

The Diatribe in Meaning Making of Paul's Letter to Romans / A diatribe na construção de sentidos da Carta de Paulo aos Romanos

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ABSTRACT

In this work it was analyzed the diatribe in the meaning making of the Paul's letter to Romans, focusing on the dialogical relations in its use in the enunciative construction of the letter. Thus, it dialogues with the enunciative language perspective from Bakhtin's Circle, from a qualitative and interpretative approach. The analysis of the letter showed the occurrence of the diatribe materialized in the linguistic-enunciative elements that configure the rhetorical direct discourse. In terms of using this diatribical resource in meaning making, the letter reveals its internal dialogicity, veiled dialogue, the meeting of voices and discourses, materializing enunciatively recipients' points of view. Therefore, meaning making settles down under bigger and smaller influence of the other and their anticipated response.

KEYWORDS: Letter to Romans; Diatribe; Meaning making; Dialogical relations

RESUMO

Neste trabalho, analisa-se a diatribe na construção de sentidos da Carta de Paulo aos Romanos, focalizando as relações dialógicas decorrentes de seu uso na construção enunciativa da carta. Para isso, o artigo dialoga com a perspectiva enunciativa da linguagem oriunda do Círculo de Bakhtin, a partir de uma abordagem qualitativa e interpretativa. A análise da carta mostra a ocorrência da diatribe materializada nos elementos linguístico-enunciativos configuradores do discurso direto retórico. Ao lançar mão desse recurso diatribico na construção de sentidos, a carta desvela sua dialogicidade interna, o diálogo velado, o encontro de vozes, de discursos, materializando enunciativamente pontos de vista dos destinatários. Assim, conseqüentemente, a construção de sentidos se instaura sob maior ou menor influência do outro e da sua resposta antecipada.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Carta aos romanos; Diatribe; Construção de sentidos; Relações dialógicas

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Initial Considerations

When discussing peculiarities of Dostoevsky's work, in the text *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, Mikhail Bakhtin (1984)¹ presents the notion of diatribe as being of a markedly dialogical nature. Diatribe is a kind of dialogue internal to the genre, that is, it concerns the stylistic and compositional construction of the concrete statement and manifests itself in the encounter of voices within the discourse. According to Bakhtin (1984),² the creation of the dialogic internal rhetorical genre - the diatribe - can be found in the writings of antiquity, more precisely in Bion of Borysthenes, who was also considered the creator of the menippea.³

In the same discussion, Bakhtin (1984, p.120)⁴ observes that “[...] it was precisely the diatribe, and not classical rhetoric, that exercised a defining influence on the generic characteristics of the ancient Christian sermon.” As it was not precisely his focus of discussion, the author (Bakhtin) is not dedicated to exploring and/or showing how diatribe is revealed in ancient Christian sermons. Thus, considering this possibility of investigation raised by the Russian scholar, and starting from the understanding that diatribe is an enunciative element that establishes meanings in the construction of concrete utterances, this work⁵ analyzes an ancient Christian writing, more precisely Paul's letter to the Romans (henceforth, Romans), written in the first century AD. Therefore, it intends to investigate how diatribe is mobilized in the construction of Romans' meanings. At the same time, it aims to show that linguistic-enunciative elements make diatribe noticeable in the construction of the enunciative texture. Thus, in the investigative path, we seek to answer two central questions, namely (i) what do linguistic-enunciative resources materialize diatribe in the enunciative texture of

¹ BAKHTIN, M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Translated by Caryl Emerson. Introduction by Wayne C. Booth. Theory and History of Literature, vol. 8. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

² For reference, see footnote 2.

³ In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin (1984) widely discusses Menippea. For him, menippea incorporates cognate genres such as diatribe, soliloquy and symposium, being an internal dialogued genre.

⁴ For reference, see footnote 2.

⁵ This work is part of a study of the use of diatribe in Paul's Letter to the Romans initiated, but not verticalized, in the doctoral thesis entitled *The Quoted Speech in Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Discursive-Enunciative Approach [O discurso citado na carta de Paulo aos romanos: uma abordagem discursivo-enunciativa, in Portuguese]*” (NASCIMENTO, 2019).

Romans?; and (ii) how is diatribe mobilized in the process of building the meanings of that letter?

As a theoretical-methodological foundation, this research dialogues with the dialogical perspective of language originating from the Bakhtin Circle, more precisely Mikhail Bakhtin (1981;⁶ 1984;⁷ 1986)⁸ and Valentin Vološinov (1973),⁹ and with studies by commentators on the work of the aforementioned Circle, for example, Augusto Ponzio (2013). This dialogue with the dialogical perspective of language takes into account “[...] the discursive peculiarities that point to broader contexts, to an extralinguistic context included there,”¹⁰ as Beth Brait (2012, p.13) points out, when proposing an *analysis and discourse theory*. Furthermore, in order to understand the context of production of Romans and the very nature of the letter, the work establishes a dialogue with authors such as Alexandre Júnior (2015), Gonçalves and Di Mesquita (2010), Dunn (1998),¹¹ Fabris (2003), Ehrman (1997; 2005),¹² among others.

The corpus of the analysis, as already mentioned, is formed by the letter to the Romans authored by the apostle Paul. It should be noted that this letter is one of the canonical texts that make up the New Testament of the Christian Bible. Considering the existence of several versions and translations of the Bible, in this research, the text of the version and translation of the Jerusalem Bible¹³ is used. This choice, among other reasons, was due to a certain prestige that this translation enjoys before specialists in the subject, in addition to its being a translation made directly from the originals. Furthermore, regarding the choice of Romans as a corpus of analysis, its quantitative and qualitative importance should be highlighted. In the quantitative aspect, it is the longest/most extensive letter in the New Testament; qualitatively, it has the historical-

⁶ BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Edited by Michael Holquist; translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

⁷ For reference, see footnote 2.

⁸ BAKHTIN, M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee; Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.

⁹ VOLOŠINOV, V. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. Cambridge/Massachusetts/London: Harvard University Press, 1973.

¹⁰ In Portuguese: “[...] as particularidades discursivas que apontam para contextos mais amplos, para um extralinguístico aí incluído.”

¹¹ DUNN, J. D. G. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1998.

¹² EHRMAN, B. D. *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005.

¹³ New Jerusalem Bible. In: *Bíblia Católica*. 2020. Available on: <https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/new-jerusalem-bible/romans/1/>. Access: 19 jul. 2020.

theological value of being considered the first most accurate theological treatise of primitive Christianity.

