

Recognizing the Dialogical Nature of the Landscape: For a Marxist Semiotics / *Reconhecendo a índole dialógica da paisagem: por uma semiótica marxista*

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to defend the dialogical nature of the landscape. Working in between the borders of the Bakhtinian philosophy of language and cultural studies on landscape, we defend that landscape study should not be studied without considering the cultural forms of communication in the different domains of social organization– the speech genres; that landscape is a semiotic encounter with a concrete otherness; that the interpreter who emerges when an area enters a relationship of representation is necessarily characterized as a chronotope; that every landscape is a chronotopic representation; that cultural geography recognizes that the semiotic aspects of the landscape are as material as its morphology. We start from the hypothesis that landscape is a chronotopic representation that is always made possible by means of some speech genre, because it is always a communicative process, and an encounter with another in a situation of socially organized interrelation – it is concrete dialogue. To find the deeper meaning of a landscape, one must recognize and understand its material, historical, geographical, and dialogic nature.

KEYWORDS: Cultural geography; Dialogism; Speech genres; Chronotope; Historical materialism

RESUMO

O artigo objetiva defender a índole dialógica da paisagem. Trabalhando na fronteira entre a filosofia bakhtiniana da linguagem e os estudos culturais da paisagem, defendemos que a paisagem não seja estudada sem considerar as formas culturais de comunicação nos diferentes domínios da organização social – os gêneros discursivos; que toda paisagem é encontro semiótico com uma alteridade concreta; que o intérprete que emerge quando uma área entra em relação de representação é necessariamente caracterizado por um cronotopo; que toda paisagem é representação cronotópica; que a geografia cultural

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reconheça que os aspectos semióticos da paisagem são tão materiais quanto sua morfologia. Partimos da hipótese de que a paisagem é uma representação cronotópica que sempre se realiza através de algum gênero discursivo, pois sempre é um processo comunicativo e de encontro com o outro em uma situação de inter-relação socialmente organizada – é diálogo concreto. Para adentrar à profundidade de seus sentidos, precisa-se reconhecer e compreender sua índole material, histórica, geográfica e dialógica.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Geografia cultural; Dialogismo; Gêneros do discurso; Cronotopo; Materialismo histórico

Introduction

Considering Denis Cosgrove's innumerable contributions to cultural geography and, more specifically, to the thinking about landscape, this article makes its own contribution to the discussion with the premise that his thinking about landscape, explicitly or implicitly, appears in all of his works as follows: landscape must be treated based on a Marxist interpretation of cultural processes. This is a premise argued by the author when identifying that the two distinct approaches popularized in landscape studies, ecological (material) and semiotic (symbolic), were not sufficient for the study of the object. The Marxist interpretation is, for the author, a possibility, since it recognizes that the experienced world, even though symbolically constituted, is material and that its objectivity should not be denied. Thus landscape,

is no mere product of an unfettered human consciousness, but is precisely the collective encounter of subject and object, of consciousness and material world (Buttimer, 1974; 1976). Sustaining the dialectic of culture and nature without lapsing into idealism or reductionist materialism is the central theoretical problem for historical materialism (Thompson, 1978) and thus for constructing a marxist geography (Cosgrove, 1983, p.1).

It is noteworthy, however, that the author explicitly asks for cooperation, mutual respect and understanding between these two approaches, maintaining that no interpretation or ecological politics can ignore the effect of the cultural processes of creation of meaning, given that “cultural meanings are invested into and shape a world whose ‘nature’ is known only through human cognition and representation, and is thus always symbolically

mediated” (Cosgrove, 2003, p.15). In the same way, it must also be recognized that no semiotic interpretation of landscape can ignore the fact “that meaning is always rooted in the material processes of life” (Cosgrove, 2003, p.15). It is clear, from the previous citations, that Cosgrove (2003) in his theoretical project, proposed to treat the landscape through Marxist semiotics, in other words, historical materialism; by means of a semiotics that recognizes the materiality of the symbolic processes, as well as its social, historical and cultural grounding. A semiotics, therefore, that considers the dialectical interaction of content-form in the landscape, in the objective/subjective activity of humans. As Lagopoulos and Boklund-Lagopoulou (2015, p.35) state, “a materialist social semiotics applicable to all cultural signifying systems.”

Geography can no longer be seen as an exclusively spatial science, and it is in this sense that Marxist geography has been especially successful. It is not by chance that most of the subjectivist geographers, who suggested the connection between subjectivism and objectivism, were referring to Marxist geography – which is Cosgrove’s case. For this reason, it seems reasonable to direct our attention to this tendency of integrating semiotics to geography – the semiotics of the landscape. The prerequisite for this integration, however, is the more general articulation between semiotics and Marxism. This is not a new question, but the Marxist tendency in semiotics is, according to Lagopoulos (1993), clearly underrepresented and some more noteworthy attempts, such as Godelier (1973; 1978) and Bourdieu (1971), “have remained outside semiotics proper” (Lagopoulos, 1993, p.269). The oldest attempt of this type, and the one we rely on as a foundation for the development of this article, dates to the Soviet Union of the 1920s, and was realized by Bakhtin’s Circle.¹

With the growing recognition of the Bakhtin and the Circle’s contributions to the development of a Marxist materialist semiotics, we seek, relying on a framework mainly developed on the notions of chronotope (Bakhtin, 1981)² and speech genres (Bakhtin, 1986),³

¹ The Bakhtin Circle is the name given to the group of researchers and intellectuals from diverse disciplines, who worked together between the years 1919 and 1929, such as Matvei I. Kavan (philosopher), Ivan I. Kanaev (biologist), Maria V. Yudina (musician), Lev V. Pumpianski (literary critic), Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Valentin N. Vološinov e Pavel N. Medviédev. These last three are very popular in Brazil for their works. It is fitting to note that, as Brait and Campos (2009) affirm, due to Stalinism, only at the end of the decade of 1910 did the members of the Circle meet regularly.

