

The Concept of the Ideologeme in the Artistic Creation of Dostoevsky's Work / *O conceito de ideograma na criação artística da obra de Dostoiévski*

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this essay is to better understand the complementarity of the conceptual field developed in dialogism studies, to explore the composition of ideas from the dialogic relations expressed in ideologemes, in Dostoevsky's novels, as constructed by the theorists. To achieve this aim, Vološinov's investigation is presented as a fundamental premise. Thanks to the understanding of the ideological sign as a discursive formation, established in the refractions that open up the investigative pathways to new speculative possibilities – or rather, to ideologemes – we are able to understand the magnitude of the ideologist's work and their intensive production of ideology, creating forms in the polyphonic novel.

KEYWORDS: Ideas; Ideologist; Ideologeme; Refraction; Great Time

RESUMO

O objetivo do presente ensaio é compreender a complementaridade do campo conceitual, desenvolvido pelos estudos do dialogismo, para explorar a composição das ideias a partir das relações dialógicas manifestadas em ideogramas construídos pelos ideólogos nas obras romanescas de Dostoiévski. Para cumprir tal objetivo, a investigação de Volóchinov se coloca como premissa fundamental. Graças à compreensão do signo ideológico como formação discursiva constituída nas refrações que abrem os caminhos indagativos a novas possibilidades especulativas, ou melhor, a ideogramas, podemos compreender a magnitude do trabalho do ideólogo e de sua produção intensiva de ideologia geradora de formas no romance polifônico.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ideias; Ideólogo; Ideograma; Refração; Grande tempo

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Introduction

One study that proposes examining the “problems” of creative work in the field of verbal art is concerned, among other objectives, with finding analytical pathways through which such works master their fundamental procedures. In the case of the book *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Creation* ([1929] *PDC*),¹ M.M., Bakhtin clearly presents his research concerns: to examine how Dostoevsky creates a new manner of “artistically representing ideas” in his novels, and, thus, how he develops procedures for the construction of artistic devices based on interaction and dialogue, in a quest for, if not for understanding, at least discussions regarding the conflict of ideas that afflict his characters.

To this end, Bakhtin proposes examining the manner of constructing an artistic practice in which the creative act itself develops following an analytical pathway of a dialogic nature – which also confers upon Bakhtin the will to be not only the discoverer of the specific devices of Dostoevsky’s *poiesis*, but also of his own critical-analytical method for the construction of his historical–dialogic poetics. How can one follow this transforming movement of a discovery that emerged in an exercise of artistic creation and transformed the very theoretical–analytical gesture? This is the question that inspired the study proposed in this essay.

At the very beginning of the book *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Creation* (1929), which celebrated its 90th anniversary of publication in 2019, Bakhtin explains his interest in examining the function of the representation of ideas, found in Dostoevsky’s novels, in their interaction with other ideas, or rather, in their displacement in relation to one another. It is a representation in which the idea is explored within the extent of its possibilities and not as a conclusive demonstration of completed thoughts, defined once and for all, on the authorial plane. The representation of ideas is taken to be a fundamental problem of Dostoevsky’s artistic creation in its most essential aspect: inquiry that seeks to understand its very own questions.

¹ TN: The *PDC* is an early version of *The Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (*PDP*), which was translated into English by Caryl Emerson in 1984. Given there is no English translation of the *PDC*, citations from this text that do not appear in the later version (*PDP*), will be from the Portuguese. All direct references to the *PDP* are from the following translation: BAKHTIN, M. *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson. University of Minnesota Press: Minnesota, 1984.

The demand, clearly stated in Bakhtin's book, reflects a preoccupation that extends to other works of the intellectual circle that aim to better understand the representation of ideas in interaction. In the book *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929), V. N. Vološinov examines this concern in the processes of construction in which the idea is manifested in some discursive form in order to interact with others. Thought and discourse translate the operational dimension of the idea into different forms of transmission that not only reflect accomplished assumptions, but also refract, in other words, they open them to discussions of possibilities within an investigational space consisting of different points of view, in which none of them lead to the closure of the question.

While Vološinov's investigative trajectory aims to organize the discourse elements present in different accents and points of view, Bakhtin proceeds to provide a background for how multi-accented discourses give rise to movements of ideas open to their own possibilities and incompleteness. It is from these investigations that structural-theoretical fields emerge to constitute dialogism. On the one hand, Vološinov formulated the concept of the ideologeme to designate discursive practices comprising different accentuations of points of view. On the other hand, Bakhtin explores those discursive practices based on ideologemes constructed by the ideologue – the hero in the novel who utters his discourse as a subject from his own points of view.

Notably, the investigations that underpin the studies of Dostoevsky's *poiesis* as a mark of dialogic-polyphonic artistic creation, follow lines of emergent questioning that are organized from distinct perspectives. Hence, the need to understand the creation of the artistic idea in the complex field of its articulation.

Nevertheless, it is important to consider that thought produced within dialogic studies spurred by the dynamics of ideas in the artistic representation is itself an investigational environment, in which various speculations are made as an ethical act. It is an ethical act of theoretical-philosophical thoughts that are not closed in their sole propositions, and which can be observed in the dialogue between Vološinov and Bakhtin's concepts, and also with other members of the intellectual circle raised within dialogic studies. It is significant to note that the two books – Vološinov's and Bakhtin's

– were published in the same year: 1929²; it is natural, therefore, for there to be a complementarity of conceptions about the emerging issues.

The aim of this essay is to better understand the complementarity of the conceptual field developed by studies of dialogism in order to explore the representation of ideas from the dialogic relations expressed in ideologemes created by ideologues in the Dostoevsky's novels. Vološinov's investigation presents itself as a fundamental impetus for achieving this aim. Thanks to the understanding of the ideological sign as a discursive formation established in the refractions that open up the investigative pathways to new speculative possibilities – or rather, to ideologemes –, we are able to understand the magnitude of the ideologue's work and his intense production of ideology, creating forms in the polyphonic novel. In short, our subject-matter examines the hypothesis that the concepts formulated by Vološinov are densified and expanded in the findings of Bakhtin on discursive dialogism and in the refractions of the creative act. The ideologue becomes a key figure in this process. As the subject who utters discourse and imposes an accent, which is independent from the author's accent, the hero of the novel becomes an ideologue, whose speech consists of ideologemes – within it, conflicts emerge in the form of accents that distinguish, qualify and utter different points of view in confrontation.