Having made this introduction, it is worth saying that this work is organized in the following main sections: the second section, presents a discussion about Romans, highlighting its origin and formal and functional characteristics. In the third section, the notion of diatribe is discussed, from the dialogical perspective of language. The fourth section is dedicated to the analysis of diatribe in the construction of the letter's meanings. Finally, the conclusion will highlight the main aspects explored in the analysis, such as the linguistic resources that materialize the diatribe and the effects of meanings resulting from its use in Romans.

1 Paul's Letter to the Romans

The epistolary (letter) discursive genre played an important role in establishing and maintaining commercial, affective, family and religious ties, among others, in Antiquity. When discussing the rhetorical argument in the epistolary literature of Antiquity, Professor Alexandre Júnior (2015, p.168) notes that “[...] the volume of letters recovered from the Greco-Roman world is surprising.”¹⁴ This historical observation is also made by Gonçalves and Di Mesquita (2010), based on the analysis of three consolatory letters by Lucius Annaeus Seneca, written in the first century of the Christian era, during the Roman Empire. Gonçalves and Di Mesquita (2010, p.31) shows that “[...] without means of communication reaching large social groups, the missives became the primary locus of information and ideas among individuals and of these with small groups to whom the letters were sent.”¹⁵ Thus, in the context of Romans writing, the discursive genre letter became a fundamental vehicle for the circulation of news, exchange of ideas, establishment of interaction among people and among groups, etc.

Written in the context of the 1st century AD, Romans is mentioned in the first lists of texts considered canonical, and its authorship is attributed to Paul. In the second

¹⁴ In Portuguese: “[...] surpreendente o volume de cartas recuperadas do mundo greco-romano.”

¹⁵ In Portuguese: “[...] sem meios de comunicação que chegassem a grandes grupos sociais, as missivas tornavam-se locus primordial de informações e ideias entre particulares e destes com pequenos grupos aos quais as cartas eram remetidas.”

century, Marcion, a philosopher-master who was active in Rome, selected some writings that, according to him, constituted the list of the sacred texts of the faith. This set of texts became known as the *Marcion's Canon*, which consisted of eleven books/texts: ten letters from Paul (including Romans) and the gospel of Luke. Marcion left out the Old Testament and the other writings that today make up the New Testament.

Regarding Marcion, Ehrman (2005)¹⁶ comments that he fostered the need for the Church to define a canon (a list of inspired, sacred texts, authored by the apostles), since in the years that followed the apostolic period, many writings appeared claiming apostolic authority. It was this dispute that gave rise to the Muratorian Canon, for example, a document written in Latin, from the end of the second century, in which 22 books chosen by the Church of Rome are listed as “apostolic.” This document attributes to Paul thirteen letters in all: nine of them are addressed to the Christian communities of the time and four are addressed to friends and/or collaborators. It is in this document that we find the first complete mention of the Pauline epistolary in a list of Christian books.

Fabris (2003) quotes the following section of the *Muratorian Canon*, which makes reference to Paul's letters:

Among the longest letters, Paul first wrote to the Corinthians, forbidding party divisions; then, to the Galatians, forbidding circumcision, and, more broadly, to the Romans, to inculcate in them the unity and order of the Scriptures, which have in Christ their unitary principle (*Muratorian Canon* fragment. In: FABRIS, 2003, p.656).¹⁷

In the organization and selection of the canonical books, and in the order in which it finally settled, Romans finds itself after the book of Acts. It is, therefore, the first letter of the volume of texts that make up the New Testament of the Bible. Moreover, Romans is the most extensive letter in the volume, divided into 16 chapters. Furthermore, Ehrman (1997) points out that no New Testament book has been shown to

¹⁶ For reference, see footnote 12.

¹⁷ In Portuguese: “Entre as cartas mais compridas, Paulo escreveu primeiro aos coríntios, proibindo as divisões em partidos; depois, aos gálatas, proibindo a circuncisão, e, de modo mais amplo, aos romanos, para inculcar neles a unidade e a ordem das Escrituras, que têm em Cristo o seu princípio unitário.”

be more influential in the history of Christian thought than Romans. Evidence of this is that this letter is one of the most cited pieces of Christian literature during the early centuries of the church (EHRMAN, 1997).

The letter is addressed to a Christian community residing in Rome. From reading this letter, it is possible to know that the group of Christians residing in the capital of the Roman Empire was composed of Gentiles¹⁸ and Jews. It is estimated that in AD 57, the Christian religious movement was already present in the capital of the Roman Empire. Fabris (2003) and Ehrman (1997; 2005)¹⁹ understand that the contact with the Christian faith on the part of the inhabitants of Rome can be found in the episode of the book of Acts. This book, written decades after the historic event, presents a narrative of the birth of the Church. According to the narrative, a crowd of pilgrims was present in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost and heard Peter preach the Gospel. It is said that there were “residents of Rome, Jews and proselytes” (Acts 2, 10). Thus, these visitors would have converted to the message/preaching of the gospel and took the ideas/dogmas/teachings of Christianity to the capital of the Empire - Rome.

As for the date of his writing, Paul would have dictated the letter to his collaborator, Tertius, during the winter of AD 56-57, in the Greek city of Corinth, having a Christian community not founded by him as an interlocutor. Thus, Romans aimed to prepare the Christian community for a visit by the Apostle. The letter’s purpose can be inferred from the following initial excerpt:

For I am longing to see you so that I can convey to you some spiritual gift that will be a lasting strength, or rather that we may be strengthened together through our mutual faith, yours and mine. I want you to be quite certain too, brothers, that I have often planned to visit you -- though up to the present I have always been prevented -- in the hope that I might work as fruitfully among you as I have among the gentiles elsewhere. I have an obligation to Greeks as well as barbarians, to the educated as well as the ignorant, and hence the eagerness on my part to preach the gospel to you in Rome too (Romans 1, 11-15).

¹⁸ In the context of producing the letter to the Romans, *Gentiles* were all those who did not belong to the Jewish nation. It is, therefore, a major distinction made by the ethnic-religious identity. This distinction must be situated and its meaning emphasized, as it marked the place of religious life, belonging to a tradition, a culture. Thus, the distinction became tenser in the context of the first century (Roman writing period), since, as the Roman Empire exercised rule over vast territory, Jewish towns and villages were under Roman rule.

¹⁹ For reference, see footnote 12.

These introductory words signal the fact that *Romans* was written to anticipate Paul's visit to Rome. When communicating via letter, the announcer takes the opportunity to discuss issues of interest to the Christian community, because, as Ehrman (1997, p.247) comments, "[...] Paul's letters are chiefly concerned with problems that have arisen in his churches." As for the letter to the Romans, the same author adds: "This was a letter that Paul wrote to a particular church. As with all of his letters, this one had an occasion and was written for a reason" (EHRMAN, 1997, p.299).