² BAKHTIN, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

to expand the discussions present in the premise defended by Cosgrove (2003), since, as Lindström, Kul and Palang (2014, p.126) assert: “Landscape is an inherently dialogical phenomenon and communication lies at the core of semiotic processes in landscapes.” Thus, we argue that Marxist semiotics, in its dialogic interpretation offered by the Bakhtin and the Circle,

can provide adequate tools for analyzing processes of landscape formation, because they are always a result of multi-party communication and depend on the sign categorization of the participants. The potential for the semiotic ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin (such as chronotope, dialogism and heteroglossia) [...] cannot be underestimated in this respect (Lindström *et.al.*, 2014, p.126).

It is, therefore, working on an area that borders with the dialogic studies of language, that we argue in this article that landscape cannot be studied without considering the many cultural forms of communication in the different domains of social organization – speech genres; that the landscape cannot be understood nor studied in any of its functions without considering the forms of interrelation organized among people, as it is encountered as an ideological body of its communication; and finally, that the nature of landscape is dialogic. In this sense, we start from the hypothesis that landscape is always realized within a speech genre, as it is always a communicative and encounter process with the other in a situation of interrelationship that is socially organized – it is concrete dialogue (Soeiro et al., 2020). Therefore, in order to delve deeper into its meanings, its geographical, historical, and dialogic nature must be recognized and understood.

To better position our construction, we must clarify that to date, in landscape studies, a balance between an ecological (material) approach and a semiotic (symbolic) one is sought out. As Lagopoulos and Boklund-Lagopoulou (2015) argue, geography is characterized by a fundamental epistemological weakness: a division between subjectivist and objectivist approaches. Marxist geography, in this context, attempts to provide a paradigm linking the two. In historical materialism, consciousness and ideology are not the primary factors that mold the

³ BAKHTIN, M. M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.

society, nor are they independent of social material practices. Instead, the ideological practice depends on the material practice – the subjects are social and historical, and the landscape is a socio-historical product. Marxism can, thus, provide geographers and other landscape scholars with a materialist theory of consciousness, of subjectivity and ideology or, as Bakhtin proposes (1981),⁴ a theory of the dialogic imagination.

The integration of semiotics with Marxist theory of ideology, however, runs into a fundamental problem, as follows: historical materialism sees semiosis springing from material processes, while structuralist semiotics is based on logical positivism (Saussure, Levi Strauss), and highlights semiosis as socio-historical process. There are also signs of Neokantian idealism in European semiotics. Thus, articulating Marxism with semiotics is not an easy task.

Aware of the challenges that the object imposes on us, it can be said that the present article is included in the sphere of dialogue formed around landscape, and seeks, through distinct methods, to find the cooperation and the mutual respect between the approaches Cosgrove (2003) describes. Our contribution explicitly arises from, as Cosgrove (1983; 2003) proposes, a historical materialist approach. More specifically, it stems from the dialogic interpretation offered by theoreticians from the Bakhtin and the Circle.

The present text is structured as follows: (first section) - *Is Landscape Dialogue?* discusses the ontological relationship between landscape and dialogue, and demonstrates that it is necessary to recognize this condition in cultural geography studies; (second section) - *Landscape of the Text Refers to the Speech Genre*, aiming to clarify the distinction between a structuralist semiotic and post-structuralist approaches that predominated in landscape studies, and the dialogic approach to landscape, made viable mainly through the Bakhtinian notion of speech genres; (third section) - *Landscape: From Reductionist Materialism to Dialogic*, demonstrates that the Marxist semiotic approach proposed in the dialogism of the Bakhtin and the Circle must not be confused with other reductionist materialist approaches. Finally, in the *Conclusions*, we make some considerations intending to point to ways of continuing the contribution to the debates about the theme and/or what we propose in this article. In its entirety, the present article entails, perhaps, many more questions than it provides answers.

⁴ For reference, see footnote 3.

However, as we do not impose a theoretical project, we think it is relevant to present our concerns and thoughts, even in their embryonic state, on the subject.

1 Is Landscape Dialogue?

For Bakhtin (1981,⁵ 1986,⁶ 1981),⁷ dialogue is a fundamental human condition of the constant exchange with an external other.⁸ Considering this notion of dialogue with regard and in answer to the question that gives title to this section, we respond – yes. Landscape is, without a doubt, dialogue. To clarify our response, we must remember that everything in human behavior is associated with language and is meaningful, interpretable, and is a part of an ideology; every gesture and nearly every function – even the humans’ animal functions mean something beyond its physiological expression – mark one’s belonging in a society, signaling the presence of the other in every action. We must remember, therefore, that all ideological objects, including the landscape, belong to social relations and not to the use, contemplation, experience, and hedonistic delight of the autonomous individual. It is dialogue, because we do not relate ourselves purely and directly with the elements that comprise a landscape – we do not relate purely and directly with its ontological anchorage, with its morphology, with its objectivity –, once these had been historically and geographically semiotized by the words of the other. To contemplate or experience a landscape is always a process of interpretation and a response to the word of the other. It is always a responsive attitude, active and open. It is always a process – a contentious, solidary process – of incessant dialogue; ultimately, it is always a situation of communication between oneself and the other. The relationship between

⁵ For reference, see footnote 3.

⁶ For reference, see footnote 4.

⁷ BAKHTIN, M. Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel. In: BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, pp.259-422

⁸ Speaking of the Bakhtinian concept of *other*, it would be prudent to point out that the Bakhtinian concept of other has nothing to do with psychoanalysis. Bakhtin has his own special conception of the individual and the social. According to this conception, the development of communication has its starting point in the interindividual communication that is the psychological basis of the formation of the individual psyche. The first social communication in which a subject participates resides, in general, in the family circuit: family members are the first external gazes that subject experiences, the first given evaluations of oneself. For this reason, the other is essential in forming the individual.

subject-object, thus is always permeated by the intersubjective relationship, by the relationship between oneself and the other – permeated with dialogue. This is why we defend that landscape must be understood as a dialogic phenomenon, which is not a mere presence nor a pure representation, but the result of the encounter between a world (semiotized by the word of the other) and a point of view.

