

For the style of a genre / *Para o estilo de um gênero*

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ABSTRACT

In the search for the encounter between discursive stylistics and the thinking of Bakhtin and the Circle, we investigate procedures that support the emergence of a style of the genre of religious discourse, hagiography. Beginning with the theoretical and methodological studies of discourse studies, we then use Bakhtinian thinking, especially regarding the notion of outsideness, which places the author as a correlate of the “hero.” We thus intend to discuss the concept of genre style. Stabilities based on regulating movements of specific architectonics of genre will result in a discursive totality, which is open, however, to contingency and the eventness of the act of utterance.

KEYWORDS: Style; Genre; Hagiography; Speech; Outsideness

RESUMO

Procurando a experiência do encontro entre uma estilística discursiva e o pensamento de Bakhtin e do Círculo, investigaremos procedimentos que respaldam a emergência do estilo de um gênero do discurso religioso, a hagiografia. A partir do lugar teórico e metodológico oferecido pelos estudos do discurso, estaremos então subsidiados pelo pensamento bakhtiniano, em especial quanto à noção de exotopia, a qual coloca o autor como um correlato do “herói”. Assim pretendemos problematizar o conceito de estilo do gênero. Estabilidades fundadas em movimentos reguladores de determinada arquitetura genérica radicarão uma totalidade discursiva, aberta, porém, à contingência e à eventicidade do ato de enunciar.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Estilo; Gênero; Hagiografia; Discurso; Exotopia

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Stylistic Vectors

Bakhtin, when remembering that we speak through genres without being aware of their existence, adds: “We speak only in definite speech genres, that is, all our utterances have definite and relatively stable typical *forms of construction of the whole*” (1986, p.78). If we speak through genres, which are stabilized, though precariously, according to a theme, a composition and style as suggested in this study, we can examine how such stabilities are organized, in order to investigate the production process of a particular genre. Let us consider hagiography. Similarly to biography, the hagiographic theme is the history of a particular life. However, there is an emphasis on the ethical constraints exerted by the sphere of religious activities, where the biographies of saints circulate. In addition, the composition, as a form of text organization, has certain equivalences.

In order to examine the compositional construction of genre, we can mention studies on utterance and speech, as they deal with challenges contained in Bakhtin’s thinking. When Bakhtin states that “Speech genres organize our speech in almost the same way as grammatical (syntactical) forms do” (1986, p.78-79), he refers us to studies made on the categories of utterance (people, time, space). Nothing organizes our speech more than the categories introduced in discourse like the person (the subject who takes the word in the act of utterance), time (the moment of speaking), and space (the place of the speaker). From *I, here, now*, we open out, in a singular way, in hagiography, to the *not-I* (he), the *not-here* (somewhere), and the *not-now* (then).

In seeking elucidation of the components of the genre, we find support in a study on these categories by Fiorin (1996), in the description he makes of the system that governs the operation of each of them. Thus, considering as a procedure of the composition of genre the installation in the utterance of the discursive categories of person, time and space, we pay attention to the person, the speaker, installed in the utterance by a narrator who, in hagiography and biography, is usually hidden: the author, equivalent to the speaker, is from early on a component of the work and does not reveal himself as a speaking *I* (the so-called first-person narrator) in these genres. He does not usually take on the role of explicit narrator, i.e., he does not install himself as a participant in his own narration, the subject responsible for narrating the lives of others. Hagiography and biography prioritize the implicit narrator. But this

compositional characteristic has a distinct function in each of these genres. In hagiography, which is “traditional and conventional” (BAKHTIN, 1990, p.185), the hiding of a narrator who ends up by moving away from the *here* and *now* of the act of narration also helps the he who is the subject of the biography to vanish as he begins to deny his own body: the hero of the biography will surrender completely to God. “The *vita* of a saint is a life that has significance in *God*,” says Bakhtin (1990, p.185).

Examining the confluences between the Bakhtinian notion of author and the hero (Bakhtin, 1990, p.4-256) with the discursive notion of the enunciative actor (the speaker), and the actor of the utterance (the hero), we can say that the compositional characteristic referred to helps the author to dilute the author (in the voice of the implicit narrator) and the hero (in the function of the protagonist, the saint in the biography) in the presence of a third party. This third party, as a discursive target established by the whole genre, is the God who completely subsumes the author and hero. Let us then use Bakhtin's reflections on the relationship between author and hero, which shed light on the constitution of hagiography as the life of a saint that “proceeds from the very outset in eternity, as it were” (1990, p.186). Observing that the genre in its internal mechanisms of production allows us to examine how the theme of the hagiography takes shape when compared to the other related genre.