This aspect of the letter is also highlighted by Dunn (1998),²⁰ when analyzing the theology of the apostle Paul. According to the author:

[...] Paul's arguments and exhortations focus so frequently on the situations of his audiences and the views of those who disagreed with him that it becomes impossible to understand these arguments and exhortations fully without some awareness of these situations and of the views opposed by Paul (DUNN, 1998, p.11).

In this sense, the letter presents the point of view of its author (Paul) on matters related to the Christian faith, engaging in controversial dialogues with certain religious ideas and practices of legalistic groups from Judaism. For example, justification before God occurs by faith or by the works of the Law, should circumcision be practiced by Christians or not? Thus, the letter presents the point of view of its author in this horizon of divergent discourses.

In addition to the aspects discussed in the context of biblical-theological studies, we understand *Romans* from the perspective of the enunciative studies of the Bakhtin Circle. In this perspective, the letter can be understood as a secondary genre, because, in a way, it appears in a condition of complex social interaction. It establishes a(n) (in)tense dialogue between the interlocutors. This is perceived, for example, in the enunciative movements that aim to present and defend points of view around an evangelistic message, more precisely in the defense of a religious conception.

In the same perspective, as a concrete statement, the letter presents address/direction, author and addressee, as constitutive traits. In the text *Speech Genres*,

²⁰ For reference, see footnote 11.

Bakhtin (1986, p.95, emphasis added)²¹ discusses these constitutive features of the statement:

An essential (constitutive) marker of the utterance is its quality of being *directed* to someone, its *addressivity*. [...] the utterance has both an author [...] and an addressee. This addressee can be an immediate participant-interlocutor in an everyday dialogue, a differentiated collective of specialists in some particular area of cultural communication, a more or less differentiated public, ethnic group, contemporaries, like-minded people, opponents and enemies, a subordinate, a superior, someone who is lower, higher, familiar, foreign, and so forth. And it can also be an indefinite, unconcretized *other* (with various kinds of monological utterances of an emotional type). All these varieties and conceptions of the addressee are determined by that area of human activity and everyday life to which the given utterance is related.

The addressing and the addressee are important traits to be considered in this work, because diatribe takes such traits into account in the process of its constitution. In the case of Romans, there are at least two interlocutors: one real and the other fictional. The real interlocutor and the Christian community in Rome; the fictional is a master simulacrum of the Jewish religion. Corroborating this reading, as can be seen from the studies of Dunn (1998),²² there were different religious groups in Rome. Among them, radical Jewish sects that differed from the thinking of the author of Romans. Therefore, it should be noted that there is no way to generalize the controversies present in the letter as being directed towards “Judaism,” as this was not a uniform religious movement.

Thus, from the studies of Dunn (1998),²³ it is understood, for example, that there is a fictitious interlocutor in Romans, who is represented in apocryphal literature by the text *Psalms of Solomon*.²⁴ In this case, this interlocutor can be seen at points in the letter in which the author criticizes the more radical ideological aspects of Judaism.

²¹ For reference, see footnote 8.

²² For reference, see footnote 11.

²³ For reference, see footnote 11.

²⁴ The apocryphal texts *Psalms of Solomon* form a collection of 18 psalms attributed to the famous son of David, but which probably had their origin in the second or first century BC. These psalms maintain an intimate connection with the canonical psalms, imitating style, and show a strong Jewish conservative position. Emphasis such as justice, divine retribution and determinism point to issues discussed later by the Pharisees. Dunn (1998), in *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, shows the dialogue that Romans

Understanding Romans as a statement directed towards certain interlocutors is also to emphasize its constitutive complexity, including enunciative elements and aspects of the communicative sphere of the first century. Discussing the subject, Gonçalves and Di Mesquita (2010, p.31) affirm that “the epistolography in the ancient world was an art, a technique exercised by the small literacy coefficient, capable of applying the constituent elements of rhetoric to transmit messages and information.”²⁵ It is concluded that the letter is not a simplified and disinterested construction, nor was it improvised, but it is a well-planned statement, resulting from a well-designed enunciative project. In this sense, according to Alexandre Júnior (2015), the letters written in the Greco-Roman world were divided into three parts: opening, oratory development and conclusion. In the case of Paul’s letters, as noted by Fitzmyer (1972), they follow some formal and functional characteristics of the current Greek-Roman epistolary genre. Thus, the letters contained an (i) initial formula (greeting), (ii) thanksgiving, (iii) message, (iv) conclusion and (v) final greeting.

From the reading of Romans, we can see the division presented by the aforementioned authors. Extending the reading of Fitzmyer (1972) and Alexandre Júnior (2015) to Romans, we see the following division (due to the extension, it will not be possible to reproduce the entire text that comprises some sections, such as the oratory development - message -, which consists of exposing the body of the letter):

I- Opening

a- Initial Formula (Greeting)

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the service of the gospel of God [...] To you all, God’s beloved in Rome, called to be his holy people. Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 1, 1-7).

establishes with the ideas of the *Psalms of Solomon*, showing that there were Jewish groups, in Rome, with a more radical / conservative tendency.

²⁵ In Portuguese: “a epistolografia no mundo antigo era uma arte, uma técnica exercida pelo pequeno coeficiente de letrados, capazes de aplicar os elementos constituintes da retórica para transmitir mensagens e informações.”

b- Thanksgiving

First I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for all of you because your faith is talked of all over the world (Romans 1, 8).

II- Oratory Development

a- Message

(Romans 1,16 - 15, 13)

III- Conclusion

b- Conclusion

My brothers, I am quite sure that you, in particular, are full of goodness, fully instructed and capable of correcting each other. But I have special confidence in writing on some points to you, to refresh your memories, because of the grace that was given to me by God. I was given grace to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the gentiles, dedicated to offer them the gospel of God, so that gentiles might become an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Romans 15, 14-33).

b- Recommendation

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae; give her, in the Lord, a welcome worthy of God's holy people, and help her with whatever she needs from you -- she herself has come to the help of many people, including myself (Romans 16, 1-2).

c- Paul's Greeting

[...] My greetings to Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, [...] and my greetings to the church at their house. Greetings to my dear friend Epaenetus, [...] Greetings to Mary (Romans 16, 3-16).

d- Warning. First Post-Scriptum

I urge you, brothers, be on your guard against the people who are out to stir up disagreements and bring up difficulties against the teaching which you learnt. Avoid them (Romans 16, 17-20).

e- Greetings from the Collaborators and the Scribe (Tertius). Second Post-Scriptum

Timothy, who is working with me, sends greetings to you, and so do my kinsmen Lucius, Jason and Sosipater. I, Tertius, who am writing this letter, greet you in the Lord. Greetings to you from Gaius, my host here, and host of the whole church. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends greetings to you, and our brother Quartus (Romans 16, 21-24).

f- Doxology (Hymn of Praise)

And now to him who can make you strong in accordance with the gospel that I preach and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, in accordance with that mystery which for endless ages was kept secret but now (as the prophets wrote) is revealed, as the eternal God commanded, to be made known to all the nations, so that they obey in faith: to him, the only wise God, give glory through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen (Romans 16, 25-27).