It is a fact that we are not the first to identify these interesting attributes in thinking about landscape from the perspective of dialogic theory. Whiston Spirm (1998), for example, affirms that theories of dialogue are ample enough to invite a reformulation of the way we think about human and landscape interaction. Even before Spirm, notably, the contribution of Mireya Folch-Serra (1990), who comes closer to our view for exploring the epistemology of the literary critic and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, had already demonstrated great intimacy with the dialogic theory on arguing that landscapes are objects of meaning that engage multiple geographically and historically voices aimed at them. We must recognize, therefore, that the contours of all landscapes are formed by increasing circles of responses and verbal resonances; growing circles of dialogue (conflicting and solidary). Folch-Serra (1990) defends, in this sense, that landscape is not just morphologically visible in space, but also discursively visible in time through dialogue. Increasing circles, as, in dialogue, there is no possibility of universal comprehension. The heteroglossia – a Bakhtinian term to describe the infinite number of interpretations, context, and voices, even within a single language – is enriching because the participants never come to a complete agreement, which entails the continuation of the dialogue (Folch-Serra, 1990).

We can, then, safely submerge into Bakhtinian dialogue theory through any one of its categories and concepts, and most assuredly achieve our objective. We say this, since our theoretical framework is set up in such a way that we direct ourselves to other elements of the scholar's theoretical components. To enter this study, we have decided to adopt the notion of chronotope (time-space), as it is the category that most openly refers to space and time – there is no other choice that is more appropriate for reflecting on landscapes. Being directly linked to the ways space and time are represented, this concept makes it one of the few Bakhtinian

categories already taken up by some geographers⁹ and scholars of spatiality (Folch-Serra, 1990; Holloway; Kneale, 2000; Crang, 2001; Lawson, 2011; Calcatinge, 2012; Osman et.al., 2019), – facilitating our journey and interlocution.

What is it that Bakhtin names ‘chronotope’? What is the relationship between chronotope and landscape? In short, chronotope is the ontological interlinking of the relationships between space and time as assimilated in speech genres. Notably, this term, as Bakhtin (1981)¹⁰ warned, is used in mathematical sciences, and was introduced and based on Einstein’s theory of relativity. Even though the field of its origin was Physics, it did not matter for the author its specific meaning in the theory of relativity, and easily transferred it to the field of literary studies and aesthetics – almost as a metaphor. What mattered to Bakhtin in this term was the expression of the inseparability of space and time in the representations of the world through speech genres. Bakhtin employs this understanding in the analysis of literary works and conceives the chronotope as a constitutive category capable of expressing the inseparability of time and space. In it, spatial and temporal cues are merged in a meaningful and concrete unity and – time thickens, takes shape and materializes, while space acquires meaning and is measured by time (Bakhtin, 1981).¹¹ Bakhtin refers to this world as a world that creates texts, literature, scenes, etc., but that also contributes to its representation, production, and reproduction. The literary texts represent, thus, the spatial and temporal culture (this is the chronotope) of a society in the era of its creation (Folch-Serra, 1990, p.262) – we must point out that not only literary genres, but all speech genres, primary or secondary,¹² assimilate and represent, in their own way, concrete space and time.

⁹ The chronotope was used in Geography for the first time in the 1990s by Mireya Folch-Serra. She came close to the Bakhtinian notion of the chronotope and, to a dialogic approach, conceived space as a product of the continuous dialogical interactions of many languages, discourses, voices – a specific chronotope based on the current proportion of centripetal forces (monologic) and the opposite centrifugal forces (dialogic) (Folch-Serra, 1990, pp.255-258). The author also points out the possibility of Geography analyzing the composition of the spaces from discursive, textual and literary productions. Folch-Serra’s concepts go beyond the mere ‘graphic visibility’ of the landscape, region, place and visual territory in a spatial context and focusses on ‘discursive visibility’ in time, exceeding, thus, the visual criteria necessary and transforming geographers into interpreters of spatial-temporal conditions (Holloway; Kneale, 2000, pp.82-83).

¹⁰ For reference, see footnote 8.

¹¹ For reference, see footnote 8.

¹² It is of special relevance to recognize an essential distinction between primary speech genres, the primary (simple) and secondary (complex) – that this does not deal with a functional distinction. Secondary speech genres (novels, dramas, all types of scientific research, urban planning projects etc.) are products of more complex, developed and organized cultural experience. In the process of its formation, they incorporate and

It is of interest to highlight here that the concept of chronotope has the potential for studies on aspects of space-time landscapes (see for example: Calcatinge, 2012; Folchserra, 1990; Lindström; Kull; Palang, 2011). Moreover, “the characteristics of the chronotype, described by Bakhtin and his followers, present the semiotic characteristics of the landscape well” (Lindström, *et. al.*, 2014, p.121). Describing a painting of a landscape, Tim Ingold posits that the temporality assumes the visible form in a landscape and writes:

Not far off, nestled in a grove of trees near the top of the hill, is a stone church. [...] They have more in common, perhaps, than meets the eye. Both possess the attributes of what Bakhtin (1981, p.84) calls a ‘chronotope’ – that is, a place charged with temporality, one in which temporality takes on palpable form (Ingold, 2000, p.205).

In fact, the space-time, not only in the physical sense, but also in the semiotic sense, the chronotope, is the nucleus of the landscape itself, if not identical to it. This concept represents the temporalized place made possible by simple exchanges in a bar, for instance, or in exchanges of opinions in the theater or at a concert, or about a painting, a novel, a thesis, or even a project of urban planning – through a speech genre.

Alexandru Calcatinge (2012) provides a detailed analysis under this perspective by mentioning that: “For the study of cultural landscape, the importance of the concept of chronotope must be acknowledged through several approach directions” (Calcatinge, 2012, p.144). Even Mireya Folch-Serra, who revised the application of the chronotope concept in geography, observes, among other things, that “the main lesson to be taken from Bakhtin’s typology is that there is no single, timeless/master chronotope” (Folch- Serra, 1990, p.264).