1 Discursive Refraction in the Variations of Accent of Ideologemes

Any examination that seeks to position the field of refraction in the process of the discursive generation of ideas, particularly in the field of the verbal work created by Dostoevsky, deserves to be preceded by the concept of refraction as conceived by Vološinov within the scope of his semiotic understanding of ideology, or rather, in cases in which ideology manifests itself only in the production of signs.

According to Vološinov's assumption (1986, pp.9-16), the ideological sign was conceived as a signification process resulting from the reflection and refraction of a given reality – natural and/or social – in which signification develops, and from where it is projected into another dimension. While in reflection, signification approximates the

² We made use of the 1930 edition, reprinted in Russian by Mouton in 1972.

reference, in refraction there is the expression of a movement that leads to predictable and unpredictable possibilities of signification.

Even though the two movements – reflection and refraction – are components of the ideological sign and mutually interdependent, it is not unusual for the notion of ideological sign merely as a reflection to ignore refraction. In addition to the indisputable disqualification of the concept – or rather, the loss of the inalienable quality of its constitution –, the foundations of what Bakhtin conceived as “form-shaping ideology” (BAKHTIN, 1994, pp.92 et seq.) are lost. Likewise, the basis for a qualitative distinction between the monologic principle and the dialogical-polyphonic principle created by Dostoevsky, one of the issues examined in this essay.

If, on the one hand, the creation of the idea reflects a context of a single thought dominated by the centripetal movement in the monologic universe, on the other hand, the idea reacts and expands into different centrifugal positions on being directed to the other, thus expanding the enunciative limits of dialogism.

Notably, the concept of refraction defines not only the notion of ideological sign, but the very dialogic construction of ideology, which at various moments is in confrontation with dialectic construction. Ultimately, any work committed to the study of form-shaping ideology cannot ignore the role of refraction as an inalienable part of the ideological sign.

Considering that the positions do not consist of elaborations resulting from a single and uniform focus, but rather of concrete utterances in confrontation with different gradients of focalisation, the understanding of the ideological sign is not limited to the procedures of its formation. Inside it, intonations on different scales of values are shaped by different degree of accents in conflict. Here, we are faced with Vološinov’s conception concerning the concreteness of the ideologeme and its differential quality: the ability to distinguish accents from values.

To give a name to the distinction of discursive experiences on a gradient of their value accents, Vološinov thought of the concept of the ideologeme, as can be read in the following passage:

The fact is, after all, that the speaking personality, its subjective designs and intentions, and its conscious stylistic stratagems do not exist outside their material objectification in language. Without a way of revealing

itself in language, be it only in inner speech, personality does not exist either for itself or for others; it can illuminate and take cognizance in itself of only that for which there is objective, illuminating material, the materialized light of consciousness in the form of stable words, value judgements, and accents. The inner subjective personality with its own self-awareness does not exist as a material fact, usable as a basis for causal explanation, but it exists as an ideologeme. The inner personality, with all its subjective intentions and all its inner depths, is nothing but an ideologeme – an ideologeme that is vague and fluid in character until it achieves definition in the more stable and more elaborate products of ideological creativity (VOLOŠINOV, 1986, pp.152-153).

It is in the ideologeme that refraction distinguishes the strength of positions at the same time that it confers concreteness to the utterances of one in relation to the others. This is because the ideologeme simultaneously defines the accents of values in dialogic creation and the analytical process that makes it possible to critically formulate the understanding of the interactions in the clash of dialogic relations and of the refractions that manifest themselves therein as active reactions of otherness. The study of the ideologeme cannot be separated from the concept of refraction, nor from the discursive production that the ideologist expounds as an errant discourse of ideas in friction with (the) other(s) and with the views of the world around them.

Vološinov achieves the analytical understanding of his formulation in Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot*, citing an episode in which Prince Lev N. Myshkin falls into an inner conflict with Parfyon Rogozhin, mainly because he feels persecuted by his gaze, and he enters into a deep internal conflict of ideas. Rogozhin, as we know, is the merchant with whom Myshkin engages in conversation on the train when coming back to Petersburg after four years away for the treatment of epilepsy in Switzerland. If, initially, Rogozhin and Myshkin feel empathy for one another, when Myshkin gets to know Anastassya Filippovna, the friend becomes his rival, although Myshkin feels him to be the projection of his double in reverse. His kindness, ingenuity and helpfulness contrast with the brutality, greed and obsession of Rogozhin, especially with respect to the love that he says he feels for Anastassya.

Traces of the compassion that builds Myshkin's inner world can be found in other episodes on the theme of the "gaze," which permeates the novel. At the very beginning of the narrative, when the prince visits General Yepanchin's family, in a conversation with the general's daughters and wife, he relates an episode that had marked his life,

which he lived intensely thanks to the gaze he directed to an acquaintance of his who was about to be shot. The scene in which the prince gives his account is trivial, but the tone of his speech gradually creates a scale of accents that differentiates itself from the banality of the conversation. The episode follows.

[...] “Do help me to a subject, prince.”

“Oh, but I know nothing about painting. It seems to me one only has to look, and paint what one sees.”

“But I don’t know *how* to see!”

“Nonsense, what rubbish you talk!” the mother struck in. “Not know how to see! Open your eyes and look! If you can’t see here, you won’t see abroad either. Tell us what you saw yourself, prince!”

“Yes, that’s better,” said Adelaida; “the prince *learned to see* abroad.”

“Oh, I hardly know! You see, I only went to restore my health. I don’t know whether I learned to see, exactly. I was very happy, however, nearly all the time.”

“Happy! you can be happy?” cried Aglaya. “Then how can you say you did not learn to see? I should think you could teach *us* to see!”