Prioritizing the *he* before the *I*, the *then* before the *now*, the *somewhere* before the *here* are operations of actoralization, temporalization, and spatialization that make up the syntax of the discourse and which support the compositional structure of the genre. Becoming anchored in a determined domain of meaning such as the story of a life constitutes operations that make up the semantics of the discourse, which in turn are the support for the theme of genre. But the composition, far from being a watertight element, allows one to examine its characteristics which are linked to the theme, in order to obtain the whole of a genre.

All through one can find the style, which, as thought of discursively, adjoins the Bakhtinian notion of the “expressive aspect [that] is a constitutive feature of the utterance” (1986, p.90), or “typical generic expression” (1986, p.89). Considering this all as a support for an expressiveness or tone, we can understand that composition and theme can be seen as vectors of the style of the genre, as they pull or guide the genre towards this very expressiveness. We take for the meaning of the term *vector* its

etymology (in Latin, *vector*, *-oris*, that which pulls, takes, transports) or the trace of direction and guidance contained in the term which has been incorporated into other sciences.

The special theme of a genre can be deduced from the comparison with the theme of a similar genre, as well as the examination of the connection of this theme with the compositional structure within the same genre. Together they make up a front which is established in relation to the reciprocal conditioning with the style. The theme and compositional content reverberate in the style of the genre, and this style resonates in them while it becomes established as expressiveness or tone. One direction of such a concept of style is also suggested in Bakhtin's ruminations on the "choice of linguistic means and speech genre" (1986, p.84), which he considers a determining element of the "compositional and stylistic features" (1986, p.84). Bakhtin authorizes us to think that choosing is to set the tone.

If speech stylistics thinks of style as the man and man as a person presupposed by a totality of discourses, a subject defined by how he responds to *the other*, we can here understand a thinking on the boundary with the Bakhtinian philosophy of language with regard to the utterance as a "*real unit* of speech communication" (1986, p.71): this utterance, which, in order to be concrete, necessarily supposes the "speech subjects" (1986, p.71). Bakhtin, when discussing the architectonics of the genre, refers to the constitutive particularity of the utterance, concerning "the relation of the utterance with the *speaker himself* (the author of the utterance) and *to the other* participants in the speech communication" (1986, p.84). Therefore, privileging the style of the genre as an "expressive intonation" (1986, p.85) is not foreign to discursive studies on style. Resulting from the appropriation made of the theme and the compositional structure in the act of constitutive utterance of genre as a concrete utterance, such intonation emerges as style. "One of the means of expressing the speaker's emotionally evaluative attitude toward the subject of his speech is expressive intonation, which resounds clearly in oral speech" (1986, p.85).

These propositions of Bakhtin are examined by the studies already mentioned on utterance, such as those developed by Fiorin (1996), which, in (re)using Benveniste's concept of an utterance as a mediating instance between language and discourse, develops its two theses on an utterance systematized according to categories of person,

time and space (1996, p.22): “a) the categories of person, time and space are governed by the same principles; b) its operation in discourse is unstable, but this instability obeys certain constraints”¹. This work provides the resources for the analysis developed here on the use of such categories in the constituent utterance of a genre.

We can thus confirm such categories as one of the elements of the composition of a highly stable genre, in order to produce a brief description of certain procedures that make up the organization of hagiography. As a compositional characteristic of the genre and a nuclear point of the discursivization of the category of person, we have the *he* in biography, which occupies a space away from the *here* of the act of utterance: a space *somewhere*, joined to the anchoring of those who have come and gone in a time of *then*. There is a proliferation of past reference marks for time, which pierce the narration in the time which is distance from the *now* of the act of utterance. In the sample of hagiography used in our study (Varazze, 2003, p.352-354), we find occurrences such as “Around the year of our Lord 270, in the time of Emperor Claudius” (2003, p.352), designating the start of the penitence of the saint in the biography.

We also have the occurrence of the adverbial formula *once*, to name the moment when an abbot, the saint’s interlocutor, crossed the River Jordan, a fact which led to the meeting of the old man with the subject of the biography. In the syntax of the sentence, we see the frequent use of reduced or not reduced adverbial, temporal or causal subordinate clauses, used with the function of a past verb tense marker in this example of hagiography. Here is one example: “*Hearing his name being called*, he [the abbot] was surprised” (2003, p.352). The surprise of the abbot is thus an event simultaneous to his being called, which came from the saint, as we shall see. We have a gift from the past: the surprise of the abbot is concomitant, so it is present in relation to that past moment, when the abbot heard his name. We can also note another case, here part of the outcome, when the abbot began to meditate on the body of the dead Mary of Egypt: “*Meditating on the fact*, the old man concluded that she [the saint] *had ended* her life in the desert the previous year, shortly *after having received* the sacrament of the Lord (2003, p.354). In *he concluded*, there is a recurrence of a present of the past: something was concluded simultaneously with the act of meditation. In turn, in *she ended her life*

¹ a) as categorias de pessoa, tempo e espaço são regidas pelos mesmos princípios; b) seu funcionamento no discurso é instável, mas essa instabilidade obedece a determinadas coerções.

