Possible Dimensions of Consciousness in Narrative Inquiry and in Self Narrative - a Bakhtinian Perspective / *Dimensões de consciência possíveis na pesquisa e na escrita narrativa sobre si - uma perspectiva bakhtiniana*

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses narrative writing and narrative inquiry as powerful resources for gaining awareness and for professional self-development. To this end, it presents possible movements in a narrative inquiry in which the researcher investigated her own teaching practice, on the basis of questions regarding how she became a teacher. The distinct places where she placed herself – beginning teacher, teacher-researcher and researcher – as a teacher who was investigating her own practice, made her aware of the distinct dimensions of these roles. Such dimensions were possible because, while writing reflexively about her work and inquiry - which led to provisional finalizations -, the teacher-researcher was placing herself at an exotopical place and expanded the verbal interactions from this place and with other interlocutors, thus acquiring a far-reaching vision that was not possible before. Drawing on possible perceptions thereof, she built memories of the future that would make her reorganize the practice on behalf of her professional development and of her pupils' learning process.

KEYWORDS: Consciousness; Narrative; Narrative inquiry; Mikhail Bakhtin

RESUMO

Este artigo problematiza a escrita narrativa e a pesquisa narrativa como meios potentes para tomadas de consciência e para o autodesenvolvimento profissional. Para isso, apresenta movimentos possíveis em uma pesquisa narrativa na qual a pesquisadora investigou a própria prática, questionando-se como se constituíra professora no início da docência. Os diferentes lugares em que se colocava — de professora iniciante, professora-pesquisadora e pesquisadora — ao ser professora e pesquisar a própria prática de ensino lhe possibilitavam diferentes dimensões de consciência. Essas dimensões eram possíveis, pois, ao escrever reflexivamente sobre o trabalho e a pesquisa, produzindo acabamentos provisórios, a professora e pesquisadora se colocava em um lugar exotópico e ampliava as interações verbais, desse lugar e com outros interlocutores, enxergando o que antes não fora possível alcançar. A partir das percepções possíveis, construía novas memórias de futuro que lhe faziam reorganizar a prática em prol de seu desenvolvimento profissional e do aprendizado dos estudantes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Consciência; Narrativa; Pesquisa narrativa; Mikhail Bakhtin

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Introduction

This paper aims at showing how reflexive narrative writing and narrative inquiry may be powerful ways for professional self-development and for having a greater awareness in relationships with one's other selves (cf. BAKHTIN, 1993;[1] 1990).[2]

From a narrative inquiry (CONNELLY; CLANDININ, 1995; CLANDININ; CONNELLY, 2000)[3] on her own teaching practice, a beginning teacher investigated how she constituted herself as a teacher at the beginning of her career. The teacher wrote reflexive narratives on her practice and on the relations that she was establishing at school, realizing the difficulties she faced, as well as her accomplishments, and seeking ways to improve teaching processes. These narratives were shared and discussed with a group of education professionals called Group of Interlocutors (primary and secondary education teachers, pedagogical supervisors, teacher's educators and university teachers). In this process, the teacher was placing herself in the role of teacher-researcher (STENHOUSE; RUDDUCK, 1985;[4] GERALDI; FIORENTINI; PEREIRA, 1998), since she was seeking, in her shared reflexive writing, possibilities to investigate her practice so as to achieve her professional self-development.

Having the question of professional constitution as a starting point in the beginning of her teaching career, the teacher began her doctorate and, thereafter, started to investigate, in a more systematic way, her actions in school daily life as well as what she was writing through narrative inquiry, i.e., how she was placing herself as a researcher.

Thus, the discussions here presented were developed in that research context, which concerns the way the processes of dialoguing and thinking about the work at work/through work from a Bakhtinian perspective - by means of shared reflexive writing

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[1] BAKHTIN, M. *Towards a Philosophy of the Act.* Translated by Vadin Liapunov and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

[2] BAKHTIN, M. Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Art and Answerability*: Early Philosophical Essays. Edited by Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov. Translation and Notes by Vadim Liapunov. Supplement translated by Kenneth Brostrom. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990, pp.4-256.

[3] CLANDININ, D.; CONNELLY, F.. *Narrative Inquiry* – Experience and Story in Qualitative Research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000.