“Oh! *do* teach us,” laughed Adelaida.

“Oh! I can’t do that,” said the prince, laughing too. “I lived almost all the while in one little Swiss village; what can I teach you?”

[...]

“All this is pure philosophy,” said Adelaida. “You are a philosopher, prince, and have come here to instruct us in your views.”

“Perhaps you are right,” said the prince, smiling. “I think I am a philosopher, perhaps, and who knows, perhaps I do wish to teach my views of things to those I meet with?”

[...]

“...but I think I had better tell you of another man I met last year. There was a very strange feature in this case, strange because of its extremely rare occurrence. This man had once been brought to the scaffold in company with several others, and had had the sentence of death by shooting passed upon him for some political crime. Twenty minutes later he had been reprieved and some other punishment substituted; but the interval between the two sentences, twenty minutes, or at least a quarter of an hour, had been passed in the certainty that within a few minutes he must die. I was very anxious to hear him speak of his impressions during that dreadful time, and I several times inquired of him as to what he thought and felt. He remembered everything with the most accurate and extraordinary distinctness, and declared that he would never forget a single iota of the experience.

“About twenty paces from the scaffold, where he had stood to hear the sentence, were three posts, fixed in the ground, to which to fasten the criminals (of whom there were several). The first three criminals were taken to the posts, dressed in long white tunics, with white caps drawn over their faces, so that they could not see the rifles pointed at them. Then a group of soldiers took their stand opposite to each post. My friend was the eighth on the list, and therefore he would have been

among the third lot to go up. A priest went about among them with a cross: and there was about five minutes of time left for him to live.

“He said that those five minutes seemed to him to be a most interminable period, an enormous wealth of time; he seemed to be living, in these minutes, so many lives that there was no need as yet to think of that last moment, so that he made several arrangements, dividing up the time into portions—one for saying farewell to his companions, two minutes for that; then a couple more for thinking over his own life and career and all about himself; and another minute for a last look around. He remembered having divided his time like this quite well. While saying good-bye to his friends he recollected asking one of them some very usual everyday question, and being much interested in the answer. Then having bade farewell, he embarked upon those two minutes which he had allotted to looking into himself; he knew beforehand what he was going to think about. He wished to put it to himself as quickly and clearly as possible, that here was he, a living, thinking man, and that in three minutes he would be nobody; or if somebody or something, then what and where? He thought he would decide this question once for all in these last three minutes. A little way off there stood a church, and its gilded spire glittered in the sun. He remembered staring stubbornly at this spire, and at the rays of light sparkling from it. He could not tear his eyes from these rays of light; he got the idea that these rays were his new nature, and that in three minutes he would become one of them, amalgamated somehow with them.

“The repugnance to what must ensue almost immediately, and the uncertainty, were dreadful, he said; but worst of all was the idea, ‘What should I do if I were not to die now? What if I were to return to life again? What an eternity of days, and all mine! How I should grudge and count up every minute of it, so as to waste not a single instant!’ He said that this thought weighed so upon him and became such a terrible burden upon his brain that he could not bear it, and wished they would shoot him quickly and have done with it.”

The prince paused and all waited, expecting him to go on again and finish the story.

“Is that all?” asked Aglaya.

“All? Yes,” said the prince, emerging from a momentary reverie.

“And why did you tell us this?”

“Oh, I happened to recall it, that’s all! It fitted into the conversation - ”
[...] (DOSTOEVSKY, 2017).³

In his long account, the prince plunges into the discursive consciousness of his interlocutor – the prisoner; his eyes interact with the event and the consciousness of the prisoner, confusing the discursive fields. With his voice, the prince performs the intonation of the other’s speech and bivocalizes the accents of a trance that enters into confrontation with the interlocutors, who neither interact nor understand what they heard,

³ DOSTOYEVSKY, Fyodor. *The Idiot*. [E-book]. Translated by Eva Martin. The Project Gutenberg, 2017. Available on: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2638/2638-h/2638-h.htm>. Access: 03 Apr. 2021.

and are merely hoping for the conclusion that does not exist. The prince's inconclusive dialogue enunciates passages: from the prisoner's speech uttered by the prince and from the prince to his interlocutors. The prince has fulfilled his role: he has given his lesson of looking outwards and seeing; however, the characters do not assimilate the lesson. The prince nevertheless continues to exercise his ability to read eyes and faces in order to penetrate people's inner worlds, as can be read in episodes with Nastassya Filippovna, Rogozhin and others, seeking, in each one, the sound incarnation of the different intonations so dear to the ideologeme.

Ultimately, the process of refraction inside the ideological sign becomes the primary basis of artistic creation, whose accents transform speeches into ideologemes, making it possible to understand, in creation, the creative ideology of forms, and here we switch to another analytical trajectory.

Considering that the system of ideas does not recognise the isolation and the systematised unity of a vision, Bakhtin more thoroughly examines the specificity of the creative process in which the ideology is designed as a potential source of forms. And this is another defining force of the ideologeme. This takes us back to Vološinov's study, particularly where he defines the ideologeme as a force for generating accents, from which the representation of ideas emerges in confrontation between reported speech and reporting in the discursive arena of ideas (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, pp.152-153). In the ideologues' utterances, the ideologeme maintains the force of points of view, thanks to the flow that organizes systems of ideas in such a manner as to offer a hypothetical image of the world that is equally fluid and in an endless becoming. It is in the concept of the ideologeme that we place the movement of ideas in which ideology manifests as a potential source of forms.

2 Form-Shaping Ideology

Bakhtin brings us face to face with the examination of the degree of refraction of the ideological sign, and its manifestation in artistic and cultural creation, through the notion of form-shaping ideology. That is to say, the process of generating ideas without which no ideology exists. His point of departure is the principles of the entire ideological culture of modern times, which have fuelled the spread of the monology "in all spheres

of ideological life” (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.91). If, on the one hand, the monologic principle – dominant in western culture – sees the functioning of an entire creative process as founded on the form-shaping ideology, on the other hand, it places Dostoevsky’s creation on the disruption of this principle. In his novels, Dostoevsky explores a variety of different discursive accents, in which Bakhtin finds the orientation that follows the form-shaping ideology according to the dialogic–polyphonic principle. What emerges from this is a dual character of the form-shaping ideology, i.e., one of monologic and dialogic ideas, guiding the different compositional and creative processes.