The opening of the letter includes a greeting and the expression of a wish for health or a formula of thanks, more precisely a thanksgiving. This composition follows the structure of letters written in the Greco-Roman world, as described by Alexandre Júnior (2015). Likewise, the body of the letter contains the thematic content, the message that the situation imposed, including elements of a narrative and argumentative character. As for the conclusion, in the same way as quoted by Alexandre Júnior (2015) about the letter in Antiquity, Romans presents farewell formulas that clearly mark its end. In the farewell formulas that make up the conclusion, one can include what Fitzmyer (1972) described as recommendations, greetings from Paul and his collaborators, warnings and doxology (hymn of praise). It is worth noting that this layout of the letter does not break down all its aspects, but aims to point out its macro-structural organization, inserting it in the discursive current of the first century.

As a last point, it is worth reaffirming that Romans was originally produced as correspondence between interlocutors, in view of specific readers, aiming, therefore, to

fulfill specific objectives. Such writing, however, due to the relationship with the religious sphere and the growth of Christianity, started to circulate through several religious communities, that is, its content became of interest not only to a specific community or individual (the Christian community in Rome), but started to circulate among those communities that shared the Christian faith.

2 Dialogue and Diatribe in the Dialogical Perspective of Language

In writings such as *The Problems of Speech Genres* (BAKHTIN, 1986)²⁶ and *The Text Problem in Linguistics, Philology and the Human Sciences* (BAKHTIN, 1986),²⁷ the Russian author Mikhail Bakhtin thinks of the dialogical nature of the statement, inserting it in the great dialogue of discursive communication. For this philosopher of language, statements - real texts produced in a given communicative situation - are considered from the point of view of their interaction with other statements. This conception is revolutionary in that it points out the dialogical relations, the complexities, the dynamics, the heterogeneity and the multiform reality of the enunciative manifestations.

It should be noted that, in the dialogical perspective of language, dialogue is understood in a broad way, that is, it is not just about face-to-face conversation in everyday life. Dialogue is thought from the notion of dialogical relations. “But dialogic relations, of course, do not in any way coincide with relations among rejoinders of real dialogue — they are much broader, more diverse, and more complex,” postulates Bakhtin (1986, p.124).²⁸ This notion of dialogue understands that two statements distant from each other, both in time and space, “[...] knowing nothing of one another, when they are compared semantically, reveal dialogic relations if there is any kind of semantic convergence between them (if only a partially shared theme, point of view, and so forth)” (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.124).²⁹

²⁶ For reference, see footnote 8.

²⁷ For reference, see footnote 8.

²⁸ For reference, see footnote 8.

²⁹ For reference, see footnote 8.

In dialoguing with Bakhtin and the contemporary thought, Augusto Ponzio, in *The Bakhtinian Revolution* (2015), comments on the dialogical nature of every text. In the words of Ponzio (2015, p.102):

Every text, written or oral, is connected dialogically with other texts. It is thought in consideration of other possible texts that this one can produce; anticipate possible responses, objections, and is oriented towards texts previously produced, to those which allude, replicate, refute or seek support, to those which gather, analyze etc.³⁰

In this way, the dialogue permeates the dimensions of spatiality and temporality, as the statements are found, touched, even if it is only in the thematic aspects. As Ponzio (2015) rightly observes, dialogue occurs not only with those *already said*, but with *possible texts*, that is, the text is dialogical because it is an anticipated response to possible other texts.

This notion of dialogue is not limited to the idea of agreement and disagreement between two statements, but implies a relationship, responsive-active understanding, because, for Bakhtin (1986, p.127, emphasis added),³¹ “[...] For the word (and, consequently, for a human being) there is nothing more terrible than a *lack of response*.” And yet: “[...] the word wants to be heard, understood, responded to, and again to respond to the response, and so forth *ad infinitum*” (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.127, emphasis added).³² In this perspective, the units of discursive communication - what Bakhtin (1986) calls “total statements” - are irreproducible (although they can be mentioned) and are linked together by dialogical relations.

The same author (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.276), in *Questions of literature and aesthetics: the theory of the novel*,³³ states:

The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by

³⁰ In Portuguese: “Todo texto, escrito ou oral, está conectado dialogicamente com outros textos. Está pensado em consideração a outros possíveis textos que este pode produzir; antecipar possíveis respostas, objeções, e se orienta em direção a textos anteriormente produzidos, aos que aludem, replicam, refutam ou buscam apoio, aos que congregam, analisam etc.”

³¹ For reference, see footnote 8.

³² For reference, see footnote 8.

³³ In English, the search for this text resulted in the reference available in footnote 6.

socioideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it - it does not approach the object from the sidelines.

This dialogical nature of the statement can be felt in the enunciative structure itself. Thus, the same author, in *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* (1984),³⁴ analyzes the *phenomenon of veiled dialogue*, which, according to him, does not coincide with the phenomenon of *veiled polemics*. This, according to the author, occurs when the discourse is directed towards an objective, “[...] naming it, portraying, expressing, and only indirectly striking a blow at the other’s discourse, clashing with it, as it were, within the object itself” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.196).³⁵ The veiled controversy, therefore, occurs in an indirect way, because the controversial encounter between voices occurs in the object, in the theme. In this case, facing the object and polemically touching the meanings of other speeches, the speech is bivocal, because it “[...] senses alongside it someone else’s word speaking about the same object, and this awareness determines its structure,” explains Bakhtin (1984, p.196).³⁶

Another notion posed in relation to the *veiled controversy* is the notion of open controversy. For the Russian thinker, “[...] overt polemic is quite simply directed at another’s discourse, which it refutes, as if at its own referential object” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.224).³⁷ In this case, in addition to being focused on the object / theme, the speech turns directly to the other’s speech, polemicizing its meanings.

