

***Crônicas by Milton Hatoum: Dialogism and Emancipation in Postmodernity / Crônicas de Milton Hatoum: dialogismo e emancipação na pós-modernidade***

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**ABSTRACT**

This study analyzes Milton Hatoum's narrative using the crônicas *Um sonhador* [A Dreamer] and *Margens secas da cidade* [Dry Riverbanks of the City] as corpus. It aims to ascertain the discursive and aesthetic characteristics of Hatoum's literary creation from the dialogical perspective proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin, exploring the artistic-literary discourse of the Amazonian writer, the axiological positions refracted in his narrative. It also relates Boaventura Santos' epistemological perspective about the waste of social experience in modernity/post-modernity, discussing the criticism of the paradigm of current rationality called by the author as indolent reason. Initial analysis based on these theoretical-methodological approaches show evidence in Hatoum's crônicas narrative that brings it closer to a counter-hegemonic and responsive perspective of literary representation. Thus, with this inter-relationship among literature, dialogism and theory of knowledge, we intend to highlight the existing overlaps between the socio-historical and economic discourse produced by the critique of modernity / postmodernity and literary discourse of Milton Hatoum.

**KEYWORDS:** *Crônica*; Milton Hatoum; Dialogism; Boaventura de Sousa Santos; Postmodernity

**RESUMO**

*O presente estudo analisa a narrativa de Milton Hatoum utilizando como corpus as crônicas "Um sonhador" e "Margens secas da cidade". Objetiva problematizar as características discursivas e estéticas da criação literária de Hatoum, a partir da perspectiva dialógica proposta por Mikhail Bakhtin, explorando, no discurso artístico-literário do escritor amazonense, as posições axiológicas refratadas em sua narrativa. Relaciona ainda a perspectiva epistemológica de Boaventura Santos acerca do desperdício da experiência social na modernidade/pós-modernidade, discutindo a crítica ao paradigma da racionalidade atual denominado pelo autor de razão indolente. As*

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*análises iniciais alicerçadas nestas abordagens teórico-metodológicas evidenciam indícios, na narrativa cronística de Hatoum, que a aproxima de uma perspectiva contra-hegemônica e responsiva de representação literária. Pretende, assim, com esta inter-relação entre literatura, dialogismo e teoria do conhecimento, evidenciar as imbricações existentes entre o discurso sócio-histórico-econômico produzido pela crítica à modernidade/pós-modernidade e o discurso literário de Milton Hatoum.*

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Crônica; Milton Hatoum; Dialogismo; Boaventura de Sousa Santos; Pós-modernidade*

## Introduction

Milton Hatoum, who lately has been one of the contemporary writers who has received the most attention by critics and academia,<sup>1</sup> has notably written novels, but also published narratives in other literary genres, such as short novels – *Órfãos do Eldorado* [*Orphans of the Eldorado*] (2008); short stories – *A cidade ilhada* [*Islanded City*] (2009); and human-interest stories (henceforth *crônicas*)<sup>2</sup> – *Um solitário à espreita* [*A Loner on the Look*] (2013) and *Sete crônicas de Milton Hatoum* [*Seven Crônicas by Milton Hatoum*] (2020).<sup>3</sup> His *crônicas* guide Hatoum's trajectory even before the writer had published his first novel, *Relato de um certo Oriente* [*Report of a Certain Orient*] (1989), as he has mentioned in an interview:

I've also published a *crônica* in the old Folhetim [Paperish], by the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*. It's a long one, I only remember its title: "*Papai Noel visita a Amazônia*" [Santa Claus visits the Amazon], I've never researched in *Folha* to track it down. I've also published articles and reports when I worked as a freelancer for *Isto é Magazine*, run by Mino Carta. I was a student, I wanted to work (Hatoum, 2019, p.434).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> We hereby refer ourselves to the research conducted by Juciane Cavaleiro (2020) on the critical reception of Milton Hatoum's work.

<sup>2</sup> TN. *Crônicas* are a Portuguese-language form of writing which encompass topics concerning daily life and human-interest stories. They are usually published in newspapers or magazines, being very common in Brazilian literature.

<sup>3</sup> On this volume there are *crônicas* selected by the author that had already been published previously in newspapers and in *Um solitário à espreita*.

<sup>4</sup> TN. When there is no published English version of the work, direct quotes will be translated into English, and the text in the original language will be provided as footnotes.

In Portuguese: "Publiquei também uma crônica no antigo Folhetim, da *Folha de S. Paulo*. É uma longa crônica, só me lembro do título: "Papai Noel Visita a Amazônia", nunca pesquisei a Folha para resgatar esse texto. Além disso, publiquei artigos e reportagens quando fui *freelancer* da *Isto é*, dirigida pelo Mino Carta. Queria trabalhar, era estudante."

Milton Hatoum has also written *crônicas* for the magazine *EntreLivros* and for the e-magazine *Terra Magazine*. He continues to write a monthly *crônica* for a section in the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*.<sup>5</sup> The reflective and critical tone of language is one of the characteristics of Hatoum's *crônicas*, as well as its lyricism. In this sense, his style confirms what some of main theorists of Literature have already established as the genre *crônica*. According to Antonio Candido (1992, p.14), *crônicas* "take what is little and show the greatness within it, a beauty or an unsuspected uniqueness."<sup>6</sup> These idiosyncrasies of everyday lives are often represented by Hatoum's narrators by means of many social voices that echo in his narratives.

As previously stated by Mikhail Bakhtin, "it frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction—and, consequently, the word has two contradictory meanings, two accents" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.305).<sup>7</sup> These are the senses that are imbricated within the voices of narrators and characters of Hatoum's *crônicas*. In addition, there are indications of social invisibilities caused by a late-modernity totalitarian speech, aestheticized in the enunciation. The homogenizing and intolerant discourse, artistically represented in Hatoum (2013), is hereby seen under the epistemological and sociological perspective of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, given that literature refracts in and for the language all society's conflicts within a certain time and space.

## 1 Modernity and Literature: Some Considerations

According to Boaventura Santos (2002, p.238) should there not be a new perception on the current rationality, "all proposals put forward by the new social analysis (...) will tend to reproduce the same effect of concealment and discredit."<sup>8</sup> Thus, the

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<sup>5</sup> He published literary-essayistic *crônicas* in the magazine *EntreLivros* between 2005 and 2007. In the e-magazine *Terra Magazine*, Hatoum published between 2006 and 2010. He's been writing for the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* since 2008.

<sup>6</sup> In Portuguese: "pega o miúdo e mostra nele uma grandeza, uma beleza ou uma singularidade insuspeitadas."

<sup>7</sup> BAKHTIN, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

<sup>8</sup> In Portuguese: "todas as propostas apresentadas pela nova análise social, (...) tenderão a reproduzir o mesmo efeito de ocultação e descrédito."

