

The Sacred Whirlwind. The Poetic-Pentecostal Imagination of Carlos Nejar in *Riopampa: o moinho das tribulações* [Riopampa: The Mill of Tribulations] / *O redemoinho sagrado. A imaginação poético-pentecostal de Carlos Nejar em Riopampa: o moinho das tribulações*

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ABSTRACT

Religious discourse is multiple, challenging and inviting, especially when poetry and theological imagination find themselves expanding their boundaries. Carlos Nejar, poet member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, in his novel *Riopampa: o moinho das tribulações* provides us with a wide variety of images, symbols and experiences that can be attributed, among other characteristics, to his involvement with the Sacred from of Pentecostality, since Nejar is a Pentecostal pastor. In this article, we will reflect on the Sacred whirlpool, among other metaphors used by Nejar, to try to answer the question: why can Nejar's imagination in the novel *Riopampa: o moinho das tribulações*, within the spectrum of religious discourse, be considered Pentecostal? To this end, we will use the theoretical contribution of Discourse Analysis, under the auspices of Bakhtin and his dialogism, in addition to concise documentary research using the aforementioned Nejarian novel as a basis.

KEYWORDS: Carlos Nejar; Riopampa; Religious discourse; Pentecostality; Bakhtin

RESUMO

O discurso religioso é múltiplo, desafiador e convidativo, especialmente quando poesia e imaginação teológica se encontram, expandindo suas fronteiras. Carlos Nejar, poeta e membro da Academia Brasileira de Letras, em seu romance Riopampa: o moinho das tribulações, fornece-nos ampla variedade de imagens, símbolos e experiências que podem ser atribuídas, dentre outras características, ao seu envolvimento com o Sagrado a partir da pentecostalidade, uma vez que Nejar é pastor pentecostal. No presente artigo, vamos refletir sobre o redemoinho Sagrado, dentre outras metáforas utilizadas por Nejar, para tentar responder à pergunta: por que a imaginação nejariana no romance Riopampa: o moinho das tribulações, dentro do espectro do discurso religioso, pode ser considerada pentecostal? Para esse fim, utilizaremos o aporte teórico da Análise do Discurso, sob os auspícios de Bakhtin e seu dialogismo, além de uma concisa pesquisa documental tendo o referido romance nejariano como base.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Carlos Nejar; Riopampa; Discurso religioso; Pentecostalidade; Bakhtin

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Introduction

Carlos Nejar was born in Porto Alegre in 1939. He is the fifth occupant of Chair no. 4 of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, elected on November 24, 1988. A vast writer – poetry, novel, short story, fiction, novel, children’s literature –, his work is respected, recognized and widely awarded. The Brazilian Academy of Letters nominated Nejar three times for the Swedish Academy’s Nobel Prize for Literature. His first book of poetry was *Sélesis* (1960).¹ Among the vastness of his work, we can highlight *Livro de Silbion* [The Book of Sibilion] (1999), *Os viventes* [The Living Ones] (1999), *A engenhosa Letícia do Pontal* [The Ingenious Letícia from Pontal] (2003), *Carta aos loucos* [Letter to the Fools] (1998), and *Riopampa: o moinho das tribulações* [*Riopampa: The Mill of Tribulations*] (2006). The latter will be the main object of our study.

In *Riopampa: o moinho das tribulações*, Nejar invents, reinvents and subverts languages, models, and forms. The text on the back cover of the 2006 edition, by Bertrand Brasil, describes Nejar’s work very well:

Rabelais and river; Machiavelli and horses; Montale and birds. Literature, thought, nature, and spirituality meet and fail to meet in *Riopampa – o moinho das tribulações*. In this work, Carlos Nejar subverts and reinvents everything: language, style, formal disciplines, etymologies. Margins are no limits to the narrative. Not even the words themselves. As long as they are in the middle of the whirlwind of thought – the same thing that gives shape to the text. Everyone can recreate themselves, reposition themselves, in the fire of imagination. Reader, don’t expect to read a conventional book. After all, who can impose rules on the wind? (Nejar, 2006).²

In addition to the characteristics described above, the Nejarian text has another interesting ingredient: Nejar is a Pentecostal pastor (*Igreja Cristã Maranata* [Maranata

¹ No equivalence in English.

² In Portuguese: Rabelais e rio; Maquiavel e cavalos; Montale e pássaros. Literatura, pensamento, natureza e espiritualidade se encontram e desencontram em *Riopampa – o moinho das tribulações*. Nesta obra, Carlos Nejar subverte e reinventa tudo: linguagem, estilo, disciplinas formais, etimologias. As margens não são limites para a narrativa. Sequer as próprias palavras. Desde que estejam no meio do redemoinho do pensamento – o mesmo que dá forma ao texto. Todos podem se recriar, se reposicionar, no fogo da imaginação. Não espere o leitor um livro convencional. Afinal, quem pode impor regras ao vento? (Nejar, 2006).

Christian Church]) and his speech is permeated by the presence of the Sacred in constant dialogue with the Bible. He usually identifies himself as “Servant of the Word” (2003, p. 307).³ In an article about Carlos Nejar’s collected poetry, Alfredo Bosi made a reminder: “We may not forget that Carlos Nejar’s word is the word of a believer” (2009, p. 3).⁴ We can add that he is a Pentecostal believer and, according to Kenner Terra: “it would be very fair to Nejar himself, whose Pentecostality and charismatic personality are admitted by him and treated based on the inseparable relation between aesthetics and ecstasy, *poiesis and charisma*” (2020, p. 40).⁵

In this article we intend to reflect on the following question: Why can the Nejarian imagination in the novel *Riopampa: o moinho das tribulações* be considered Pentecostal, within the spectrum of religious discourse? To answer this question, we will carry out documentary research on Nejar, essentially in the novel under study, based on the perceptions of dialogism in Bakhtin. Our theoretical framework is the discourse analysis, and we start based on the hypothesis that the use of Nejarian images, symbols, and poetic languages is permeated by his Pentecostal experience, present as inspiration.

The article is structured in three sections: in the first, we intend to reflect on Carlos Nejar’s poetic-theological imagination, observing his treatment of the Bible, making it his *locus poeticus*, which leads him to make, in turn, poetry his *locus theologicus*. The Nejarian novel under study can be considered a sample of Nejar’s poetic-theological act. In the second section, we will take a look at the metaphors of Nejarian Pentecostality,⁶ analyzing its symbols and languages, with the Bakhtinian concept of dialogicity. In the

³ In Portuguese: “Servo da palavra.”

⁴ In Portuguese: “Não se pode esquecer que a palavra de Carlos Nejar é a palavra de um crente.”

⁵ In Portuguese: “(...) seria justíssimo ao próprio Nejar, cujas pentecostalidade e carismatismo são por ele admitidos e tratados a partir da relação indissociável entre estética e êxtase, *poiésis e carisma*.”