That said, returning to the notion of veiled dialogue, Bakhtin (1984, p.197),³⁸ to illustrate it, creates the following situation:

Imagine a dialogue of two persons in which the statements of the second speaker are omitted, but in such a way that the general sense is not at all violated. The second speaker is present invisibly, his words are not there, but deep traces left by these words have a determining influence on all the present and visible words of the first speaker. We sense that this is a conversation, although only one person is speaking, and it is a conversation of the most intense kind, for each present,

³⁴ For reference, see footnote 2.

³⁵ For reference, see footnote 2.

³⁶ For reference, see footnote 2.

³⁷ For reference, see footnote 2.

³⁸ For reference, see footnote 2.

uttered word responds and reacts with its every fiber to the invisible speaker, points to something outside itself, beyond its own limits, to the unspoken words of another person.

The veiled dialogue marks the reciprocal relations with the other's word in the living and concrete context. Such dynamics of the interrelation of voices in the discourse, of the internal dialogue, can vary markedly (BAKHTIN, 1984).³⁹ Closely related to the notion of veiled dialogue is the notion of diatribe. Diatribe cannot be conceived without internal dialogue, without the interrelation of voices, without the perception of others' words. Bakhtin (1984)⁴⁰ highlights the dialogical nature of diatribe, presenting it as a genre, although he does not dwell in more detail on this. He explains that “[...] the diatribe is an internally dialogized rhetorical genre, usually structured in the form of a conversation with an absent interlocutor – and resulting in a dialogization of the very process of speech and thought” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.120).⁴¹ As can be seen, diatribe is seen as a markedly dialogical genre, as it is characterized by internal dialogue with an absent interlocutor. Physically absent, but present in the construction of meanings of the statement, since it is taken into account by the author and influences, for example, the construction of the style, in the thematic, in the compositional construction of the statement.

Diatribe is an enunciative resource for establishing the dialogue shown in the speech. As Bakhtin (1984)⁴² pointed out, it materializes dialogism in the very process of construction of discourse and thought. This implies thinking about the voices of others, the points of view and the ideological valuations of the other's discourse, which are mobilized and materialized in the enunciative construction.

As for its origin, diatribe goes back to Greek philosophical literature. Possibly, this genre arose from the works of Greek cynical philosophers, around the third century BC. Diatribe, as an enunciative resource, consisted of the exposition of ideas, philosophical doctrines in the form of dialogue. Through diatribe, therefore, the author of a given speech presented an inner dialogue, with a view to a possible interlocutor. In ancient times, diatribe had also been used by Christian writers of the first century.

³⁹ For reference, see footnote 2.

⁴⁰ For reference, see footnote 2.

⁴¹ For reference, see footnote 2.

⁴² For reference, see footnote 2.

Bakhtin (1984, p.120)⁴³ realizes this influence when he says that “[...] it was precisely the diatribe, and not classical rhetoric, that exercised a defining influence on the generic characteristics of the ancient Christian sermon.”

Furthermore, diatribe can be materialized by several linguistic-enunciative resources. As will be shown in the next section, in the letter, diatribe materializes through direct rhetorical discourse. This way of citing the speech of the other is discussed by Vološinov (1973),⁴⁴ in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, when problematizing the phenomenon of transmission of the speech of others in a sociological perspective. According to Vološinov (1973, p.115, emphasis added),⁴⁵ “[...] reported speech is speech within speech, utterance within utterance, and at the same time also *speech about speech, utterance about utterance.*”

The same scholar points out that “[...] the forms employed for reporting speech are an *active relation* of one message to another, and are expressed, moreover, not on the level of the theme but in the stabilized constructional patterns of the language itself” (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.116).⁴⁶ The forms of transmission of the speech of others, thus, establish the reaction of the word to the word. In the specific case of direct rhetorical discourse, Vološinov (1973)⁴⁷ comments that, many times, it directly integrates the authorial discourse and the discourse of others.

Direct rhetorical discourse occurs when the same speech can be interpreted simultaneously as belonging to the author and as belonging to another. It is, therefore, ground populated by more than one voice, it is the place of plurality of voices, of the encounter between the self and the other. Thus, for Vološinov (1973),⁴⁸ the rhetorical question and the rhetorical exclamation are enunciative resources that materialize the direct rhetorical discourse.

[...] *rhetorical question*, or the *rhetorical exclamation*. [...] seem to be situated on the very boundary between authorial and reported speech (usually, internal speech) and often they slide directly into one or the other. Thus they may be interpreted as a question or exclamation on

⁴³ For reference, see footnote 2.

⁴⁴ For reference, see footnote 9.

⁴⁵ For reference, see footnote 9.

⁴⁶ For reference, see footnote 9.

⁴⁷ For reference, see footnote 9.

⁴⁸ For reference, see footnote 9.

the part of the author or, equally, as a question or exclamation on the part of the hero, addressed to himself (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.137, emphasis added).⁴⁹

The essence of direct rhetorical discourse is the presence of voices situated on the border between authorial discourse - the cited discourse, for example, in Romans - and the discourse of others - the discourse of the other, for example, the discourse cited by the letter's interlocutors. In the direct rhetorical discourse, the words belong at the same time to the author of the statement and to the other, but "it will surely be claimed that [...] the author's initiative takes the upper hand, and that that is why they never appear enclosed in quotation marks," explains Vološinov (1973, p.138).⁵⁰ In direct rhetorical discourse, the saying is the author's own, but he does it on behalf of the other, as if he were speaking in his place, that is, the author anticipates his other, "says in his stead *what* the hero might or should have said, says *what* the given occasion calls for" (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.138 emphasis added).⁵¹

Next, the analysis of Romans will try to show how the direct rhetorical discourse establishes the phenomenon of diatribe in the construction of meanings of that statement, paying attention to the linguistic elements that materialize diatribe.

3 Diatribe in the Enunciative Construction of the Meanings of/in Paul's Letter to the Romans

Diatribe is an enunciative resource for the construction of meanings that establishes the active presence of the other in the process of Roman discursive communication. In this case, the letter is the setting for encounters of voices, points of view, evaluative positions, ideological-religious concepts, that is, their meanings are crossed by the speeches of the interlocutors, mainly religious groups residing in Rome. The analysis of diatribe allows listening to the points of view of these interlocutors, as they take shape in the statement.

The excerpts that will be analyzed are representative of the enunciative movements that mobilize the diatribe in the construction of the letter's meanings. In the

⁴⁹ For reference, see footnote 9.

⁵⁰ For reference, see footnote 9.