Portuguese scholar, in defending cosmopolitan reason - his proposal for a new rationality –, presents three sociological procedures, namely: *the sociology of absences*, *the sociology of emergencies* and *the translation work*. In this study, we shall concentrate our reflections on the *sociology of absences*.

Santos (2002, p.239) states that shrinking the present and expanding the future is, in our time, “the most fundamental feature of the Western conception of rationality.”<sup>9</sup> By doing so, the multiplicity of experiences which are built is disregarded in contemporaneity, causing what Santos terms as *indolent reason*, that is, reason which wastes experiences. This is why a *sociology of emergencies* becomes necessary to the existence of a *cosmopolitan reason*, which causes the “present to expand and the future to shrink,” thereby creating “the space-time required in order to know and value the inexhaustible social experience which is present in today’s world” (Santos, 2002, p.239).<sup>10</sup>

This is a matter of debate within the *sociology of absences*, in which Boaventura Santos argues for the expansion of the present, for this theoretical conception acknowledges other totalities and heterogeneities; unlike the perspective of *indolent reason* which, in a metonymic fashion, privileges, says Santos (2002, p.242), a “homogeneity between the whole and its parts and the latter have no existence outside the relation with totality,”<sup>11</sup> thus making up the dichotomies which wind up legitimizing one of the parts as a whole or for the whole, which is why there are hierarchies.

When other totalities and heterogeneities are acknowledged, it is possible to see such dichotomies outside the power relation that unites them, making it possible “to reveal alternative relations which have been obfuscated by hegemonic dichotomies” (Santos, 2002, p.246).<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the present can be expanded, since other experiences are rendered visible and their value can be measured, i.e., that which is considered an absence by hegemonic discourse is turned into a presence within counter-hegemonic discourse.

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<sup>9</sup> In Portuguese: “a característica mais fundamental da concepção ocidental de racionalidade.”

<sup>10</sup> In Portuguese: “o espaço-tempo necessário para conhecer e valorizar a inesgotável experiência social que está presente no mundo de hoje.”

<sup>11</sup> In Portuguese: “homogeneidade entre o todo e as partes e estas não têm existência fora da relação com a totalidade.”

<sup>12</sup> In Portuguese: “revelar outras relações alternativas que têm estado ofuscadas pelas dicotomias hegemônicas.”

It is this counter-hegemonic epistemological perspective on life which we mean to point to in Milton Hatoum's literary project. Precisely because Hatoum speaks of ways of life which are invisible and silenced for the canon established by modernity.

According to Mikhail Bakhtin, "any consideration of reason had to answer demands not only of logic or epistemology, but of ethics and aesthetics as well" (1986, p.10).<sup>13</sup> In that sense, we aim to situate the author-creator's ethical and responsive commitment<sup>14</sup> of the author-creator within an emancipatory, counter-hegemonic perspective, objectified in the *amazonense* writer's artistic-literary expression, discussing *crônicas Um sonhador* and *Margens secas da cidade*,<sup>15</sup> republished in *Um solitário à espreita* in 2013.

When Antonio Candido (1992, pp.14-15), discusses the defining qualities of a *crônica*, he alludes to a language with a "slight poetic tone," which seeks "orality in writing." This first element of the *crônica* is intimately related to the place the narrator needs to observe, which, according to Candido, must be close to everyday life, to its most trifling events. Besides, a feature of the *crônica* style is that it should convey "a nonchalant tone, as if one were speaking of unimportant things, [...] yet it may go deep into social criticism" (Candido, 1992, pp.17-18).<sup>16</sup> It is in this complex relationship among style, theme and discourse what we can envisage the discussion on the process of artistic-literary creation. And, as warns critic Davi Arrigucci Junior (1987, p.53), a *crônica* is a "literary text," for it involves "linguistic elaboration."

The relation between society and work in and through language, thus representing the *other*, is intrinsic to and constitutive of literary and artistic work. Bakhtin states that it is through the *other*, through empathy and alterity that the *self* becomes a responsive subject during a life event: "This moment of empathizing is always followed by the

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<sup>13</sup> BAKHTIN, M. M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.

<sup>14</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, in *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity* (2011 [1924]), distinguishes between author-person: the empirical author, and author-creator: an artistic representation in the literary or in other artistic works. We have used the text translated by Paulo Bezerra and published in *Aesthetics of Verbal Art* (2011).

<sup>15</sup> The *crônica Um sonhador* [A Dreamer] was initially published in the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*, in 2006. *Margens secas da cidade* [Dry Riverbanks of the City] was published by the magazine *Caracol*, by the University of São Paulo (USP), as well as in France, in 2012; they were both rewritten and republished in the book of *crônicas Um solitário à espreita* [A Loner on the Look], in 2013.

<sup>16</sup> In Portuguese: "despreocupado, de quem está falando coisas sem maior consequência, [...] mas podem levar longe a crítica social" (Candido, 1992, pp.17-18).

moment of objectification, that is, a placing outside oneself of the individuality understood through empathizing, a separating of it from oneself, a return into oneself” (Bakhtin, 1993,<sup>17</sup> p.41).<sup>18</sup> This subject which is situated and built by the *other* becomes aware of their *responsivity* in a here-now relation, which may influence one’s aesthetic production, for writing is the “opening of a space where the subject who writes does not cease to disappear” (Foucault, 2009, p.268).<sup>19</sup>

In that sense, Bakhtin (1993, p.83)<sup>20</sup> had already pointed to the fact that “the world of art” is pervaded by “emotional-volitional tones;” therefore, the Russian thinker remarks that the author-artist/author-person has a *singular position in existence* – his excess of seeing, which rules over “all of the concrete moments in the architectonic,” allows for creating, representing and devising “the object of emphasizing,” engendering, thus, “for the first time the aesthetic activity of forming” (Bakhtin, 1993, p.94).<sup>21</sup> As a consequence, Bakhtin (1993, p.100)<sup>22</sup> contends that “aesthetic activity is a participation of a special, objectified kind,” both by the aesthetic subject/author-creator and by the ethical subject/author-person.

Then we see that, for Bakhtin, the aesthetic-literary object is an imagetic creation that takes place through the excess of seeing of an author-person who creates the *other*: the author-creator who, in his turn, is also constituted by this excess of seeing, refracting this alterity into the environment of one’s artwork. In that case, language is pivotal in the process of aesthetic creation: “one could say that the artist fashions the world by means of words, and to this end words must be immanently surmounted as words and must become an expression of the world of others and of the author’s relationship to that world” (Bakhtin, 1990, p.195).<sup>23</sup> In this artistic reworking of the world through language, the author-creator refracts other values in the literary work, which often legitimize the

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<sup>17</sup> BAKHTIN, M. M. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Translated by Vadim Liapunov. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

<sup>18</sup> Written in the early 1920s, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, was first published in 1986. It is one of the first texts written by Mikhail Bakhtin. The text is an untitled draft/manuscript, with illegible parts, due to its terrible storage conditions (Faraco, 2017a, pp.147-148).