⁶ Davi Mesquiati de Oliveira (2011, p. 91) presents the concept of Pentecostality based on the perceptions of the Peruvian theologian Bernardo Campos: “(...) the principle and typical religious practice informed by the (Christian) event of Pentecost. This ‘central intuition’ causes the community thus informed to elevate the category of ordering and structuring principle (*arque*), the primordial experience of Acts 2 and similar, and to legitimize and identify its practices as an extension of that. Hence the practice (Pentecostality) and the ordering and structuring principle (Pentecostality) form two differentiable, but mutually complementary poles [In Portuguese: o princípio e a prática religiosa tipo informada pelo acontecimento (cristão) do Pentecostes. Esta ‘intuição central’ faz que a comunidade assim informada eleve a categoria de princípio (*arque*) ordenador e estruturante, a experiência primordial de Atos 2 e similares, e legitime e identifique suas práticas como prolongação daquela. Daqui a prática (pentecostalityos) e princípio ordenador e estruturante (a pentecostalidade) formam dois pólos diferenciáveis, mas mutuamente complementares].”

third section, we will reflect on the Sacred whirlwind and the interdiscursive dialogue from Job to Nejar.

Nejarian language, polysemic and dialogical, provokes multiple imaginaries and breaks artistic boundaries, especially when our exotopic look allows the expansion of the horizons of the word. In the afterword he wrote about the novel under study, Marco Lucchesi gives us a sample of this amplified perception: “I leave the pages of *Riopampa* – my eyes are clear and my soul is light – as if a Mozart concerto were finishing. Let’s say the *Concerto for flute, harp and orchestra in C major*” (2006, p. 211).⁷ The Nejarian whirlwind is like this: it causes sounds and noises, subverts linearities and proposes the dialogic new.

1 The Poetic-Theological Imagination of Carlos Nejar

“The grace of the world is the inventable” (Nejar, 2006, p. 93).⁸ This is how Nejar signals the graceful inventiveness of his imagination in the characters’ conversations. *Riopampa* is a novel that challenges, as its swirling structure, in a subversive architecture, evokes plurilingualism, pluristylism and Bakhtinian plurivocality (Campos, 2022, p. 137). The voices, the relations of time and space, disconcert and provoke imaginative delirium, a chronotopy in motion. Nejar travels from Job to Rabelais, from Cioran to Goethe, from Machado de Assis to João da Cruz (2006, pp. 114-115). The image-in-action becomes an exercise of the word in movement, carried by the wind – a profound symbolic instance that reaches from the natural effect to the theological imagery of the Holy Spirit: “The wind talks with those who know how to listen to it” (Nejar, 2006, p 9),⁹ in an effect of suggested textual memory of the Gospel: “The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).¹⁰

⁷ In Portuguese: “Saio das páginas de *Riopampa* – os olhos claros e a alma leve – tal como se terminasse um concerto de Mozart. Digamos o *Concerto para flauta, harpa e orquestra em dó maior*.”

⁸ In Portuguese: “A graça do mundo é o inventável.”

⁹ In Portuguese: “O vento conversa com quem o sabe escutar.”

¹⁰ All Bible citations are from the *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition* (NRSVUE).

In 2020, in the celebrations of Nejar's 60 years of poetry, one of the books he published was *O evangelho segundo o vento* [The Gospel According to the Wind], Life Editora), whose epigraph is precisely the text of the Gospel of John 3:8, cited above. In its dialogicity, the Nejarian poetic-theological imagination does not do without images loaded with symbolism and densities of the Sacred, however, without imprisoning itself. Nejar's religious discourse is not necessarily a discourse of institutionalized religion, a dogmatic or denominational defense; it raises as a text of culture. As Paulo Nogueira puts it: "The religious is not restricted to the clerical, priestly, and theological. There are discourses about the sacred and religious experience in different and unusual places in society. This is especially the case of the languages of art" (2012, p. 15).¹¹ In an article about Nejar, Kenner Terra states: "Even admitting Christian and Pentecostal religious affiliation and his clear spiritual adherence to mystical-charismatic piety, the 'servant of the word' is not simply considered a poet of religious issues, but of the human condition" (2020, p. 47).¹²

In *Riopampa*, the imagination follows its trail gaining contours throughout the text. These are imaginative scores that can serve as a guide through the whirlwind. In the intentional absence of formal divisions of chapters, titles and subtitles, imagination appears sometimes accompanied by wind or time, sometimes by the awakening from sleep or hunger – both as needs of the body and the soul: "And time can only be invented for those who love each other – I realized later. When my father's time passed for me. Because I loved my father" (Nejar, 2006, p. 15).¹³ Throughout the text, Nejar's language acquires a biblical tone, in a dialogue with characters and passages from the sacred text, especially in the symbolic form that Nejar uses in *Riopampa* and others of his books to refer to the Bible: "*O Livro do Caminho*" [The Book of the Path], 2006, pp. 17, 107, 115, 119, 176). Discussing Nejar's poetry, Vera Lúcia de Oliveira says that "in him, there is

¹¹ In Portuguese: "O religioso não se restringe ao clerical, sacerdotal e ao teológico. Há discursos sobre o sagrado e sobre a experiência religiosa em diferentes e inusitados lugares da sociedade. Este é o caso, em especial, das linguagens da arte."

¹² In Portuguese: "Mesmo admitindo filiação religiosa cristã e pentecostal e sua clara adesão espiritual à piedade místico-carismática, o 'servo da palavra' não é simplesmente considerado poeta das questões religiosas, mas da condição humana."

¹³ In Portuguese: "E o tempo só pode ser inventado pelos que se amam – percebi mais tarde. Quando o tempo de meu pai passou para mim. Porque amava meu pai."

also a deep and uninterrupted dialogue with the transcendent, an imperative quest for God” (2009, p. 36).¹⁴ The Nejarian imagination does not fear the whirlwind. In the novel, the narrator reveals the reason for this fearless march: “Because the delirium is how God writes. I get the sense I am receiving walking. It is by walking that I have a destiny” (2006, p. 109).¹⁵

The images from the Bible that Nejar uses in *Riopampa* can be perceived as imagetic-symbolic dialogues that evoke the voices and texts of the past with a look permeated by the Sacred.¹⁶ Symbols, for example, are discussed in the text itself: in a provocative conversation, the narrator asks Tarsus: “To explain a symbol, do you use another symbol?,” and Tarsus responds: “All things are symbols when we are using words” (2006, pp. 75-76).¹⁷ As Marco Lucchesi wrote: “Without this translecture it is impossible to follow the currents of *Riopampa*, divine its birdlike language, contemplate its hidden spaces. In *Riopampa* grows the abyss of the Word” (2006, p. 214).¹⁸ The Nejarian text fits well with the notion of discourse in Bakhtinian theory which, according to Adail Sobral: “[...] is an architectural unit of production of meaning that is part of the symbolic practices of concrete subjects and articulated dialogically to their conditions of production; this involves its constitutive link with other discourses” (2022, p. 176).¹⁹

The theological-poetic imagination in *Riopampa* weaves its dialogicity with multiple passages from the *Livro do Caminho* [Book of the Way], as Nejar configures the Bible in the novel under study. The symbolic image of the wind/Spirit, in one example, is everywhere, accompanied by dialogues and provocations that can be conceptualized

¹⁴ In Portuguese: “há nele também um diálogo profundo e ininterrupto com o transcendente, uma imperiosa busca de Deus.”