(died) the previousness in relation to the act of concluding is emphasized, resulting in a past of the past (pluperfect). This is similar to what happens with *after having received*.

Another occurrence maintains what is narrated distant from the *now* of the act of narrating, as the delineation of a compositional structure of the genre. Also in the final scene, where the saint was about to be buried, we find: “*Seeing a lion meekly coming towards him, the old man said to it [...]*” (2003, p.354.). In *said to it*, there is another concomitant reference point in relation to the past referential point, another present from the past. The repeated use of the present of the past, privileging the past temporal tense to discursivize this world, has its own function in the whole genre.

Both the discursive category of time and the linguistic resources employed concern a language compared according to the functionality acquired within the genre itself, and this is why they constitute mechanisms that articulate stylistic vectors for the genre. Bakhtin (1986, p.87) says: “A speech genre is not a form of language but a typical form of utterance; as such the genre also includes a certain typical kind of expression that inheres in it.” He also says, having alerted us to the fact that the sentence, like the word, considered in their grammatical completeness, are clear because they are abstract and present the “finality of an element, but not of the whole (1986, p.83): “Both the word and the sentence as *language units* are devoid of expressive intonation” (1986, p.85). The procedures emphasized in the composition of the genre, which privilege as a person the *he* who is the subject of the biography, as place, the *somewhere*, launching person and space into an articulation with a time of *then*, all of which are linked to the religious theme, ultimately give an unstressed tone to the authorial voice, which will be in line with a certain “*renunciation* of his position outside the saint” (Bakhtin, 1990, p.186): a renunciation of an *outside* position, whether it is outside oneself or outside the hero of the biography, a position which would make feasible the non-consummation of the subject and the threshold state of aesthetic finalization.

With hagiography we have a composition, theme and style that root the author as someone who “renounces himself here, renounces his own individually answerable activity” (1990, p.185). This genre, together with those sayings of popular wisdom such as proverbs, has become independent of the yoke of authorial signature. But such authority is confirmed in its own way, while responsibility for the act of narration ends

up being diluted into the third person, which is God. In order for this to happen one can turn to “the word’s ‘stylistic aura’”, as Bakhtin (1986, p.87-88) calls it, while insisting that the typical expressiveness of a genre is not linked to words as units of language, “which belong to *nobody*” (1986, p.84). He then continues: “It is an echo of the generic whole that resounds in the word” (1986, p.88.). Such expressiveness, called by the author “expressive intonation” (1986, p.70) refers to the possibilities of new inflections of tone. Then, as the result of the possible transfer of a genre of one sphere to another, Bakhtin alludes to a “parodic-ironic reaccentuation” (1986, p.80). The sad tone of an epitaph may become amusing: as a result we have “comical epitaphs” (1986, p.87).

What hagiography wants to say takes on a tone of seriousness coupled with an unshakable truth, while the subject is stated in a body which is fixedly closed and through an event which is also fixedly closed. In this direction the theme echoes and the cited instances of compositional organization resound. From the observation of how such resources are processed throughout the genre, we obtain the style which is inclined to dilute tensions between the author and hero, in the prevalence of the influence of a third on both. We speak of tensions peculiar to an outsidership, which, for Bakhtin, is established in the aesthetic event, which is not the case of hagiography. Outsidership concerns the necessary incompleteness of both the author and the hero in the Romanesque aesthetic act, which produces the *unconsummated man* in search of aesthetic finalization. Here is a Bakhtinian formulation, which according to Tezza (1996, p.284), is “a definition that exceeds the aesthetic”²: “If I am consummated and my life is consummated, I am no longer capable of living and acting. For in order to live and act, I need to be unconsummated, I need to be open for myself” (Bakhtin, 1990, p.14).

We believe that, in the treatment given to outsidership by the architectonic of the genre, we find one of the vectors of style of the genre: the minimization of outsidership guides the style of the hagiography. In utterances in this genre one does not find the aesthetic finalization relative to an author who has cast himself *outside* the hero or *outside* himself. We do not have, in this religious event, an author (narrator) that clears “the whole field of life for the hero and his existence” (Bakhtin, 1990, p.14). Thus the event “consummated from within itself” is confirmed (Bakhtin, 1990, p.14). Being

² *definição que ultrapassa a estética.*

outside the hero to compose him, while also leaving himself, is a position of outsideness, so that, from the non-consummation, the consciousness of another consciousness can be perceived; it is the gesture of lightness directed towards the space of a threshold, incompatible with the weight of hagiographic conventionality. Linguistic resources that, discursively organized in the demonstration of the categories of person, time and space, project the “word’s generic expression – and its generic expressive intonation)” (1986, p.88), contribute to this conventionality. In the case of hagiography the style of the genre is geared to minimizing the outsideness in the tensions between author and hero.

