RHETORIC, ARGUMENTATION AND DIALOGIC ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE[1]

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▪ ABSTRACT: This paper proposes a dialogue between ancient rhetoric and the dialogic analysis of discourse, based on the oeuvre of Mikhail Bakhtin and the Circle. It aims to examine how teachings of rhetoric echo in the Bakhtinian thought, seeking consonances and dissonances between them. We propose a dialogue with Aristotle's rhetoric and then with Plato's criticism to its use and functioning. Our goal is to understand the relations and dialogic possibilities between rhetoric and the Circle's oeuvre, arguing for the productivity of their alliance to the understanding and production of discourse and argumentation. Taking into account that they agree on several points, but also acknowledging the criticisms in the works of the Bakhtin Circle as regards rhetoric, we find it important to understand them so that this theoretical alliance can be grounded on reliable epistemological bases and be productive.

▪ KEYWORDS: Rhetoric. Argumentation. Bakhtin and the Circle. Aristotle. Plato.

> *The dialogic nature of consciousness,*
> *the dialogic nature of human life itself. The single*
> *adequate form for verbally expressing authentic human life is the open-*
> *ended dialogue. Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to*
> *participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree,*
> *and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout*
> *his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body*
> *and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse*
> *enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium.*
> Mikhail Bakhtin

Dialogism, or dialogy, has been a widely accepted concept in language theories for quite some time. As a constitutive principle of the senses[2] of different discourses, it

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[2] TN. We have opted to translate the word "sentido" as "sense," which is a direct translation of the word from Portuguese. However, it is important to point out that Vern McGee, when translating From Notes Made from 1970-71 into English, used the expression "contextual meaning." Here is an example: "O sentido é potencialmente infinito [...]" (BAKHTIN, 2017, p.41) / "Contextual meaning is potentially infinite [...]" (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p.145).

has been extensively studied from different theoretical perspectives and under different names – even if used with different nuances –, such as polyphony, internal and external heterogeneity, intertextuality, interdiscursivity. A watershed moment for the recognition of the importance of the concept was when Bakhtin's works were introduced in the West especially through Bulgarian semiotician Julia Kristeva's writings, the first one of which was published in 1969 (see FIORIN, 2008). Broadly understood, dialogue does not refer to face-to-face interactions only; it is the fundamental reality of language that occurs in the discursive interaction between concrete utterances, be them oral or written. According to Vološinov (1986, p.95, original emphasis),

> *Any utterance*, no matter how weighty and complete in and of itself, *is only a moment in the continuous process of verbal communication*. But that continuous verbal communication is, in turn, itself only a moment in the continuous,all-inclusive, generative process of a given social collective. An important problem arises in this regard: the study of the connection between concrete verbal interaction and the extraverbal situation-both the immediate situation and,through it, the broader situation. The forms this connection takes are different,and different factors in a situation may, in association with this or that form,take on different meanings (for instance, these connections differ with the different factors of situation in literary or in scientific communication). *Verbal communication can never be understood and explained outside of this connection with a concrete situation.*

In this paper we propose a dialogue between Bakhtinian works and rhetoric.Thus, it is important to firstly emphasize this concept, for both theoretical approaches deal with *discursive communications*, which are viewed as culturally, historically and socially situated actions. In discourse exchanges between utterances and enunciators, senses are produced and constituted through *dialogical relations*, which are always evaluative, since utterances express positions (BAKHTIN, 1984a).

Much has been studied about and commented on the philosophical sources of the Bakhtin Circle's or their interlocutors' thought. However, far less has been discussed about possible associations and approximations between their thinking and rhetoric. Thus, it is through tradition and permanence, despite its ruptures, that we present this study under a new perspective; that is, we offer a dialogue between Bakhtinian thinking and the old discipline. Rhetoric is the oldest discipline of the Western world that was interested in discourse studies. It exerted a profound influence on literature throughout history. Both in Greece and Rome, it was the center for the education of the free man for over two thousand and five hundred years. During the Roman Empire we find that rhetoric studies were still present, as it was part of the *Trivium*, alongside with Grammar and Dialectics. It was found either in monasteries and medieval abbeys or in royal chancelleries. Later on, it was at universities. Recognized as fundamental to human

education, rhetoric, from its inception, was closely connected to Greek democracy; however, it was rarely developed in connection with the idea that the word and its use were accessible to everyone.

In fact, in the course of its existence of 2,500 years, rhetoric underwent continuous changes, as it overlapped sometimes with dialectic, sometimes with logic, and sometimes with poetry. At the rise of the modern states, after the Middle Ages, rhetoric was still active and present until the mid-19th century. However, the lack of prestige of the old discipline was accentuated thereafter – we need to recognize that since Plato it has been viewed with suspicion! –, which was undoubtedly under scored with the Enlightenment and the Cartesian reasoning, based on rational evidence. Nevertheless, this does not mean that rhetoric disappeared, for it remained in education for a long time. It either is identified with the teaching of writing or greatly influences it until the beginning of the 20th century (or is it until today?).[3]

Studies have discussed sufficiently how rhetoric was delegitimized throughout the centuries and how it subsequently reemerged, was recreated or revitalized. They have also pointed out that it retrieved either the lost prestige or the acknowledgment of its importance. This occurs especially in 1958 with the publication of *Tratado da argumentação* [*Treaty of Argumentation*] by Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca and *The Uses of Argument* by Stephen Toulmin. It is at this point that we begin to establish a dialogue between the old discipline and the dialogical analysis of discourse, grounded on the works of Bakhtin and the Circle.

