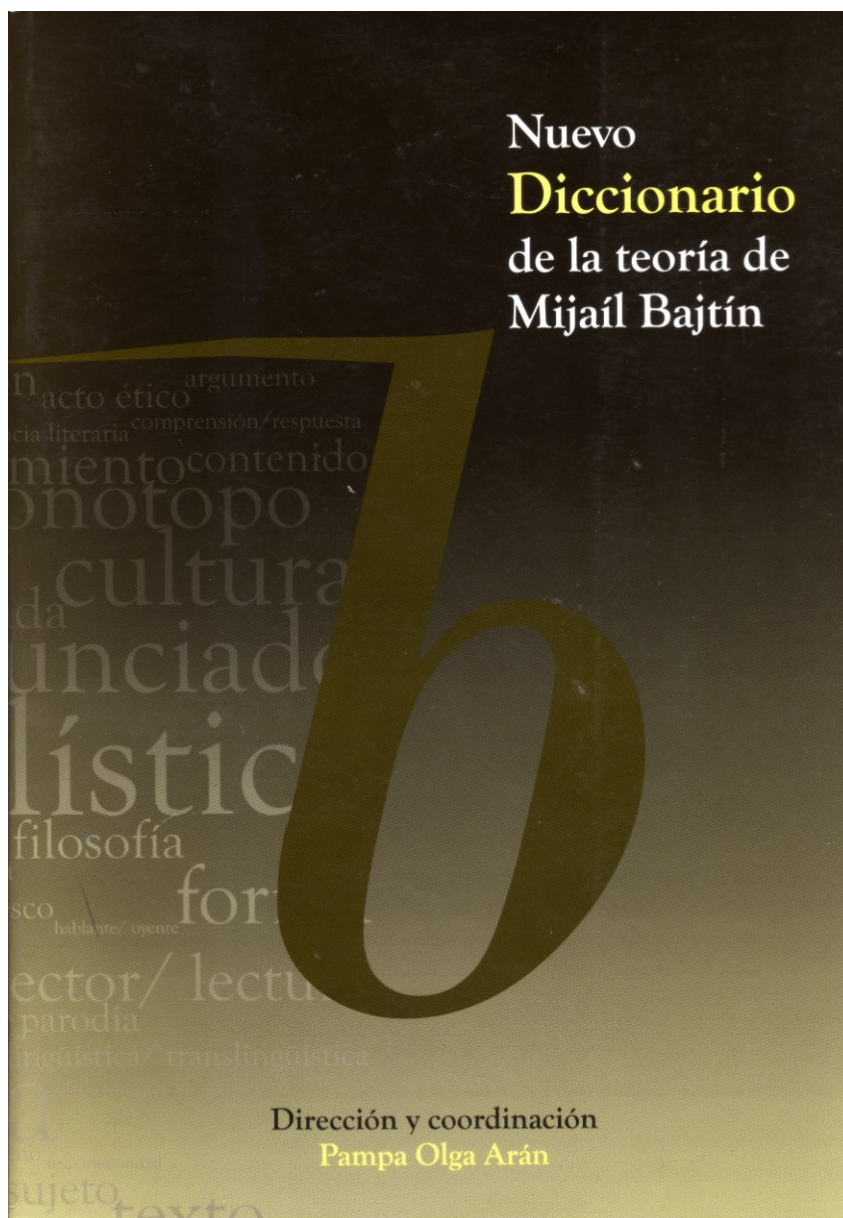


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If, according to the Aurélio dictionary of the Portuguese language, a dictionary is defined as a “set of words from a language or given names from a science or art, alphabetically presented, and with their respective *meaning* [...]” (our highlight), the proposal of a dictionary of terms of Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory could be presented as an expression of repetitiveness, reiterativeness, of a monologic “explanation” of terms. And still: if the lexicon is only one of the aspects of the text/enunciation/discourse in Bakhtin’s point of view, to gather the vocabulary of the Circle in one work, with the purpose of understanding the meaning of each term or to give it certain meaning stability, would be a very complex task. Nevertheless, loyal to Bakhtin’s thoughts, the dialogue is present in all entries of this *Nuevo Diccionario*: with the author/authors of the Circle, with the reader, with different commentators and critics around the world, sometimes with theory and/or literary critic, at other moments with philosophy, linguistics, psychology, anthropology...