<sup>19</sup> In Portuguese: “abertura de um espaço onde o sujeito que escreve não para de desaparecer.”

<sup>20</sup> For reference, see footnote 17.

<sup>21</sup> For reference, see footnote 17.

<sup>22</sup> For reference, see footnote 17.

<sup>23</sup> BAKHTIN, M. M. *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*. Translated by Vadim Liapunov. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990.

dominant discourses in society: “the intentions of the prose writer are refracted, and refracted at different angles, depending on the degree to which the refracted, heteroglot languages he deals with are socio-ideologically alien, already embodied and already objectivized” (Bakhtin, 1981, p.300; author’s emphasis).<sup>24</sup>

Still according to the Russian thinker, “it is only through this axiological relationship to the hero that the formal literary devices for the first time acquire their validity (...) and that the movement of an event is also introduced into the material literary sphere” (Bakhtin, 1990, p.198).<sup>25</sup> In this imagetic and subjective process carried out by and with language, several meanings are produced which can be refracted or reflected in a literary work, thus representing the “the differentiated socio-ideological position of the author amid the heteroglossia of his epoch” (Bakhtin, 1981, p.300, author’s emphasis).<sup>26</sup> Moreover, heteroglossia may well be understood as the different “historical and social voices populating language,” (Bakhtin, 1981, p.300)<sup>27</sup> which is always aestheticized by the *author-creator*.

The constitution of one through the other, according to Bakhtin, is inherent to the subject. Thus, the subject, having an empathetic excess of seeing, recognizes and identifies oneself through the existence, values, culture and language of the other. Hence, the subject incorporates a responsive acting into every event in life by means of interaction with others. The subject turns into an ethical, responsive subject in the existence. Considering that notion of subject, we see that language permeates this entire process and, according to Bakhtin, the word is not monologic, but dialogic; therefore heteroglossic: “any utterance (...) reveals to us many half-concealed or completely concealed words of others with varying degrees of foreignness” (Bakhtin, 1986, p.93).<sup>28</sup>

This discursive heterogeneity defended by Bakhtin shows that the author-person or the author-creator does not possess a transparent language, immune to other discourses; on the contrary, discourse is opaque, made of several other discursive social and historical voices which influence the discourse of a self that speaks from the *other*. In that sense, as Michel Foucault (2009, p.270) also stated, writing “still preserves the existence of the

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<sup>24</sup> For reference, see footnote 8.

<sup>25</sup> For reference, see footnote 23.

<sup>26</sup> For reference, see footnote 8.

<sup>27</sup> For reference, see footnote 8.

<sup>28</sup> For reference, see footnote 14.

author,” for if we relate a discourse/utterance to “the author’s name” we shall notice that it is instituted by “a given culture,” in “a certain group of discourses” and in the author’s “singular mode of being;” this is why Foucault (2009, p.274) argues for the “authoring function;” marked by the “mode of existence, circulation and functioning of certain discourses within society.”

It is noticeable that both in Bakhtin and Foucault the authorship of an artwork, in this case, a literary one, maintains indications of the words/utterances/voices/discourses of *others*, but this influence of *other words* is always mediated by the subject’s evaluations, for the subject is situated in a given social and historical context, besides being historically composed of several discourses. Valentin Vološinov (1973, p.157, author’s emphasis)<sup>29</sup> has stated that “the word as the ideological phenomenon par excellence exists in continuous generation and change.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, language is never neutral as regards the ideological interests which are at stake in a certain society: “any ideological product is not only itself a part of a reality, (...) it also, in contradistinction to these other phenomena, reflects and refracts another reality outside itself” (Vološinov, 1973, p.9).<sup>31</sup>

Consequently, Vološinov (1983, p.145) argues that:

No actual reality in which a real person lives, is *history*, is the eternally turbulent sea of the *class struggle* which knows no rest, knows no pacification. And the word which reflects this history cannot help reflect its contradictions, its dialectical movement, its ‘coming to be’.<sup>32</sup>

From this dialectic point of view, Vološinov still observes, regarding the relationship between language/history/ideology/class struggle, that the underprivileged groups, rendered invisible by the hegemonic discourse of history, tend not to realize and not to change their reality through discourse. In such case, the social group that yields power, continuously alters, with and through discourse, the objective reality, refracting the meanings which do not interest them to maintain the *status quo* of inequality,

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<sup>29</sup> Vološinov belonged to Bakhtin’s study group, known as the Bakhtin Circle. Vološinov wrote several essays between 1925 and 1930, collected in *A palavra na vida e a palavra na poesia*, published in Brazil in 2019, translated directly from Russian by Sheila Grillo and Ekaterina Vólkova Américo.

<sup>30</sup> VOLOŠINOV, V. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. New York: Seminar Press, 1973.

<sup>31</sup> For reference, see footnote 30.

<sup>32</sup> VOLOŠINOV, V. N. The Word and its Social Function. In: *Bakhtin School Papers*. Translated by Joe Andrew. Oxford: Oxon Publishing, 1983.



stereotypes, preconceptions and several other *truths* imposed by the hegemonic discourse of the ruling class:

Different classes have different points of view: in the language of each class there exists a particular degree of correspondence between the word and objective reality. The proletariat, whose subjective point of view most closely approximates to the objective logic of reality, naturally, does not need to distort this reality in words (Vološinov, 1983, p.146).<sup>33</sup>

Vološinov's stance on the ideological sign and its resulting manipulation by discourse is relevant to our discussion, insofar as it holds an intrinsic relation with artistic and literary activity. Bakhtin (1990, p.195)<sup>34</sup> stated that the creative act demands an axiological stance "in the occurrence of existing," and in that case, the word is "an expression of the author's relationship to that world." In this sense, Carlos Alberto Faraco (2018, p.50), when interpreting Bakhtin's propositions concerning the act of aesthetic creation, contends that the "author-creator is a verbal-axiological position which reflects and refracts heteroglossia."<sup>35</sup> Considering that the axiological conception of acting grounds Bakhtin's conceptions of culture, subject, language and life, we may say, quoting Faraco (2017b, p.52), that "acting, evaluating, interacting – weave our living."<sup>36</sup>

From this perspective on acting axiologically through and with language, we place the Amazonian writer Milton Hatoum's discursive-literary project as the aesthetic of an author-creator who always acts with an excess of seeing and who is committed to his act in the event of being of/in and through the literary work. According to Pierre Bourdieu, in intellectual field and creative project.

the relationship between a creator and his work and, therefore, the very work are affected by the system of social relations in which creation takes place as an act of communication or, more precisely, by the creator's position in the structure of the intellectual field (Bourdieu, 1968 [1966], p.105).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> For reference, see footnote 32.