[4] STENHOUSE, L.; RUDDUCK, J. *Research as a Basis for Teaching*: Readings from the Work of Lawrence Stenhouse. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1985.

and a systematic research of actions and narratives - allowed the beginning teacher to move in several places and, from them, reach distinct dimensions of consciousness.[5]

Although the agent of the research was only one, here we speak of beginning teacher, teacher-researcher and researcher, because she was moving through distinct places/roles and was realizing distinct aspects of her work in these places. According to this perspective, we understand that consciousness is only one, even though it is always plural. Due to this fact, we chose to consider the idea of dimensions of consciousness so that we could talk about the possible "consciousnesses" at the three places the subject was occupying. Hence, we use dimensions because they were provisionally finished in order to allow the understanding of these moments of awareness.

The positions lived in this experience were not positions that ceased to exist, but coexisting positions (together with the several dimensions of consciousness). During the whole process, the agent was a teacher, a teacher-researcher and a researcher, which expanded her professional constitution instead of hindering her from being one in order to be the other.

The teacher thus reflected about her practice from the beginning teacher's place, when the reflection occurred during her practice at school with her pupils; from the teacher-researcher's place, when this exercise happened while she wrote about lived teaching situations, questioning, constructing and realizing what was imperceptible to her before, always in dialogue with the group of interlocutors; and from the researcher's place, when she was researching her own practice according to her research question, producing data, constructing *a posteriori* categories, analyzing the narratives and the interactions, drawing conclusions and acquiring knowledge based on experienced life situations.

The distinct places where she placed herself, in addition to the interactions established with the group of interlocutors, with the pupils and with the school community allowed her to have different excesses of seeing (BAKHTIN, 1993;[6] 1990;[7] VOLOŠINOV, 1973),[8] understanding that subjects are constituted in positions of

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[5] We will explain later the reason why we chose to call these moments of awareness "dimensions of consciousness."
[6] For reference, see footnote 1.
[7] For reference, see footnote 2.
[8] VOLOŠINOV, V. N. *Marxism and The Philosophy of Language.* Translated by Ladislav Matejka, I. R. Titunik. London: Seminar Press, 1973.

outsideness[9] (as proposed in BAKHTIN, 1990).[10] While having access to these exotopic positions, she was constructing memories of the future[11] (BAKHTIN, 1986a),[12] gaining awareness, reorganizing her teaching practice, self-developing and constructing knowledge from experience (DEWEY, 2010; ZAMBRANO, 2011).

1 Research Assumptions

In this paper we adopt a dialogical perspective (BAKHTIN, 1990;[13] 1993;[14] VOLOŠINOV, 1973),[15] understanding, as a consequence, that the subject is constituted in the relation with the context and with others, mediated by language and, consequently, in and by work. In these relations, subjects constitute themselves, others and the world. Thus, in a dialogical movement, life constitutes consciousness (MARX; ENGELS, 2004),[16] and the latter, in turn, allows new memories of the future and, consequently, new and different futures.

The conscious vital activity of humans (MARX, 2010) comes precisely from the relation humans-nature and the emergence of consciousness is "a phenomenon historically situated and connected to human producing activity" (PINO, 2005, p.16).[17] Therefore, consciousness emerges from the very actions of men, since their distancing from nature allows them to make of nature the object of their actions. Vološinov reinforces this perspective regarding consciousness and its emergence when he explains that "consciousness only becomes consciousness once it is pervaded with ideological

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[9] Outsideness, or excess of vision is the vision that the other has of the I and to which the I has no access to. For example, others are able to see my facial expression in a certain situation – what my hair looks like, among other aspects, while I will only be able to know about the results of outsideness by means of information coming from the other who sees it.

[10] For reference, see footnote 2.

[11] Memory of the future is a projection humans develop for their own future. For instance, the teacher realized her own needs and the children's — in the school daily life or through interactions or her own writings — and began to think of future actions to meet these needs. These possible movements constituted what we name memory of the future.

[12] BAKHTIN, M. From Notes Made in 1970-71. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays.* Translated by Vern W. McGee. Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986a, pp.132-158.

[13] For reference, see footnote 2.

[14] For reference, see footnote 1.

[15] For reference, see footnote 8.

[16] MARX, K.; ENGELS, F. *The German Ideology.* Edited by C. J. Arthur. New York: International Publishers Co., 2004.

[17] Original text: "um fenômeno historicamente situado e ligado à atividade produtora do homem."

