

Contemporary dialogues: What meanings? Which answers? / *Diálogos do presente: quais os sentidos? Quais as respostas?*

With meaning I give answers to questions.
Anything that does not answer a question is devoid of sense for us.
*Mikhail Bakhtin*¹

The continuous dialogue in the pursuit of answers to constitute meanings is a characteristic of human beings; “Life by its very nature is dialogic.” as Bakhtin (1984, p. 293)² had already claimed. In the unfortunate context we live, a global pandemic so politically charged in our contry, again we search for *meanings*. And socially motivated dialogues are not always able to answer our questions.

Given the quarantine and intense changes we face, the attempts to understand both social and human reality have influenced significantly the number of submissions to the journal. Discourse investigators show how Brazilian language science has remained active and productive even under adverse circumstances, which include the governmental politics that have limited research funds in general. The articles, by focusing on different utterances, aim to understand reality in texts that reflect and refract it ceaselessly. Life, art and knowledge are interwoven, and ethical, aesthetical and cognitive stances value different discourses.

As it is known, “*the word functions as an essential ingredient accompanying all ideological creativity whatsoever*” (Volosinov, 1973, p. 15; original italics).³ Therefore, as usual, the articles presented here study and analyze aspects of vairous ideological creations. Some texts deepen theoretical matters. Others search for meanings in the literary, filmic, political, health discourses...

¹ Bakhtin, M. M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.

² Bakhtin, M. M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Translated by Caryl Emerson. University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

³ Volosinov, V. N. *Marxism And Philosophy Of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. New York: Seminar Press, 1973.

Our presentation starts with an article written by researchers at Fundação Oswaldo Cruz – FIOCRUZ, Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sergio Arouca – ENSP [Oswaldo Cruz Foundation – National School of Public Health Sergio Arouca], Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, an institution that now plays a pivotal role for all Brazilians as it investigates the pandemic and proposes the production of a vaccine against COVID-19. Reinforcing both their ethical and political commitment as well as the intimate relationship between discourse and health, Ana Paula Pimentel (FIOCRUZ, Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) and Paulo Duarte de Carvalho Amarante (FIOCRUZ, Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) in *Paradigms, Perceptions and Practices in Mental Health: A Case Study Based on Bakhtin* rely on Bakhtinian contributions to reflect on the vicissitudes of care in the public psychosocial care system for the mentally suffering. The investigation, a result of a Master's degree in Programa de Pós-graduação em Saúde Pública [Public Health Postgraduation Program], verifies the presence of contradictory positions expressed in perceptions that, simultaneously, agreed and disagreed with ethical-dialogic assumptions.

Also in terms of attention to the socially marginalized discourses, the article *How to make sense of precariousness? Bíos-Precarious and Sensitive Life* by Martin de Mauro Rucovsky (Universidad Nacional de Córdoba – UNC, Córdoba, Argentina) concentrates on conceptual complementarity between biopolitics and precariousness, to argue for a conceptual tool that deals with markers that codify precarious life. Also from an ethical perspective, Derivaldo Santos (Universidade Estadual do Ceará – UECE, Quixadá, Ceará, Brazil) discusses *Natural Beauty and Distance from Nature: Notes on Ethics and Aesthetics*. The article is theoretically grounded on the ideas of Georg Lukács and questions whether natural experiences are asthetical or not, in other words, how the relationship between natural and artistic beauty is established. It signals the importance of both in the development of the social being's private personality.

The next three articles focus on the literary discourse. Ivanete Bernardino Soares (Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto – UFOP, Mariana, Minas Gerais, Brazil), presents, from a theoretical perspective, an intriguing study on *The (Non) Specific in Literary Discourse Analysis*. By comparing Dominique Maingueneau's theses to the founding assumptions of French Discourse Analysis and the contemporary propositions from the literary studies, the author discusses the constitution of the theoretical and methodological

framework of the French author to study literature discursively. Andreia Pagani Maranhão (Centro Universitário Inta – UNINTA, Sobral, Ceará, Brazil), in *Giallo & Subversive: The Neapolitan Novels and the Onset of “Ferrante Fever” in Brazil*, approaches Elena Ferrante’s best sellers as literature of transition. Maranhão explores elements of “pop hybridism” in Ferrante’s works to highlight aspects that delineate the reception of her works in Brazil, the fervent readership and the phenomenon of “demarginalization,” which allows an approximation to the past and awareness of its implications on the identity, behavior and ethics of ordinary people. Also concerning the literary discourse, Ana Lúcia Macedo Novroth (Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie – UPM, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil), in *The Multiple Faces of Dialogue in A Certain Captain Rodrigo*, by Erico Verissimo, examines how dialogism and the categories of carnivalesque perception of the world desecrate and subordinate the discourse of power to laughter.