<sup>34</sup> For reference, see footnote 23.

<sup>35</sup> In Portuguese: "autor-criador é uma posição verbo-axiológica que reflete e refrata a heteroglossia."

<sup>36</sup> In Portuguese: "agir, valorar, interagir – tecem o viver."

<sup>37</sup> In Portuguese: "a relação que um criador mantém com sua obra e, por isso mesmo, a própria obra são afetadas pelo sistema de relações sociais nas quais se realiza a criação como ato de comunicação ou, mais precisamente, pela posição do criador na estrutura do campo intelectual."

As a result of Bourdieu's observation, it is possible to refer to Bakhtin and Vološinov's proposal, initially in two senses, which are, firstly, related to the ideological influence which social discourses imprint on the conception of the life and art in the author-person; secondly, the possible existence of a power position assigned to the artist within the intellectual field in which the author-person is situated, and in that case, the axiological understanding of responsive acting in existence assigns ethical, moral, social and artistic value to the author-creator's artistic-literary production. It is this responsive quality, pervaded by and in literary discourse which refracts the many social voices which have been historically rendered invisible, which we believe that Milton Hatoum's literary production possesses.

Gremião Neto, in analyzing Hatoum's literary project, considering the *crônicas* published by the Amazonian writer in the magazine *EntreLivros*, highlighted the work of remembrance as feature of Hatoum's literary work, whose concern is "a critical articulation with the past, which is responsible for encompassing ethical issues." (Gremião Neto, 2019, p.53)<sup>38</sup> In that sense the researcher argues that

the social function of Milton Hatoum as an empirical writer is directly linked to his function as a writer, thus building, besides his aesthetic composition, an ethical position which contributes both to his social function and to the thematic dimension of his works (Gremião Neto, 2019, p.57).<sup>39</sup>

This feature pointed by Gremião Neto reminds us of what Bourdieu alluded to when stating that, within the intellectual field, the artist is entitled to some autonomy, despite the pressures of the artistic literary field which influence the author: "the autonomous intellectual (...) does not know and does not want to know other pressures than the constitutive demands of his creative project" (Bourdieu, 1968, p.108).<sup>40</sup> There is a common feature to Milton Hatoum's works: he gives voice to those who are socially

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<sup>38</sup> In Portuguese: "uma articulação crítica com o passado responsável por abranger questões éticas."

<sup>39</sup> In Portuguese: "a função social do escritor empírico Milton Hatoum está diretamente ligada à sua função de escritor, de modo a emoldurar, ao lado de sua composição estética, uma posição ética que contribui tanto para sua função social quanto para a dimensão temática de suas obras."

<sup>40</sup> In Portuguese: "o intelectual autônomo (...) não conhece e não quer conhecer outras pressões que não sejam as exigências constitutivas de seu projeto criador."

silenced. This trait arises in his compositions either as a feeling of loss, of ruin, or as exposure of authoritarian and life-consuming postures. In *Amazonas: palavras e imagens de um rio entre ruínas* [*Amazon: Words and Images of a River in Ruins*], Hatoum's first published work, he introduces the artistic and intellectual quality which will pervade the whole of his work:

Other exploitation fronts in the Amazon destroy primeval forests to plant this one kind of foreign to the region (...) It is already possible to find extensive areas (...) bare of the Amazonian richness of flora and fauna, a scenario that verges on desolation and tedium (Hatoum, 1979, unpagged).<sup>41</sup>

Hatoum's perspective shows a counter-hegemonic discourse which opposes the homologating discourse produced by the canon of modernity. Yet the notion of universal truth cannot be plausible in contemporaneity. As argued by Gianni Vattimo (1992, p.7), "modernity (...) ends when (...) we cannot speak of history as something unitary,"<sup>42</sup> and that implies, for instance, questioning the truths which had been unquestionable in several fields: science, religion, philosophy, language, literature, among other fields which are encompassed by human action in life.

In that sense, even the notion of progress as something that comes naturally to everyone is highly questionable. Vattimo points out that the development of the capitalist production relations triggered an expansion process in markets and, as a result, in means of communication – the so-called *mass media* – which paved the way for the emergence of *subcultures*, thus determining "the passage of our society to post-modernity" (Vattimo, 1992, p.12). This weakens, or might even discredit, the idea of *linear history* as the only possible truth, as proposed by modernity.

In Bakhtinian terms, we might envisage a *non-monologizing* discourse on contemporaneity in Vattimo's considerations; but, on the contrary, the Italian philosopher shows in his conception of modernity/post-modernity a need for thinking of social

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<sup>41</sup> In Portuguese: "Outras frentes de penetração na Amazônia, destroem áreas da mata original para plantar um único tipo de árvore, estranha à região (...). Já é possível encontrar extensas áreas (...) desnudas da riqueza da fauna e da flora amazônica, num cenário que beira a desolação e o tédio."

<sup>42</sup> In Portuguese: "a modernidade (...) termina quando (...) não se pode falar de história como qualquer coisa de unitário."

relations as a *heterotopia*.<sup>43</sup> According to the author, within a heterotopic conception it is possible to understand, create, aestheticize *other worlds* for: “We live the experience of beauty as the acknowledgment of models which make up worlds and communities only when these worlds and communities are explicitly multiple” (Vattimo, 1992, p.74).<sup>44</sup>

This new way of thinking and knowing the world and oneself has shifted paradigms in life, social relations and in the understanding of history as truth. In that sense, Vattimo (1992, p.15) argues that “the emancipatory effect of the liberation of local rationalities” means not only having a voice on the speaking stage, for it also consists of *uprooting* those voices, acknowledging the various *historicitities* which have been so far neglected. From this perspective, Vattimo deems indispensable the posture viewing the *other*: “that which we call the ‘reality of the world’ is something which is constituted as the ‘context’ of multiple fabulations – and thematizing the world in such terms is precisely the duty and meaning of the humanities” (Vattimo, 1992, p.32; author’s emphasis).<sup>45</sup>

It is by reflecting on the many *others*, from both an evaluative and responsive perspective, that the thought of Boaventura de Sousa Santos corroborates our discussion. Santos (2011) unveils in *A crítica da razão indolente: contra o desperdício da experiência* [*The Criticism of Indolent Reason: Against the Waste of Experience*] a different way of looking at modernity. The Portuguese thinker calls for a shift in the epistemological paradigm in modern knowledge, for the current one, the so-called post-modern one, is, according to him (Santos, 2011, p.37) a perspective that lacks an emancipatory look at modernity; on the contrary, it is often understood as a “regulating and conservative” version of it, legitimizing it with its conceptual guidelines on society, resulting in nothing else but “accelerated repetitions of the present” (Santos, 2011, p.37). In that sense, Santos terms his proposal an “opposing post-modernism,” because it is a perspective which “articulates the criticism of modernity with the criticism of the critical theory of

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<sup>43</sup> Vattimo reflects on the epistemological and historical transition of the utopian aesthetic experience, which considered the *world* (reality) and *beauty* (the object/artistic artifact) as immanent, univocal objects; proposing, on the other hand, a *heterotopical* conception of “mass aesthetic experience” with the advent of mass media (Vattimo, 1992).