(semiotic) content and consequently, it is possible only in the process of social interaction" (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.11).[18] He adds that consciousness does not emerge only from men's actions, but that it is necessary that these men are in relation with other men. Thus, when men transform nature through work and modify it, they are also modified. In this movement that presupposes the other, consciousness is built.

In line with Marx's ideas and in dialogue with those of Bakhtin and Vološinov, it is evident that it is through language that man constitutes himself in the relations with others and with the environment:

> The *word is the ideological phenomenon par excellence.* The entire reality of the word is wholly absorbed in its function of being a sign. A word contains nothing that is indifferent to this function, nothing that would not have been engendered by it. A word is the purest and most sensitive medium of social intercourse. [...] No cultural sign, once taken in and given meaning, remains in isolation: it becomes part of the *unity of the verbally constituted consciousness.* It is in the capacity of the consciousness to find verbal access to it. (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, pp.13–15; italics by the author).[19]

Thus, language is essential for consciousness to emerge and manifest itself because as language is in the world, consciousness needs the world to constitute itself at the same time that it constitutes the world (SOBRAL, 2007).

> Although the reality of the word, as is true of any sign, resides between individuals, a word, at the same time, is produced by the individual organism's own means without recourse to any equipment or any other kind of extracorporeal material. This has determined the role of the word as *the semiotic material of Inner life - of consciousness* (inner speech) (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.14; italics by the author).[20]

Consequently, considering that consciousness emerges by means of words and expression and that by narrating lived experience reflexively one inevitably uses words, we are able to show that the practices of reflexive narrative writing and narrative inquiry re-elaborate consciousness and foster the access to other dimensions of consciousness in a movement that is always dialogical.

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[18] For reference, see footnote 8.
[19] For reference, see footnote 8.
[20] For reference, see footnote 8.

2 Narrative Writing and Narrative Inquiry

The subject of the inquiry was also the researcher, who was moving between the places of teacher, teacher-researcher and researcher. While teaching and interacting with the school community, she was acting intuitively and reflecting during the action of teaching.

For example, the moment she noticed that her pupils were not able to deal with abstractions to solve a mathematical problem, she reflected on what could be done so that they could understand that subject matter. Thus, in that space/time in which reflection was taking place, she would propose a set of actions and make concrete materials available to them so that they could gradually construct and deconstruct their hypotheses.

In the position of teacher-researcher, while using memory — here understood as "a work on time, but on an experienced time connoted by culture and the individual" and as "a confluence between what was and what will be" (BOSI, 1993, p.280, 281)[21] — in order to practice narrative writing on lived experiences in school daily life outside that space, she reflected about her own practice and the relationships established at school.

In this process, she looked at past situations from a place and a time distant from those situations and had access to outsideness (BAKHTIN, 1990)[22] regarding herself and the relationships she was establishing with her pupils, the teaching contents, and school professionals. By projecting herself, her actions, and relationships through narrative writing, she re-examined what she had experienced at school "for what they mean in the present and by putting the future into perspective" (JOSSO, 2007, p.420).[23] As a consequence, the moments of awareness were possible precisely due to the act of observing the situation from another perspective, thinking about it and re-planning classes while narrating. This is possible because

> When people report facts they lived, they may perceive they reconstruct their past trajectory, giving it new meanings. Thus, narrative is not some

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[21] Original text: "um trabalho sobre o tempo, mas sobre o tempo vivido, conotado pela cultura e pelo indivíduo" e como "um traço de união entre o que foi e o que será."
[22] For reference, see footnote 2.
[23] Original text: "por sua significação no presente e pela colocação em perspectiva do futuro."

literal truth of the facts, but rather a representation the subject creates of them and because of this it may transform reality itself. [...]
To work with narratives in inquiry and / or teaching is to begin a deconstruction/construction of the very experiences of the teacher / researcher and of the subjects of inquiry and / or teaching. [...] While we discover ourselves in the other, phenomena are revealed in us (CUNHA, 1997, paragraphs 8 and 10).[24]

Reflection on practice allowed her to organize new actions and to elaborate hypotheses about the reasons for expected or non-expected events and pupils' acts (BAKHTIN, 1993).[25] This intentional exercise of hypotheses construction and this movement in search of formative changes made her a teacher-researcher. That happened because in that movement of action-reflection-action "through self-monitoring, the teacher becomes a conscious artist. Through conscious art he is able to use himself as an instrument in his research" (STENHOUSE; RUDDUCK, 1985, p.16).[26] We share the conception of Cunha and Prado (2007) concerning a teacher-researcher as a teacher not necessarily linked to graduate programs, but committed to a dialog for constructing her knowledge about the daily life of school, her pupils and herself, and committed to systematizing her knowledge, producing new relationships and mobilizing changes in the school.