Returning to what was described on the use of the categories of person, time and place in the hagiographic utterance, the use of the recurring use of temporal adverbial subordinate clauses with the function of the past marker can be seen. For such clauses, which are impregnated by the expressive intonation of genre, we have selected another case, still on the encounter of the abbot with the dead saint: “*While he was thinking this, he saw the following words engraved on the ground*” (Varazze, 2003, p.354). Among the various concomitant elements in relation to the past reference mark, with the dominance of the present of the past, whether specific (past tense), or durative (imperfect), and non-concomitance, preferably oriented to a point prior to the past marker (pluperfect), hagiography is definitely anchored in the temporal system of the past. Such anchoring is a compositional marker of the genre and is linked to another, the use made of the quoted discourse, which, in hagiography, mainly summons direct discourse. Not favoring bivocalism, the markers of separation between the speeches of the abbot and the saint are clear in the discourse being cited. Noteworthy is the segment where Mary of Egypt tells her story from her birth in Egypt, through arrival in Jerusalem, including the crossing of the Jordan, until reaching the desert: three lengthy paragraphs clearly separated from the citing discourse are introduced by the following formulation of the citing discourse: *But faced with the vehement insistence [of the abbot], she told: [...]*. This chosen way to quote the speech of others was used with the fixed purpose of composing a stylistic vector of the genre. Through this dominance, the effect of the truth is strengthened, and the presence of the narrator in the quoting discourse is attenuated. With this mechanism of giving priority to quoting the speech of others, the narrator does not appear: what is important are the words of the saint and

abbot, which are cited with an air of transparency. These words are spared the impregnation of the point of view of others, found in the citing discourse. The manner of organizing the quoted speech can be one of the vectors for the style or tone of the genre, and, in terms of the compositional structure, can help to set this tone. After stating that expressive intonation is understood differently to oral execution, Bakhtin says in a footnote: “Of course, intonation is recognized by us and exists as a stylistic factor even with the silent reading of written speech” (1986, p.85).

The compositional structure and the theme then prepare the “generic expressive intonation” (1986, p.88). The categories of person, time and space, as well as “the dynamism characterizing the interorientation of the author’s and another person’s speech (Bakhtin, 1986a, p.125) constitute stabilities which, as stylistic vectors, require other utterances of the same genre to be examined, so that the whole genre is also confirmed according to a numeric total. But for the style of the genre the whole is also in the parts. Describing the mechanisms of the construction of a single utterance refers to the tone of the genre, if we there identify stylistic vectors in the mode of the internal organization of the genre.

For *hagiography*, for now we can take as a basis one of the 170 lives of saints, which make up the *Golden Legend*, a document on medieval Christianity, written in the thirteenth century by the Archbishop of Genoa, Jacopo de Varazze, who lived from 1229 to 1298. We emphasize the principle that any generic whole, that is, one, two, three or more utterances, from which one can form a genre as “relatively stable typical forms of construction of the whole” (Bakhtin, 1986, p.78), appears in the stylistic vectors which are implemented according to what is contained by the way of saying and what is said. This allows the analyst to obtain the whole as a presence which is part of the order of what is to come and what has been, as a “*speech plan*” (Bakhtin, 1986, p.77). Having at hand a single text, the analyst is faced with the presence of this speech purpose, responsible for the expressive tone of the genre. Naming the purpose as the “subjective aspect of the utterance” (1986, p.77), Bakhtin adds this idea:

Therefore, the immediate participants in communication, orienting themselves with respect to the situation and the preceding utterances, easily and quickly grasp the speaker’s speech plans, his speech will. And from the very beginning of his words they sense the developing whole of the utterance (1986, p.77-78).

Bakhtin's thinking certainly helps us to elucidate the principle that, in order to understand the style of the genre, we conceive a whole which is in the parts. From here we can examine another principle, that whereby every utterance of a genre cannot be seen as a unit in itself, or the utterances cannot be seen as units when placed next to one another, which would lead one to suppose that we can obtain the whole through the mere sum of the parts. The architectonic of a genre is an organized scheme. Each utterance relative to a generic whole has a function in the whole. When we have a single text, we therefore operate, not only with the realized presence of the speaker of that text, but also with the potentialized presence of the speakers of other texts grouped by the same genre. This happens thanks to the stylistic vectors offered within the limits of a single text. These vectors guide the analysis of the style of the genre, as a starting point to be proven in the reading of other texts. In a second step after the analysis of the first text, two, three or more utterances supposedly united by the same genre will be used for the same purposes.