<sup>44</sup> In Portuguese: “Vivemos a experiência do belo como reconhecimento de modelos que fazem mundo e que fazem comunidade apenas no momento em que estes mundos e estas comunidades se dão explicitamente como múltiplos.”

<sup>45</sup> In Portuguese: “aquilo que chamamos a ‘realidade do mundo’ é alguma coisa que se constitui como ‘contexto’ das múltiplas fabulações – e tematizar o mundo nestes termos é precisamente o dever e o significado das ciências humanas.”

modernity” (Santos, 2011, p.37).<sup>46</sup> Thus, besides being, according to Santos (2011, p.37), “a normativity built from the ground of social struggles, in a participatory and multicultural fashion,”<sup>47</sup> it aims to, among other things, give credit to “those (...) who feel that the reasons for indignation and non-conformism are not supported by the indignation and non-conformity of reason” (Santos, 2011, p.37).<sup>48</sup>

It was in accordance with this perspective that Santos, on quoting Leibniz,<sup>49</sup> termed the current paradigm of modernity as an *indolent reason*, since, as it imprints its homogenizing conception of life, it consequently imposes a hegemonic discourse on all scientific, artistic, cultural, historical and economic productions involved in human relations. Thus it disregards all of *other* productions which are not valued by the *indolent* conception in contemporaneity. This produces the loss of knowledge and experience in *other* subjectivities: “the experience of indolent reason is limited, (...) and thus the critic of indolent reason is also a condemnation of the waste of experience” (Santos, 2011, p.42).<sup>50</sup> In understanding that social relations are both multiple and singular in their existence, for they bear values and historicity themselves, inherent in their social and identity constitutions, Santos assigns, as previously mentioned, a *metonymic* idea of the regulation of the whole to the hegemonic discourse of *indolent reason*. On the other hand, he puts forward the *sociology of absences* as a paradigmatic alternative to this reductionist conception of modernity, which aims to “turn absences into presences,” that is, to give voice and visibility to temporalities, knowledge, social groups, geographic spaces and productive forces that are silenced by the metonymic discourse of modernity in contemporaneity (Santos, 2002).

These are the meanings which we intend to point out in Hatoum’s *crônicas* (2013). We start from Bakhtin’s philosophical, discursive and artistic-literary perspective,

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<sup>46</sup> In Portuguese: “articula a crítica da modernidade com a crítica da teoria crítica da modernidade.”

<sup>47</sup> In Portuguese: “uma normatividade construída a partir do chão das lutas sociais, de modo participativo e multicultural.”

<sup>48</sup> In Portuguese: “junto daqueles (...) que sentem que as razões da indignação e do inconformismo não estão apoiadas pela indignação e o inconformismo da razão.”

<sup>49</sup> German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), in his preface to *Theodicy*, recovers the expression *indolent reason* or *lazy reason*, used by Antiquity thinkers, which believed that, if the future is a *fait accompli*, then they were not to “do anything, worry about anything, but only seize the day,” being conformist towards the present, according to Santos (2011, p.42).

<sup>50</sup> In Portuguese: a experiência da razão indolente é uma experiência limitada, (...) por isso a crítica da razão indolente é também uma denúncia do desperdício da experiência.”

compare and contrast it now to metonymic reason, now to the sociology of absences, as put forth by Santos. We intend to show an emancipatory perspective in Hatoum's literary project, which values, by means of literary aesthetics, experiences made invisible up to that point.

## **2 Milton Hatoum's *Crônicas*: A Literary Project Dialogized in the *Sociology of Absences***

Milton Hatoum can be considered one of the most renowned writers by literary criticism, as he has been one of the most studied writers in the academic world in recent years. Apart from the literary merit of his texts, Milton Hatoum is also a popular writer among readers, as stated by over 200,000 books sold in the last twenty years (Cavalheiro, 2020, p.155):

There have been thesis and dissertations on Hatoum's work in twenty Brazilian states and the Federal District, distributed among 46 higher education institutions. In three other countries, there have been thesis and dissertations in five foreign higher education institutions (Cavalheiro, 2020, p.162).<sup>51</sup>

In addition to the relevance of his work in the academic world and his popularity among readers, Hatoum also emerges due to the peculiarities and the artistic value of this themes. As mentioned by Gremião Neto (2019), Hatoum refracts an ethical and aesthetic view in his productions. In this sense, the study conducted by Paulo César de Oliveira and Ana Carolina Figueiredo on his *crônicas* published by *Revista Magazine [Magazine Review]* have also indicated a responsive role for Hatoum's author/creator: "an intellectual Milton Hatoum, committed to social causes, political and cultural issues, and that is also noticeable in his texts" (Oliveira; Figueiredo, 2020, p.302).<sup>52</sup>

From what research demonstrates, Hatoum is part of a literary and intellectual field as pointed out by Bourdieu (1968) for, even though he approaches themes that may

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<sup>51</sup> In Portuguese: "Houve defesas de teses e dissertações sobre a obra de Hatoum em vinte estados brasileiros e no Distrito Federal, distribuídas entre 46 instituições de ensino superior. Houve, em outros três países, defesas realizadas em cinco instituições de ensino no exterior."

<sup>52</sup> In Portuguese: "um Milton Hatoum intelectual engajado em causas sociais, questões políticas e culturais e isso também se verifica em seus textos."

bother hegemonic speeches, the author does not refrain from representing in his aesthetics, here summarily discussed, voices that have been made invisible before. Although he is well-known for his production of novels, we can see that Hatoum's author-creator maintains a common element to his themes: he gives voice to the silenced ones, demonstrating the consequences of a metonymic speech to human relations and subjectivities. The *crônicas Um sonhador* and *Margens secas da cidade* will be analyzed in a dialogized reading movement, bringing together aesthetic traces left by the author-creator by means of both a Bakhtinian perspective and Boaventura Santos' sociological approach.