Consequently, the teacher, who in the school space was systematizing her knowledge, mobilizing changes, always in dialogue with others, was becoming a teacher-researcher. Moreover, as a reflexive professional, the teacher-researcher was able to build knowledge about her own practice (CUNHA; PRADO, 2007; SCHÖN, 2010).

When the teacher, while placing herself at the researcher's place, was analyzing the reflexive narratives written by herself and the possible interactions from these narratives, she was doing a narrative inquiry based on the question that was guiding her: "How did I constitute myself as a teacher in the beginning of my teaching career?"

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[24] Original text: "Quando uma pessoa relata os fatos vividos por ela mesma, percebe-se que reconstrói a trajetória percorrida, dando-lhe novos significados. Assim, a narrativa não é a verdade literal dos fatos, mas, antes, é a representação que deles faz o sujeito e, dessa forma, pode ser transformadora da própria realidade. [...] Trabalhar com narrativas na pesquisa e/ou no ensino é partir para a desconstrução/ construção das próprias experiências tanto do professor/pesquisador como dos sujeitos da pesquisa e/ou do ensino. [...] Ao mesmo tempo que se descobre no outro, os fenômenos revelam-se em nós."
[25] For reference, see footnote 1.
[26] For reference, see footnote 4.

Connelly and Clandinin mention that "the study of narrative [...] is the study of the way human beings experience the world" (1995, p.11).[27] This happens because as language is a mediator of the flow of experience, a narrative, by describing experiences, gives it another status, i.e. the experience is mediated by a set of narrative structures that configure it and give it sense (BOLÍVAR; DOMINGO; FERNÁNDEZ, 2001).

Thus, narrative inquiry

> is a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experience that make up people's lives, both individual and social. [...] narrative inquiry is stories lived and told (CLANDININ; CONNELLY, 2000, p.20).[28]

The researcher, while analyzing the reflexive narratives using this methodology, realized the relevance of this writing in constructing an understanding of the pupils' dynamics, investigated reasons and reorganized her practice. When constructing these understandings while she was narrating the inquiry, she offered herself and distinct situations provisional finalizations (BAKHTIN, 1990),[29] constituted in the dialogue with her interlocutors and with her own history as a sense-maker of her teaching work.

"Finalization is the element that allows the response of others to the utterance. Or else, the others' response indicates the finalization of the utterance" (AMORIM, 2004, p.110).[30] The teacher had access to provisional finalizations not only by means of utterances coming from the group of interlocutors and the school community, but also by making herself another self. When she put herself at the researcher's place, she was constituting another self for herself (regarding the roles of beginning teacher and teacher-researcher). This way, in the movement of responding to others and constructing senses regarding what they were responding, she was also carrying out the inquiry and being both a teacher and a researcher.

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[27] Original text: "El estudio de la narrativa, por lo tanto, es el estudio de la forma en que los seres humanos experimentamos el mundo."
[28] For reference, see footnote 3.
[29] For reference, see footnote 2.
[30] Original text: "O acabamento é o que torna possível a resposta do outro ao enunciado. Ou ainda, a resposta do outro indica o acabamento de um enunciado."

By adopting a reflexive posture regarding work, aiming at developing understandings about the process of professional constitution and self-development so as to practice an ever-better teaching with the pupils, the teacher was always practicing this movement of action-reflection-action in dialogue. This movement was potentialized by keeping a watchful eye and ear on the relationships established at school, in the conversations established with a group of interlocutors, discussing the narratives with the group of interlocutors and with herself.

3 The Three Dimensions of Consciousness from a Bakhtinian Perspective

In order to expatiate on the dimensions of consciousness based on the acts of narrating reflexively and investigating narratively, always in dialog with others, it is of utmost importance to characterize this research. The inquiry to which we refer, in addition to being a narrative inquiry, also had a self/hetero/biographical focus (PRADO, 2014). The question was the professional constitution in the beginning of the teaching career of the researcher herself (autobiographical focus) and not of any other person, but, at the same time, it was reconfigured by the narratives produced by other subjects (heterobiographical focus), which expanded the autobiographical focus into a self/hetero/biographical focus.