Although Bakhtin’s original concept of chronotope arose within the structure of his theory of the novel, it is important to observe that the notion is equally applicable to landscapes present in other discursive genres. As landscape is a particular area as perceived by people, it includes an interpretive-semiotic element by definition. The interpreter, who emerges when an area enters a process of representation, is necessarily characterized by a chronotope. On representing an area/territory by means of some speech genre, just “certain isolated aspects of

redevelop primary speech genres, which form under the conditions of immediate speech communication (Bakhtin, 1986). For reference, see footnote 4.

the chronotope, available in given historical conditions, have been worked out, although only certain specific forms of an actual chronotope were reflected in art” (Bakhtin, 1981, p.85)¹³ and in life.

It is evident, thus, that, there has been a direct relationship between landscape, chronotope and speech genres. “It can even be said that it is precisely the chronotope that defines the genre and generic distinctions” (Bakhtin, 1981, p.85)¹⁴ – determined, precisely, by real space and time. However, it must be taken into account that there is no identity between the chronotope and its representation in a speech genre. There is no identity, since, as the author himself warns us: the assimilation of the real and historical (landscape), a chronotope in a speech genre, will always be ideological. It is ideological because it exists in a complex and discontinuous way. In this way, it can be said that each socially organized situation in time and space culturally produces one or more speech genres that, in their turn, make unique ways of seeing, comprehending, and representing reality, which are only accessible to them.

Just as a graph is able to deal with aspects of spatial form inaccessible to artistic painting, and vice versa, the lyric, to choose one example, has access to aspects of reality and life which are either inaccessible or accessible in a lesser degree to the novella or drama. [...] Every significant genre is a complex system of means and methods for the conscious control and finalization of reality (Bakhtin; Medvedev, 1985, p.133).¹⁵

As such, the process of assimilation of time-space in speech genres always comprehends an axiological element. In other words, every process of representation of a landscape is done through a speech genre, that entangles not only the field of space-time existence, but also the semantic and ideological field – the material and the symbolic embodied in the landscape. For Bakhtin speech genres are not only related, but they are the central analytical tools for understanding the different forms of representation of the real; to understand the different meanings of a landscape, its heteroglossia; and to understand dialogic nature of a landscape.

¹³ For reference, see footnote 3.

¹⁴ For reference, see footnote 3.

¹⁵ BAKHTIN, M. M.; MEDVEDEV, P. N. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. Translated by Albert J. Wehrle. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985.

2 Landscape: From the Text to the Speech Genre

As we saw in the previous topic, the direct relationship between landscape and dialogue is undeniable. It is a relationship that is especially evident when we recognize that every landscape is a chronotopic representation that is made possible through a speech genre. However, the relation between speech genres and landscape should not be confused with the popularized approach denominating landscape as text. It is true that there are certain similarities, but a defining gap separates both approaches, as follows: the landscape as text retains structuralist characteristics within its development. The marked structuralist character, as Lindström et al. (2014) affirm, finds its inspiration, above all, in the works of Saussure, Eco, Barthes and Greimas. The landscape, thus, is conceived as communication devices produced by authors to transmit information to the readers (Duncan, 1990). In James Duncan's terms:

The landscape, I would argue, is one of the central elements in a cultural system, for as an ordered assemblage of objects, a text, it acts as a signifying system through which a social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored (Duncan, 1990, p.17).

A significant epistemological gain obtained through the analogy of the text is the possibility of denaturalizing the landscape, revealing its ideological and semiotic aspects. The landscape “may distort that reality or be true to it or may perceive it from a special point of view, and so forth” (Vološinov, 1973, p.10).¹⁶ To read the landscape is, therefore, to identify signs and meanings in one given spatial cut and to deduce codes according to which these meanings had previously been grouped. “Such an approach is shared by many geographers who do not explicitly align themselves with semiotics, but nevertheless speak of landscapes as ‘texts’ that need to be ‘read’ and which act as communicative systems” (Lindström *et al.*, 2014, p.114).

It must be recognized, however, that in the approach to landscape as text, as Mitch Rose (2002) clearly demonstrates, the interpretation of the landscape is not completely dissociated from a structuralist understanding of space and language. As a tradition founded in the reading

¹⁶ VOLOŠINOV, V. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. New York: Seminar Press, 1973.

of the material world through cultural processes, it established the culture as a constitutive force that structures the shaping of landscapes. In this perspective, the central theoretical question is: how is the culture (as the operative mechanism that structures the landscape) understood? In the landscapist tradition of cultural geography introduced by Sauer (2012) in 1925, the culture was conceptualized as a set of traces or characteristics that could be identified in the landscape and combined in specific groups, categorized, and structured. In the mid-1980s, this conception of culture was revised by the new cultural geography. It is during this moment of revitalization that the approach to landscape as text, among others, arises (Duncan, 1990). Mitch Rose (2002, p.457) points out “that while new cultural geography radically re-conceptualized culture and opened the landscape to an important set of questions, it did not move landscape theory beyond a structuralist framework.” On the contrary, it substituted one form of structuralism for another.

The key to this critique is to recognize that the new cultural geography never discarded the structuralist understanding of the culture present in the traditional cultural geography – it humanized it. “A humanist tradition within historical materialism offers the framework within which to maintain and clarify the traditional interests of cultural geography.” (Cosgrove, 1983, p.1) This perspective, as Rose (2002) defends, is better illustrated through the conception of landscape of the new cultural geography, since it is based on a particular understanding of representation. The cultural geographers see the cultural representation not as a naive reflection of the world, but as systematizations of meaning loaded with power. In this sense, in the process of creation of a representation, we enter a peculiar political matrix, where the representational act assumes an affective and rhetorical authority: “representations influence the thought and practices of socio-spatial subjects through the stories they tell about social space.” (Jones; Natter, 1999, p.242) Thus, the representations are seen in the new cultural geography as imposing certain beliefs, characterizing various understandings, and structuring particular ways of seeing the world. As landscapes are part of our day-to-day environments, it has the potential of, unwittingly, teaching us about the way society is and must be organized (Duncan, 1990).

Many of these efforts are concentrated in the conciliation of a post-structuralist interest in representation with a materialist emphasis in the social structures and in the real material

processes – or rather, to bring the lessons of the political economy to the reading of the landscape. Thus, the landscape as text is seen as a result of struggles for power among various groups and classes. Peet (1996), for example, sought to establish what he called materialist post-structuralism as a way to link the texts/representations and the material processes through which subjects recreate their worlds. In a sentence, the “discourses serve as social regulatory mechanisms by guiding the meaningful recreation of cultural landscapes” (Peet, 1996, p.23).