In the monologic universe, ideology stimulates the development of compositional forms generated by a single consciousness that defines the unity of being. In the novel, this process involves the production of ideas expressed as a single accent of a single consciousness: the authorial consciousness from which arises the finished idea of which the character is merely a spokesperson. The role of this spokesperson is to represent the cognizant subject that has the dominion of truth and is obliged, therefore, to teach the non-cognizant subject – one who makes mistakes. After all, only that authorial consciousness is ideological and capable of preserving the accentual unity of a given representation. We have, then, that in the monologic universe there exists the ideology that shapes forms of representation that are, of course, guided by monology (BAKHTIN, 1994, pp.79-84).

To this universe, in which the world is represented as an object without voice and totally directed towards the completion of the single and unified authorial ideological consciousness, Bakhtin contrasts the ideology for shaping forms guided by the dialogic-polyphonic principle. More than anything else, this is a creative process organised by the diversity of accents in which ideas become manifestations of diverging points of view constituted by different forms of refraction. These are the ideas around which the concept of the ideologeme is formed. In his study on the multi-accentuality of discursive utterance, in the third part of the book *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Vološinov (1986, pp.155-156) understands the ideologeme to be a kind of reporting, superimposed on the authorial discourse in order to intone the sound incarnation of another voice – a voice that is bivocalized by its very nature.

In the Dostoevsky’s work, the ideology that shapes dialogic-polyphonic forms give to the hero the condition of positioning themselves as a subject responsible for their

own discourse and points of view, which implies the exercise of self-consciousness. Instead of the unity of being in the authorial consciousness, what is observed is the autonomy and the ideas full of value for the further production of distinct accents.

According to Bakhtin, Dostoevsky was acclaimed as “a *great artist of the idea*” and the idea thereby becoming the “*object of representation*,” reserving for the hero the role of “*man of ideas*” (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.85). The man of ideas therefore becomes “The carrier of a fully valid idea,” the one that “must be the ‘man in man’ about which we spoke in the preceding chapter, with its free unfinalized nature and its indeterminacy.” (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.86) However, it is worth noting that “What he wrote were not novels with an idea, not philosophical novels in the style of the eighteenth century, *but novels about the idea.*” (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.23) As recognised by Bakhtin himself (1994, p.93), “Dostoevsky – to speak paradoxically – thought not in thoughts but in points of view, consciousness, voices.”

Bearing in mind that the man of ideas is guided by the incompleteness of his questions, ideas are not manifested as finished formulations based around a unity of thought or consciousness. On the contrary,

The idea begins to live, that is, to take shape, to develop, to find and renew its verbal expression, to give birth to new ideas, only when it enters into genuine dialogic relationships with other ideas, with the ideas of others. Human thought becomes genuine thought, that is, an idea, only under conditions of living contact with another and alien thought, a thought embodied in someone else’s voice, that is, in someone else’s consciousness expressed in discourse (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.88).

In the fragment of *The Idiot* quoted previously, Prince Myshkin, considered a fool, contradicts all visions that see him as a being with no capacity for thought. However, in the scene in which he witnesses the shooting of his acquaintance, his thinking gains intensity as his consciousness is oriented towards the consciousness of the other by empathy, which leads us to say, with Bakhtin, (1994, p.88) that:

The idea is a *live event*, played out at the point of dialogic meeting between two or several consciousnesses. In this sense the idea is similar to the word, with which it is dialogically united. Like the word, the idea wants to be heard, understood, and “answered” by other voices from other positions. Like the word, the idea is by nature dialogic [...].

In the Dostoevsky's work, we can see a firm positioning of the ideologue against the monologism that denies a voice to different points of view, without even considering the possibility of refractions of ideologemes across a range of their positioned accents. As the supremacy of a single monologic pole, ideological production manifests merely as a deduction immune to the idea of others, as can be seen in the following fragment:

In the presence of the monologic principle, ideology – as a deduction, as a semantic summation of representation – inevitably transforms the represented world into a *voiceless object of that deduction*. The forms of this ideological deduction can themselves be most varied. Depending on these forms, the positioning of represented material changes: it can be a simple illustration to an idea, a simple example, it can be material for ideological generalization (as in the experimental novel), or it can exist in more complex relationship to the final result. Where the representation is oriented entirely toward ideological deduction, we have an ideological philosophical novel (Voltaire's *Candide*, for example) or – in the worst instance – simply a crudely tendentious novel (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.83).

For Bakhtin, a deductive positioning is nothing more than a tendentious ideological form that – in our view – did not hold sway in Dostoevsky's time, but takes hold in the troubled scenario of the 21st century in various ideological representations deaf to utterances that are not the direct reflection of one isolated point of view. Such thoughts never achieve the refraction of the discursive bivocality of dialogic otherness.

As a deduction, any emission is conclusive and closed in its possibilities, restricting all accents to a single point of view and the supposed idea is confused with the form.

The creative force of Dostoevsky fights against the unity of the monologic form, attacking its accentual oneness by the refraction of different accents. The verbal work becomes a discursive arena in which the multi-accentuality of different vocal intonations fulfils the role of decentralising points of view in confrontation. The intention of the ideology that shapes forms of dialogic–polyphonic composition is achieved in that the idea is embodied in positioned intonations of discursive subjects whose ideologemes establish them as ideologists or simply people of ideas.

3 Constructive Force of the Idea in Ideologemes Uttered by the Ideologist

Idea, ideologist and ideologeme constitute the core of the complex that forms dialogic-polyphonic discourse. From a philosophical point of view, this means that idea, ideologeme and ideologist constitute the system that defines the man as a being that is able to contemplate the world, to intervene in it, and to produce worthy discourses of intelligence without which any consciousness develops. On the creative horizon of this system the gallery of characters emerging in Dostoevsky's work is formed.