In the first *crônica*, *Um sonhador*, the narrative is in the first person and it begins with the narrator rowing a canoe. He is going to vote and, while rowing, the narrative advances with a description of how the environment has been degraded over time: the river, the burning of the forest. Meanwhile, the narrator recalls a group of young people who brought from the South a reading project for kids living in the area. According to the narrator, *words* made the kids dream. After this recollection, he continues his trip through the river until the voting place, describing how hard it was for the canoe to go through due to dead fish and carbonized branches. Suddenly, the narrator mentions a great noise of explosion; that is when we, readers, realize he was dreaming and got awakened by fireworks celebrating the New Year.

In the *crônica Margens secas da cidade*, the narrative is also in the first person. The narrator remembers the image of a street fruit seller, who would walk around the city carrying a tray full of typical fruits of the Amazon region. In the narrator's childhood, he used to think this seller resembled a *tree-man*. The narrator mentions that whenever he went back to the city, he would meet the fruit seller, but over time the *tree-man* deteriorated himself, losing his vitality, beauty and life. The transformation of the *tree-man* character follows the degradation of the city, according to the narrator.

In both *crônicas*, there is a noticeable lyricism in the narrative, which creates an imagetic atmosphere so common to Hatoum's work. In *Um sonhador*, the narrator presents us, readers, with the moment when the young ladies, from the South, who bring words to our village: "they reappeared like fireflies: by surprise, blinking in the darkness"

(Hatoum, 2013, p.222).<sup>53</sup> In *Margens secas da cidade*, the voice of the narrator presents the *tree-man* from his childhood: “The sounds of his words enchanted me, attracted me like a serpent that lifts its head at the sound of a flute” (Hatoum, 2013, p.222).<sup>54</sup> Octavio Paz (1982, p.131) states that images “create realities which hold a truth in themselves: their own existence.”<sup>55</sup> We can say that those are aesthetic images objectified by the poet/author-creator himself. Paz also affirms that images “are a desperate resource against the silence that invades us every time we try to express the terrible experience of what surrounds ourselves” (Paz, 1982, p.135).<sup>56</sup>

From the observations made by Paz, we can already testify how in this first movement within Hatoum’s poetics the author-creator arranges literary resources to produce meanings. This experience which Paz refers to may be intensified because Hatoum’s author-creator makes use of a memory resource to express this experience. Also, as Pierre Nora (1993) pointed out by means of “places of memory” – “vestiges of sense,” “a symbolic life” –, these memories may continuously be revived by language, as these senses of and for memory represent “social practices” of a certain time-space, which are resignified by historically-placed individuals’ own subjectivities. That is precisely why Nora (1993, p.27) states: “all symbolizes, all signifies.”<sup>57</sup> In that way, choosing to narrate in the first person might intensify these sensations and feelings, as Arrigucci Junior (1998, p.20) has already mentioned: choosing a “narrative voice has implications,” it is opting for “a view of the world.”

Such implications can be recognized in both narratives; narrators are committed to the scenes they are telling, as well as the sensations they are living, recalling or experiencing. In *Um sonhador*, the narrator says: “Words don’t heal, but they are a truce in abandonment, a melody in loneliness. Now, kids dream with the stories they have heard and tell dreams with the words they have learned how to read” (Hatoum, 2013, p.222).<sup>58</sup> This passage is proof to the narrator’s own values when witnessing the effects of the book

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<sup>53</sup> In Portuguese: “elas reapareceram que nem vaga-lumes: de surpresa, piscando na escuridão.”

<sup>54</sup> In Portuguese: “Os sons das palavras encantavam, me atraíam como a serpente que ergue a cabeça ao som de uma flauta.”

<sup>55</sup> In Portuguese: “cria realidades que possuem uma verdade: a sua própria existência.”

<sup>56</sup> In Portuguese: “é um recurso desesperado contra o silêncio que nos invade cada vez que tentamos exprimir a terrível experiência do que nos rodeia e de nós mesmos.”

<sup>57</sup> In Portuguese: “tudo simboliza, tudo significa.”

<sup>58</sup> In Portuguese: “As palavras não curam, mas são uma trégua no desamparo, melodia na solidão. Agora as crianças sonham com as histórias que ouviram e contam sonhos com as palavras que aprenderam a ler.”



campaign for the kids of the community, given the hardships surrounding them. As a result of the human degradation of the place – based on the speech of the whole of metonymic reason –, the narrator-character sees in the book, in knowledge, an alternative to change. When mentioning the election day and the fact that, despite all adversities of the way, the narrator wishes to reach the voting place; this also symbolizes, in the *crônica*, a perspective of transformation for the characters' lives, aestheticized in the *crônica* by the author-creator: "On Republic Day, I wanted to be the first to vote" (Hatoum, 2013, p.222).<sup>59</sup> This demonstrates the responsive perspective of the narrator's voice; he understands the importance of his actions in that space-time, not only for himself, but for the *others*. In Bakhtinian terms, we can say the narrator is a *responsive* being.

On the other hand, the narrator-character's wish for change is also represented as something hard to happen, as indicated by the obstacles met on his way to the voting place: "the rotten fish, carbonized leaves and branches" that *hinder* the passage of the canoe. This is a prominent aspect, given that the narrator names the river as either "Stretch of Hell" or "Small River of Freedom" (Hatoum, 2013, p.222). This confirms all the hardships he had to face – it is almost as if he had to solve a paradox. At the same time this dilemma does not eliminate the chances of changing for that space-time. There is the "Freedom" of action, and reaction: a counter-hegemonic speech. In addition, in the end of the *crônica* we realize it was all a dream, but the narrator says: "It was the first morning of the year. In the memory of my dream, betrayal without remorse and hope were alternating. And then a phrase I have never forgotten came to my mind: a dreamer's fate is to doubt..." (Hatoum, 2013, p.223).<sup>60</sup> The sign of a new year by its beginning, "the morning," strengthens yet again the character-narrator's emotional-volitional stance in that moment of existence and, even though he is dreaming, he argues that "a dreamer's fate is to doubt..." This excerpt can cause many different meaning effects, for instance: doubt, concerning the change of a current situation; hope, even in the shape of a dream. This can be reinforced by the suspension points and other signals of *emotional-volitional*

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<sup>59</sup> In Portuguese: "Dia da República, quis ser o primeiro a votar."

<sup>60</sup> In Portuguese: "Era a primeira manhã do ano. Na memória do sonho ainda alternavam a traição sem remorso e a esperança. E logo me veio à mente uma frase que nunca esqueci: o destino do sonhador é duvidar..."

and *responsive* actions left by the narrator throughout the *crônica* and explored here thus far.