The filmic discourse is approached from a Bakhtinian perspective in two articles. The first, by Natassia D’Agostin Alano (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina – UFSC, Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil), is entitled *The Relationship between Art and Life in the Feature Film Gabbeh*, by Mohsen Makhmalbaf: The Bakhtinian Perspective on the Scene. Centered on the feature film *Gabbeh* (1996) of the Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf, the article promotes reflections that may, somehow, contribute to the debate of issues regarding the field of art and life. The second article is *The Body Sliding Meanings: The Discursive (Inter)(En)lacement of the Political on the Frontiers with the Social*, by Emanuel Angelo Nascimento (Universidade Estadual de Campinas – UNICAMP, Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil). Using two Dan Halter videos, the author discusses the meaningful materiality of the body in the discursive intertwining of the political embedded in the borders with the social in an analysis that straddles verbal and non-verbal materialities.

The following articles focus on argumentation. Ulisses Tadeu Vaz de Oliveira (Universidade Federal do Mato Grosso do Sul – UFMS, Três Lagoas, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil), dealing with the political discourse in the American elections of 2016, authors *Social Evaluation as a Persuasive Resource in Political Discourses: Clinton vs. Trump*. The article relies on Critical Discourse Analysis and Functional-Systemic

Linguistics as well as on the Appraisal theoretical methodological framework. Results show the different strategies for persuading the electorate in a polarized race: negative discursive ideological approaches (Trump) or positive ones (H. Clinton); both applied social attitude as their primary rhetorical strategy. Providing a deep critical and theoretical approach of the arguments posed by Toulmin, Paulo Roberto Gonçalves-Segundo (Universidade de São Paulo – USP - São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil) signs *The Functional Configuration of Epistemic Argumentation: Reframing Toulmin’s Layout of Arguments in a Multidisciplinary Perspective*. The author proposes a conception of argumentative move compatible to a linguistic approach that is discursively and cognitively coherent and that answers to theoretical and analytical demands related to both the justification and communication aspects of argumentation. The dialogue with Toulmin’s ideas is exemplified through the analysis of an excerpt of journalistic discourse.

Giovane Fernandes Oliveira (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul – UFRGS, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil) assumes the perspective of French Discourse Analysis to investigate enunciation in Peuceuxian texts in *Enunciation in Michel Pêcheux: A Disturbing Question*. The author examines the issue of enunciation in texts by the French philosopher, dated 1969 to 1975, and broadly reveals an epistemological statute and a theoretical-methodological statute of enunciation in the foundations of French Discourse Analysis. Finally, regarding educational matters, the article *The Concept of Understanding for Bakhtin and the Circle: Reflections for the Educational Process*, by Guilherme da Silva Lima (Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto – UFOP, Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais, Brazil), discusses the notion of understanding in the works of the Circle. He claims that it involves concrete, ideological and axiological elements, as a promise that allows for the representation and the prolongation of the communicative activity.

The review on this issue discusses *Currículo e responsividade. Entre políticas, sujeitos e práticas [Curriculum and Answerability. Between Policies, Subjects, and Practices]*, by Jozanes A. Nunes, a study on the curricula of Letras majors and their possible changes. It is brought to us by Maria Helena Cruz Pistori, Associate Editor of *Bakhtiniana*. *Revista de Estudos do Discurso*, PUC-SP, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

And two final remarks are necessary before closing this Editorial. First, we remind readers that in 2021, *Bakhtiniana* is to publish an issue dedicated to discursive matters on

COVID-19 pandemics. We know discourses constitute the self and the other in unescapable responsive relations that produce meaning embedded with values and axiological positions. For that issue, we invite researchers from the various Discourse Analyses to contribute by submitting their articles or book reviews on that matter.

Second, something that has weightened on us. Orison Marden Bandeira de Mello Junior, Foreign Languages Editor since 2012, when *Bakhtiniana* became a bilingual journal, has left the office. *Bakhtiniana* owes him much! Both the executive board and authors are aware of his dedication, commitment and rigor. The journal would not have its current reach without his inestimable service. We are very grateful for all his work, responsibility, attention and correctness. You shall be missed! At the same time, we welcome the new Foreign Languages Editor, Renata Philipov (Universidade Federal de São Paulo – UNIFESP, Guarulhos, São Paulo, Brazil), with whom we expect to continue the process of providing visibility and internationalization for national and international research devoted to language studies.

The traditional balance ends this introduction to highlight its 13 texts and 14 authors, representing 13 institutions (UNC, Argentina; FIOCRUZ; UECE; UFOP; UNICAMP; UNINTA; UPM; UFSC; UFMS; USP; UFRGS; UFMG; PUCSP). We invite readers to enjoy these texts and include them in their research. This is how *Bakhtiniana* actively participates in the national and international cultural and academic life.

The number of submissions as well as their rigorous selection, conducted by competent and collaborative reviewers (*ad hoc* reviewers and members of our Advisory Board), have allowed us this excellent result: *Bakhtiniana* remains steadfast in its commitment to always promoting dialogical possibilities between national and international research devoted to language studies. Therefore, we are grateful for the invaluable and constant support, assistance and recognition from MCTI [Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation]/CNPq [Brazilian National Research Council]/MEC [The Brazilian Ministry of Education]/ CAPES [Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education] – CNPq Note 19/2019 – Programa Editorial / Editoração Ch. 2019 [Editorial Program] – and PUC-SP, through their Plano de Incentivo à Pesquisa (PIPE'q) [Research Incentive Plan] (PIPE'q) / Publicação de Periódicos [Journal Publication] (PubPer-PUCSP) – 2020.

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