As Moore (2000, p.686), points out, “the search for materialist roots of landscape contestation, however, often fails to extend much beyond Gramscian notions of hegemony and counter-hegemony, or the political manifestations of class struggle.” On using this dichotomy, however, it is necessary to recognize that the cultural geographers try to emphasize that the territorialized social subjects are not the passive recipients of the representation. On the contrary, the cultural geographers continually emphasize that the landscape is an arena of struggle where various agents continually try to impose and/or resist the different representational constructions. However, they also try to show that these struggles have their limits. As More (2000, p.686) suggests: “By controlling the physical symbols by which communities memorialize the past, dominant classes are able to reproduce their control over the ideology under which people are socialized into society.”

In this way, despite the flexibility that is constitutive in the cultural processes, the cultural geographers argue that some form of dominion must always be present so that the culture and/or the cultural landscapes exist. This justifies, according to Rose (2002), the development of concepts as interpretive communities, hegemonic discourses, and dominant ideologies, to explain the presence of the culture and the landscape in the world. Thus, although the struggle is always present in the landscape, the forces of limitation and control are what define what is culture or cultural landscape. This is the dilemma at the heart of the new cultural geography and the approach to landscape as text:

Although struggles in space affect, disrupt and even re-write the hegemonic ideologies that produce the landscape, they do not in themselves define the landscape. [...] Thus, while the landscape is described in terms of struggle it is defined in terms of structure (Rose, 2002, p.459).

It must be recognized that the semiotic debate on landscape slowly accompanied the sphere of dialogue that formed the notion of text. However, as Lindström et al. (2014) also assure, it did not manage to disassociate itself from a structural interpretation.

The notion of text itself has undergone several changes in the scientific history of the second half of the twentieth century, allowing for a larger plurality of voices in the text and giving more power to the interpreter and less power to the producer of the text. Nevertheless, the methodological approach remains similar: to identify individual signs, codes, and messages among apparently neutral physical forms. In that, the emphasis is almost always on the side of the interpreter rather than the sender. Despite developments, the text-metaphor remains relatively rigid and hierarchic (Lindström *et al.*, 2014, p.115).

It is true that the landscape as text permitted the incursion of geography in realms beyond the habitual explanations and measures that, in the past, impeded the formation of interpretation as political praxis. On the other hand, this position neglects discourse and discourse practices through dialogue. Reading the world as text, as a script, is different from hearing a discourse manifesto (Folch-Serra, 1990). In addition, this current is not free of critics who argue that the emphasis on the semiotic qualities and on the representations tend to make the substantive aspects of the landscape – the materiality – disappear (Delgado, 2005). Those critics concentrate their concerns on the studies that do not value representations as a constitutive part of reality; studies that “do not give a proper place to the practices and ignore the material aspects and the biological implications of the cultural facts” (Claval, 1999, p.74).¹⁷

We hold that: everything that is ideological, including the landscape, possesses meaning and relies on something situated outside of itself, outside of the individual, outside of the representation of phenomena, outside of the conscious. That being true, we must recognize that “every phenomenon functioning as an ideological sign has some kind of material embodiment, whether sound, physical mass, color, movements of the body, or the like” (Vološinov, 1973, p.11).¹⁸ Therefore, due to its objective character, it is prone to be studied. It is possible to consider that landscapes, besides being concrete phenomena of the external

¹⁷ In the original, Spanish: “no dan un lugar suficiente a las prácticas y ignoran los aspectos materiales y las implicaciones biológicas de los hechos de la cultura.”

¹⁸ For reference, see footnote 17.

world, their effects (all the actions, reactions and new representations that take place dialogically in the surrounding social environment) also appear in this external experience. The landscape is not just dialogue, but a dialogue which is materially present.

For Bakhtin and the Circle there is a direct relationship between language and power – a direct relationship between class struggle and the dialectics of the sign. By recognizing that all forms of discursive interaction are closely related to the conditions of a given field or concrete social situation and that those forms react with extreme sensibility to all the changes in the social environment, Vološinov (1973, p.19)¹⁹ states that “countless ideological threads running through all areas of social intercourse register effect in the word. It stands to reason, then, that the word is the most sensitive index of social changes” (Vološinov, 1973, p.19).²⁰ The struggles and the social changes, thus, are materialized in speech genres.

The Bakhtin and the Circle recognizes, for example,

enormous significance belongs to the *hierarchical factor* in the processes of verbal interchange and what a powerful influence is exerted on forms of utterance by the hierarchical organization of communication. Language etiquette, speech tact, and other forms of adjusting an utterance to the hierarchical organization of society have tremendous importance in the process of devising the basic behavioral genres (Vološinov, 1973, p.21, emphasis of the original).²¹

It is in this sense that they state that the social hierarchies and the relations of power are historically, geographically and culturally inscribed in speech genres – this justifies, for example, the existence of genres more or less dialogic.

If the genres are sensitive to the social environment and its changes, it can be said that “each period and each social group has had and has its own repertoire of speech forms for ideological communication” (Vološinov, 1973, p.20).²² The speech genres are cultural and do not permit universalization; they do not permit a structuralist treatment, monologizing. The new cultural geography recognizes the ideological character of language and representations, but is unfamiliar with the notion of speech genres, neglecting the specificity of the ideological

¹⁹ For reference, see footnote 17.

²⁰ For reference, see footnote 17.

²¹ For reference, see footnote 17.

²² For reference, see footnote 17.

material, following structuralist interpretations. Consequently, it simplifies the ideological phenomenon, as Rose (2002) has clearly demonstrated.

