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BAKHTIN, M. *Teoria do romance III: o romance como gênero literário* [*Theory of the Novel III: The Novel as a Literary Genre*]. Tradução, posfácio e notas Paulo Bezerra; organização da edição russa de Serguei Botcharov e Vadim Kójinov. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2019. 144p.

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Mikhail Bakhtin



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As it is well known to readers who follow the publication of the Circle's works by Editora 34 [34 Publishing House], *Teoria do romance I* [*Theory of the Novel I*], *Teoria do romance II* [*Theory of the Novel II*] and now *Teoria do romance III* [*Theory of the Novel III*] comprise the third volume of Mikhail Bakhtin's *Collected Works in Seven Volumes* [*Sobranie sotchiniênii v siémi tomakh*], edited by Vadim Valerianovich Kozhinov (1930-2001) and Sergei Georgievich Bocharov (1929), who, according to Grillo (2009), are Bakhtin's literary executors. After Kozhinov's death, Grillo (2009) explains, Bocharov became responsible for coordinating the project of the collected works. According to the Nota à edição brasileira [Note to the Brazilian Edition] of *Teoria do romance I* [*Theory of the Novel I*] (BAKHTIN, 2015), it was Bocharov who allowed Paulo Bezerra and the publishing house to split the third volume of the *Collected Works* into three books.

As *Teoria do romance III* [*Theory of the Novel III*] completed the publication of Bakhtin's theory of the novel, it is now possible to have a privileged view of the texts that comprise the third volume of the *Collected Works*. Thus, it is easier to note that the number of essays in the three volumes does not totally correspond to the number of essays that make up *Questões de literatura e de estética: a teoria do romance* [*Questions of Literature and Aesthetics: The Theory of the Novel*] (henceforth *QLE*) (BAKHTIN, 2002). The first essay in *QLA*, The Problem of Content, Material and Form in Verbal Art,¹ is not in any of the three volumes of *Teoria do romance* [*Theory of the Novel*]. According to Bezerra (2015), it was removed from the third volume of the *Collected Works* because the Russian editors deemed it a more general text on the theory of literature that aimed to oppose Russian formalism. Grillo (2009) informs that it was published in the first volume of the *Collected Works* along with the texts Art and Answerability,² *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*,³ and Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity.⁴

¹ TN. The English translation of this essay was published in the essay collection titled *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. [BAKHTIN, M. The Problem of Content, Material and Form in Verbal Art. Translated by Kenneth Brostrom. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Edited by Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov; translated by Vadim Liapunov. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990. pp. 257-325.]

² TN. The English translation of this text was also published in the collection *Art and Answerability*. [BAKHTIN, M. Art and Answerability. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Edited by Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov; translated by Vadim Liapunov. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990. pp. 1-3.]

The second essay Discourse in the Novel was published by Editora 34 [34 Publishing House] in the first volume of the trilogy: *Teoria do romance I: A estilística* [Theory of the Novel I: Stylistics] (BAKHTIN, 2015).⁵ Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics, the third essay of *QLE*, was published in *Teoria do romance II: As formas do tempo e do cronotopo* [Theory of the Novel II: The Forms of Time and of the Chronotope] (BAKHTIN, 2018).⁶ It is noteworthy that Paulo Bezerra makes a small change in the translation of the essay's title: As formas do tempo e do cronotopo no romance: um ensaio de poética histórica [Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: An Essay on Historical Poetics]. Moreover, it is important to highlight that the reviews of *Teoria do romance I* [Theory of the Novel I] and *Teoria do romance II* [Theory of the Novel II] were published in *Bakhtiniana* right after the books were released. Silva's review of the first volume was published in the first issue of 2006 (SILVA, 2016)⁷ and Queijo's review of the second volume, in the second issue of 2019 (QUEIJO, 2019).⁸

³ BAKHTIN, M. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Translated by Vadim Liapunov. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1993.

⁴ TN. The English translation of this essay was also published in the collection *Art and Answerability*. [BAKHTIN, M. Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Edited by Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov; translated by Vadim Liapunov. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990b. pp. 4-256.]