The feeling of resisting to a situation which was previously established by *progress* is indicated in the first utterance that the narrator's father has taught him: "I learned how to sail in the dark, before I learned how to read and write. My father taught me to row and to find a canal at times of ebb tides" (Hatoum, 2013, p.222).<sup>61</sup> The saying "learn to sail" taking on a poetic stance already brings a lot of different meanings within the narrative, such as knowing how to sail and guide through life, how to make decisions. Also, the meaning assigned to books: "young ladies who bring words to our village," "they reappeared like fireflies" (Hatoum, 2013, p.222) confirms a hope for change: the young ladies bring *words* to people, thus the villagers will have a voice, will be able to articulate decisions and initiate change. The reference to "fireflies" overtly accentuates the thought of light within darkness and struggle, thus representing a way through light, books and knowledge.

So far, it is noticeable that the author-creator, through the narrator's voice, refracts on the text other socially invisible voices, disrespected in their singularities: the *povos ribeirinhos* [peoples who live in riverbanks], as indicated in the *crônica*. In addition, in our analysis we gather that the literary aesthetic of Hatoum indicates, by means of the author-creator, a literature that makes the hegemonic speeches produced by *metonymic reason* explicit. We see this in the result represented in the river: "fish were made prisoners in lakes which were never lakes. Dead. And a smell of ashes in the air. My parents didn't see this copper sky which hides the sun away" (Hatoum, 2013, p.222).<sup>62</sup> Aesthetically, we are able to see that the promise of development, posed by modernity, is not equanimous, confirming a homogenizing, and at the same time "limited in itself," as stated by Santos (2002, p.243).

In this regard, in the paradigm suggested by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2011), post-modernism should be opposite to fragmented or dissident views on social and environmental relations. Therefore, the theorist recommends recognizing other totalities,

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<sup>61</sup> In Portuguese: "Aprendi a navegar no escuro antes de ler e escrever. Meu pai me ensinou a remar e a encontrar canal em época de vazante."

<sup>62</sup> In Portuguese: "os peixes foram aprisionados em lagos que nunca foram lagos. Mortos. E um cheiro de cinzas no ar. Meus pais não viram esse céu de ferrugem que esconde o sol."

other heterogeneities; this characterizes a perspective which turns other existences visible, or other heterotopias, as proposed by Vattimo (1992). In Hatoum's text, one is able to perceive this alternative when the narrator assumes a responsive position in relation to his own existence. He glimpses a change, even with all the destruction caused by *progress*: the trip to the voting place, the reading project, ending with the New Year and kids telling dreams with the words they have learned.

From here onwards, one might deconstruct a logic of metonymic reason: monoculture of knowledge.<sup>63</sup> In this way, the children mentioned by the narrator will be able to absorb knowledge and share their own. Also, the manner in which the *crônica* represents *voting* may indicate a change of public policies that examine another metonymic logic of modernity: the dominant scale. Thus, one intends to unite these places in a responsible way, respecting each unique feature of the *povos ribeirinhos* and the environment. In this way, it will be possible to give voice to subjectivities which have been ignored by the hegemonic elite. Characters and the space-time aestheticized in the *Um sonhador* may be leading characters in the contemporary event of being.

In *Margens secas da cidade*, the narrator initially uses his memory to emphasize the vigor and splendor of the *tree-man*:

The man was a surprise in the morning daylight, and morning, that was childhood: naked land, never-ending river in the horizon. He would carry a heavy tray, his face could barely be seen among all the fruit and branches, fruit pulled out of trees of some yard or empty land, or out of the forest surrounding us. A *tree-man*, a forest being (Hatoum, 2013, p.61).<sup>64</sup>

According to Nora (1993), "places of memory" might indicate a harmonious interrelated connection between men and nature by means of the narrator's childhood recollections; for the narrative voice, man and nature integrate, and sometimes they

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<sup>63</sup> Metonymic reason has multiple logics by which it disqualifies, cancels or does not recognize other existences, such as the *monoculture of knowledge* and the *dominant scale*. The former considers principles of modern science and high culture to be canonic, despising other knowledges, while the latter, under the light of universalism and globalism, disregards whatever is deemed local and individual. (Santos, 2002, pp.246-248)

<sup>64</sup> In Portuguese: "O homem era uma surpresa na luz da manhã, e a manhã, sim, era infância: terra nua, rio de horizonte sem fim. Carregava um tabuleiro pesado, o rosto dele mal aparecia no meio de frutas e galhos, frutas arrancadas das árvores de algum quintal ou terreno baldio, ou da floresta que nos cercava. Um homem-árvore, um ser da floresta."

become one: “a suspended orchard swinging over an invisible head, the voice chirping trembling sounds by the wind coming from *Rio Negro* [Black River]” (Hatoum, 2013, p.61).<sup>65</sup> This approach of the author-creator, by means of the narrator, shows a responsive aesthetic perspective. This responsive attitude values the space-nature and the existence of men, both are placed as heterogenous speeches which are rationally coexisting in a modern metonymic logic which does not recognize different singularities.

Upon returning to the reality objectified by the text, the memory of that space-time from the narrator-character’s childhood faces a slightly different situation: the character *tree-man* still being “faun in Manaus” (Hatoum, 2013, p.61). This *tree-man* seems to suffer from the “non-existence” logic of the hegemonic capitalist modernity (SANTOS, 2002). The narrator gives evidence to this: “the man would always show himself upon my return to Manaus. I can say if older, more worn out or with a bigger hump” (Hatoum, 2013, p.61).<sup>66</sup>

For most of his life, the *tree-man* character seems indifferent to the action of mimetic reason. The narrator mentions a tale when the fruit seller refused payment for the purchase of some of his fruit; he also mentions the *tree-man*’s friendly behavior upon seeing the costumer-narrator again, saying: “Hey, Bro” (Hatoum, 2013, p.62).<sup>67</sup> This “alien speech” of the other, according to Vološinov (1973),<sup>68</sup> is a manifestation of the “inner speech.” By the situational context of the *tree-man*’s utterance, we can see that this utterance refracts a dominating ideology from dominating groups. This kind of discourse tends to “stabilize the preceding factor in the dialectical flux of the social generative process, so accentuating yesterday’s truth as to make it appear today’s” (Vološinov, 1973, p.24).<sup>69</sup> The author also states: “The proletariat, whose subjective point of view narrowly surrounds the objective logic of reality, obviously does not need the reality of words to be inaccurately represented” (Vološinov, 1973, p.146).<sup>70</sup> It is by means of this this evaluative and responsive view that the narrator shows us the intersubjective force of the

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<sup>65</sup> In Portuguese: “um pomar suspenso oscilando sobre a cabeça invisível, a voz trinando sons tremidos pelo vento que vinha do rio Negro.”

<sup>66</sup> In Portuguese: “o homem sempre aparecia quando eu regressava a Manaus, não sei se mais velho, mais acabado, ou mais corcunda.”

<sup>67</sup> In Portuguese: “E aí, mano.”

<sup>68</sup> For reference, see footnote 30.

<sup>69</sup> For reference, see footnote 30.

