical” (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.4)<sup>78</sup>, and on the other, “a strict formalist approach” that “is not capable of going beyond the periphery of this form” (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.4).<sup>79</sup> Bakhtin’s proposal is to achieve “an ideology that determines its artistic form, its novelistic construction exceptionally complex and entirely new,” “its revolutionary innovation in the field of the novel, as an artistic form” (BAKHTIN, 1929, p.4).<sup>80</sup>

Ultimately, Bakhtin also perceives a qualitative change in the construction of the characters starting with the novella, *Notes from the Underground*:

This polemic with the other on the subject of himself is complicated in *Notes from Underground* by his polemic with the other on the subject of the world and society. The underground hero, in contrast to Devushkin and Golyadkin, is an ideologist (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1929], p.236).<sup>81</sup>

For Bakhtin, the change is in the emergence of character-ideologues, who are in constant polemical dialogue with themselves and with others. According to Bakhtin, the underground man’s revolt is against “the world order” [*мировой строй*] (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1929], p.236)<sup>82</sup> or a nature, as well as “someone else’s will” [*чужая воля*] (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1929], p.236)<sup>83</sup> that predetermines him.

## Final Remarks

The main objective of this article was to reach a deeper understanding of the concept of the polyphonic novel proposed for the first time by Bakhtin in *PDC* (1929),

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<sup>78</sup> In Portuguese: “um ideologismo estreito, que busca antes de tudo uma compreensão e uma revelação puramente filosóficas.” In Russian: “Узкий же идеологизм, ищущий прежде всего чисто философских постижений и прозрений.”

<sup>79</sup> In Portuguese: “Uma abordagem formalista estreita”, “não é capaz de ir além da periferia dessa forma.” In Russian: “Узко-формалистический подход дальше периферии этой формы пойти на способен.”

<sup>80</sup> In Portuguese: “a ideologia que determinou sua forma artística, sua construção romanesca excepcionalmente complexa e totalmente nova”, “sua inovação revolucionária no campo do romance, como forma artística.” In Russian: “идеология, которая определила его художественную форму, его исключительно сложное и совершенно новое романное построение”, “его революционное новаторство в области романа, как художественной формы.”

<sup>81</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.236. In Russian: “Полемика с другим на тему о себе самом осложняется в *Записках из подполья* полемикой с другим на тему о мире и об обществе. Герой из подполья, в отличие от Девушкина и от Голядкина, - идеолог.”

<sup>82</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.236.

<sup>83</sup> For reference, see footnote 1a, p.236.

through researching the genesis of the of text, and the Russian and Soviet interlocutors in the fields of both: literary criticism/theory, and philosophy. Thus, while Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel reveals an innovation on the background of the Western novel tradition, the novelty and the depth of the Bakhtinian approach is more profoundly evaluated given the knowledge about the Russian and Soviet academic context of its development. The first relevant discovery is the news article about Bakhtin's work on Dostoevsky in 1922. This date points to two important elements of the *PDC*: on the one hand, its direct connection to Bakhtin's philosophical texts from the beginning of the 1920s, as Botcharov (2017) pointed out, and on the other hand, considering the absence of the term "polyphony" in Bakhtin's works prior to the *PDC*, as Nikolaev (1996) observed, that Dostoevsky's approach underwent a significant alteration at the end of the 1920s.

In connection with this second aspect is the fact that the Bakhtinian perspective of Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel, when read in dialogue with the philosophers and literary theorists who study Dostoevsky, excels for its refined analyses of the word, the utterance, dialogue and discourse. As we have shown throughout this article, Bakhtin was not the first to propose that polyphony, the counterpoint of voices and the relationship of I/other were guiding principles of Dostoevsky's art. However, his theory of polyphony shows, through the analysis of stylistics and metalinguistics, and with the help of some concrete examples taken from Dostoevsky, how these philosophical, ideological, anthropological and political principles acquire an artistic form. As a literary writer, Dostoevsky knew, with his art, to foresee a radical change in the view of man and the world. Although this change was alluded to by Russian philosophers such as Berdiaiev, Shestov and Soloviov, it was Bakhtin who discovered and described this artistic innovation better and more deeply than the others, which produced the philosophical turnabout. The Russian researcher Natalia Konstaninovna Bonietskaia raised the question, in a pertinent way, of Bakhtin's innovations in relation to the tradition of studies on Dostoevsky in Russia: the ethical existence developed in the works of the beginning of the 1920s, the heightened ethical dialogue, the carnivalized-comic line of popular culture in the 1963 text, and the predominance of the spirit of Menippean satire. In my view, it is necessary to add stylistics and metalinguistics to the analysis.

Founded on an ethics of artistic or literary creation, the analysis of stylistics and metalinguistics of *PDC* – with a focus on the diverse aspects of the word (the style as the



relation of the author to the material, as an expression of the relationship of the author with the world of others) – was already projected in the text “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” (1923-1924)<sup>84</sup> and gained a revitalization in the spirit of the other two texts published almost simultaneously by Pavel Medvedev, *The formal Method of literary Scholarship. A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics* (1978 [1928]),<sup>85</sup> and Valentin Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language. Fundamental Problems of the Sociological Method in Language Sciences* (1973 [1929]).<sup>86</sup> The main revitalization is the concept of the artistic and concrete utterance in which the style is analyzed through the dialogical relations among them.

Finally, the Bakhtinian analyses of the polyphonic novel excel in paying attention to the aspects of man and society as being unfinished, inconclusive, unique, multiple, and always in process of transformation. In light of the view of tragedy prompted by isolation and individualism as a proposal, Bakhtin proposes a gaze of his own: polyphony and the dialogical relationships, which seek to account for the possibility of a tense coexistence of personalized ideas within the conflict of worldviews. Thus, as Dostoevsky’s artistic ethics project a form that looks to the future, the concept of Bakhtinian polyphony is elaborated to comprehend a plural, inconclusive world in constant transformation, replete with uniqueness, which recalls the formulations of Brazilian psychoanalyst Jorge Forbes (2012), who thinks about contemporary transformations of the world that he understands to be flexible, risky and responsible, based on horizontal social ties and on multiple patterns. In this framework, Bakhtinian polyphony is shown to be surprisingly current and powerful.

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<sup>84</sup> For reference, see footnote 1d.

<sup>85</sup> MEDVEDEV, P.N.; BAKHTIN, M. M. *The Formal Method of Literary Studies. A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. Translated by Albert J. Wehrle. John Hopkins University Press: Maryland, 1978.

<sup>86</sup> For reference, see footnote 1e.

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