This characteristic - that allowed the researcher to be an author and character at the same time, in addition to being situated at the three places and times already mentioned, always in dialogue with others – offered her new dimensions of consciousness that transformed and reconstructed her ways of being and doing (CERTEAU, 1998) at school and in the inquiry, since the others were making possible understandings about the relationships present in the studied experience. That is possible because

> autobiography [...] creates disjunctions between an I who reports at a given moment and other ''Is.' [...] From a personal interest, by means of reflection, one introduces a specific focus which, while sharing dialectically the report with another, as if they were a magnifying glass, allows hidden aspects of life to surface and a new consciousness is recreated [...] (BOLÍVAR; DOMINGO; FERNÁNDEZ, 2001, p.33).[31]

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[31] Original text: "la autobiografía [...] va creando disyunciones entre un yo que relata en un momento dado, y los otros 'yo'. [...] Desde un interés personal por medio de la reflexión se introduce un foco particular

So, in the inquiry in question, considering the fact that the researcher was both an author and a character, Bakhtin also helps us to think about the movements that took place in this process and the places and times she was occupying, when he declares, in Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity, that

> The author's consciousness is the consciousness of a consciousness, that is, a consciousness that encompasses the consciousness and the world of a hero—a consciousness that *encompasses* and *consummates* the consciousness of a hero by supplying those moments which are in principle transgredient to the hero's consciousness and which, if rendered immanent, would falsify this consciousness. […] And it is precisely in this invariably determinate and stable *excess* of the author's seeing and knowing in relation to each hero that we find all those moments that bring about the consummation of the whole— the whole of each hero as well as the whole of the event which constitutes their life and in which they jointly participate, i.e., the whole of a work (1990, p.12; italics by the author).[32]

Considering Bakhtin's explanation, we may conjecture that in this process of researching how she constituted herself as a teacher, the researcher's consciousness was the consciousness of the consciousness of the consciousness of the beginning teacher who was working in the classroom. Thus, it was a third dimension of consciousness, which included and was connected to the other two – those of the teacher and the teacher-researcher who was writing and thinking about her own teaching practice. Therefore, in this inquiry there was a movement in which three dimensions of consciousness were constructed and organized. These dimensions of consciousness were felt by the researcher as the consciousness of the consciousness of the other two characters (the teacher and the teacher-researcher).

At first, there was the dimension of consciousness of the teacher who was in the classroom, in direct contact with pupils, responsive and responsible for her acts (BAKHTIN, 1993).[33] In addition to this one, there was the dimension of the teacher-researcher who positioned herself at an exotopical place, included the first one, producing other senses and being connected to the first dimension, namely, the dimension of the

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que, al compartir dialécticamente el relato con otro, a modo de lupa, posibilita hacer emerger aspectos recónditos de la vida y se recrea una nueva conciencia…"

[32] For reference, see footnote 2.

[33] For reference, see footnote 1.

teacher's consciousness. When examining, for instance, a lived experience from another place and another time (be it the place she occupied when she was writing about her own practice or that built in the interlocutions about her experiences), she could produce provisional finalizations for lived experiences, attributing senses to the experiences and reaching the first dimension of consciousness, or the first character, attributing to it other senses and ending it provisionally.

There was still a third dimension of consciousness, the consciousness of the researcher, which not only produced other senses, but also included and was connected to the dimension of the teacher researcher's consciousness, who was writing about her own practice and, in turn, already included the place of a beginning teacher.

By producing new senses and reaching conclusions according to her research goals, while encompassing and being connected to the other two dimensions, this third dimension was constructing a process of understanding of what was narrated and produced in this movement of inventing herself as a teacher. That is to say that this third dimension revealed the ways by which narration (and other forms of presenting useful information for her to understand how she was making herself a teacher) allowed some moments of awareness and indicated the path she had gone through to reach such understandings.

In addition, it was by means of this third dimension that the researcher, from the set of available information, generated data in a more systematic way - while producing a detailed inventory of the set of information, creating charts, organizing information in NVivo program[34] and thinking about *a posteriori* categories (that is, the others, the reflexive narrative writing, the considered difficulties and the acquired teacher's knowledge) – which helped build understandings about the question, analyze these data and reach other understandings.