Understanding that the texts concerning the genre we have chosen to examine underlie *the relatively stable utterance* that, as a whole, defines the genre, we have, in the text under analysis, the relationship with what has already been said and what is going to be said inside the hagiographic genre. We have compositional and thematic stabilities, which become peculiarly conventional to define the style of the hagiography. Bakhtin, alluding to the more or less standardized genres, notes that "particularly the high and official ones, are compulsory and extremely stable" (1986, p.79). Thus, a hagiographic utterance which the analyst comes across can be seen as suitable for the constituent vectors of the style of an official genre such as *hagiography* to be described. The biography of Saint Mary of Egypt, the starting point for the analysis of the style of the genre, initiates the positioning of the subject in the world, which confirms the text as a concrete utterance. The subject (author, or speaker, as Bakhtin wishes), presupposed each time he is mentioned as a new and unique utterance every time it is spoken, is now seen as a specific responsively and responsibly occupied place, in a particular ethical organization that supports the whole genre.

The World of the Divine

Let us return to the genre that takes place in the divine world, so that we can be given the account of “a life that has significance in *God*”. Bakhtin (1990, p.185) says, when pointing to the characteristic that pervades the genre: “the author’s sense of reverence leaves no room for individual initiative, for individual choice of expression” (1990, p.185), adding that: “The form of a *vita* is conventional traditionally, is sanctioned by incontestable authority” (1990, p.185). Discursively understanding that author and reader are both parts of the subject that is speaking, we believe we can extend, from the author to the reader of a hagiography, the “reverent awe” that obstructs the freedom of one and the other as a presupposed initiative to the act of utterance. An individualized reading, which separates possibilities of doubt or a crisis of confidence in what is narrated, is an expectation created by the genre. The style of a genre creates expectations in reading, which is why the genre can be initiated and subverted, as in a parody, in which the serious tone can become comic.

Let us now examine in more detail the biography of Saint Mary of Egypt, with a view to finding the means by which a constituent utterance which is part of a whole may echo the theme of the whole. The hagiographic text begins as follows:

Saint Mary of Egypt

Mary of Egypt, called the Sinner, spent 47 years in the desert in austere penance, starting around the year of our Lord 270, at the time of the Emperor Claudius.

Once an abbot named Zosimas crossed the Jordan River and travelled through a great desert looking for a holy hermit, when he saw a naked person whose body had been blackened by the sun walking. It was Mary of Egypt, who immediately fled, with Zosimas chasing her, and she asked: “Abbot Zosimas, why are you chasing me? Excuse me, I cannot show my face because I’m a woman and I’m naked, so give me your cloak so that I can look at you without being embarrassed”. He was surprised to hear his name being called, and after giving her his cloak fell at her feet and asked her to bless him. She said: “It is you, Father, who are adorned by priestly dignity, who should bless me.”

Realizing that she knew his name and his position impressed him even more, and he insisted that she bless him. But she said: “Blessed be God, the Redeemer of our souls.” While she was praying with outstretched hands, Zosimas saw she had risen a cubit from the ground (Varazze, 2003, p.352).

The narrator continues, inserting the autobiographical segment on Mary of Egypt, when “Zosimas asked her in the name of the Lord to tell him the story of her life” (2003, p.352). Initially hesitant, Mary of Egypt alerted the Abbot to the fact that he certainly would run away scared, as if he had seen a serpent: “Your ears will be tainted by my words and the air contaminated by sordid details” (2003, p.352). The abbot insisted so much that Mary of Egypt started narrating the saga of a woman who, born in Egypt, went to Alexandria, where she publicly gave herself to libertinism: “I never refused to give myself to anyone” (2003, p.353). Mary continued, recounting a trip to Jerusalem in the company of sailors who were going there to worship the Holy Cross, who would only take her after her offer: “I can give you my body as payment” (2003, p.353). And this was what happened.

Upon arrival in Jerusalem there followed a certain sequence of events related to the tests undergone by women trying to worship the cross: the impediment triggered by an invisible force, the frequent and enigmatic repulses suffered in the doorway of the church, while “everybody else entered unhindered” (2003, p.353). Mary then concluded that the cause of all this was enormity of her crimes. She beat her chest with her hands; shed bitter tears, sighed deeply from the bottom of her heart, until she lifted up her head to see the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom she asked to forgive her sins, and give her permission to worship the Holy Cross, but not before promising to renounce the world and henceforth lead a chaste life. Mary of Egypt, trusting in the blessed Mary, finally passed through the door. After worshipping the Holy Cross, she received three coins from a stranger, with which she bought three loaves, while she heard a voice saying to her: “If you cross the Jordan, you will be saved”.