¹⁵ In Portuguese: “Porque o delírio é como Deus escreve. Pego o sentido que vou recebendo no andar. É andando que tenho destino.”

¹⁶ In a telephone conversation we had the pleasure of meeting Nejar. He revealed his deep delight in writing *Riopampa*, for, in his words: “*Riopampa* is the river of the Spirit that is born in God [In Portuguese: *Riopampa* é o rio do Espírito que nasce em Deus]”. Nejar, in the telephone conversation, assured the important place that *Riopampa* has in his vast work, as one of the most important texts he wrote. We talked by phone on September 8, 2023, at 10:05 am.

¹⁷ In Portuguese: “Para explicar um símbolo emprega outro símbolo?”; “Todas as coisas são símbolos ao usarmos as palavras.”

¹⁸ In Portuguese: “Sem essa transleitura, é impossível seguir as correntezas de *Riopampa*, adivinhar sua língua passarineira, contemplar seus desvãos. Medra em *Riopampa* o abismo da Palavra.”

¹⁹ In Portuguese: “(...) é uma unidade arquitetônica de produção de sentido que é parte das práticas simbólicas de sujeitos concretos e articulada dialogicamente às suas condições de produção, o que envolve seu vínculo constitutivo com outros discursos.”

within the idea of “Nejar’s hyperphysics,”²⁰ as proposed by Marco Lucchesi (2006, p. 215). In *Riopampa*, José Bernardo Róvia, the narrator’s father, says: “The event is wind. Something is happening and the wind wants to tell. The wind knows. It runs with time behind it” (2006, p. 25).²¹ At another point, José Bernardo Róvia provokes: “If the image gives birth, the imagination engenders its clutch of dreams” (2006, p. 30).²² The whirlwind, too, is polyphonic and plurilingual: “God looms when men cover themselves with words. When the whirlwind turns, God stops in the wave” (2006, p. 155).²³ God, Job, the Bible, the wind and the time, all can be inside the whirlwind or be the very symbol of this whirl of eternities.

The whirlwind as an imaginative symbol also aims to face enemies, including death: a figure of finitude, of the limit that terrifies and threatens. In an intriguing combination with a passage from the First Letter to the Corinthians 15:50-58, in which the apostle Paul challenges death and provokes a future without its presence: “Death has been swallowed up by victory” (I Cor 15:54), the narrator provokes: “And death no longer knew what to do with itself. I suggested that it kill itself and it told me: ‘Only the Word kills me’. And I in the Word decided to kill it. I killed it. Killing” (2006, p. 85).²⁴ In Nejar’s imaginative poetics, the victory of life is not in the inevitable cessation of dying, but in the daily rediscovery of new possibilities, in the resurrections of the senses, the incessant movement of the mill: “And living is not repeated. The turning of the mill looks the same, but it is not repeated” (2006, p. 95).²⁵ Time and rediscoveries are related like the plots of a text that is renewed every morning: “And the things and the beings are words” (2006, p. 144).²⁶ This “transgression of limits” (Iser, 2013, p. 45)²⁷ can be seen in

²⁰ In Portuguese: “hiperfísica de Nejar.”

²¹ In Portuguese: “O acontecimento é vento. Algo está sucedendo e o vento quer contar. O vento sabe. Corre com o tempo atrás.”

²² In Portuguese: “Se a imagem dá cria, a imaginação engendra a sua ninhada de sonhos.”

²³ In Portuguese: “Deus avulta, quando os homens se cobrem de palavra. Quando o redemoinho vira, Deus para na onda.”

²⁴ In Portuguese: “E a morte não sabia mais o que fazer de si mesma. Sugeri que se matasse e ela me disse: ‘Só a Palavra me mata’. E eu na Palavra resolvi matá-la. Matei. Matada.”

²⁵ In Portuguese: “E viver não se repete. O virar do monjolo parece igual, mas não se repete.”

²⁶ In Portuguese: “E as coisas e os seres são palavras.”

²⁷ In Portuguese: “transgressão de limites.”

Nejar as a kind of “delirium of the word” (2006, p. 21),²⁸ a feedback in which poetry feeds on the theological imagination and theology drinks from poetic sources.

The imaginative construction of places is also intriguing. The town is described as a frontier place. *Riopampa* is a town whose images evoked by Nejar always provoke the imagination: in addition to the mill, there is, for example, the image of a cabbage: “Riopampa, the village, like a cabbage bulged inwards” (2006, p. 18),²⁹ in an image that suggests the contours inwards, the spiral shut in its own existence. The village that borders *Riopampa* is *Solturvo* [literally: Cloudy Sun], whose description is in itself an effect of opposites, in name and natural state, a dark sun and a dry land: “Now, on the frontier of *Riopampa*, a village, a bitter enemy, was cramped: *Solturvo*. It was characterized by dryness” (2006, p. 40).³⁰ In *Solturvo*, unlike *Riopampa*, residents had to suffer to get water. The abundance of *Riopampa* stands in stark contrast to the scarcity of *Solturvo*. The other neighboring village, *Assombro* [literally: Haunt] (2006, p. 138), a town that appears in other works by Nejar, also evokes the imaginary of the transcendent, of that which astonishes and haunts. It is town and dimension: a whirlwind of meanings and applications.

In his *Caderno de fogo: ensaios sobre poesia e ficção* [Fire Notebook: Essays on Poetry and Fiction], Nejar moves between concepts from his own writing: “Thoughts and images are cells of the plot, and the plot serves the imagination and the myth. And all genres mix. Because the word transfigures the indefatigable sense of reality” (2000, p. 65).³¹ In the same book, Nejar reveals: “For me, poetry is when language raves and childhood dreams; and fiction is when language dreams and childhood wakes up. But we always wake up to a very old memory that is the dreams of our words” (2000, p. 79).³² His poetry and novels draw abundantly from theological sources, in an interesting poetic-fictional theology, as Márcio Cappelli says in his thesis published in Portugal:

²⁸ In Portuguese: “delírio da palavra.”

²⁹ In Portuguese: “Riopampa, o lugarejo, como um repolho avultava para dentro.”

³⁰ In Portuguese: “Ora, na divisa de Riopampa se aferroava um povoado, inimigo figadal: Solturvo. Caracterizava-se pela secura.”

³¹ In Portuguese: “Os pensamentos e imagens são células do enredo e este serve à imaginação e ao mito. E todos os gêneros se mesclam. Porque a palavra transfigura o senso infatigável da realidade.”

³² In Portuguese: “Para mim, a poesia é quando a linguagem delira e a infância sonha; e ficção é quando a linguagem sonha e a infância acorda. Mas acordamos sempre uma memória muito antiga que são os sonhos de nossas palavras.”