⁵¹ For reference, see footnote 9.

analysis of these passages, the linguistic-enunciative materiality in which the voices of others are heard in the enunciative construction will be highlighted. Thus, in the following events, the letter materializes a controversial encounter between points of view. This encounter of voices makes visible “[...] the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.280),⁵² that is, it raises the voices of others in the enunciative texture.

Is there any benefit, then, in being a Jew? Is there any advantage in being circumcised? A great deal, in every way. First of all, it was to the Jews that the message of God was entrusted. What if some of them were unfaithful? Do you think their lack of faith could cancel God’s faithfulness? Out of the question! [...] can we say that God is unjust when -- to use human terms -- he brings his retribution down on us? Out of the question! It would mean that God could not be the judge of the world. You might as well say that if my untruthfulness makes God demonstrate his truthfulness, to his greater glory, then I should not be judged to be a sinner at all. In this case, the slanderous report some people are spreading would be true, that we teach that one should do evil that good may come of it. In fact such people are justly condemned (Romans 3, 1-8).

In this highlighted passage, Paul discusses sensitive points of the Jewish faith and the Christian faith. These two religious worlds, these two religious ideologies, are found in the letter. On the one hand, Paul’s reading of the situation of Jews and Gentiles is perceived before the judgment of God. In the letter, Paul makes a reinterpretation of circumcision, which was a Jewish ritual that served to insert every Jewish boy in the so-called “people of the covenant.” By reframing circumcision, Paul faces a controversial struggle with the views of interlocutors who had a Jewish background, because in that context and within the Jewish religious system of the time, circumcision was a sign of faith sufficient to achieve justification before God. When writing Romans, Paul reinterprets circumcision, arguing from another point of view, namely, “real circumcision is in the heart.”

The influence of the interlocutors’ discourse is felt in the letter in such a way that Paul anticipates his possible questions. In the excerpt of the highlighted letter, these questions appear in the form of diatribe, more precisely through direct rhetorical discourse. More specifically, there is an alternation of voices in the highlighted section.

⁵² For reference, see footnote 6.

Immediately before the passage under analysis, Paul had stated that “Jew is the one who is inwardly a Jew, and real circumcision is in the heart” (Romans 2, 29). In view of this statement, the recipient of the letter would soon ask: “What advantage then is there in being a Jew? And what is the use of circumcision?” (Romans 3, 1). In an active response to the questions raised by this interlocutor, Paul presents a counterstatement: “A great deal, in every way. First of all, it was to the Jews that the message of God was entrusted” (Romans 3, 2). With this, Paul aims to refute, erase doubts and present another point of view in the controversial interaction with such interlocutors.

The questions (live speech of the recipients) and the answer (counterstatement) establish “the internal dialogism of the word” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.280).⁵³ This dialogicity also manifests the trait of addressing/directing the statement, which is perceived in the stylistic constitution itself. Bakhtin (1986, p.95)⁵⁴ says that the interlocutor of the statement, the way the writer writes, perceives and represents for himself his interlocutors, the strength and influence of these interlocutors in the statement, depend “[...] both the composition and, particularly, the style of the utterance.” Thus, the letter perceives, in the process of its construction, the questions arising from the interlocutors. In this way, the style, the linguistic-enunciative choices, the tonalities of the saying are adjusted towards the interlocutors and their responses.

The diatribic resource, mobilized in the section under analysis, establishes a dialogical movement of anticipation from the point of view of the interlocutors, aiming to combat them. This enunciative resource allows the author to anticipate someone else’s point of view. Such a dialogical movement occurs because, according to Bakhtin (1986, p.95),⁵⁵ when trying to anticipate the speech of the other, “this anticipated response, in turn, exerts an active influence on my utterance (I parry objections that I foresee, I make all kinds of provisos, and so forth).” This implies that Romans, like all concrete statements, takes into account the apperceptive field of the discourse perception by the interlocutor.

Still on the section under analysis, as is characteristic of diatribe, it presents turn-taking of voices, in a sequence formed by questions and answers, as well as in the face-to-face conversation of everyday life. This is the case throughout the passage, because

⁵³ For reference, see footnote 6.

⁵⁴ For reference, see footnote 8.

⁵⁵ For reference, see footnote 8.

the questions “What if some of them were unfaithful? Do you think their lack of faith could cancel God’s faithfulness?” (Romans 3, 3) are also on the border between the author’s speech and the other’s speech. That is, these questions can be attributed not only to Paul, but also to the letter’s interlocutors. To these questions, the authorial discourse answers the following: “Out of the question!” (Romans 3, 4). It is worth noting that these questions are materialized through direct rhetorical discourse, because the statement is on the border between the authorial speech and the speech of the interlocutors. Therefore, these possible questions are not simply monological questions asked by Paul, but it is the speech of the other active and present in the orientation of the letter’s senses. As Vološinov (1973)⁵⁶ postulates, direct rhetorical discourse directly integrates authorial discourse and the discourse of others. Thus, in the same statement, two voices, two speeches, two (at least) valorative centers are heard.

At another point in the same excerpt, the letter anticipates yet another question from the interlocutors: “In this case, the slanderous report some people are spreading would be true, that we teach that one should do evil that good may come of it” (Romans 3, 8). This voice of the other is active and gains materiality in the form of a direct rhetorical discourse, as the author asks a question, attributing it, in the same enunciative movement, to some interlocutors. It is worth noting that in direct rhetorical discourse, as in the case under analysis, the statement is shared, the saying is bivocal, the other is established.

In addition, it is clear that the direct rhetorical discourse establishes an open controversy, since the authorial discourse (by the author of Romans) is directly oriented towards the discourse of the other, linguistically marked with the expression “the slanderous report some people are spreading.” Thus, this “some people,” which is recognized as the voice, since, although undefined, is present in the discourse. The interlocutors, marked by “some people,” “affirm,” but this affirmation is negatively valued. The weight of the term “slanderous” falls on the enunciative act, on the content of the saying.

Furthermore, the rhetorical direct speech is perceived in the letter by the “[...] invasions into authorial speech of others’ expressive indicators (ellipsis, questions,

⁵⁶ For reference, see footnote 9.

exclamations) [...] upon the author's voice" (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.316).⁵⁷ Thus, rhetorical questions are shared with the letter's interlocutors, that is, there are possible questions that readers/listeners would ask Paul if he were personally with them. The rhetorical questions are located on the border between the authorial discourse (of Paul) and the discourse of the letter's interlocutors. Returning to the passage under analysis, in view of the possible questioning by the recipients, Paul sums it up and says: "such people are justly condemned" (Romans 3, 8).