So Mary of Egypt recounted how she came to the desert, where, for 47 years, she did not see a single man and only ate those three loaves that she had brought with her, which were now as hard as rocks. Mary of Egypt continued: “During the first seventeen years spent in the wilderness, I was tormented by the temptations of the flesh, but I have now conquered them, with the grace of God” (2003, p.353). To this she added: “Now that I have told my whole story, I ask you to pray to God for me” (2003, p.353). With the end of this autobiographical account, the old man knelt down and blessed the slave of the Lord, followed by a request from Mary of Egypt to the abbot: “I

ask you on the day of the Lord's Supper to come to the banks of Jordan and bring the body the Lord" (2003, p.353). This would take place one year after that date.

When this day came, Mary of Egypt made the sign of the cross over the water and came to meet the abbot, who was overcome by astonishment. After the communion, she returned to the solitude of the desert, having made another agreement with the monk: in the following year Holy Communion would again be held in the same place. The old man returned to the place at the arranged time, but he found Mary of Egypt dead. Around her head, these words had been engraved in the ground: "Zosimas, bury the body of Mary, return her dust to the ground and pray for me to the Lord, through whose order I left this world on the second day of April" (2003, p.353).

Let us return to the compositional marks which have been highlighted as the use of the category of person. Using the third person in place of the first person is a resource that can exalt the *persona*. "Zosimas, bury the body of Mary [of her] pray for me [I]." Mary of Egypt here refers to herself as *she*. Here the use of *she* has the value of *I*, a fact which is relative to the neutralization of the opposition between the third and first person in benefit of the third person, as Fiorin discusses (1996, p.85), when formalizing the principles of the installation of the category of person in discourse (1996, p.59-126). This fact, on the discursive level, enables Mary, when she calls herself *she* ("body of Mary"), to definitively detach herself from her humanity and join the world of the divine. The official sacredness that supports the thematic homogeneity of this utterance and which constitutes a vector of the style of the genre is strengthened. The world of the divine, which gives a "stylistic aura" to these words which are still in the sand, converges to the use of the syntactic resource of the neutralization of the opposition between one person (the third) and another (the first). Humanity and everyday life, as the background of the meaning denied by the roles that the protagonist plays in the progression of the narration, join the themes which founds the official sacred element. The roles played by the character, in keeping with the theme outlined in this text, constitute another stylistic vector, now linked to the very theme of the hagiography.

Along with the discursive categories of person, time and space, which, as discursive stabilities, simulate a distancing of the act of utterance, we thus have the guidance given to the theme, which, the more the protagonist is part of the order of a sacredness linked to the Revealed Word, the less this protagonist is linked to human

vulnerabilities. The narration continues in a tone of narrating the unquestionable truth, to which the use made of the facts of the language contributes. Let us consider the phrasal structure of the sentence made up by subordination, in which we highlight the adverbial subordinate clause, whether it is temporal or causal. This structure recurs in the chain of past referential markers throughout the text. Here are some more cases: “*Realizing that she knew his name and his position, he was even more impressed*” (Varazze, 2003, p.352): “*While she was praying with outstretched hands, Zosimas saw she had risen a cubit from the ground*” (2003, p.352), “*Seeing this, the old man began to wonder if it was not a spirit that was pretending to pray*” (2003, p.352), “*Seeing this, taken by surprise, he humbly prostrated himself at her feet*” (2003, p.353).

Seen as a concrete utterance, a text relative to an entire genre can be confirmed as a unit that offers vectors to define the style of the genre itself. The constraints exerted on the theme and the composition by the spheres of institutionalized activity (such as those relating to the Church, School, and Journal) guide the style of the genre. Within the genre, the style is founded in response to the *other*, although this *other* has an opposite tone. Says Bakhtin (1986, p.92): “The utterance is filled with dialogic overtones, and they must be taken into account in order to understand fully the style of the utterance”.

Here we begin to enter another area of the thinking of Mikhail Bakhtin (1987), where he compares the official and popular culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In hagiography, one can find the world view linked to the official culture of the Middle Ages, this official culture understood with the meaning used by Bakhtin, to highlight the contrast to it: that of the second world, that of the laughter of the people and opposed to serious and official forms of worship and Church ceremonies. To extend his research on this popular culture, Bakhtin examines that which is antagonistic to it, the official feast, which “tended to consecrate stability, immutability and permanence of the rules governing the world” (1984, p.9). When discussing norms and religious taboos that upheld eternal truth, the mainstay of the medieval system of religious imagery, he also highlights the “monolithically serious” “tone” (1984, p.8), of the official feast in which the comic principle had no place.