(...) it is admirable to state that poetry and, by extension, other artistic languages are epiphanies, as they bring within them the experience of reality and reveal reality in such a different way that languages such as the philosophical and scientific do not reach. The poetic experience has a phenomenological similarity with the religious, mystical, prophetic experience: it arises from pathos and is expressed by the image, by the metaphor that translates the unspeakable (Cappelli, 2019, p. 27).³³

Nejar is not a writer easily to assimilate. His writing requires an openness to dialogism and polyphony, so that the multifaceted phenomenon of his text is not wasted in reading. His poetry is at the base, in the novel structure, and his theology permeates the works' fabric like the metaphorical whirlwind of the novel under study. Bearing in mind the multiple perspectives that the Nejarian imagination presents and draws, it is more intriguing to delve into the abundant and inviting Nejarian metaphors. In the next section we will reflect on the metaphors of Nejarian Pentecostality, which will deepen the notion of dialogue with the biblical sphere that Nejar does naturally. The imaginative resource we have seen so far should serve as a guide for our incursions into the Nejarian textual universe. Describing the relation between the author's imagination and the reader's reception, Nejar says: "We write what the imagination sparks. And the reader continues to imagine" (2000, p. 33).³⁴

Carlos Nejar's poetic-theological imagination, especially in *Riopampa*, uncovers semantic and symbolic possibilities that continue to provoke dialogue, listening to polyphony. Biblical reading permeated by Pentecostality provides Nejar with other multiplicities of meaning, amplifying concepts and rescuing perspectives on texts from the past. Nejar's religious discourse collaborates with religion as a cultural text, as it can be read in a literary sense and not just in a dogmatic sense: his theology comes from life and not just from the church. His poetry comes from the human condition and not just from the aesthetics of ritual. Writing about Nejar, Maria João Cantinho clarifies: "This is

³³ In Portuguese: (...) é admirável afirmar que a poesia e, por extensão, outras linguagens artísticas são epifanias, pois trazem no seu bojo a experiência da realidade e desvelam o real de uma maneira tão diferente que linguagens como a filosófica e a científica não alcançam. A experiência poética possui uma semelhança fenomenológica com a experiência religiosa, mística, profética: surge de um pathos e é expressa pela imagem, pela metáfora que traduz o indizível (Cappelli, 2019, p. 27).

³⁴ In Portuguese: "Escrevemos o que a imaginação acendeu. E o leitor persiste imaginando."

a deeply out-of-date writing, and I say that in the Nietzschean sense. (...) Nejar reserves his talent for constructing a cartography of the essential, through a refined and simple language, stripped, free from ornament” (2009, pp. 73-74).³⁵ Reflecting on the metaphors of Nejarian Pentecostality is a challenge that deserves our time.

2 Metaphors of Nejarian Pentecostality

In an article on Nejar’s collected poetry, Alfredo Bosi said:

It is up to poetry to express the feeling that is sometimes joyful, sometimes poignant, through which the transcendence of things and events becomes the immanence of the word. The royal road of Nejar’s poetic language found in the metaphor the ductile instrument to express with maximum concreteness this dialogue always renewed between transcendence and immanence, the outside that is created within, the object that merges with the subject (2009, p. 1).³⁶

Riopampa is an expansion of the metaphor itself: as time, as wind, as the heart of man and as the river of the Spirit of God. All of these meanings share the same metaphorical structure: Carlos Nejar’s Pentecostal imagination. In his experience as a Pentecostal pastor, mainly in the *Igreja Cristã Maranata* in the Brazilian State of Espírito Santo, Nejar acted as a preacher and mystic. His Pentecostality emerges in the use of biblical-theological memories that always return to the decisive point of the experience with the Holy Spirit. In *Riopampa*, the wind, one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal theology, is perceived as a guiding thread of time: immanence and transcendence.

In an interview with Ana Marques Gastão from Lisbon, Nejar himself defined *Riopampa* and did so based on metaphors:

³⁵ In Portuguese: “Trata-se de uma escrita profundamente inatural e digo-o no sentido nietzschiano. (...) Nejar reserva o seu talento para a construção de uma cartografia do essencial, através de uma linguagem depurada e simples, despojada, liberta do ornamento.”

³⁶ In Portuguese: “Cabe à poesia dizer o sentimento ora jubiloso, ora pungente, pelo qual a transcendência das coisas e dos acontecimentos se converte na imanência da palavra. A estrada real da linguagem poética de Nejar encontrou na metáfora o instrumento dúctil para exprimir com o máximo de concretude esse diálogo sempre recomçado entre a transcendência e imanência, o fora que se faz dentro, o objeto que se funde com o sujeito.”

Riopampa is the story of a town whose events take place in a mill. The narration does not end, it has no chapters, because it is the whirlwind of which God speaks in the *Book of Job*, it is time that is always renewed. And the prophecy is the invasion of Riopampa by horses. (...) And the use of metaphor in the novel has a driving force and explosion. And the desmemory of God is the territory not yet revealed to man (2009, p. 198).³⁷

Pentecostal theology is rich in metaphors; its plurality and multiplicity of meanings is comprehensive and challenging. Its theological and poetic framework makes continuous use of images and symbols such as wind, fire, cloud, river, among others. Pentecostal theologian Roger Stronstad says: “In describing the spectacular phenomena of Pentecost with metaphors of wind and fire, Luke has used typical language of theophany (for example 1 Kings 19:11-12)” (1995, p. 122).³⁸ Stronstad explains: “These theophanic phenomena are, in fact, the auditory and ocular symbols which announce the invisible presence of the Holy Spirit for ‘they were filled with the Holy Spirit.’” (1995, p. 122).³⁹ In *Riopampa*, Nejar uses the same “pneumatic” speech explained by Stronstad (1995, p. 133) in the speech of João o Velho [John the Elder], a character who says: “I write the fire in me” (2006, p. 124).⁴⁰ The Pentecostality expressed in this symbol of fire expands the meaning of the allusion or allegory, as it implies an existential principle: “John the Elder (...) never left the living God. On the contrary. He did not find Him in the convent, but outside it (...). A light called him by his name. And as it progressed, the intensity increased” (2006, p. 124).⁴¹ Nejar dialogues with Rev 1:10-16, where John, the Visionary, receives the revelation.

To better understand the metaphors of Nejarian Pentecostality, we can start from James Smith’s assumption: “Implicit in the practices of pentecostalism are both a

³⁷ In Portuguese: “Riopampa é a história de uma cidade, cujos acontecimentos se dão num moinho. A narração não finda, não tem capítulos, porque é o redemoinho que no Livro de Jó, Deus fala, é o tempo que sempre se renova. E a profecia é a invasão de Riopampa pelos cavalos. (...) E o uso da metáfora no romance tem força de motor e de explosão. E a desmemória de Deus é o território ainda não revelado ao homem.”

³⁸ STRONSTAD, Roger. *Spirit, Scripture and Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective*. Philipines: Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press, 1995.

³⁹ See footnote 39.

⁴⁰ In Portuguese: “Escrevo o fogo em mim.”