<sup>70</sup> For reference, see footnote 32.

oppressive speech that the metonymic reason imposes on minorities and on many other social voices; the *tree-man*, in this case, can be a symbol of these many peripheral voices to the hegemonic system.

Throughout the *crônica*, one may witness the simultaneous crumbling of both the *tree-man* character and the space of the city:

[the city] let be destroyed by the real estate wrath, by the progress which is only an ominous caricature of the progress. (...) The *tree-man* lost his leaves, his branches, and his strength (Hatoum, 2013, p.62).<sup>71</sup>

(...) now backfilled *igarapés* [River passageways], poor *palafitas* [Suspended houses in the river] replaced by ugly, closed houses with no balconies and small windows (Hatoum, 2013, p.63).<sup>72</sup>

Due to the metonymic speech imposed by modernity and its contemporary economic system, this process in which the fruit seller and, in parallel with him, the city of Manaus, are crumbling down is aestheticized by a responsive look from the author-creator when he gives voice to the narrator. By means of a very simple and down to earth view, the author-creator allows himself to impregnate his perspective with a stance axiologically committed to the event of being and to the *other* within the narrative. This perspective reaches its summit when the *tree-man*, now aware of his social immobility and resigned to a literal silence, finds himself “without a voice, with a submissive look down to the floor.”<sup>73</sup> And this time the *tree-man*, who previously had not accepted money – the biggest symbol of the financial system – did not hesitate in taking it: “He received the money, folded the bills and put them inside his shirt pocket. [...] Sad and voiceless, standing in the heat, a survivor whom death awaits in the dry riverbanks of my city” (Hatoum, 2013, p.63).<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> In Portuguese: “[a cidade] se deixava destruir pela sanha imobiliária, pelo progresso que é apenas caricatura sinistra do progresso. (...) O homem-árvore foi desfolhando, perdendo galhos, sua força vegetal arrefeceu.”

<sup>72</sup> In Portuguese: “[...] igarapé agora aterrado, as palafitas pobres substituídas por casas feias, fechadas, sem varanda, janelas pequenas.”

<sup>73</sup> In Portuguese: “sem voz, com um olhar resignado voltado para o chão.”

<sup>74</sup> In Portuguese: “Recebeu o dinheiro, dobrou as notas e pôs no bolso da camisa. (...) Triste e sem voz, parado no mormaço, sobrevivente que a morte espera nas margens secas da minha cidade.”

## Conclusion

Aesthetic representations, in a responsive way, are an ethical attitude in contemporary days, because as Bakhtin states (1986, 1990, 1993), it is the exotopian look at the *other* which makes the *self* a responsive individual, one that is axiologically acting within one's own existence. This feature also influences in one's artistic production; in this case, it enables many social voices, which at many times have been made silent by hegemonic speeches, to be objectified, as Santos (2002, 2011) has indicated with his perspective on the current paradigm on modernity: *the indolent reason*.

Both *crônicas* written by Hatoum have demonstrated, in an aesthetic ideation, a responsive perspective, which dialogs with other social discourses in an artistic and reflexive way. The narrators composed in these *crônicas* by the author-creator Hatoum take upon themselves a critical stance when facing facts of their everyday lives. In *Um sonhador*, the narrator aestheticizes possibilities of transformation from the ruins caused by a metonymic speech into new experiences for the group who lives in the banks of the Amazon rivers. As for *Margens secas da cidade*, the heteroglossia is represented by a fruit seller who crumbles alongside with the urban space of the city, both falling preys to the contemporary productivity logic which turns people and places uniquenesses as one single and homogeneous mass.

Therefore, the literary-aesthetic production here analyzed has its own tone to criticize the *status quo* by which many social voices are imposed to live with. Hatoum's work with the language refracts and reflects the many tensions lived as a society, causing multiple meaning effects in his texts. The meaning of destruction, ruin and death which encompass the analyzed *crônicas* are synonyms for the waste of experience mentioned by Santos (2002, p.239) regarding the effects of the indolent reason, as it tends to "shrink the present and (...) expand the future," silencing multiple social voices that could contribute to expanding the present, thus significantly valuing actions of space-time from here and now.

Another converging point between both *crônicas* lies in the existential allusions that involve Nature and Mankind. In the first *crônica*, the river is a flow of life, which conducts the narrator between a reality which is full of hardships and troubles and a precarious life which is composed of some accomplishments and happiness, always on

the verge of the fictional. In the second *crônica*, the fitomorphic image of the man who crumbles due to the force of time and Mankind itself is the dualized representation of roughness and dryness of this concrete world made by human hands, equally faded to decay and perish.

Finally, we can state that Hatoum engraves into his artistic creation ethical values by which the author-person himself believes to be valid to assign to his author-creator, which elevates even more the relevance and quality of his work as literary-art. In this way, Hatoum combines that feature referred by Bourdieu (1968): the *autonomous intellectual*, given that he is able to maintain his themed project without apparently suffering pressure within the intellectual and literary field to which he belongs. In this context, we also consider his reception in the academia, as indicated by Cavalheiro (2020) as an appraisal element of Hatoum's work inside the literary field.

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### **Declaration of Ownership and Responsibility for the Published Content**

The authors David Costa de Souza, Juciane dos Santos Cavalheiro e Márcio Leonel Farias Reis Páscoa have significantly contributed for the production of the article “Chronicles of Milton Hatoum: Dialogism and Emancipation in Post-Modernity” in what comprehends the elaboration of the project, data analysis, essay, critical review, as well as the final approval for it to be published. Therefore, they are responsible for all the elements and interpretations that are part of the article.

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## Reviews

### Review I

The paper establishes a plausible relationship between thoughts of Bakhtin and Boaventura de Souza Santos, efficiently discussing dialogic relations in two *crônicas* written by Milton Hatoum. The paper requires some proofreading, and there is a remark that needs to be addressed, but nothing that compromises its quality. It was well written and organized, and it deserves being published in case it is proofread. APPROVED

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### Review II

The paper, which was suitably entitled “*Crônicas* of Milton Hatoum: dialogism and emancipation in postmodernity” aims at discussing discursive and aesthetic characteristics of Hatoum’s literary works from Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogic perspective, thus exploring, in the artistic-literary discourse, axiologic positions refracted in two of the author’s *crônicas*. The paper’s aim is satisfactorily met, appealing to Boaventura Santos’ epistemological perspective regarding social experience in modernity/postmodernity, which is a current and appropriate reference. The paper is relevant to the field, contributing to shed a light on the dialogue between literary and sociological discourse, thus demonstrating relationships between literature and its social-historical context. In addition, the writing is clear, precise and suited to scientific norms. There is only one error when using the verb “imply,” which should not be written alongside the preposition “in,” and a misspelled word. In face of all this, I am favorable to the paper being published. APPROVED.

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