If, according to Bakhtin, the carnivalesque vision was “opposed to all that was ready-made and completed, to all pretense at immutability” (1984, p.11), constituting a

vision that neither asked for or demanded anything, insofar that it freed the individual from piety, we have been able to see, in Bakhtin's thinking, a support to understand the theme of hagiography, as presented in the processing of the genre. We have here a theme that, full of religious dogmatism, is far from the joyful relativity of truths, minimizing the permutation between high and low bodies, which is so dear to the carnivalesque vision. Thus the crowning of a closed body, contrary to the grotesque or unconsummated body, is now exalted as witness of the conversion of a sinner. In the case of the text in question, it is the body of Saint Mary of Egypt. We can remember allusions she made to sexual activity (Varazze, 2003, p.353): "the enormity of my crimes," "air contaminated by sordid details," "I was tormented by the temptations of the flesh, but now I have conquered them, with the grace of God".

Taking the notion of ethics as a framework of moral values that divide the perceived world into good and evil, we have a theme that continues the perpetuation of hierarchies, not only those of the Church: Zosimas, according to Mary of Egypt, should not prostrate himself at her feet, as he tried. "She said, 'It is you, Father, who are adorned by priestly dignity, who should bless me'" (Varazze, 2003, p.352). Apart from preserving the hierarchy within the Church, the world order remains stable, which is supported by the textualization of the utterance, in which the recurrent use of the subordinate adverbial clauses to fix the past temporal system echoes. The discursive purpose to distance the narrated world now narrated from the present from the act of narrating is strengthened.

Let us move to another phrasal structure, which repeatedly materializes in the utterance a certain logic of thinking, the logic of implication, as this case: "Because I was asked to pay for the ticket, I replied: 'I have no money'" (Varazze, 2003, p.353). Paraphrasing, we have: "They asked me to pay for the ticket, I had no money; I wanted to, should have, could have, and knew how to sell my body, and so I did it". This is the logical implication, which, from this sentence structure, materializes a certain coherence relative to the roles played by the protagonist. The logic of implication (*x, therefore y*) leads to definite certainties, part of the semantics of the founding time and space of the body of the hero.

Also the logic of granting and implication can be thought of in function of the discursive purpose of the genre. The implication (*x, therefore y*), which obtains its

functionality in the pairing with the logic of concession (*despite x, y*), as Zilberberg (2006) shows, supports the style of the genre. There are genres that refer to a discursive purpose accustomed to the tone of unchallenged authority; here, truth is constructed according to the dominance of the logic of implication both in the utterance, for the protagonist, as in what is uttered, for the author and reader. As expressiveness or tone, the style of a genre can be linked to the dominance of one of these logics over the other. Implicative logic, the territory of absolute rationality, leads to minimization of actorial outsideness, i.e., the minimizing of the body openings of the author and the hero towards a place outside themselves and out of the *other*. Thus the bodies closed in the constitution of the hagiographic style are confirmed. The logic of the implication will certainly intensify the authority of what is said, while the tone of unchallenged authority supports the generic expressiveness.

The genre offers a relatively stable tone for its style. In turn, the author's encounter with the genre, assuming the author has chosen this genre, is equivalent to the encounter of man with the world: a contingent man, a contingent world. But such precariousness can be silenced in the form of establishing the theme, which is responsive to ethical constraints. The more closed the body, the less contingent it will be; the less precarious, as a special way of guiding the responsiveness to the *other*. With responsiveness comes the responsibility of the act of utterance. The author, in choosing the genre, is preparing for the encounter with the intonation or the style of the genre. Certainly residues of the responsibility of the act will remain in the architectonic of the genre, and these residues will make constraints reverberate, and, as effects of meaning, they can be described. Everything demarcates the tone or expressiveness that, in the genre, ultimately materializes as man's experience in the world. The encounter between the author / speaker and the chosen genre takes place according to mutual attractions, gathered around a discursive purpose. The authorial style remains on the fringe of the style of the genre: the former takes place in this encounter with the latter.

In the case of hagiography, a certain degree of closure of the “boundaries of each concrete utterance” (Bakhtin, 1986, p.71), determined by the “change of speaking subjects” (1986, p.71-72) joins the authorial signature that renounces itself. The role of the author, withdrawn into the humility “which renounces all initiative,” as Bakhtin (1990, p.185) states, also makes the role of the reader in his interpretative function

withdraw. It is impossible not to believe in miracles, and here there is a parameter of constructed truth.