In the excerpt below, there is one more occurrence of diatribe in the construction of the letter's meanings:

Then what do we say about Abraham, the ancestor from whom we are descended physically? If Abraham had been justified because of what he had done, then he would have had something to boast about. But not before God (Romans 4, 1-2).

This excerpt integrates the argument in favor of the thesis that all men are justified by faith and not by the works of the Law. According to the reading of Dunn (1998, p 366),⁵⁸ "the 'works' against which Paul constantly warns against were, in his view, Israel's misunderstanding of what its covenant law required." For this scholar, "[...] that misunderstanding focused most sharply on Jewish attempts to maintain their covenant distinctiveness from Gentiles and on Christian Jews' attempts to require Christian Gentiles to adopt such covenant distinctives" (DUNN, 1998, p.366).⁵⁹ Therefore, themes such as "justification" and the role of "works" were not undisputed issues among the Romans' interlocutors.

Thus, it is possible to perceive that there was a belief among the Romans' interlocutors that they were just before God because they had the "Law of Moses" - the texts attributed to Moses that currently make up the Old Testament of the Bible -, circumcision and the writings of the prophets. In this way, for many readers of the letter, the simple fact of belonging to the Jewish nation, having Jewish surname, was not only sufficient but also a necessary condition to be considered "just before God." In

⁵⁷ For reference, see footnote 7.

⁵⁸ For reference, see footnote 11.

⁵⁹ For reference, see footnote 11.

other words, resuming the reading made by Dunn (1998)⁶⁰ on the question, in the ideological-religious conception of interlocutors of Romans, the ethnic (Jewish) identity had a most important value for salvation, determining and qualifying the justification. When presenting a different religious point of view, the letter *listens* to questions from these interlocutors. Thus, the section under analysis reveals the dialogic relationship marked with an anticipated response from the other/interlocutor, generating stylistic effects in the discourse.

With this, the excerpt highlighted evidences the tone of replica, more precisely, there is an open controversy with the discourse of the other (of the recipients), because, according to Bakhtin (1984, p.196),⁶¹ “overt polemic is quite simply directed at another’s discourse, which it refutes, as if at its own referential object.” In the case under analysis, the open controversy occurs because, in view of Paul’s thesis that “a person is justified by faith and not by doing what the Law tells him to do” (Romans 3, 28), some interlocutors would soon disagree with this thesis, citing the case of Abraham, because he was considered the “father of the nation” who, in the belief of certain interlocutors in the letter, was an example of someone justified by works. With this, the statement/letter listens to the following controversial question: “Then what do we say about Abraham, the ancestor from whom we are descended physically?” (Romans 4, 1). This structure of direct rhetorical discourse (the question attributed to the recipient) shows the direction of the letter towards the speech of the other, representing him, enunciating him, coming into conflict with him in the body of the utterance. “Such a discourse draws in, as it were, sucks in to itself the other’s replies” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.197),⁶² also showing how the structure of the utterance is determined by the dialogical relationship between the interlocutors of the communicative process that gives life to the letter.

Thus, as Bakhtin (1984 p.195)⁶³ points out, “[...] the entire structure of speech would be completely different were it not for this reaction to another person’s implied words.” According to the same author, the controversial color of the discourse manifests itself in purely linguistic traits. He cites intonation and syntactic construction as an

⁶⁰ For reference, see footnote 11.

⁶¹ For reference, see footnote 2.

⁶² For reference, see footnote 2.

⁶³ For reference, see footnote 2.

example. In the case of the letter to the Romans, this controversial color appears marked in the syntactic structure, namely, through diatribe, which gains materiality in cases of direct rhetorical discourse.

Furthermore, the analysis of the letter from the diatribe perspective reveals that Paul's interlocutor shares the discourse that Abraham was justified by the works. This *listening* is revealed in a counter word: "If Abraham had been justified because of what he had done, then he would have had something to boast about. But not before God" (Romans 4, 2). Thus, it appears that the struggle for the meaning of the Genesis narrative is at issue here. The letter perceives the other's speech and reacts to it. The field of dispute is the discourse about "how Abraham was justified before God." This dispute establishes dialogicity in two ways: first, in the encounter with the other's discourse in the object itself, that is, in the discourse theme, namely, Abraham's justification; second, in the dispute that occurs in the internal listener's anticipated response to the statement. This second way, according to Bakhtin (1981, p.282),⁶⁴ "[...] bears a more subjective, psychological and (frequently) random character, sometimes crassly accommodating, sometimes provocatively polemical."

As seen, regarding this controversial and provocative aspect, diatribe, through direct rhetorical discourse, marks controversial points of view in the internal plot of the letter. Furthermore, in the letter, diatribe is constructed as a form of dialogue with a physically absent interlocutor. "A characteristic feature of the letter is an acute awareness of the interlocutor, the addressee to whom it is directed," affirms Bakhtin (1984, p.205).⁶⁵ He further says that "[...] the individual manner in which a person structures his own speech is determined to a significant degree by his peculiar awareness of another's words, and by his means for reacting to them" (BAKHTIN, 1984, p 196).⁶⁶ As a concrete statement, Romans presents an intense relationship with / reaction to the other participants in the communication, namely, the religious groups residing in Rome. The controversial questions, the expressive elements and the letter's evaluative intonation are marked by this relationship with the receiving religious community.

⁶⁴ For reference, see footnote 7.

⁶⁵ For reference, see footnote 2.

⁶⁶ For reference, see footnote 2.

In the next section, the controversial relationship with the other's discourse is also evident in the letter's internal dialogicity.

What should we say then? Should we remain in sin so that grace may be given the more fully? Out of the question! We have died to sin; how could we go on living in it? You cannot have forgotten that all of us, when we were baptised [...] (Romans 6, 1-3).

In the immediate context of this highlighted passage, Paul sets out his vision of how "God justifies through Faith." He explains that the Law brought sin to light, that is, the Mosaic Law accuses the existence of sin and, consequently, causes death, but, on the other hand, he argues, "however much sin increased, grace was always greater, so that as sin's reign brought death, so grace was to rule through saving justice that leads to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5, 18-21). When saying that "grace overflowed where sin grew," Paul's speech was crossed by the speech of the other, which takes place in the texture of the letter. It is possible to hear this speech in the following question, materialized in the form of direct rhetorical discourse: "should we remain in sin so that grace may be given the more fully?" (Romans 6, 1). Paul dialogues with this discourse, which expresses another point of view, another way of relating to divinity, another religious worldview, another axiological position.