In the following narrative, the researcher points out the possible dimensions of consciousness from the distinct places occupied:

> These two weeks were awful for me [*1st dimension of consciousness: what I lived in the school daily life, two difficult weeks*], and must also have been difficult for them, since from the moment I only saw problems, I also changed the way I behaved. Or was it the opposite? Is it possible that from the moment I changed the

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[34] NVivo is a software that helps the organization of a set of information and its analysis.

way I behaved I began to see only problems? [*2nd dimension of consciousness: while writing, I wonder why the weeks were awful and elaborated hypotheses about why the pupils had acted in a certain way*]. Hearing so many people say that I should have a steady hand, that they would behave if I repressed them and that I lacked authority, I realized that in fact my class was a total mess, so I decided to change (I do not know if I really decided to or if I did it automatically). I changed and due to this change I was no longer fond of tricks, and saw no results coming from talking or acting affectionately. And I began to do what they all thought to be the solution. That's right, my days became a hell. [*1st dimension of consciousness: I bring out the days lived in the school*]

It was necessary to reread all writings to realize that I was acting in a way that I never wanted. I could no longer see fascination and amusement in the movements of pupils. I could no longer see and neither did I try to see the stories that each one had brought to the classroom. Then it dawned on me that those had been the saddest and most desperate moments of my entire teaching career. I was stunned, and I could not stop thinking about the way I had been acting the last two weeks and the way pupils should be feeling. Someone else in that place who did not see them as children, gifted with fascination, peculiarities and stories. [*2nd dimension of consciousness: I place myself at another place, distanced, and now I realize that my actions might be causing discomfort in me and in pupils*]

At the same time, it was extremely difficult to realize the mistake I made; it was also very important. I say this because if I had not perceived the change in my attitude, I would have kept acting carelessly. The next day I went to the school with a different desire and another necessity: I also needed the freedom I had taken away from the pupils. I also needed to play and I also needed their affection (which had lessened in reply to my intolerance in the previous weeks). [a possible movement because I come to another position and I realized what was imperceptible before: that everything was bad because I had begun acting carelessly as regards the relationships].

[*3rd dimension of consciousness: the possible one, when, at the researcher's place, I look at the teacher and at the teacher-researcher. In the 3rd consciousness, I inquire myself about how these movements of thinking and writing about the school daily life, in the path I walked to become a teacher, makes me a teacher. I see that, in the act of writing, there are always some movements: the one of narrating the day, the one of elaborating hypotheses and, sometimes, another subsequent event that is related to the hypothesis, validating them or not. I also realize that narrating is not the only benefit, but to reread everything that had been already narrated allowed me to occupy exotopical positions about me and the relations. In addition, I allowing myself to see all the advancements I made. In that moment, a third dimension of consciousness is made possible by the distanced place from where I look at this past: I realize that to write was not only helping myself to glimpse new horizons, but also making me not to work by the book. Writing was a promise of mine to maintain an impartial look regarding the school daily life and not to allow myself to be blind and not to reproduce all the things I never wanted.*]

(Narrative of the teacher-researcher being analyzed by herself when she was at the researcher's place)

This process, which includes, produces new senses and concludes provisionally life experiences, has a direct connection to the writing and narrative inquiry, since she

was writing about her own practice and occupying the place of researcher, which allowed her to carry out these reflexive movements and reach distinct dimensions of consciousness. In other words, by writing reflexively, the teacher ressignified the experience and attributed sense to other dimensions of consciousness.

Despite moving between the places she was occupying in order to create provisional finalizations so as to have other connected moments of awareness and dimensions of consciousness - since she created other selves for her when she occupied other positions and looked at other 'I's' -, these possible dimensions of consciousness did not consummate the subject, but allowed her to act in new ways on behalf of her pupils' learning process.

It is important to emphasize that by "provisional finalizations" we do not refer to erasing the preceding dimensions, but rather to producing ever provisional finalizations for new moments of awareness to happen. Thus, instead of annulling each other, the three dimensions of consciousness were integrated and allowed new perceptions and movements.

The finalizations were happening in the act of reflecting and talking to the interlocutors by writing; however, as she was a teacher, a teacher-researcher and a researcher, all these dimensions were connected and constructed this subject that constituted herself by means of these distinct roles. This happened because the

> moments that can consummate us in the consciousness of the other lose their consummating power by being anticipated in our own consciousness, and as such they merely extend our consciousness in its own direction. Even if we succeeded in encompassing the whole of our consciousness as consummated in the other, this whole would not be able to take possession of us and really consummate us for ourselves: our consciousness would take that whole into account and would surmount it as just one of the moments in its own unity (which is not a unity that is given but a unity that is set as a task and, in its essentials, is yet-to-be). The last word, that is, would still belong to our own consciousness rather than to the consciousness of another, and our own consciousness would never say to itself the word that would consummate it. […] the aesthetic standpoint would still have to provide his consciousness with a background that is transgredient to it. Or, in other words, the author would have to find a point of support outside that consciousness, in order that it should become an aesthetically consummated phenomenon — a hero (BAKHTIN, 1990, pp.16-17).[35]

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[35] For reference, see footnote 2.