What would the speech genre for Bakhtin precisely be? In his words:

Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity. These utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure. All three of these aspects – thematic content, style, and compositional structure—are inseparably linked to the *whole* of the utterance and are equally determined by the specific nature of the particular sphere of communication. Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances. These we may call *speech genres* (Bakhtin, 1986, p.60; emphasis in the original).²³

Before any comments and clarifications, it must be taken into account that Bakhtin the Circle refuse to limit the understanding of genre to its formal and morphological aspects; refuse to understand speech genres by a non-sociological poetics neglecting the live interaction in the concrete unity of social and historical life. The first consideration to make is that speech genres are “forms of thought, constituting a specific way to visualize and represent a given reality, without reducing it to a collection of devices nor a way of combining linguistic elements” (Brait; Pistori, 2012, pp.397-398).²⁴

Or rather, speech genres cannot be conceived outside of the space-time dimension, as all forms of representation that are contained in them are also oriented by space and time; oriented by historicity of the concrete situation in which they originate; oriented by the historicity and geographics of a particular field of language use. Genres, thus, retain modes of seeing and assimilating specific aspects of reality, and because of this, they acquire a cultural dimension, and go on to express the Great Time, as creative memory. In this sense, to understand any speech genre, the materiality that comprises it must be considered, which points to the outside, to the life that produces it and is reflected and refracted in it; therefore, the

²³ For reference, see footnote 4.

²⁴ In the original Portuguese: “formas de pensar, constituindo um modo específico de visualizar e representar uma dada realidade, não se reduzindo a uma coleção de dispositivos nem a um modo de combinar elementos linguísticos.”

tradition in which the genre belongs must also be considered. The generic tradition must be identified and understood, which implies synchronic and diachronic studies (Brait; Pistori, 2012). As we have seen it must be understood that every process of representation of a landscape in a speech genre is not only in the field of space-time, semantic and ideological existence, it necessarily goes through the cultural, social, and dialogic field as well.

Thus, we understand, as Brait and Pistori (2012) propose, that we always communicate by way of genres within a given field of human activity – of life in society; that speech genres are not limited to literary productions but are also understood as day-to-day language in its broad variety. This variety is a result of the multiplicity of individual and collective lived experience in a society, in a space, in a time and in a culture. For this reason, it is not limited to texts or structures as commonly understood, but it implies the dialogism and the means of knowing and confronting life in society. In the words of Bakhtin (1986, p.79), “if speech genres did not exist and we had not mastered them, if we had to originate them during the speech process and construct each utterance at will for the first time, speech communication would be almost impossible.”²⁵ It is evident, then, that the way this theoretician conceives speech genres guides us to the idea that genres govern internal and external speech.

We must, therefore, recognize and admit that it is always through a speech genre that we convert elements of reality into representations, which, without stopping being part of material reality, go on to reflect and refract another dimension of reality, the dimension of signs, phenomena, representations. It is in this sense that Daniels and Cosgrove (1998, p.1) affirm that:

A landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings. This is not to say that landscapes are immaterial. They may be represented in a variety of materials and on many surfaces - in paint on canvas, in writing on paper, in earth, stone, water and vegetation on the ground. A landscape park is more palpable but no more real, nor less imaginary, than a landscape painting or poem. [...] To understand a built landscape, say an eighteen-century English park, it is usually necessary to understand written and verbal representations of it, not as ‘illustrations’, images standing outside it, but as constituent images of its meaning or meanings.

²⁵ For reference, see footnote 4.

Being thus, it must be taken into account that the representation, within a Marxist dialectical materialist semiotics is not only a phenomenological manifestation of reality, but also a material fragment of this reality – possessing empirical manifestations and always using relatively stable types of utterances – using speech genres.

We must admit, therefore, that every landscape refers to a concrete communicative situation that does not recognize a monologic conception, since every speech genre is dialogic; since every verbal emission is directed to someone, it does not matter if the interlocutor is real, imaginary, supposed (in written communication), or the other who is always present in the psychic structure of humans (in the case of internal monologues). It is possible to recognize the dialogic nature of landscape. The addressee (the other) participates in a more or less direct way in the process of enunciation. Consequently, this other takes part in the configuration of the resulting utterance, which would be a verbal expression with a global sense, generated within a dialogic circuit constituted by, at least, two interlocutors. For this reason, the meaning of the utterance, or any other cultural product – including landscape –, is determined both by the intention of the locutor and by the reaction of the prefigured addressee. The meaning is not previously given, ready, and finished, but the result of an open, historical and material dialogue (Bubnova, 1984),

recognizing the importance of the listener in the process of uttering and, consequently, in its result, that is to say, the utterance: on the other hand, the focus itself invites always taking the intentionality of the speech into consideration, and to see in every verbal emission, independent of its extension, a type of response to a prior utterance, given that – and here we must highlight another very important constituting aspect of utterance in its Bakhtinian version – every utterance is just a link in the chain of speech communication, which never starts from zero (Bubnova, 1984, pp.35-36).²⁶

Every utterance/cultural product, including landscape, is historical and dialogical, and is part of a chain of speech communication. The elaboration of a cultural product – urban

²⁶ In the original Spanish: “reconocer la importancia del destinatario en el proceso de la enunciación y, por consiguiente, en su resultado, es decir el enunciado: por otro lado, el enfoque mismo invita a tener siempre en cuenta la intencionalidad del discurso y a ver en toda emisión verbal, independientemente de su extensión, una especie de respuesta a un enunciado anterior, puesto que – y aquí hay que poner de relieve otro importantísimo aspecto constitutivo del enunciado en su versión bajtiniana – todo enunciado no es sino un eslabón en la cadena de la comunicación discursiva, la cual nunca parte de cero.”

planning projects, public policies, books, theses, paintings, songs, etc. – include a broad gamut of attitudes that are responses by a subject to prior external and one’s own utterances. Besides that, it also anticipates itself to possible interlocutor’s responses, which can be immediate, virtual, imaginary, in the future, personal, collective, etc. (Bubnova, 1984). It is evident, therefore, that, behind the Bakhtinian notion of utterance/cultural product, there is an ideological and analytic stance and related to the result of the process of speaking – producing an utterance. And as for interlocutors, their possibility of response, responsiveness, is an instance that normally is not taken into consideration in the analysis of landscapes, because that may seem at first sight so subjective that it would be impossible to observe. The communicative situation becomes perceivable in the utterance as long as it is not seen as an isolated instance of emission, but as an intermediate link in the chain of speech (Bubnova, 1984).