Occurrences like these, refer us to what Bakhtin (1986, p.95)⁶⁷ says about the way "the speaker (or writer) senses and imagines his addressees, and the force of their effect on the utterance." And he rightly states that both the composition and, particularly, the style of the statement depend on it. The analysis of diatribe reveals exactly the (in)tense and controversial presence of the addressees 'speeches in the construction of Romans' meanings. It is, at the same time, *speech within speech and speech about speech* (VOLOŠINOV, 1973).⁶⁸ This presence guides the choice of subject, style, language, expressive tones. It is responsible for the thematic orientation, for the veiled and open polemics, for the argumentative construction of the statement.

Still, analyzing the same passage, it is clear that the voice of the other, which crosses the letter, has a logic based on Paul's statement, namely, if where sin grew, grace overflowed, then the more sin the more grace there will be. Listening allows the

⁶⁷ For reference, see footnote 8.

⁶⁸ For reference, see footnote 10.

preception of this questioning, materialized through a form of direct rhetorical discourse, as the other's voice is heard together with the author's voice (Paul). The authorial discourse does not leave this other in the void without an answer and emphatically replies: "Out of the question! We have died to sin; how could we go on living in it?" (Romans 6, 2). Therefore, we can see the internal dialogue materialized in the letter. It should be said that this responsive aspect of the letter, oriented towards the addressee, is not exclusive to the letter to the Romans, but, as Alexandre Júnior (2015, p.168) notes, in Antiquity, the letter was "written as dialogue between interested parties, as one of the two sides of an argument; as if to invoke the strategic dynamics of oratory discourse, where refutation and confirmation were evident."⁶⁹

In view of the excerpts analyzed and taking up statements by Fabris (2003, p.60), it is noticeable that "[...] in the epistolary dialogue with his young Christian communities, Paul uses some elements of the diatribe or the debate in use among the masters and propagators of popular stoicism."⁷⁰ The analysis showed the use of direct rhetorical discourse as an instigator of diatribe. That said, the next topic will highlight some conclusions drawn from the analyses.

Final Considerations

This work investigated the use of diatribe in the construction of meanings from Paul's letter to the Romans, focusing on two central questions, namely, (i) what linguistic-enunciative resources materialize diatribe in the enunciative texture of Romans; and (ii) how is diatribe mobilized in the process of building the meanings of that letter? For this, it dialogued with studies by Bakhtin (1981,⁷¹ 1984,⁷² 1986)⁷³

⁶⁹ In Portuguese: "escrita como diálogo entre partes interessadas, como um dos dois lados de uma discussão; como que a invocar a dinâmica estratégica do discurso oratório, onde refutação e confirmação eram evidentes."

⁷⁰ In Portuguese: "[...] no diálogo epistolar com as suas jovens comunidades cristãs, Paulo recorre a alguns elementos da diatribe ou do debate em uso entre os mestres e propagadores do estoicismo popular."

⁷¹ For reference, see footnote 7.

⁷² For reference, see footnote 2.

⁷³ For reference, see footnote 8.

Vološinov (1973),⁷⁴ Ponzio (2013), Alexandre Júnior (2015), Gonçalves and Di Mesquita (2010), Dunn (1998),⁷⁵ Fabris (2003), Ehrman (1997), among others.

The analysis showed how diatribe occurs through linguistic-enunciative marks of direct rhetorical discourse, configuring a recurrent enunciative resource in Romans. In this way of listening to the other, the author of the letter brings to the utterance (Romans) the addressees' discourse, aiming to refute their arguments, answer their questions, silence their possible protests. With that, it was possible to show the controversial dialogue veiled and shown in the constitution of meanings and how the anticipated response to the speech of the other influences the choice of linguistic resources, the construction of style, the valuations and the construction of the theme of the statement (BAKHTIN, 1986).⁷⁶

Therefore, from the analysis of representative passages of the letter, it is evident how much diatribe, specifically in cases of direct rhetorical discourse, is a linguistic-enunciative resource used by Paul to deal with controversial issues. Through this resource, Paul brings to his speech the speech of the other, of the interlocutors/recipients, aiming to refute his arguments, answer his questions, silence his protests.

Thus, in the internal dialogicity of the letter, the voices in dispute are noticeable. At this point, the understanding of Bakhtin (1984)⁷⁷ about the genre of the letter is confirmed. According to this philosopher, “[...] the letter, like a rejoinder in a dialogue, is addressed to a specific person, and it takes into account the other's possible reactions, the other's possible reply. This reckoning with an absent interlocutor can be more or less intensive [...]” (BAKHTIN, 1984 p.205).⁷⁸ Therefore, in the construction of the letter, the occurrences of direct rhetorical discourse materialize diatribe as an enunciative resource for the construction of meanings. As Bakhtin (1984)⁷⁹ already pointed out, diatribe had a strong influence on the ancient Christian sermon genre. It can be said, from the analysis undertaken, that, in the letter to the Romans, this linguistic-

⁷⁴ For reference, see footnote 10.

⁷⁵ For reference, see footnote 11.

⁷⁶ For reference, see footnote 8.

⁷⁷ For reference, see footnote 2.

⁷⁸ For reference, see footnote 2.

⁷⁹ For reference, see footnote 2.

enunciative element of construction of meanings takes place in cases of direct rhetorical discourse.

Furthermore, internal dialogicity - as a daily dialogue - corroborates the understanding that Romans belong to the category of secondary genres, because, as Bakhtin (1986, p.62)⁸⁰ argues, “[...] during the process of their formation, they [the secondary genres] absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communion.” Undoubtedly, the analyzed letter presents the characteristics of a complex discursive genre, more particularly because it integrates diatribe as a compositional dialogical resource.

Furthermore, by using diatribe, Paul demonstrates some knowledge of the ideas and points of view that circulated in the Christian community in Rome, which was composed of Gentiles and Jews. As Ehrman (1997, p.301) himself states, “by employing this style, Paul could effectively counter arguments that others had made against his teachings.” Thus, diatribe, in addition to working argumentatively in defending the author’s points of view, is an enunciative resource that marks the construction of the letter’s style and internal dialogue.

In short, Romans is inter-individual territory (VOLOŠINOV, 1973),⁸¹ as the recipient also has his voice enunciatively marked. To paraphrase Bakhtin (1984),⁸² it is intensely dialogical, since constructed as correspondence, the anticipation of the addressees’ discourse penetrates deeply into the core of its discursive construction. The analysis also showed how this anticipation of the other’s discourse occurs through diatribe, more precisely through direct rhetorical discourse, establishing controversial dialogical relations, these relations being responsible for constituting the letter’s enunciative architecture.

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⁸⁰ For reference, see footnote 8.

⁸¹ For reference, see footnote 9.

⁸² For reference, see footnote 2.

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