For that reason, we emphasize that, depending on the place the teacher occupied, the possible consciousness coming from the provisional finalization of the other consciousnesses included and expanded the others. In addition to it, when she put herself in the author's place, when she was writing, and when she turned herself into a character in her narrative, the teacher-researcher and the researcher found the point of support they needed for distancing themselves from the lived situations.

This way, the three dimensions of consciousness, in addition to depending on the social audience (VOLOŠINOV, 1973),[36] were emerging along with the places in which the subject was placing herself according to the speech genres she used, from primary genres to the one she would later call a secondary genre, which would emerge during the course of the investigation.

In his essay on Speech Genres, Bakhtin (1986b)[37] defines speech genres as relatively stable types of utterances; these are, in turn, what humans produce while using language on a daily basis. He distinguishes primary from secondary genres: while the first are all utterances that happen in a more immediate communication context, the latter are more elaborated ones. Secondary speech genres re-elaborate primary ones, i.e., when we give an aesthetic finalization to some event first expressed in a primary genre, the product of this finalization will be what the author calls a secondary genre.

In this inquiry, while the beginning teacher, who was acting to organize past situations and re-elaborate them, was using primary genres, it was necessary that she placed herself at another place, where she opted to carry out a reflection on her own practice (teacher-researcher place) and research all this path (researcher), thus producing secondary genres (reflexive narratives, systematizations and the text of the inquiry).

Nevertheless, it was not only the places that the subject occupied that potentialized the moments of awareness, but also and especially the verbal interaction and the expression of the "we-experience."

> The "we-experience" is not by any means a nebulous herd experience; it is differentiated. Moreover, ideological differentiation, the growth of

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[36] For reference, see footnote 8.
[37] BAKHTIN, M. The Problem of Speech Genres. In: BAKHTIN, M *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee. Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986b, pp.60-102.

consciousness, is in direct proportion to the firmness and reliability of the social orientation. The stronger, the more organized, the more differentiated the collective in which an individual orients himself, the more vivid and complex his inner world will be (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.88).[38]

From the place of the beginning teacher, the interaction that she had with the entire school community and with herself potentialized her moments of awareness; from the teacher-researcher place, her social auditorium included the group of interlocutors and also one of her other selves, and this allowed another dimension of consciousness; and from the researcher's place, besides the social auditorium existing in the teacher-researcher's dimension, there was also another one of her other selves, as well as the doctorate research group with which she established interactions not only about the movements of the teacher and the teacher-researcher, but also that of the researcher.

In light of this, we might refer to these possible movements not as dimensions of consciousness, but rather as degrees of consciousness, since, as Vološinov says, "the degree to which an experience is perceptible, distinct, and formulated is directly proportional to the degree to which it is socially oriented" (1973, p.87).[39]

Nevertheless, although the concept of degree of consciousness helps build understandings and is implicit in the sense we are attributing to dimension, the word degree may suggest an interpretation of something progressive and/or quantitative (as if the teacher's consciousness was coming before that of the teacher-researcher and this one, in turn, after the researcher's). This possible interpretation would be mistaken, since the inquiry also took place when the subject was being the teacher, the teacher-researcher and the researcher — at the same time. Thus, the researcher's consciousness was expanding the awareness of situations lived at school, and what was done at school (by the teacher) was expanding the teacher-researcher's and the researcher's reflection. In other words, the event in the school and the possible moment of awareness based on this experience potentialized the reflections done by the subject in her other two places.

Speaking of dimensions reminds us of distinct places, distinct *topoi*, whereas the word "degree" may suggest not the idea of places, spaces and times, but that of progressivity and quantity. As these three places existed based on dialogical movements

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[38] For reference, see footnote 8.
[39] For reference, see footnote 8.

in which each one presupposed and potentialized the others and that one did not stop existing so that the others could appear, we opt to use the term "dimensions of consciousness."