⁴¹ In Portuguese: “João, o Velho, (...) jamais deixou o Deus vivo. Ao contrário. Não O encontrou no convento, mas fora dele [...]. Uma luz o chamou pelo nome. E na medida em que avançava aumentou a intensidade.”

philosophical anthropology and an epistemology that resist the slimmed-down reductionism of modern cognitivism” (2020, p. 51).⁴² Nejar makes this hyperphysical reading through the lens of his experience, both as a preacher and as a poet of the living God. Victor Breno Farias Barrozo says about Nejar that “(...) the poet does not just talk about God, but with God – in a dialogue between friends. The living being Nejar and his living God are poetically intertwined in the mesh of mystery” (2022, p. 12).⁴³ The Nejarian Pentecostal experience appears as an experiential and imaginative palimpsest.

Another metaphor that appears in *Riopampa* is the image of the mountain of God that dialogues with the biblical text of Exodus 3, in which Moses talked to God based on the experience of the voice coming out of the burning bush. In *Riopampa*, Horebe, which in the Bible is the mountain of God, is a character who also speaks out of the bush and evokes the image of the mountain: “Horeb had flames that went from the hands to the eyes, in concise rotation. It was as if he were the very mountain where Moses saw God” (2006, p. 108).⁴⁴ Mountain, fire, God and word are signifiers, as *Riopampa*’s narrator says: “Because everything is a symbol, even what is ignored” (2006, p. 201).⁴⁵ Nejar works in the sphere of imagination, using senses and perceptions of God that expand the scope and applicability of this spirituality. From this same perspective, the whirlwind and the winds can be encompassed as metaphorical themes of an imaginative spirituality that is not afraid to move between frontiers.

In line with theologian Amos Young and the “Pentecostal imagination” (Young, 2002, pp. 119-149),⁴⁶ Smith says: “pentecostal spirituality is a nexus of practices that dispose us to imagine the world in a certain way, to “make” the world under a Spirit-charged construal” (2010, p. 34).⁴⁷ This pneumatological hermeneutics is perceived in Nejarian texts, especially in his works from the 1990s onwards, when he moved from Rio

⁴² SMITH, James K.A. *Thinking in Tongues*. Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy. Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010.

⁴³ In Portuguese: “(...) o poeta não fala apenas de Deus, mas com Deus – num diálogo entre amigos. O vivente Nejar e seu Deus vivo estão poeticamente entrelaçados nas malhas do mistério.”

⁴⁴ In Portuguese: “Horebe tinha chamas que iam das mãos aos olhos, em rotação concisa. Era como se fosse o próprio monte, onde Moisés viu Deus.”

⁴⁵ In Portuguese: “Porque tudo é símbolo, mesmo o que se ignora.”

⁴⁶ YOUNG, Amos. *The Spirit Poured Out on Flesh*: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of a Global Theology. Michigan: Baker Academy, 2005.

⁴⁷ See footnote 43.

Grande do Sul to Espírito Santo, after his marriage to Elza, the woman who inspires him and receives most of his dedications, including in the novel under study. Nejar does with metaphors what Young understands should be done: not reducing them to mere language resources, but “asking about the theological implications of such phenomenological metaphors” (2022, p. 394).⁴⁸ Pentecostal theology seeks to think about metaphors and not just use them as a semantic framework.

The metaphor of the human heart also has an important space in *Riopampa*. In an intriguing image taken from the Book of Jeremiah 17:9-10: “The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse – who can understand it? I the Lord test the mind and search the heart [...],” Nejar, in a whirlwind-style sequence, presents us the heart of man in a kind of refrain repeated five times: “The heart of man is a ground where no one sets foot on” (2006, p. 166).⁴⁹ Afterwards, he discusses the metaphor: “And if Riopampa is the heart of man, what dreams, what designs activate hope?” (2006, p. 166).⁵⁰ And then he expands the metaphor: “The mill of words turns with the blades, it turns with my hands, the text turns in the text, it turns the heart of man. And Riopampa is the blood. And the blood is spirit” (2006, p. 166).⁵¹ Finally, he repeats the refrain, attaching the town to the heart: “Riopampa is the heart of man, a land that no one sets foot on” (2006, p. 167).⁵²

The metaphorical figure of the heart has multiple applicability; however, from the Pentecostal perspective predominate feeling, emotionality, the experience of amazement, enchantment. James Smith puts it this way: “the point is to affirm the primacy of the heart and affections as the basis for a rational, intellectual engagement with and interpretation of the world” (2010, p. 51).⁵³ Smith goes further: “the Spirit is understood to be the Trinitarian person in which creation lives and moves and has its being” (2010, p. 39).⁵⁴ It is the heart of the divinity, the seat of the most intimate and also renewing sensations. Nejar’s imaginative creativity as a Pentecostal pastor is not only the talent

⁴⁸ In Portuguese: “perguntar a respeito das implicações teológicas de tais metáforas fenomenológicas.”

⁴⁹ In Portuguese: “O coração do homem é terra que ninguém pisa.”

⁵⁰ In Portuguese: “E se Riopampa é o coração do homem, que sonhos, desígnios ativam a esperança?”

⁵¹ In Portuguese: “O moinho das palavras gira com as pás, roda com minhas mãos, o texto roda no texto, roda o coração do homem. E Riopampa é o sangue. E o sangue é espírito.”

⁵² In Portuguese: “Riopampa é o coração do homem, terra que ninguém pisa.”

⁵³ See footnote 43.

⁵⁴ See footnote 43.

with words, but also the control of emotions surrendered to the Spirit of the living God. Nejar points to this duality between the cold letter and the spirit of the word in a sinister character: Abedón, who, as an apocalyptic imaginary, tries to convince the people of Riopampa to his “theology of the letter” (2006, p. 177),⁵⁵ in a concept that evokes the biblical text of 2 Cor 3:6: “It was he who qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” Without a heart remain only letters, not speech.

In *Riopampa* a frightening metaphor appears as “dark cloud” (2006, p. 205).⁵⁶ It is the image of evil. Nejar reveals the presence of evil in a series of images that dialogue with contrasts: “But evil has no childhood” (2006, p. 205),⁵⁷ in a distressing suppression of the past, of the best memories. In the narrator’s speech, evil continues to be projected in new images: “Evil has an unknown flowering. And unknown colors on the trunk. I didn’t see it; however, I sense it. It is never alone” (2006, p. 206).⁵⁸ The narrator continues: “Evil is a disease. From the outside in. It makes the stem become dry” (2006, p. 206).⁵⁹ In a very intriguing passage, the narrator even surprises Elisabeth, another character, by bringing God to the subject of evil: “Evil is what remained, when God,” to which Elisabeth, perplexed, asks: “When God?”, and the narrator continues: “When God fell asleep in God” (2006, p. 206).⁶⁰ Here, the figure of the tree evokes the cross and the crucified, the God who sleeps, and sleep here is also a figure of death, so that in the resurrection death and evil lose their hegemony, as Rev 1:18 says: “I am the Living One. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever, and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.”