As we defend in this article, Bubnova (1984, p.39)²⁷ likewise considers that “the concept of speech genres permits seeing why the utterance is so uniquely a link in the chain of speech.” That permits seeing that every landscape is a link in the chain of speech and a bridge between oneself and the other. The concept of speech genres, implying, as we have seen, a variety of social roles that the subject of speech can adopt, seems to be the most adequate tool to analyze all types of discourses and landscapes. On the one hand, the utterance is unrepeatable due to its unique condition in the process of its production, which cannot be reproduced with total precision; on the other hand, each utterance/cultural product/landscape belongs to a certain speech genre or is constituted following certain conventions and rules that the language elaborates for concrete purposes and practices of verbal expression.

To close this topic there are three fundamental, methodological demands on studying landscape, as follows: landscapes cannot be isolated from the material reality of the speech genres; landscapes cannot be isolated from the concrete forms of social communication (the landscape is a part of organized social communication and does not exist, as such, outside of it, as it would be taken as a simple physical object); communication and its forms, that is, material, historical and geographic nature, cannot be isolated.

²⁷ In the original Spanish: “El concepto de géneros discursivos permite ver por qué el enunciado es tan sólo un eslabón en la cadena discursiva.”

3 Landscape: From Reductionist Materialism to Dialogic

It must be stated that the treatment of landscape from the Marxist materialist semiotic perspective must not, under any hypothesis, be confused with reductionist materialist approaches. For a reductionist materialism understands landscape as a given independent object of the subjective consciousness and psyche. This is why landscapes are treated in their immanent and internal characteristics – according to their morphology. Reductionist approaches greatly emerge as counter currents to the subjective and psychological interpretation of landscapes, as they are understood as an expression of the inner world, the soul. That being considered, we must say that it might be an acceptable point of view but not entirely sufficient (Bakhtin; Medvedev, 1985).²⁸

Under the guise of a historical and dialect materialist approach, Milton Santos – with all of the reservations to his theoretical project, whose central category was not landscape, but space – is an example of reductionist materialist treatment of the landscape. For him, the landscape, “is a set of natural and artificial elements that physically characterize an area. [...] The landscape is given as a set of real-concrete objects” (Santos, 2006, pp.66-67).²⁹

During the cold war, Pentagon laboratories came to contemplate the production of something ingenious, the neutron bomb, capable of annihilating human life in a given area, but preserving all of the constructions. In the end, President Kennedy renounced taking this project to its conclusion. If not, what on the day before would still be a space, after the feared explosion would only be a landscape. There is no better image to show the difference between these two concepts (Santos, 2006, pp.68-67).³⁰

We can also remember the search for objectivity and scientific rigor that marked the notion of landscape developed by Carl Ortwin Sauer (2012). The landscape, in its theoretical

²⁸ For reference, see footnote 16.

²⁹ In Portuguese: “é o conjunto de elementos naturais e artificiais que fisicamente caracterizam uma área. [...] A paisagem se dá como um conjunto de objetos reais-concretos.”

³⁰ In Portuguese: “Durante a guerra fria, os laboratórios do Pentágono chegaram a cogitar da produção de um engenho, a bomba de nêutrons, capaz de aniquilar a vida humana em uma dada área, mas preservando todas as construções. O Presidente Kennedy afinal renunciou a levar a cabo esse projeto. Senão, o que na véspera seria ainda o espaço, após a temida explosão seria apenas paisagem. Não temos melhor imagem para mostrar a diferença entre esses dois conceitos.”

project, is a set of natural and cultural forms associated with an area. As Corrêa clarifies (2014, p.41):

Materiality and extension are essential attributes of Sauerian landscape, which does not permit the use of the term as a metaphor, such as economic or political landscape. The forms that constitute landscape are integrated in themselves, presenting functions that create a structure. Landscape constitutes, thus, in an organic unit or almost organic. It deals with morphology in which form, function and structure are central elements.³¹

It is evident that the reductionist materialism, on separating landscape from subjective consciousness and the psyche, also separates the ideological environment in general, as well as the objective of social communication. Like the idealists and psychologists, the materialist interpretation of the landscape had projected everything that is ideologically significant to the individual and subjective consciousness. The idea, the evaluation, the vision of the world, the humor etc., all this was considered as the content of the subjective consciousness, the inner world, and the soul. On rejecting the subjective consciousness, the materialists neglect, in the same epistemological turn, all those ideological contents that were erroneously attributed them. As a result, landscape became an empty ideology. “Objectivity was purchased at the price of meaning” (Bakhtin; Medvedev, 1985, p.146).³²

We propose to take landscape as dialogic historical and dialectic materialism according to the perspective of Bakhtin and the Circle, as this perspective does not ignore the individual’s consciousness nor treats it in a phantasmagoric way. On the contrary, this perspective argues in favor of the contents of the consciousness as presented materially and objectively like the morphology of the landscape. In this sense, we argue that the individual consciousness must be taken in its objective manifestations. As Bakhtin and Medvedev understand it:

The individual consciousness is only suitable for appraisal and study to the extent that it is objectively, materially expressed in some definite aspect of the

³¹ In Portuguese: Materialidade e extensão são atributos essenciais da paisagem Saueriana, não se admitindo o uso do termo como metáfora, como paisagem política ou econômica. As formas que constituem a paisagem estão integradas entre si, apresentando funções que criam uma estrutura. A paisagem constitui, assim, em uma unidade orgânica ou quase orgânica. Trata-se de morfologia na qual forma, função e estrutura são elementos centrais [...] (CORRÊA, 2014, p.41).