⁵ TN. The English translation of this essay was published in the collection *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. [BAKHTIN, M. Discourse in the Novel. In: BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Edited by Michael Holquist; translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981. pp.259-422.]

⁶ TN. The English translation of this essay was also published in the collection *The Dialogic Imagination* [BAKHTIN, M. Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics. In: BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Edited by Michael Holquist; translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981. pp.84-258.]

⁷ SILVA, A. P. P. F. BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Teoria do romance I: a estilística* [Theory of the Novel I: Stylistics]. Translation, afterword, notes and glossary by Paulo Bezerra; Russian edition organizers Serguei Botcharov and Vadim Kójinov. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2015. 256p. Translated by Carlos Renato Lopes. *Bakhtiniana, Rev. Estud. Discurso*, São Paulo, v. 11, n. 1, p. 234-239, 2016. Available at: http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2176-45732016000100264&lng=en&nrm=iso&tlng=en. Access on: Feb. 07, 2020.

⁸ QUEIJO, M. E. S. BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Teoria do romance II: As formas do tempo e do cronotopo* [Theory of the Novel II: The Forms of Time and of the Chronotope]. Translation, afterword and notes by Paulo Bezerra; Russian edition organizers Serguei Botcharov and Vadim Kójinov. São Paulo: Editora 34, 2018. 272p. Translation revised by Robin Driver. *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 158-167, 2019. Available at: http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2176-45732019000200150&lng=en&nrm=iso.&tlng=en. Access on: Feb. 07, 2020.

The *QLE* collection ends with three shorter essays: Da pré-história do discurso romanesco [From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse],⁹ Epos e o romance (sobre a metodologia do estudo do romance) [Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel]¹⁰ and Rabelais e Gógol (arte do discurso e cultura cômica popular) [Rabelais and Gogol (The Art of Discourse and the Popular Culture of Laughter)].¹¹ The first two essays are in *Teoria do romance III: o romance como gênero literário* [*Theory of the Novel III: The Novel as a Literary Genre*] (BAKHTIN, 2019), but their titles are somewhat different. The latter essay, however, is published in the fourth volume of the *Collected Works*, which, according to Grillo (2009), compiles Bakhtin's texts on Rabelais, including, obviously, his work on François Rabelais and popular culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, published in Brazil by Hucitec, titled, in Portuguese, *A cultura popular na Idade Média e no Renascimento: o contexto de François Rabelais* [*Popular Culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Context of François Rabelais*] (BAKHTIN, 2010).¹²

As to the essays that comprise *Teoria do romance III* [*Theory of the Novel III*], the reader at first recognizes only one, namely, Sobre a pré-história do discurso romanesco [On the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse] as the title resembles the former one, Da pré-história do discurso romanesco [From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse]. However, the title of the second essay, which is also the subtitle of the book, may seem unfamiliar to the reader: The Novel as a Literary Genre. In the Afterword titled O fechamento de um grande ciclo teórico [The Completion of a Broad Theoretical Cycle], Bezerra (2019) explains that this was the original title of the essay, which was published, in a fragmented way, with the title Epic and Novel. The same title is found in its translation into English, Spanish, French, and Italian: Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel (BAKHTIN, 1981); Épica y novela: (acerca de la metodología del análisis novelístico) (BAJTÍN, 1989); Récit épique et

⁹ TN. The English translation of this essay was published in the collection *The Dialogic Imagination* [BAKHTIN, M. From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse. In: BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Edited by Michael Holquist; translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981. pp.41-83.]

¹⁰ TN. The reference to the English translation of this essay is in References, at the end of this review.

¹¹ TN. This essay was translated into English by Patricia Sollner and published at *Mississippi Review*, ISSN 0047-7559. [BAKHTIN, M. Rabelais and Gogol: The Art of Discourse and the Popular Culture of Laughter. Translated by Patricia Sollner. *Mississippi Review*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 34-50, 1983.]