The metaphor of evil is not limited only to the image of death or disease, but also to the spirit of opposition and chaos. Nejar makes a bold parody of Acts 17:23 and the inscription on the Areopagus in Athens: “To the unknown God.” In *Riopampa*, Nejar

⁵⁵ In Portuguese: “teologia da letra.”

⁵⁶ In Portuguese: “nuvem escura.”

⁵⁷ In Portuguese: “Mas o mal não tem infância.”

⁵⁸ In Portuguese: “O mal tem floração desconhecida. E cores ignotas sobre o tronco. Não vi, porém, pressinto. Nunca está sozinho.”

⁵⁹ In Portuguese: “O mal é uma doença. De fora para dentro. Faz o caule secar.”

⁶⁰ In Portuguese: “O mal é o que ficou, quando Deus;” “Quando Deus?;” “Quando Deus caiu no sono, em Deus.”

places “a monument dedicated To the Unknown Politician” (2006, p. 37),⁶¹ whose creative innocence Feijoo Lúcio, an artist from the town, believed to represent in the form of three heads, the divergent ideas or interests emanating from the same national body. At the the monument’s inauguration, the Nejarian parody presents the town’s ruler – “*Inominado*” [Unnamed] (2006, p. 37) and, again in another chilling perception, dialogues with the imagery of Eden in Gn 3:24: “In the first months, a soldier with his sword drawn guarded the monument, day and night” (2006, p. 37).⁶² Evil appears as a sinister shadow, an unspoken word. If the mill moves the waters, bringing life, the evil is in the dryness, in the thirst that is constantly provoked, in the hunger that is never satisfied.

Pentecostal spirituality always uses apocalyptic imagery because it seeks the eschatological horizon of hope. The Spirit that blows upon all flesh is not accusation and/or destruction, but renewal, hope, salvation. The waters of mercy, in Nejarian theological-poetic discourse, are waters of the Spirit who is not subject to our thirsts: “God has arrived and we are covered, full. Everything is words. Then only soul. Riopampa: time” (2006, p. 208).⁶³ The Nejarian whirlwind, which begins on the first page and never ends, continues moving the waters and the hearts, the emotions and the senses, the poetry and the soul of the experiences. Metaphors follow their path of showing and/or covering up, revealing and purifying. Nejar makes his art based on his experience, on his passionate involvement with the Spirit of the living God. This places him within a very particular sphere of Pentecostal phenomenology and epistemology.

In the next section we intend to take a look at the figure of the Sacred whirlwind and its palimpsest in the *Book of Job*, as Nejar’s imagery and symbolic construction draws from this source and dialogues with this rich, challenging and, at times, haunting textual universe. In Nejar, Job appears as a reference, as wisdom that dialogues with the Sacred that appears in the storm and redefines processes, rediscovers futures, and reorients life.

⁶¹ In Portuguese: “um monumento dedicado Ao Político Desconhecido.”

⁶² In Portuguese: “Nos primeiros meses, um soldado com a espada desembainhada guardava, dia e noite, o monumento.”

⁶³ In Portuguese: “Deus chegou e somos cobertos, plenos. Tudo é palavra. Depois só alma. Riopampa: tempo.”

3 The Sacred Whirlwind: From Job to Nejar

In the epigraph to *Riopampa*, Nejar makes four quotations: the 12th century French poet Chrétien de Troyes; the poet, mystic and philosopher Novalis; the great Roman poet Ovid; and the one from whom Nejar absorbs the whirlwind metaphor, Job: “And God answered Job from the top of the whirlwind” (Job 38:1). Nejar’s characteristics include the ability to move naturally between the Bible and literature, creating a dialogic bridge between cultural texts which include, in this definition, the Bible itself. We believe that there is still a lack of studies on the relation between Bible and literature in Brazil, perhaps due to dogmatic fears, or, as Antônio Magalhães says:

The obstacles do not reside in the interdiscursivities and intertextualities between the biblical text and many texts of Western literature, but they reside in the ideological domains over knowledge, in restrictive theological hermeneutics, and in literary criticism and theory lacking greater dialogue with the biblical text (2008, p. 17).⁶⁴

The *Book of Job* is one of the most challenging biblical texts. Poetry and chaos mix in a plot that still baffles. The figure that Nejar uses from the text of Job is the suggestive and threatening metaphor of the whirlwind, or storm, as it appears in other translations of the Hebrew term *se'arah* which, according to Samuel Terrien, “designates the whirl of wind, perhaps the hurricane, which becomes an instrument or symbol of Yahweh’s anger and power” (1994, p. 274). Terrien further states: “In the prophets and psalmists, the storm is an element of eschatological theophany” (1994, p. 274). In Luiz Alexandre Solano Rossi’s theological reading, it is from within a storm that God exposes creation: “With Ezekiel and Nahum the same thing happened – the storm (Ez 1:4; Na 1:3)” (2005, p. 181). Rossi too reads the metaphor seizing it for a theological lesson about life:

⁶⁴ In Portuguese: “Os obstáculos não residem nas interdiscursividades e intertextualidades entre o texto bíblico e muitos textos da literatura ocidental, mas residem nos domínios ideológicos sobre o saber, em hermenêuticas teológicas restritivas e em crítica e teoria literária carente de maior diálogo com o texto bíblico.”

What is our existence if not a permanent whirlwind in the center of which we whirl, dragged by the events and hardships of life? It is comfortable to know that God is where the whirlwinds appear. No one can deny that human history is a great permanent upheaval. God is in history (2005, p. 181).⁶⁵

The image of the whirlwind provokes multiple readings, especially when perceived through related terms, such as storm and turmoil. The powerful symbolism evoked by these terms feeds imaginations and raises different interpretative possibilities. Read in a literary sense, the terms referring to the whirlwind gain breadth and dialogue with the senses and emotions, leaving the pure expression of nature's force to delve into the domains of interiority, of the horrors that assault us from the inside out. Poetry finds vast material here. Considered the last text written by William Shakespeare, probably in 1623, *The Tempest* discusses the themes of revenge, fury and forgiveness, in one of the shortest plays written by the legendary poet. Through literary perspectives in communion with the richness of the biblical text, the whirlwind provokes even more. As Salma Ferraz pointed out:

In the middle of the *Bible* there was a stone, *there was* the Book of Job. In the middle of Job's path, he came across a stone, or rather, a cosmic mountain: God. If until before the Book of Job man sought God in the mountains, in this book God descends to the earth in the midst of the whirlwind to seek man. But, in the middle of God's path, *there was* also a mountain: Job. Despite all of God's defensive speech in the middle of the whirlwind, in the end there remains a disturbing silence: God's silence, Job's silence, the silence of each one of us... (2008, p. 85).⁶⁶

Salma Ferraz shows that the Book of Job was the target of several perspectives and great controversies: from the psychoanalytic reading of Carl Gustav Jung to the

⁶⁵ In Portuguese: "O que é a nossa existência senão um redemoinho permanente no centro do qual rodopiamos arrastados pelos acontecimentos e padecimentos da vida? É confortável sabermos que Deus está onde os redemoinhos se apresentam. Ninguém pode negar que a história humana seja uma grande permanente convulsão. Deus está na história".