Understandings Coming from the Experience

Bakhtin (1990)[40] helped us to realize these topological movements of the consciousness - in which the teacher reached other dimensions of consciousness by being at distinct places and maintaining the reflexive exercise of her own practice - when he explains that the consciousness of the author is the consciousness that includes and finalizes the consciousness of the character. Vološinov (1973),[41] when referring to degrees of consciousness and their directly proportional connection to degrees of social orientation, emphasizes the necessity of a social auditorium so that the subject may have moments of awareness, instead of staying isolated, losing clarity and ideological modeling. The distinct spaces and times that the teacher, the teacher-researcher and the researcher were occupying, as well as the distinct reflections that were taking place in each one - always in relation with others - allowed the teacher to access other dimensions of consciousness.

We cannot but mention another important understanding from these movements, namely, provisionally finishing, including, producing other senses and connecting with a multiplicity of one's other selves — something possible based on Marx and Engels (2004).[42] The authors speak of what we can always realize in our lives: "Life is not determined by consciousness, but rather consciousness is determined by life" (p.20). In agreement with Marx and Engels, Vološinov (1973)[43] also emphasizes that mental activity does not organize expression, but it is the expression that organizes, shapes and determines the orientation of mental activity.

This way, we may link these theoretical proposals to the places the teacher and the researcher occupied in this experience. It was necessary to live as a beginning teacher, to have this experience, to think about herself and to constitute consciousness. The

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[40] For reference, see footnote 2.
[41] For reference, see footnote 8.
[42] For reference, see footnote 16.
[43] For reference, see footnote 8.

experience, the situations already experienced in life, and the established relationships allowed the conscious emergence of aspects not perceived until then, aspects that were part of the experience or emerged from it as memories of the future (BAKHTIN, 1986a).[44]

This consciousness was only possible because, before that, there had been life, events, and the teacher's resolve was leading her to qualitatively distinct experiences. In addition, writing about her lived experiences and sharing those writings, beginning a dialogue with other people about her own practice was also an experience. When we consider that the work is interpreted in the spirit of the content of consciousness of the interlocutors and receives from this consciousness a new light (VOLOŠINOV, 1973),[45] we realize that sharing the narratives with a group of interlocutors and practicing an attentive listening and observation of pupils were essential actions for moments of awareness to happen. This experience allowed a second dimension of consciousness to emerge.

Giving continuity to this reflexive movement, the act of researching allowed the third dimension of consciousness to emerge. Thus, Marx and Engels help us to reaffirm that the places where the subject placed herself - teacher, teacher-researcher and researcher - and the experiences lived in each one allowed her consciousness to be determined and expanded always in interaction with others.

"Consciousness is, above all, the consciousness concerning the immediate sensitive environment of a limited connection with other people and things outside the individual who is growing self-conscious" (MARX; ENGELS, 2004, p.51).[46] In light of this, we may realize that the teacher was conscious of that immediate environment, of others, of some relations that were built in that moment. As a teacher-researcher and a researcher, she created others of herself and reached another dimension of consciousness, distinct from that of experienced life, as well as a dimension of consciousness coming from the dialogues she established with her interlocutors. Again, it is possible to associate this idea proposed by Marx and Engels to the idea of finalization coming from outsideness, which Bakhtin, in his essay *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*, proposes regarding the character (1990).[47]

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[44] For reference, see footnote 12.
[45] For reference, see footnote 8.
[46] For reference, see footnote 16.
[47] For reference, see footnote 2.

In her dialogical search for understanding how she was turning herself into a teacher, with the help of others, she became a teacher, a teacher-researcher and a researcher and was reaching, in each place, new dimensions of consciousness, which included and were related to one another.

After all, "the inherent aspect of consciousness is that its intentionality works not only on objects, but also when it addresses itself" (FREIRE, 2005, p.79).[48]

The places the subject occupied, by allowing other exotopical positions, allowed dimensions of consciousness to be consciousness of consciousness. This is the reason why we speak of three dimensions that include, are connected with and attribute other senses to the other consciousness. Always in dialogue with her others - that constituted her and were reciprocally constituted by her - and with other possible "I's" in the changes of places allowed by the acts of writing and investigating narratively, the teacher, the teacher-researcher and the researcher were producing singular consciousnesses based on lived experiences.

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[48] Original Text: "o próprio da consciência é sempre ser consciência de, não apenas quando se intenciona a objetos, mas também quando se volta sobre si mesma."

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