The *Nuevo diccionario de la teoría de Mijail Bajtin*, published by Ferreyra Editor, Córdoba, Argentina, is organized and coordinated by Pampa Olga Arán, PhD in Modern Languages, who teaches *Teoría y Metodología del estudio literario* at Escuela de Letras da Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades at the National Córdoba University. Arán clarifies, in the Prologue, that there was a first edition, in 1998, but that this is a new version she developed with the help of Candelaria de Olmos – M.A. in *Social Semiotics* at the *Centro de Estudios Avanzados* and head of *Trabajos Prácticos de Semiótica* at the Escuela de Letras, and a group of mostly young researchers. The different voices combined in developing the 55 terms selected from Bakhtin’s works are distributed among and signed by Pampa Olga Arán (13 entries), Candelaria de Olmos (8) and Lucas Berone, M.A. in *Social Semiotics* (9). Together they are responsible for writing more than half of the entries; the others are written by the group of researchers. The project was also sponsored by *Centro de Investigaciones de la Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades* and the *Secretaría de Ciencia y Técnica*.

The work includes a thorough final reference bibliography, divided in specific bibliography of Bakhtin’s texts; specific bibliography of Bakhtin’s texts and his Circle; critical and biographical studies about Bakhtin; bibliographical selections; journals; URL addresses. Next, it presents a brief bio data of all the collaborating authors and a final index of terms.

In the organizer's own words, "la forma de entradas múltiples y de recorridos simultáneos parece ser la que mejor se adecua al pensamiento abierto e inconcluso de Bajtín para quien nunca había sido dicha la última palabra". Excellent justification, especially when mentioning the multiple entries and simultaneous recurrences, as the terms in this work refer constantly to each other, besides referring out of themselves. There's more: all are inter-related, there's no possibility of defining one without defining its link to the others, they constitute an "open and dynamic" thought system, in process, and depend on a responsive-active understanding – of at least two consciences. That's the reason why various studies of Bakhtin's work, and its critics and commentators, as in this *Nuevo Diccionario*, are always welcome (even if it's to refute them, which is not the case here).

A justification for the choice of terms is not presented in the Prologue. For instance, the entries *argument*, *knowledge*, *chronotope*, *dialogism*, *discursive genres*, *parody*, *text*, actually have different importance in the Circle's work. That is, we realize that it's not a selection of key concepts for the understanding of Bakhtin's work; rather, it's a selection of notions that, at that moment, are relevant and meaningful.

The genre choice seems yet to be motivated by the epigraph: "mi predilección por las variaciones y por heterogeneidad de términos en relación con un solo fenómeno" (Bajtín "De los apuntes de 1970-1971"). Thus, we point out that the terminology problem in the Circle's work is not restricted to this liking for term variation and heterogeneity, shown in the epigraph. In fact, we can add the confusing translations that appeared in the West from 1960 on, published out of chronological order into which they were written, many times reflecting and refracting theories of the corresponding time and space. Brandist, for whom the Circle terminology, and especially that belonging to Bakhtin himself, is very specific and has a plurality of connotations, reminds us that there are terms like *stanovlenie*, which has had ten different translations into English and has appeared in four distinctive ways in the same essay. The same has somehow happened in the French, Italian, German, Spanish and Portuguese translations. Just imagine the possible confusion around the word *extraposición/exotopia*, an entry in the *Nuevo Diccionario*. Included in Tzvetan Todorov's Preface, in the French edition

*Esthétique de la création verbale*<sup>1</sup>, it is the term that appears in the first translation – from French – available in Brazil. Paulo Bezerra, who was translating from Russian, is going to substitute it for *distance* or *detachment*, with a beautiful justification in the Introduction.

Aside these questions, or even due to them, this *Nuevo Diccionario* can (and should) be read as a hypertext, which organizes each of the entries with an introduction, presenting the more general concept in the Circle's work. From then on, the author tracks the meaning in the works in which they can be found, following the chronological order oftentimes, and the reader is offered a view as to how the concept establishes itself or complements (or even modifies) itself in all of them. This is the case of *discursive genres*, for instance; or else, it shows how the Circle restricts its use to a few works, as it's the case for hybridization or grotesque. In general terms, there's still a conclusion more or less evaluative of notion heuristic fruitfulness.

Some collaborators are more explicit in their comments and evaluations of the concept and reach out to other theories. In my opinion, this interaction is extremely enriching. In this sense, Analía Gerbaudo's entry *sense/meaning* is exemplary. Initially, the author warns us of Bakhtin's "theoretical contributions" for literature as well as for linguistics. Then, as she shows us a panoramic view of the question *sense/meaning* in the Circle's work, she brings closer (and distinguishes) this concept from the others, mainly from contemporary Western theorists, such as J. Derrida, Blanchot, late Barthes, and even Benjamin. She is conscious of the disagreement among the critics about these confrontation possibilities because she finishes presenting, in a brief wrap-up, the position of Bakhtin's commentators, such as Ponzio, Zavala, Stewart, Morson and Holquist on this issue. She justifies herself, though, using Bakhtin's words when he mentions the "infinite heterogeneity of the senses" in the "From Notes Made in 1970-71": "La redujimos tremendamente mediante selección y modernización de lo seleccionado. [...] Estamos empobreciendo el pasado y no nos enriquecemos nosotros mismos". For us, readers, it arouses our intellectual curiosity to verify these dialogue potentialities.