⁶⁶ In Portuguese: "No meio da Bíblia tinha uma pedra, tinha o Livro de Jó. No meio do caminho de Jó ele topou com uma pedra, ou melhor, uma montanha cósmica: Deus. Se até antes do Livro de Jó o homem buscava Deus nas montanhas, nesse livro Deus desce à terra no meio do redemoinho para buscar o homem. Mas, no meio do caminho de Deus, também tinha uma montanha: Jó. Apesar de todo o discurso defensivo de Deus no meio do redemoinho, ao final permanece um silêncio inquietador: o silêncio de Deus, o silêncio de Jó, o silêncio de todos nós...".

intriguing texts of famous Portuguese writers such as Camões, Miguel Torga, and Saramago who dared to face the theme of theology of suffering (2008, pp. 79-86). The difference that is established when the vision is Nejar's poetics lays in the fact that his perspective is permeated by his Pentecostality. In *Riopampa*, Nejar works the metaphor of the whirlwind in several aspects, including an apocalyptic dimension, amplified in the figure of Horebe who "had a whirlwind in his hand and was the word. He had the word, and the whirlwind was spinning" (2006, p. 116).⁶⁷ In this prophetic/apocalyptic act, Horebe causes the resurrection of the dead. At this moment, Nejar presents the *persona* who inhabits the whirlwind: "And the whirlwind walked among them" (2006, p. 117),⁶⁸ the one who walks among them is the Holy Spirit who gives life, a creative act that can only come from God in the Scriptures.

Afterwards, in the description, Horebe interacts with the resurrected ones, giving them work duties next to the river Tonho; however, before they go through the ritual of new naming: "Each one took his name like a white stone from the river" (2006, p. 117),⁶⁹ in a profound image of Rev 2:17: "Let anyone who has an ear, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it." The narrator then continues: "And the whirlwind of Horebe's hand stopped. And we entered the mill together. The sun stopped and we rejoiced in the whirlwinding word" (2006, p. 117).⁷⁰ Nejar moves powerfully between the whirlwinds: his writing continues to subvert formulas and to place author, narrator, and reader within the whirlwind. Pentecostality knows how to do these readings because it understands the Spirit of God not only as an item of systematic theology, but as an ordering principle of life (Campos, 2018, p. 9).

In the *Riopampa* edition by *Bertrand Brasil*, Fabrício Carpinejar, poet and son of Carlos Nejar, wrote: "Perhaps the writer from the pampa found the alphabet that the

⁶⁷ In Portuguese: "tinha na mão um redemoinho e era a palavra. Tinha a palavra e o redemoinho girava."

⁶⁸ In Portuguese: "E o redemoinho andava pelo meio deles."

⁶⁹ In Portuguese: "Cada um pegava o seu nome como pedra branca do rio."

⁷⁰ In Portuguese: "Quem tem ouvidos, ouça o que o Espírito diz às igrejas. Ao vencedor darei do maná escondido e uma pedra branca, na qual está escrito um novo nome que ninguém conhece, a não ser aquele que o recebe;" "E o redemoinho da mão de Horebe parava. E entramos juntos no moinho. O sol parava e nos alegrávamos com a redemoinha palavra."

Russian poet Khlebnikov was looking for: the metal consonants and the glass vowels. It is a work of maturity, incandescently removed from the forge of creation” (2006, cover flap).⁷¹ Interestingly, Geraldo Tadeu de Souza, interviewing Boris Schnaiderman, states that Bakhtin paid great praise to Khlebnikov’s poetic language (2022, p. 233) which identified with Russian formalism. We can even reflect on whether or not *Riopampa* can fall into the category of polyphonic novel, an object of Bakhtinian translanguistics, or, as Beth Brait said, “(...) of what today could be called *Dialogical Discourse Analysis*” (2022, p. 55).⁷² Nejar inserts us into his whirlwind, summoning us to its dialogicity, to the encounter with the storm and the divinity that it hides and reveals.

Nejar refuses to see the whirlwind without God: “God looms when men cover themselves with words. (...) He is the centrifugal motor. The circle flying like a bird” (2006, p. 155).⁷³ The dialogical relation here goes far beyond the exchange of words and conversations; there is a sign for the act of covering oneself with the verb. It is noticeable that Nejar has a special affection for the word;⁷⁴ his visceral relation makes it an instrument of a transcendent imaginative power, capable of surpassing him, rising beyond him as a creator, nurturing expectations: “Then the creator discovers that the symbols, images or metaphors that he engendered can come back against him if he does not overcome them in the time” (2000, p. 60).⁷⁵ In *Riopampa*, Nejar dialogues with these horizons between words, symbols, time, and spirituality: “By the word, with its trigger: everything is visible. I look at it. I tie the latches, I grab symbols. One day, I cried; now, I watch” (2006, p. 209).⁷⁶

The Nejarian whirlwind, like Job’s turmoil, becomes a call to the reader to enter the metaphorical game, making the reading experience something more, a significant

⁷¹ In Portuguese: “Talvez o escritor do pampa tenha encontrado o alfabeto que o poeta russo Khlebnikov buscava: as consoantes de metal e as vogais de vidro. É uma obra da maturidade, retirada incandescente da forja da criação.”

⁷² In Portuguese: “(...) do que hoje se poderia chamar de *Análise Dialógica do Discurso*.”

⁷³ In Portuguese: “Deus avulta, quando os homens se cobrem de palavra. [...] É o centrífugo motor. O círculo revoando como pássaro.”

⁷⁴ In an article we published together with David Mesquiati and Kenner Terra, we discuss the way Nejar deals with words and the Word in his novel *Carta aos Loucos*. (cf. BRIZOTTI, Alan; MESQUIATI, David; TERRA, Kenner. 2022).

⁷⁵ In Portuguese: “Então o criador descobre que os símbolos, imagens ou metáforas que engendrou, podem voltar contra ele, se não os ultrapassar no tempo.”

⁷⁶ In Portuguese: “Pela palavra, com seu gatilho: tudo é visível. Eu olho nela. Amarro os trincos, agarro símbolos. Chorei um dia, agora assisto.”

elevation that even deepens the very concept of dialogicity. Intertexts, interdiscourses and translinguistics become even stronger as exercises of approximations, of reverberations of voices and discourses. The Sacred, the Pentecostal and the Biblical intertwine as a deepened poetic-theological experience, as it is experienced through the word: the poet, the mystic, and the pastor. They become a living, intimate text that provokes senses, genuine emotions, not just sentimental ones. As the narrator of *Riopampa* puts it: “We cannot lose pure joy, otherwise we lose language. And it’s like losing blood” (2006, p. 175).⁷⁷

In *Methodology of the Human Sciences*, Bakhtin expresses this complete unity, this whole that Nejar expresses in his architecture:

There is neither a first nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and the boundless future). Even past meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all) they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent, future development of the dialogue. At any moment in the development of the dialogue there are immense, boundless masses of forgotten contextual meanings, but at certain moments of the dialogue’s subsequent development along the way they are recalled and invigorated in renewed form (in a new context). Nothing is absolutely dead: every meaning will have its homecoming festival. The problem of *great time* (1986, p. 170).⁷⁸

The way Bakhtin exposes questions of meaning, death and renewal, including the idea of time, is compatible with Nejar’s view of the whirlwind in *Riopampa*. At the end of the book – end, here, seen only as the last page, since the text subverts the idea of beginning and end –, the narrator closes with the same word that begins the book, the wind:

Riopampa exists? Exists the time?
Perhaps the childhood of some future. There is only memory.
And God’s dismemorized dismemory. The dismemory
memorizing everything. Until we become save from the future.
Until we all fall, all.