¹² TN. The English version of this book is titled *Rabelais and His World*. [BAKHTIN, M. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984.]

roman: (méthodologie de l'analyse du roman) (BAKHTINE, 1978); Epos e romanzo: sulla metodologia dello studio del romanzo (BACHTIN, 2001). According to Bezerra (2019), the original title was restored by the editors of the *Collected Works* so it could totally correspond to Bakhtin's project that aimed to discuss "the novel as a particular literary genre," thus showing "the approximation and distancing of the two genres" (p. 120),¹³ that is, the epic and the novel. This unfamiliarity, nonetheless, is easily dissipated by the understanding of its meaning, leaving readers and scholars who study the novel from a Bakhtinian perspective to adapt to new terms and titles as they know these new terms and titles are a result of studies and research done by scholars who are specialists in the works of the Circle. Moreover, the reader of Paulo Bezerra's translation should feel privileged for having received this information that was brought to readers in *Teoria do romance III [Theory of the Novel III]*, and not disclosed in any translation of the essay into English, Spanish, French, or Italian.

Before making some specific remarks about *Teoria do romance III [Theory of the Novel III]*, we need to investigate the macrostructure of the three volumes, which is only possible now that we have this privileged view of all the texts that comprise Bakhtin's theory of the novel. As Silva (2016) and Queijo (2019) emphasized, the volumes enrich the studies of the novel not only because their translation "brings us closer to its author's voice" (SILVA, 2016, p. 269),¹⁴ but because they also provide different paratexts, which includes Bezerra's afterword. For Queijo (2019, p. 164), it "provides a framework for the preceding text."¹⁵ Brait (2019)¹⁶ explains that for us to understand a given work as a concrete utterance, as proposed by the Circle, we need to understand that every text in the book is part of its architectonics, which includes paratexts, that is, texts that are "adjacent to the main text, such as the title, subtitles, a dedication, epigraphs, a preface, an afterword, among others" (p. 259).¹⁷ Paratexts, thus, "carve out the path for the reader to enter into the intricacies of the main text" (BRAIT, 2019, p. 259). In *Teoria do romance I [Theory of the Novel I]*, Bezerra writes the

¹³ In the original: "o romance como gênero literário específico" [...] "os encontros e os desencontros dos dois gêneros."

¹⁴ For reference, see footnote 7.

¹⁵ For reference, see footnote 8.

¹⁶ BRAIT, B. Discourses of Resistance: From Paratext To Text, Or Vice Versa? Translated by Orison M. B. Melo Jr. *Alfa*, vol. 63, no.2, pp.251-272, 2019. Available at: <https://periodicos.fclar.unesp.br/alfa/article/view/11452/8478>. Access on: Feb. 07, 2020.

¹⁷ For reference, see footnote 16.

foreword and provides readers with a glossary of some key concepts. Besides these paratexts, readers find a note to the Brazilian edition, a note about the author, and a note about the translator. The second volume is comprised of the main text, some of Bakhtin's annotations made for the last chapter, added later on, that were called Folhas esparsas [Scattered Pages], Bezerra's afterword, titled, Uma teoria antropológica da literatura [An Anthropological Theory of Literature], and the three notes we find in the three volumes, viz., a note from the editors, a note about the author, and a note about the translator. The third volume follows the structure of the second, with Bezerra's afterword and the three notes. The afterword is titled O fechamento de um grande ciclo teórico [The Completion of a Broad Theoretical Cycle] and sets an apparent tone of completion to this great utterance called Theory of the Novel. Notably, only the first volume provides a glossary, with the translator's explanatory notes. This is possibly due to the fact that the translator adopted new terms for consolidated terms in the academy. One example is "heterodiscourse," which substitutes the "widely used term 'heteroglossia' in the work of Brazilian researchers who focus on Bakhtin's thought" (SILVA, 2016, p.239).¹⁸

As to the content of *Teoria do romance III* [Theory of the Novel III] (BAKHTIN, 2019), a summary of each essay will not be provided as they have been presented by different scholars of Bakhtin's works about the novel and literature in general. One example is Maria Inês B. Campos's (2009) book chapter in which she presents every essay of *QLE*. Her presentation of Da pré-história do discurso romanesco [From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse] is titled O importante papel do riso e do plurilinguismo [The Important Role of Laughter and Heteroglossia] (CAMPOS, 2009, p.137-139) and of Epos e o romance (sobre a metodologia do estudo do romance) [Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel] is titled Sobre a metodologia do estudo do romance [On the Novel Study Methodology] (CAMPOS, 2009, p.139-142). Therefore, it is necessary to explain that the essays were substantially enriched not only because they were restored in terms of their original titles, but also because they bring Bakhtin's corrections, restored passages that were cut, and Bakhtin's annotations made on the margins of the typed texts. According to the Note to the

¹⁸ For reference, see footnote 7.