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<sup>1</sup> This word occurs in the essay "Author and hero in aesthetic activity", one of the four early essays by Mikhail Bakhtin published in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, edited by Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, translation and notes by Vadim Liapunov, The Texas University Press. It is translated as *outsideness*. *Exotopy* appears in Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: the dialogical principle*, translated from French by Wlad Godzich, and published by The Minnesota University Press. *Bakhtiniana*, São Paulo, 7 (2): 186-191, Jul./Dec. 2012.

It is important to point out that the mentioned translation problem makes it hard for us, Brazilians, to read the texts, even considering the similarities between the Portuguese and Spanish languages. This may happen when we look for the entry *discurso*. At first sight, the *Diccionario* does not deal with this essential concept in the Circle's work. But then we realize the existence of the entry *palabra/discurso*, signed by Cristian Cardozo. We remember the well-known essay by Voloshinov: in French, *Le discours dans la vie et le discours dans la poésie*, Contribution à une poétique sociologique; in Spanish, *La palabra en la vida y la palabra en la poesía*. Hacia una poética sociológica; in the recent translation in Portuguese organized by Valdemir Miotello team, *A palavra na vida e na poesia*. Introdução ao problema da poética sociológica. Nevertheless, *palavra/discurso* are much closer in Spanish, which is not the case in Portuguese (probably the same as in Russian, with the word *slovo*). Based on a more general definition of the term in the Circle's work, giving it the responsibility to conceptualize all Bakhtin's work as “una larga reflexión sobre ‘la vida de la palabra’ y sus modos históricos y sociales de producción de sentido, apropiación y refracción” (p.203), the author finishes the entry with the important statement that “para estudiar la palabra como discurso no se la puede cosificar...” (p.211).

In some moments when consulting the *Diccionario* we find intriguing analogies, for instance, when Candelaria de Olmos states that Bakhtin seems to substitute Saussure's binomial *langue/parole* by the dynamic relations between *genre/enunciación*: “a pesar de ser individual e irrepitible, el enunciado tiene un carácter social, mientras que el género – lejos de ser un sistema abstracto y normativo - , se presenta como un reservorio de reglas más o menos flexibles según el caso, elaboradas a lo largo de su uso, en situaciones histórico-sociales concretas” (p.138). Or, when consulting the entry *texto*, also Olmo's responsibility, we find that important references lack for the comprehension of Bakhtin's concept as the author does not seek dialogue with important works of disputed authorship Voloshinov/Bakhtin, which could enrich it... On the other hand, there is a critic positioning in relation to this concept, placing it as opposed to structuralism and Lotman's systemic thinking, highlighting Bakhtin's polemic perspective and pointing out a possible ambiguity: “Hay que decir, pues, que la definición bajtiniana de texto es, cuanto menos, ambigua y que si en un sentido el término funciona como sinónimo del de enunciado; en otro, es su opuesto diametral y

señala más bien, la materialidad del fenómeno (impresión, reproducción, etc). Esta ambigüedad es particularmente notable en ‘El problema del texto en la filología, la lingüística y otras ciencias humanas’. No doubt, the reader’s active-responsive understanding should make him reflect upon it, introducing a new dialogue with the Circle’s works.

There’s room for a brief comment about the entry *dialogism*, of utmost importance in Bakhtin’s thinking, very well organized and extremely useful for language scholars (among others). Signed by the organizer, Pampa Olga Arán, it presents a chronological view of its development and the various occurrences in the Circle’s work to, in the end, define it as a “postulado que al condensar el imaginario de la dinámica histórica y social, atraviesa todos los conceptos, los une y les otorga sentido”.

In conclusion, just a few comments: as expected in collective works, there are different depths and perspectives in the exposition and apprehension of the concepts, which, by all means, does not invalidate the *Diccionario*. In order to complement it, the work would gain substantially – and so would Bahktin’s scholars and his Circle, if there was a correspondence of each entry with other languages (French and English); but then again we run into the translation problem. Finally, it is important to point out that books organized or written by Brazilian experts of Bakhtin’s work, such as Beth Brait, Carlos A. Faraco, Irene Machado, Gilberto de Castro and Cristóvão Tezza were consulted and widely quoted.

Last but not least, the *Nuevo diccionario de la teoría de Mijail Bajtin* reveals, above all, the penetration and vitality of the Circle’s theory in the neighboring country, and, especially, at the National University of Córdoba. But as Bakhtin tell us “an enunciation always tells us something new”, in the constant struggle for understanding, this *Nuevo Diccionario* brings us, readers/authors, enrichment and change. It’s worth it!

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