At this point, we cannot fail to cite the classic episode of *Crime and Punishment* which Bakhtin used to expound on the multi-accentuality of speech in the confrontation of many intonations: the discussion of Raskolnikov's article on his idea about the circumstances of a criminal act. According to Bakhtin (1994, p.88), "Nowhere does Dostoevsky give us this article in its monologic form." In fact, it is an "intense dialogue" between Porfiry, Razumikhin and Zamyotov. Bakhtin continues:

And Raskolnikov's account is itself shot through with interior polemic, from the point of view of Porfiry and his like. Razumikhin too puts in his replies. As a result, Raskolnikov's idea appears before us in an inter-individual zone of intense struggle among several individual consciousnesses, while the theoretical side of the idea is inseparably linked with the ultimate positions on life taken by the participants in the dialogue (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.89).

Bakhtin does not reproduce the excerpt from the novel, but reading the fragment places us before the lively scene of the distinct intonations tensioned by accents of points of view in confrontation manifested in the dialogue:

[...]
"How did you find out that the article was mine? It's only signed with an initial."
"I only learnt it by chance, the other day. Through the editor; I know him.... I was very much interested."
"I analysed, if I remember, the psychology of a criminal before and after the crime."
"Yes, and you maintained that the perpetration of a crime is always accompanied by illness. Very, very original, but... it was not that part of your article that interested me so much, but an idea at the end of the article which I regret to say you merely suggested without working it out clearly. There is, if you recollect, a suggestion that there are certain persons who can... that is, not precisely are able to, but have a perfect

right to commit breaches of morality and crimes, and that the law is not for them.”

Raskolnikov smiled”

Raskolnikov smiled at the exaggerated and intentional distortion of his idea.

“What? What do you mean? A right to crime? But not because of the influence of environment?” Razumihin inquired with some alarm even. “No, not exactly because of it,” answered Porfiry. “In his article all men are divided into ‘ordinary’ and ‘extraordinary.’ Ordinary men have to live in submission, have no right to transgress the law, because, don’t you see, they are ordinary. But extraordinary men have a right to commit any crime and to transgress the law in any way, just because they are extraordinary. That was your idea, if I am not mistaken?”

“What do you mean? That can’t be right?” Razumihin muttered in bewilderment.

Raskolnikov smiled again. He saw the point at once, and knew where they wanted to drive him. He decided to take up the challenge.

“That wasn’t quite my contention,” he began simply and modestly. “Yet I admit that you have stated it almost correctly; perhaps, if you like, perfectly so.” (It almost gave him pleasure to admit this.) “The only difference is that I don’t contend that extraordinary people are always bound to commit breaches of morals, as you call it. In fact, I doubt whether such an argument could be published. I simply hinted that an ‘extraordinary’ man has the right... that is not an official right, but an inner right to decide in his own conscience to overstep... certain obstacles, and only in case it is essential for the practical fulfilment of his idea (sometimes, perhaps, of benefit to the whole of humanity). You say that my article isn’t definite; I am ready to make it as clear as I can. [...]” (DOSTOEVSKY, 2016, Part III, chapter 5).⁴

This is an episode in which Raskolnikov’s speech, which comes about with the context of his questions on the nature of committing crimes on the basis of goals that go beyond individual limits, is submitted to a new deductive intonation. In Porfiry’s synthesis, the interest is not in the reasoning of the account, but in the conclusion that distinguishes, *a priori*, between ordinary and extraordinary men and, consequently, that reserves certain moral advantages for the latter. To simplify Raskolnikov’s speech, Porfiry ends up excluding his basic argument from the speech and the polemic is installed in the conversation. Raskolnikov, however, was investigating with regard to a question that had occurred to him and that involved complex inter-relations, contradicting not only the convictions of his interlocutors, but also discourses of ethics. However, it was the idea that he was supposed to enlighten and in the name of which he had committed the crime.

⁴ DOSTOEVSKY, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*. [E-book]. Translated by Constance Garnett. The Project Gutenberg, 2016. Available on: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2554/2554-h/2554-h.htm>. Access: 03 Apr. 2021.

His interlocutors were unable to perceive the leap that conscience imposes on action to meet broader designs. Ultimately, the controversy arises due to the neutralisation of the accents in convictions produced solely by deduction.

With regard to the character of Dostoevsky's hero, who lives to face the question put to his consciousness and, due to this demand, ends up confronting people and the field of philosophical, religious, moral, and political ideas, Bakhtin develops his concept of the ideologist or the man of ideas, as can be read in the following fragment: "Dostoevsky's hero is not only a discourse himself and his immediate environment, but also a discourse about the world; he is not only cognizant, but an ideologist as well" (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.78).

The ideologist created by Dostoyevsky, and who becomes the protagonist of the polyphonic experiment, rejects any conclusive and self-deductible premise as a systematised unity of thought. As an inconclusive being, fighting with his own ideas, instead of deduction, his consciousness presents itself as a profuse source of accentual diversities of ideologemes. Not talking with the bias of the author's voice, the character utters the speeches of his consciousness by means of points of view in confrontation to trigger other points of view, replacing deduction with a hypothesis which resonates in the "imaginary universe of his consciousness." The deduction is nullified by the hypothesis resonating in the "labyrinth of voices" of his consciousness, which reflects and refracts the diversity of discursive confluences (BACHTIN, 1997, pp.161-162).⁵

The ideologist embodies not only the speech, but also the accents that reflect positions and, at the same time, refract other positions – or convictions and deductions – in relation to which his speech is distinguished in collision with the various intonations and their accents. While accentuation constructs the speech as an ideologeme, the interaction that puts positions of other consciousnesses into conflict defines the strength and the role of the ideologist in creation.

We are far from a creative process motivated solely by the need to demonstrate a finished idea, which is typical of a deductive discourse. In the conflict of points of view, the idea is built on the bivocality of confluences of thought that does not fit into the unity of a single voice. On the contrary, just like the idea, thought is bilateral. For Dostoevsky, as Bakhtin understands it,

⁵ In Portuguese: "universo imaginário de sua consciência"; "labirinto de vozes."