Brazilian Edition (2019), readers will find the restored passages [indicated with an asterisk (*)] and the translator's notes.

These additions to and changes in the text can be understood at first as Bezerra's translational choices that, at times, are different from the choices made by *QLE* translators. For Bezerra (2015, p.10) "to translate Bakhtin is not only an extremely difficult challenge but also risky."¹⁹ For him, this is explained by the fact that the translator deals with "concepts that encompass a whole system of reflections based on something that may be called aesthetic philosophy" (BEZERRA, 2015, p.10).²⁰ In this vein, it is possible to point out two examples of different translational choices between Bezerra and *QLE* translators. The first is related to Bakhtinian categories. Bezerra brings light to many passages of the essays when he uses terms that are theoretically specific. As an example, in *Da pré-história do discurso romanesco* [From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse], we read, "It is possible to find five types of approaches to novelistic discourse" (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.364)²¹ whereas in Bezerra's translation, *Sobre a pré-história do discurso romanesco* [On the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse], we read, "five types of stylistic focus on novelistic discourse have been observed" (BAKHTIN, 2019, p.13).^{22 23} We thus see that Bezerra uses terms that are more specific ("stylistic focus") if compared to more general terms used in *QLE* ("approach").

The second example related to Bezerra's translational choices that needs to be highlighted refers to polysemic words in the Russian language. An example is the word *slovo*. According to Grillo and Américo (2017, p.364), the word "has a wide meaning, ranging from the lexical unit to the 'verbal language in use,' or the utterance and discourse."²⁴ In view of that, the translator needs to make choices by taking into account translational possibilities and the theoretical context of the term in the source text. In Translator's Note 1 of the essay *A palavra na vida e a palavra na poesia de Volóchinov*

¹⁹ In the original: "traduzir Bakhtin, além de ser um desafio extremamente difícil, é também arriscado."

²⁰ In the original: "conceitos que abrangem todo um sistema de reflexões embasado em algo que talvez se possa chamar de filosofia estética."

²¹ In Portuguese: "Pode-se notar cinco tipos de abordagens para o discurso romanesco."

²² In Portuguese: "observam-se cinco tipos de enfoque estilístico do discurso romanesco."

²³ TN. The translation of the sentence in *From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse* is "Five different stylistic approaches to novelistic discourse may be observed" (BAKHTIN, 1981, p. 42). [BAKHTIN, M. *From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse*. In: BAKHTIN, M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Edited by Michael Holquist; translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981. pp.41-83.]

²⁴ In the original: "tem um significado amplo, que compreende desde a unidade lexical até a 'a linguagem verbal em uso' ou o enunciado e o discurso."

[Word in Life and Word in Poetry] (2019),²⁵ Grillo and Americo explain that they chose to translate *slovo* as “palavra” [word] because the essay establishes a direct dialogue with the manifesto of the Russian futurists titled *Slóvo kak takovóie* [The Word as Such]. However, they clarify that the translation as “discourse” would be favored by the fact that “language is understood in its relation with the social context, its creator and contemplator, its sphere of circulation, etc.” (2019, p.109).²⁶ In this regard, still in the first essay of *Teoria do romance III* [*Theory of the Novel III*], we notice that Bezerra’s choice differs from the choice of *QLE* translators. In *Da pré-história do discurso romanesco* [From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse], we read, “However, under the category of the novel, the word has an existence that is totally of its own [...]” (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.364),²⁷ whereas in *Sobre a pré-história do discurso romanesco* [On the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse], we see that Bezerra chose the word “discourse”: “However, under the category of the novel, discourse lives a life that is totally of its own [...]” (BAKHTIN, 2029, p.14).^{28 29}