⁷⁷ In Portuguese: “Não se pode perder a pura alegria, senão perdemos linguagem. E é como perder sangue.”

⁷⁸ BAKHTIN, M. *Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences*. 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. 159-177.

All in God.
And inside the wind (2006, p. 209).⁷⁹

Nejarian architecture is passionate about the wind, about the metaphor and about the word, as in an unhurried artisanal act. The wind, as a symbol of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal theology, is always multiple in meaning, especially when it serves the poet's inventiveness. As Gutierrez Siqueira puts it: "The Spirit, the indomitable wind, operates far beyond our limited vision and our comfortable institutionalization" (2023, p. 24).⁸⁰ The metaphor – the whirlwind – as a powerful image of the manifestation of God continues to shake certainties and deepen perspectives. In a book about Nejar, Kenner Terra states: "Nejar, as usual, dilutes the cloisters of genres and develops the poetics of the apocalyptic, the eschatology of poetry, and the limiting vision of metaphors" (2022, p. 38).⁸¹ The Nejarian whirlwind is a place of encounter with the Sacred that transforms. The word, matrix of Nejarian whirls, is what the poet is serving.

Conclusion

Reflecting on Carlos Nejar's work is a challenge and a delight. *Riopampa* is, without a doubt, one of the greatest novels written by the pampa poet. His vast and award-winning work cannot be tasted without spending time in the middle of the sacred Nejarian whirlwind. We began our journey in *Riopampa*, seeking to answer the question if Carlos Nejar's poetic-theological imagination is in fact Pentecostal. According to what we observed in the investigative trajectory of the book, with the help of great thinkers such as Bakhtin, as well as the opinions of some Pentecostal theologians, we believe that, yes,

⁷⁹ In Portuguese: "Riopampa existe? Existe o tempo? Talvez a infância de algum futuro. Só há memória. E a desmemória desmemoriada de Deus. A desmemória memoriando tudo. Até ficarmos salvos do futuro. Até cairmos todos, todos. Todos em Deus. E dentro do vento".

⁸⁰ In Portuguese: "O Espírito, o vento indomesticável, opera muito além de nossa limitada visão e de nossa cômoda institucionalização."

⁸¹ In Portuguese: "Nejar, como de costume, dilui os claustros dos gêneros e desenvolve a poética do apocalíptico, a escatologia da poesia e a visão limite das metáforas."

Carlos Nejar's poetic-theological imagination is inspired, permeated, and constructed based on the lens of his Pentecostality as the ordering principle of his experience.

Understanding this point helps us broaden our view in relation to the author's work. His religious experience does not diminish him, on the contrary, it expands and provokes us to take a deeper look at the Bible as literature and at religious texts as cultural texts. Nejarian religious discourse is not concerned with defending religious denominations or institutions, but rather with deepening the vision of the Sacred that can be seen in everyday plots, in the metaphors of time, wind, whirlwind, and our relations. Nejar doesn't proselytize, he creates culture. In Nejar, religion is not an escape or abbreviation of life, but a deepening of existence and language.

Experiencing Nejar is an act of courage, essentially in *Riopampa*, as it means placing oneself inside the hurricane: embracing the experience, being touched by the epiphany, by the other who comes as a voice that proposes dialogue, that mixes silence and sound, sky and earth, light and darkness, cloud and ground. In Nejar, the Spirit that embraces the symbolism of the wind becomes a walking companion, an inspiration that challenges sameness and proposes new encounters. We use three verbs: reflect, understand and experience, because, as Pedro Bontorim said, "*Nejar é verbo*" [Nejar is verb] (2022, p. 61).

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Received September 09, 2023

Accepted February 18, 2024

Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso* [*Bakhtiniana. Journal of Discourse Studies*] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Review II

The article is aligned with the thematic focus and in accordance with the proposed theory. The study's objective is clearly stated, and the development demonstrates its coherent realization. One of the contributions of the study lies in the careful analysis of the presence of religious discourse in Carlos Nejar's novel, showing that this author deepens the vision of the sacred, which is perceived in everyday plots, metaphors of time, wind, whirlwind, and our relationships. Furthermore, within the scope of Bakhtinian studies on religious discourse, the research establishes a dialogue between biblical texts and literature. In the specific case, the study provides an analysis of images, symbols, and experiences used by Nejar in writing the novel *Riopampa: Moinho das Tribulações* [*Riopampa: The Mill of Tribulations*], establishing connections with texts from biblical literature and other works of Western literature. It is noteworthy that the article reveals a lack of studies on the relationship between biblical texts and literature in Brazil. I would say that the article under review makes a significant contribution in addressing this gap. Considering these aspects, I recommend APPROVAL for the publication of the article.

I offer three suggestions for improving the text:

Throughout the article, the author uses the terms “intertextuality” and “parody,” but these notions were not distinguished from other concepts such as dialogism, polyphony, etc. I suggest reviewing points in the text where this proposal appears; for example, in the abstract, it is stated: “For this purpose, we will use the theoretical framework of Discourse Analysis, under the auspices of Bakhtin and the concepts of intertextuality, dialogism, parody, and polyphony, in addition to a concise literature review.” Additionally, it seems to attribute the concept of “intertextuality” to Bakhtin. Thus, it would be necessary to revisit the distinction between “intertextuality,” “dialogism,” “polyphony,” which appear in the text.

I suggest conducting a technical review of the text, especially regarding the journal's norms on indicating the suppression of parts of a text in a direct quotation and checking the format for citing authors in parentheses, following the most recent update of ABNT.

On page 2, after presenting the research question, it is stated: "To answer this question, we will conduct a bibliographic research in Nejar (...)." I suggest reconsidering whether it is truly "bibliographic research." Since there is a type of bibliographic research that follows another analytical path, it might be advisable to avoid this classification. I understand that the study aligns more with a "documentary" type of research since a work/a novel (which is a written document of human culture) is taken as material for analysis. I even suggest reconsidering the concept of "Comparison," which would perfectly characterize the analytical movement developed in the study. In fact, the article juxtaposes voices from Nejar's novel with other voices (biblical texts, theology, literature, for example). APPROVED WITH RESTRICTIONS [Revised]

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Reviewed on December 30, 2023.