To think, for him, means to question and to listen, to try out orientations, to combine some and expose others. For it must be emphasized that in Dostoevsky's world even agreement retains its dialogic character, that is, it never leads to a merging of voices and truths in a single impersonal truth, as occurs in the monologic world (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.95).

If the creative process cannot be deduced from the demonstration that reflects conclusive sayings and aphorisms, it is necessary to investigate how the representation of the idea is translated into artistic work. Bakhtin appraises two conditions for the creation of the image of the idea in Dostoevsky.

The first one is summarised in the indissolubility between the image of the idea and the image of the man, since the man is born from the idea. If the "man in man" becomes, on the one hand, the only possible carrier of the idea, on the other hand, this condition defines his incompleteness and his eternal quest (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.86).

The second condition for the creation of the image of the idea concerns Dostoevsky's ability to achieve the life of the idea in its ability to break boundaries and reach horizons of interlocution, intersubjectivity and intervention that put the man before the mystery of existence, which prevents the incompleteness of any speech. If, on the one hand, this contact is seen as self-consciousness, on the other, it is no more than a manifestation of perplexity of dialogue with the dimensionality of the consciousnesses and their own conflicts in the life of ideas, given that "...the realm of its existence is not individual consciousness but dialogic communion *between* consciousnesses" (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.88). The role of interaction here becomes fundamental, thanks to which is constructed the very environment of interrelation between consciousnesses that embraces the man of ideas and his time.

The ideologist acts in the novel with all the intersubjectivity and interindividuality that make him a being who lives in the interplay and conflicts of interactions.

4 Dialogic Relations in the Great Time of Cultures

The man of ideas is, first and foremost, an unfinished being in conflict with questions that are not resolved within himself, where points of view clash in the quest,

not for syntheses, but for renewing movements, as Bakhtin states based on his understanding of the hero in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Ivan Karamazov debates against his idea that “[...] everything is permitted if there is no immortality for the soul” (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.89). As he had done in his exposition in which he questions the existence of God in the presence of Father Zosima at the monastery where his younger brother had decided to live, Ivan participates in long conversations with his brother, challenging his religious beliefs. Similarly, he introduces ideas into his stepbrother’s mind, Smerdyakov, leading him to enter into conflict with his own actions, which shows that Ivan puts his ideas to the test in different circumstances and with different interlocutors, including himself.

The issues that were born in Ivan’s mind and that nourish his anxieties, sufferings, and fears, lead us to consider the role of the ideologist as that of the one who is not afraid to raise hypotheses and not afraid to confront the problems of his time and of history. By fostering the debate that crosses historical eras, confronting them so as to advance, breaking temporal limits, the ideologist and the ideas translated into points of view show that they live in the “great time of culture,” as Bakhtin (2003, p.362) had expressed in respect of the works in their historical and cultural expansion. Ideas live in the works, whether they be an artistic production or a cultural achievement.

In the case of Dostoevsky, ideas assumed the generative capacity to create the “idea-force” in the reality of his time in order to listen to his time.

Dostoevsky possessed an extraordinary gift for hearing the dialogue of his epoch, or, more precisely, for hearing his epoch as a great dialogue, for detecting in it not only individual voices, but precisely, and predominantly the *dialogic relationship* among voices, their dialogic *interaction* (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.90).

The notion of *great time of culture* was drawn up by Bakhtin in response to the close bond that the literary studies set up between a work and its time, squeezing the tone of its monologic construction and ruling out anything that might disturb immediate reflections. The vision through the bias of the great time introduces a transverse cut into temporal relationships and reaches deep dialogic relations in which different temporalities interact and are able to achieve ideas that have not yet been uttered in any speech. As a great artist of the idea living in dialogue with his time,

Dostoevsky also heard resonances of the voice-ideas of the past—both the most recent past (the ‘30s and ‘40s) and the more remote. Also, as we have just said, he attempted to hear the voice-ideas of the future [...] (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.90).

Ivan Karamazov is one of Dostoevsky’s heroes who experienced the conflict of ideas projected into the perspective of the great time of culture. Ivan Karamazov’s performances take part in the decisive moments in the confrontations that put ideological forces of the monologic universe in conflict with ethics and religion. With the clashes of his questions changed in unfinished ideas and points of view in a constant collision of new arguments, Ivan plunges into the mystery of his ideas. Misfit with the occurrences of his daily life, he launched himself into the artistic creation of a poem, narrated in the chapter “The Great Inquisitor.” The aesthetic strength of his narrative led him to project an almost autonomous existence in the context of the entire novel. In addition to a religious mystery, the poem synthesizes the idea of Karamazovi strength that dominates the existential *pathos* of the Karamazovi men’s family.

The *Grand Inquisitor* appears in the novel as a prose poem written by Ivan and read to Alyosha in a meeting of the two brothers after one of the fights in their father’s house. The narration of the poem is preceded by a chapter entitled “Rebellion,” in which Ivan exposes to Alyosha, his nonconformity with ideas of “loving thy neighbour,” of eternal salvation and other themes of Christian dogma, confronting them with ethical questions. At a certain point in the conversation, he says:⁶

[...] Men are themselves to blame, I suppose; they were given paradise, they wanted freedom, and stole fire from heaven, though they knew they would become unhappy, so there is no need to pity them. With my pitiful, earthly, Euclidian understanding, all I know is that there is suffering and that there are none guilty; that cause follows effect, simply and directly; that everything flows and finds its level. [...] (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.267).

When investigating whether the harmony of people through the sacrifice of a child is worthwhile, he refuses to accept such harmony, saying:

⁶ The passages quoted in this segment were taken from: DOSTOYEVSKY, Fyodor. *Brothers Karamazov*, Chapters IV and V, Book V, entitled “Pro and Contra.” [E-book]. Translated by Constance Garnett. The Project Gutenberg, 2016. Available on: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/28054/28054-h/28054-h.html> Access: 05 Sept. 2020.