If the world narrated in hagiography can be thought of as an object of knowledge, with which the reader enters in conjunction in order to accept it or deny it in part or completely, we can agree with Greimas (1983) that the architectonic of this genre provides the reader with the divine world as an object of value which is presented according to what is true and necessary; but above all, according to what is inevitable. The components of the hagiographic narration cannot be put in check; they must be exactly as they are. In this increase in the density of the trust deed established in the utterance, we have another constraint that supports the theme, and, through this constraint, we find the imposition of another stylistic vector of the genre. The boundaries which presume alternations between author and reader in free combinations gradually close: both are withdrawn in the humility before the third which fills up everything.

The generic constraints unfold therefore, according to ideals and aspirations that moralize the world, taking moralization as the meaning of axiology or of moral worth of values. For this, the theme of a genre responds to its inherent dating, discursivizing the historical context and bringing to light visions in conflict, as is the case of the official culture of the Middle Ages, which contains the denial of its opposite, the carnivalesque worldview, as presented by Bakhtin (1984). Converging with the tone of hagiography, a determined ethical structure that permeates the genre can certainly be found, while confronting visions are muffled. The immutability of official culture is linked to this resistance of the object or the phenomenon itself, the narrated world. It is quite impossible not to believe the facts narrated in the hagiography, if we give ourselves over to the singular style of this biography. Thematically organized around an object of inevitable belief, hagiography thus reaffirms the logic of the implication that, in this case, governs the logic of the concession. The architectonic of the genre ends up by summoning this formulation from the reader: “the miraculous life is inevitably true, so I believe in it.” The unchallenged authority of hagiography comes from the Revealed Word, a discourse near to hagiography. This formulation of the reader becomes possible, even though the opposite could be proposed by an a priori judgment, based on a concessive formulation: “Although absurd, I believe it”.

Given the chain of miracles, whose mode of discursivization reinforces a peculiar contract of trust between author and reader, confidence in relation to the figures or images the world of the divine is not lost: it is a world that *cannot be other* than it is. In addition to there being no destabilization of belief in such images brought together in the narration, either when Mary of Egypt rises a few inches off the ground or when she walks over the waters of the River Jordan, or even when, at the end, a lion talks with the priest in order to help in the burial of the body of the saint, the resistance of the perceived object / world imposes absolute belief in this world, which cannot be other than it is. Thus the old man is able to talk in a friendly way to the lion:

Seeing a lion meekly coming towards him, the old man said to it: "This saint asked to be buried here, but I cannot dig in the dirt because I'm old and have no tools. Why don't you dig the ground so we can bury her holy body?" The lion began to dig a pit and made a suitable grave, and then went away as meek as a lamb, while the old man returned to his monastery, glorifying God. (Varazze, 2003, p.354)

Final considerations

We understand that, linked to the ethical treatment given to the subject, the transit of hagiography between the minimal degrees of outsideness is strengthened as a stylistic vector. The author and hero become one, so that the triumphant vision is that of God. If Bakhtin suggested that, in this genre, the author is made from a humility which renounces his or her own initiative, we can see that this humility is required from the author and reader, according to a style that pervades the whole of the utterance: "When selecting words we proceed from the planned whole of our utterance and this whole that we have planned and created is always expressive" (1986, p.86).

Insofar as the author, a component of the work, allows himself to assume himself as outside his own self, coming out of himself, in the outside environment he perceives the world from a place outside himself and encounters his double. In the "discourse of art," compared to "that of life", a maximum gradient of outsideness can then take place. In this case the author, when maintaining a certain distance from himself, will encounter the hero, but not merging with the hero, who has become a visible seer. The object of the perception of the author, the hero, the creature, leaves the

passive place of the perceived thing to become, he himself, a perceiving subject. This double of the author, the hero, will then have an aesthetic finalization, which does not refer in any way to the concept of closure or imprisonment. As a visible seer, an agent and patient of the perception, the hero is a subject perceived by the author and a percipient of the author. The outside finalization never imprisons the author, who, already having left himself and inhabiting an environment outside himself, participates in the very act of generosity, the giving of himself, when bringing the other to light, who, through the surplus of vision of the very author, is given in one of his profiles, or in more than one concurrently, depending on the style that emerges. Thus outsideness, which is characterized by a degree of estrangement between author and hero, occupies this place which is outside every presence, so that styles of genres are defined. This estrangement between two subjects, which can be measured in degrees of distance between them, can be seen in the equation: the greater the distance between author and hero, the more definite the space where I am outside myself, and that where the hero is outside himself, where the tension of the relationship which contains the two increases. The shorter the distance, the more I am installed inside my hero, or within myself; or together we may also ultimately merge into a third, which may be the Cartesian God, the solution for all thresholds, the ultimate end, the synthesis of unquestioned authority. Meanwhile, vectors for the style of a genre are outlined: a) the compositional stabilities, b) thematic orientation, c) the historical positioning of the subject, e) openness to greater or lesser degrees of outsideness in the relationship between author and hero.

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