The reader of *Teoria do romance III* [*Theory of the Novel III*] should know that besides the differences in translation, the third volume provides new excerpts. As previously mentioned, this new version recovers passages that were cut in earlier versions. One example is the first paragraph of the essay *O romance como gênero literário* [The Novel as a Literary Genre] (BAKHTIN, 2019, p.65), which explains why the author had to use some parts of the essay that discusses the theory of the novelistic genre to present a discussion on the philosophy of genres. This paragraph is not found in the 2002 translation. In fact, the very first paragraph of *Epos e o romance* [Epic and Novel] starts with the sentence: “The study of the novel as a genre is characterized by peculiar difficulties” (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.397).³⁰ This is the second paragraph in the

²⁵ TN. The English translation of this essay is titled *Discourse in Life and Discourse in Poetry*. [VOLOSHINOV, V. *Discourse in Life and Discourse in Poetry*. Translated by John Richmond. In: SHUKMAN, A. (ed.) *Bakhtin School Papers*. Oxford: RPT Publications, 1983. pp. 5-30.]

²⁶ In the original: “a linguagem é considerada na relação com o seu meio social, com o criador e o contemplador, com a sua esfera de circulação etc.”

²⁷ In Portuguese: “Entretanto, nas condições do romance, a palavra tem uma existência inteiramente particular.”

²⁸ In Portuguese: “Entretanto, nas condições do romance o discurso vive uma vida totalmente específica.”

²⁹ TN. The translation of the sentence in *From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse* is “And all the while discourse is the novel has been living a life that is distinctly its own” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.43). For reference, see footnote 23.

³⁰ In Portuguese: “O estudo do romance enquanto gênero caracteriza-se por dificuldades particulares.”

2019 translation, which starts with this sentence: “The theory of the novel as a genre is distinguished by peculiar difficulties” (BAKHTIN, 2019, p.65).^{31 32}

These brief observations show us the degree to which the new translation of these essays into Brazilian Portuguese is unique. As previously mentioned, besides the translational choices, which were more theoretically specific, and the text insertions, *Teoria do romance III* [*Theory of the Novel III*] even includes an essay by Paulo Bezerra. In it, the translator not only explains the origin of Bakhtin’s essays, that is, “two lectures given by Bakhtin during the meetings of the literary theory group, organized by professor Leonid Timofeyev at the Maksim Gorki Institute of World Literature in Moscow” (BEZERRA, 2019, p.113),³³ but he also provides readers with some detailed information about each essay. Thus, he emphasizes laughter and parody in *Sobre a pré-história do discurso romanesco* [On the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse] and its main objective, and shows how the essay *O romance como gênero literário* [The Novel as a Literary Genre] “[...] broke with traditional paradigms in the studies and foci of the novel’s history and theory” (BEZERRA, 2019, p.122).³⁴

Therefore, *Teoria do romance III* [*Theory of the Novel III*] is a work of excellence that should be read by everyone who studies the novel through Bakhtinian lenses. This invitation is made not only to those who have not had the chance to read the essays yet, but also to those who have already read, discussed and studied them in *QLE* as they will see how Paulo Bezerra’s translation is greatly enriched. The translator, by using his linguistic, literary, translational, theoretical knowledge (especially of the dialogical theory), once again provides the reader with a text that is more complete in itself – with the insertion of Bakhtin’s notes, which were previously cut, and the translator’s rich notes and observations – and that completes the Theory of the novel proposed by Bakhtin.

³¹ In Portuguese: “A teoria do romance enquanto gênero distingue-se por dificuldades peculiares.”

³² TN. The translation of the sentence in *Epic and Novel* is “The study of the novel as a genre is distinguished by peculiar difficulties” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.3).

³³ In the original: “duas conferências proferidas por Bakhtin nas reuniões do grupo de teoria da literatura organizado pelo professor Leonid Timofêiev no Instituto de Literatura Mundial Maskim Górkí de Moscou.”

³⁴ In the original: “quebrou os paradigmas tradicionais nos estudos e enfoques da história e da teoria do romance.”

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