[...] “I don’t want harmony. From love for humanity I don’t want it. I would rather be left with the unavenged suffering. I would rather remain with my unavenged suffering and unsatisfied indignation, *even if I were wrong*. Besides, too high a price is asked for harmony; it’s beyond our means to pay so much to enter on it. And so I hasten to give back my entrance ticket, and if I am an honest man I am bound to give it back as soon as possible. And that I am doing. It’s not God that I don’t accept, Alyosha, only I most respectfully return Him the ticket.”

“That’s rebellion,” murmured Alyosha, looking down.

“Rebellion? I am sorry you call it that,” said Ivan earnestly. “One can hardly live in rebellion, and I want to live. Tell me yourself, I challenge you—answer. Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the object of making men happy in the end, giving them peace and rest at last, but that it was essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature—that baby beating its breast with its fist, for instance—and to found that edifice on its unavenged tears, would you consent to be the architect on those conditions? Tell me, and tell the truth.”

“No, I wouldn’t consent,” said Alyosha softly.

“And can you admit the idea that men for whom you are building it would agree to accept their happiness on the foundation of the unexpiated blood of a little victim? And accepting it would remain happy for ever?”

“No, I can’t admit it. Brother,” said Alyosha suddenly, with flashing eyes, “you said just now, is there a being in the whole world who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? But there is a Being and He can forgive everything, all and for all, because He gave His innocent blood for all and everything. You have forgotten Him, and on Him is built the edifice, and it is to Him they cry aloud, ‘Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed!’” (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.270)

The dialogue between the brothers clearly ends inconclusively: there is no consensus of points of view, since Alyosha believes that everything is resolved in the salvation of the soul in Christ, while Ivan is fed by great doubt and permanent questioning. It is the investigation that moves him and leads him to present to his brother a poem he had written, but that was still incomplete. In it, the transversality of the great time of culture emerges in the appearance of Christ at the time of the Inquisition, in which the Son of God passes for a heretic and all his acts of the past are reviewed in the eyes of the present, of both the 16th-century inquisitor and the hero who lives in the 19th century.

Even the choice of the genre in which the poem was written demonstrates trans-temporal dialogic relations – which implicates accompanying the multi-accentuality of the bivocalised composition of a medieval genre: the mystery plays. The mystery plays form a liturgical genre devoted to the interventions of celestial beings: angels, saints and

deities. It was in one of these plays – *The Wanderings of Our Lady through Hell*, – that Ivan found the theme of his poem. The following summarises his understanding of this play:

[...] Our Lady visits hell, and the Archangel Michael leads her through the torments. She sees the sinners and their punishment. There she sees among others one noteworthy set of sinners in a burning lake; some of them sink to the bottom of the lake so that they can't swim out, and "these God forgets"—an expression of extraordinary depth and force. And so Our Lady, shocked and weeping, falls before the throne of God and begs for mercy for all in hell - for all she has seen there, indiscriminately. Her conversation with God is immensely interesting. She beseeches Him, she will not desist, and when God points to the hands and feet of her Son, nailed to the Cross, and asks, "How can I forgive His tormentors?" she bids all the saints, all the martyrs, all the angels and archangels to fall down with her and pray for mercy on all without distinction. It ends by her winning from God a respite of suffering every year from Good Friday till Trinity Day, and the sinners at once raise a cry of thankfulness from hell, chanting, "Thou art just, O Lord, in this judgment" [...] (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.271).

From the mystery play presented, Ivan recognizes that the faith in the Lord's return to life in harmony has been maintained, and renewed over the centuries, without Christ returning. In his poem, God shows himself: "He deigned to appear for a moment to the people, to the tortured, suffering people, sunk in iniquity, but loving Him like children." (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.272). VolIt was the time of the Inquisition in the city of Seville, Spain, and Christ reappeared among the crowd one day after the grand inquisitor condemning to burn at the stake. "He came down to the 'hot pavements' of the southern town in which on the day before almost a hundred heretics had, *ad majorem gloriam Dei*, [...] He came softly, unobserved, and yet, strange to say, every one recognized Him." (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.273). And Christ performs miracles in the crowd: restores the vision to a blind man and brings a girl back to life. The grand inquisitor passes by the scene and sees all: he orders the guards to arrest him. The crowd, accustomed to the orders of the Jesuit, departs in silence.

In the evening, the inquisitor appears at the cell and addresses the prisoner, recognising him as the returning Christ, saying to him:

[...] Why, then, art Thou come to hinder us? For Thou hast come to hinder us, and Thou knowest that. But dost Thou know what will be to-

morrow? I know not who Thou art and care not to know whether it is Thou or only a semblance of Him, but to-morrow I shall condemn Thee and burn Thee at the stake as the worst of heretics. And the very people who have to-day kissed Thy feet, to-morrow at the faintest sign from me will rush to heap up the embers of Thy fire (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.275).

Interrogated by Alyosha about the meaning of the episode, Ivan says that this is a narrative that verges on the supernatural and that his inquisitor is a man of almost ninety years who “should speak openly of what he has thought in silence for ninety years.” (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.275), even though his speech seems more like a senile reverie. The prisoner is not granted the right to speak beyond what was said in the past, and the grand inquisitor, in a threatening tone, tells him: “‘All has been given by Thee to the Pope,’ they say, ‘and all, therefore, is still in the Pope’s hands, and there is no need for Thee to come now at all. Thou must not meddle for the time, at least’” (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.275).

The accentual tonality of the poem grows when the inquisitor made use of ironies to probe the teachings of Christ, such as the “freedom of faith,” which men eventually placed in the Roman Church for fifteen centuries. The inquisitor also challenges the prisoner to reveal what happened when tempted by the devil with three questions that predicted “...the whole subsequent history of mankind is, as it were, brought together into one whole, and foretold, and in them are united all the unsolved historical contradictions of human nature” (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.277).