³² For reference, see footnote 16.

work. In this regard objectivism must be carried through to the end (Bakhtin; Medvedev, 1985, p.145).³³

The objectivity that the materialists attribute to the morphology of the landscape can be extended, for the same reason, to all the ideological meanings without exception, as brief as their external manifestation may be. That is because the primitive expression of an evaluation (emotion) in an utterance or even in a gesture is a fact as external to consciousness as the morphology of the landscape, even though its meaning and its influence in the totality of the ideological environment may be little. This has to do with opposing an ideological formation, the landscape, to the other ideological formations: ethical, cognitive and religious. That is, it has to do with opposing various moments of the material environment ideologically objectified and not opposing landscape to the subjective psyche (Bakhtin; Medvedev, 1985).³⁴

Thus, it is necessary to avoid any form of materialist reductionist treatment of landscape studies. This perspective turns landscape into something that occupies an external position not in relation to the subjective psyche, but in relation to the communication and the interaction of people who communicate. That is in the communicative process that permits landscapes to be continually constructed and continue to thrive in the process of its historical alternance. Each element of the landscape must be understood as a thread connecting subjects. The landscape in its totality, is a net comprised of these threads that create a complex and differentiated social interaction among the people who are a part of it.

Conclusion

Considering the reflections developed here, it must be admitted that:

i) every landscape is a testimony that dialog is an ontological condition of human existence; it is the testimony of the presence of the other, externally constituted, and that is never reduced to or mixed within itself. Interpreting a landscape is to semiotically encounter an alterity. In the interpretation of a landscape, meaning that fills and outlines the subject are put in contact with the universe of meanings and values of the interpreter, as it can only be this way,

³³ For reference, see footnote 16, p.145.

³⁴ For reference, see footnote 11.

only through the eyes of the interpreter's culture that "it is revealed fully and deeply." (Bezerra, 2017, p.96)³⁵ Interpreting a territory and its landscapes means completing it, dressing it up with new meanings, and, in this way, perpetuating it in time as an aesthetic/ideological object. In the interpretation, the landscape is completed by the consciousness of the interpreter where a diversity of meanings is unfolded. In this way, it can be said that the interpretation completes the landscape: it is active and creative. It is always responsive. The landscape, in its turn, must be understood as a co-creation of the interpreters, as a result of a creative and shared interpretation. The interpretation completes the text, completes the landscape, and gives continuity to the creation, or rather, makes the interpreter a sharing creator who Bakhtin names as co-creator, and who "multiplies the artistic wealth of humanity;" (Bakhtin, 2017, p.142).³⁶

ii) landscape is a phenomenon of the external world and is always made possible by some speech genre, or rather, by some ideological-social material, geographically and historically developed, available and objective – the word, materially present as words spoken, written, printed, whispered in the ear and thought in the inner speech, goes together and comments on all ideological phenomena; goes together and comments on all acts of consciousness; goes together and comments on every landscape;

iii) the landscape is a materially present dialogue, and its semiotic/symbolic aspects are material;

iv) the new cultural geography can find in the texts belonging to Bakhtin and the Circle theoretical support that points to new possibilities for (re)working the understanding of the relationship between landscape-consciousness and landscape-language. For this reason, we believe that one must contemplate the dialogic approach to language as a possible factor to motivate a renewed debate on landscape, thus improving the understanding of its semiotic and dialogic aspects, which makes it possible for the understanding of the ideological and political processes inherent to the landscape.

v) Finally, there is, in the productions of the Bakhtin and the Circle, extremely geographic elements. A geographic aspect that remains especially evident is the notion of the

³⁵ In Portuguese: "se revela com plenitude e profundidade."

³⁶ BAKHTIN, M. From Notes Made in 1970. In: *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee and Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986, pp.132-158.

chronotope. This notion, as we have seen, means that every process of representation necessarily goes through the categories of time-space. In this sense, cultural studies and landscape semiotics, in its turn, can also offer interesting support for a possible enhancement of the spatial and visual element in dialogic studies of language – contributing to the enhancement of the notion of the verbo-visual by Brait (2013), for instance.

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Statement of Authorship and Responsibility for Published Content

We declare that the authors had access to the research *corpus*, participated actively in the discussion of the results, and conducted the review and approval process of the paper's final version.

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REVIEWS

Review I

It is a text of a good theoretical-philosophical level. It addresses a specific issue: the landscape and its possibility of semiotic interpretation by Marxism. For this, it uses Bakhtin and the Circle. The reflection tries to deepen the theme without vulgar simplifications. The title is adequate, but it leaves the impression of incompleteness; the wording is developed with clarity, although it needs a rigorous revision; authorship demonstrates knowledge and controls arguments well. It is objectively clear that the landscape takes place through a relationship of interaction between the natural environment and the subject who, in turn, is challenged by ideological elements. I approve the publication of the article but reinforce the need for a spelling and grammar review. ACCEPTED

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Review II

The article “Recognizing the Dialogical Nature of the Landscape: for a Marxist Semiotics” has an interesting transdisciplinary character, showing itself as an original reflection and with the potential to contribute to the field of knowledge about discourses at the interface between Geography and language studies in investigations over the landscape. Furthermore, the text was written in a clear, correct, and appropriate way for a scientific work. It is an interesting dialogic approach to the landscape of Geography from a historical materialist point of view.

From the beginning, the text manages to handle the fundamental requirements of this discursive genre. The title of the article is appropriate, since it presents precisely what the text is about, allowing an immediate understanding of what is to come throughout the analysis.

In turn, the abstract of the article makes clear the purpose of the text and satisfactorily establishes the work methodology developed to fulfill the proposed analysis. As a suggestion, I would propose the possibility of inserting the expression “Historical Materialism” throughout the text of the abstract, since it appears in the keywords, but is not articulated throughout the abstract; or, if it is more convenient, exclude the expression from the keywords.

Throughout the text, regarding the stated objectives and the analysis methodology used to achieve these objectives, the article manages to account for what it proposes, properly articulating the bibliographic references of Geography and language studies, demonstrating updated knowledge of the discussed subjects.

Although the article does not carry out an analysis itself based on one (or more) specific statement(s), on a concrete materiality, on a landscape itself, the fact that the text raises the debate about the relationship between landscape and discourse in the perspective in question can largely contribute to future studies by this or other authors on specific materialities (in this case landscapes).

We take the opportunity to request that the author carry out a verification in relation to the works cited throughout the text and those indicated in the references, since some works that are cited in the text with a certain date appear with different dates in the works indicated in the references. In addition, some works indicated in the references are not addressed throughout the text. Taking into consideration the comments above, WE RECOMMEND the publication of the article. ACCEPTED

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