In spite of being interrupted several times by Alyosha, who misunderstood several poem passages, Ivan continues the account, focusing on the discourse of the inquisitor on the temptations to which the devil put Christ, challenging him to come down from the cross and “go into the world, and art going with empty hands, with some promise of freedom which men in their simplicity and their natural unruliness cannot even understand, [...]” (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.277).

The inquisitor’s speech accentuates his tone of rebellion and questioning of the freedom that failed to satisfy the hunger of the destitute, since Christ has not accepted the devil’s challenge to have compassion for his people. He promised them the freedom but gave them no bread, and they only did not perish because the Roman Church welcomed them, because its members are also humans and know the weaknesses and vices of humans. The inquisitor concludes: “For the secret of man’s being is not only to live but

to have something to live for” (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.279). However, Christ rejected the “three powers, three powers alone, able to conquer and to hold captive for ever the conscience of these impotent rebels for their happiness — those forces are miracle, mystery and authority” (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.280).

On hearing the inquisitor’s inflamed speech retold by Ivan, Alyosha says:

“But... that’s absurd!” he cried, flushing. “Your poem is in praise of Jesus, not in blame of Him—as you meant it to be. And who will believe you about freedom? Is that the way to understand it? That’s not the idea of it in the Orthodox Church.... That’s Rome, and not even the whole of Rome, it’s false—those are the worst of the Catholics, the Inquisitors, the Jesuits!... [...] They are simply the Romish army for the earthly sovereignty of the world in the future, with the Pontiff of Rome for Emperor [...] Your suffering Inquisitor is a mere fantasy” (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, pp.286-287).

“Joined whom, what clever people?” cried Alyosha, completely carried away. “They have no such great cleverness and no mysteries and secrets.... Perhaps nothing but Atheism, that’s all their secret. Your Inquisitor does not believe in God, that’s his secret!” (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.288).

“What if it is so! At last you have guessed it. It’s perfectly true, it’s true that that’s the whole secret, but isn’t that suffering, at least for a man like that, who has wasted his whole life in the desert and yet could not shake off his incurable love of humanity?

“How does your poem end?” he asked, suddenly looking down. “Or was it the end?”

“I meant to end it like this. When the Inquisitor ceased speaking he waited some time for his Prisoner to answer him. His silence weighed down upon him. He saw that the Prisoner had listened intently all the time, looking gently in his face and evidently not wishing to reply. The old man longed for Him to say something, however bitter and terrible. But He suddenly approached the old man in silence and softly kissed him on his bloodless aged lips. That was all His answer. The old man shuddered. His lips moved. He went to the door, opened it, and said to Him: ‘Go, and come no more ... come not at all, never, never!’ And he let Him out into the dark alleys of the town. The Prisoner went away.” (DOSTOYEVSKY, 2016, p.289).

The poem *the Grand Inquisitor* embodies what Bakhtin conceived as “living artistic images of ideas,” in which the monologic form is destroyed to be incorporated into “the great dialogue of his novels, where they began living a new and eventful artistic life.” (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.91) In this new life, the inquisitor’s ideas are only cloaked in religiosity because, in fact, they enunciate a profane and desecrating discourse, and the

man of religion is acting as an executioner. The construction is seen to be dominated by the grotesque principle of dialogic inversion also examined by Bakhtin in his study on the work of Rabelais. (BAKHTIN, 1984) Not only the mystery play, but also the medieval grotesque is used in the construction of the poem, which is thus inserted into the perspective of the great time of culture.

In addition to highlighting the diversity of the great dialogue, from the point of view of the ideologeme, ideas that are manifested as living artistic images also relate to different temporalities, and, in this field, the clashes put into movement experiences and equally multi-accentual historic environments. In Ivan's poem, the environment of the medieval mystery plays is embodied in the context of those who lived through the drama of the Inquisition. Nonetheless, both are traversed by questions involving the freedom of life in faith; the debauchery of human fragility; the threat of sin and punishment; the hope in the miracle that is also nourished in faith. All this converges into the question that haunts Ivan, who maintains a relationship of duplicity with the grand inquisitor: just like him, he has doubt in fraternal love and the capabilities of Christ; unlike him, he would not burn heretics. There is an abyss between Ivan and the inquisitor separated by the convictions of the latter, while Ivan debates with himself in doubt, doubt about ideas lived in the skin of subjects that are not objectified by the authorial discourse.

In the great time of ideas, convictions give way to investigations that are not afraid to pose new questions and set in motion unknown fields of ideas – semiotic fields. However, the grand inquisitor acts according to his convictions, which means acting as an amoral being, capable of burning heretics. According to Bakhtin, this was an ethical question of Dostoevsky himself, although on entering the work, he does not aim to elucidate it, “but must rather enter into that world as an image of a human being, as one orientation among other orientations, as one word among many words” (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.98).

The great time of culture that Bakhtin finds in the life of literary works thus extends to the understanding of the movement of ideas in the inconclusive dialogue of history in culture. In the poem *the Grand Inquisitor*, this intention is fulfilled in the long verbal attack that the man of religion directs at the prisoner. Not without reason, the entire confrontation is based on one question: why had he come back? This is the central issue because the return of Christ would affect the Roman Church in its practices, which

Alyosha had realised with great relief. The return of Christ would place in question a whole time – or better, time itself – since, according to the inquisitor, it was the role of the church, represented by the Pope, to welcome the flock of afflicted and misled, and put them on the path of glory and redemption. Just as Ivan had noticed, albeit in an inquisitive manner, the return of Christ presupposes a power struggle. And Ivan’s questioning is the new question that arises for time – for the present, the past and the future: for the great time.

The poem was still unfinished, but Ivan wanted to finish it with the prisoner’s gesture of kissing the elder inquisitor’s lips, which would free him from the court of the Holy Office, but says nothing about his departure from Earth. The question persists and acquires a new tone: if the idea of the power struggle makes sense, what would that struggle be like? Answer: Inconclusive dialogue and the problem of a great time that could only be born of an ideologist in his ability and dare to pronounce ideologemes with questions and detachment that reveal “new semantic depths.” (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.6).⁷

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