A common aspect between Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975)[4] and Chaïm Perelman (1912-1984),[5] the creator of the New Rhetoric, is that they were contemporary, shared

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[3]   In Brazil rhetoric and poetics were excluded from school curriculums in the 1990s, but as Acízelo de Souza's (1999) study points out in detail, we can clearly see their traces in the 20th century. In France, Philippe Breton (1999) takes the year of 1902 as the cut-off point, that is, as the year when these subjects were excluded from the lyceums.

[4]   In 1929, the year when *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* was published, Valentin Vološinov (1895-1936), a member of the so-called Bakhtin Circle, already rejected positivism. He criticized the "[…] unsurmounted positivistic conception of empirical data – a reverence for 'fact' understood not in a dialectical sense but as something fixed and stable." (VOLÓCHINOV, 1986, p. xiv; see footnote 3 on the same page). Also see Bakhtin (1981a, p.352): "No other approach is in fact possible in the area of poetics, or the history of literature (and in the history of ideologies in general) or to a considerable extent even in the philosophy of discourse: even the driest and flattest positivism in these disciplines cannot treat the word neutrally, as if it were a thing, but is obliged to initiate talk not only about words but in words, in order to penetrate their ideological meanings-which can only be grasped dialogically, and which include evaluation and response."

[5]   In the essay Lógica jurídica e nova retórica [Legal Logic and New Rhetoric], Perelman states that "[…] the inevitable consequence of the positivist conception was that it restricted the role of logic, scientific methods and reason to problems related to purely theoretical knowledge, thus denying a practical use of reason. Therefore, it was opposed to the Aristotelian tradition, which accepted a practical reason that would be applied to every domain of action, from ethics to politics, and would justify philosophy as the search of wisdom." (PERELMAN, 1998, p.136); or when it opposed logic or rhetoric: "Today, as we are no longer deceived by rationalism and positivism and have come to realize the existence of confusing notions and the importance of value judgment, rhetoric must once again be a living study, a technique of argumentation in human relations, and a logic of value judgments (PERELMAN, 1997, p.89). In Portuguese: "A concepção positivista tinha como consequência inevitável restringir o papel da lógica, dos métodos científicos e da razão a problemas de conhecimento puramente teóricos, negando a possibilidade de um uso prático da razão. Opunha-se, por isso, à tradição aristotélica, que admitia uma razão prática, que se aplica a todos os domínios da ação, desde a ética até a política, e justifica a filosofia como a busca da sabedoria"; "Hoje que perdemos as ilusões do racionalismo e do positivismo, e que nos damos conta da existência das noções confusas e

basically the same philosophical and academic milieu, and rejected a rational, Cartesian, and more specifically positivist, tradition. In fact, for Brandist (2015), it was *de rigueur* to reject positivism in the Soviet Union, where it was approached as something close to a fetish, as facts were collected according to one's own interests and a vulgar natural determinism on social phenomena was imposed.

They were both philosophers who searched for a logic of value judgements. Perelman's studies stem from moral philosophy and give rise to the new rhetoric, which makes him deal with Aristotelian old rhetoric and dialectic. According to him, the scientificist model of knowledge is exhausted and motivates, therefore, rupture and the rejection of scientificism asit is inadequate to his investigation. Bakhtin's first studies are also dedicated to moral philosophy, to a project to develop a first philosophy [*prima philosophia*], which rejects as truth a conception that is comprised of general and universal moments, separated from and opposed to that which is singular, subjective, and unrepeatable (cf. PONZIO, 2010, p. 16-17): "Any universally valid value becomes *actually* valid only in an individual context." (BAKHTIN, 1993, p.36).

In fact, if Bakhtin and Perelman show some similarities when we take a quick read at their works, when we delve into them we realize that the philosophers tread different paths. However, as to the importance of value, they give it a constant and rather accentuated attention: Perelman's and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1996) oeuvre is concerned with understanding a reasoning that is based on values related to what is preferred, probable and reasonable, and that is as valid as that which is based on rational logic. Bakhtin's thinking is also developed around values, in relation to culture, life and knowledge: "To live means to take an axiological stand in every moment of one's life or to position oneself with respect to values." (BAKHTIN, 1990b, p.187-188). We could continue drawing other parallels between them, but our dialogue, from this point forward, will focus on rhetoric, the old discipline that was the starting point of Perelman's studies and without a doubt contributed to the training of the members of the Circle. We say this, taking into account the times it is mentioned – with little enthusiasm, actually – in the Bakhtinian works.

Our academic studies focused on rhetoric, but they also included Perelman, Bakhtin and the other members of the Circle. Today Mosca (2001), among others, approach different language disciplines that seek either meaning effects produced by language, or actions it promotes, or new classifications for figures of speech, or even new understandings of the argumentative phenomenon, as ramifications of the old rhetoric. According to her, they are the rhetoric of yesterday and today. More recently, in 2015, Fiorin published a book that examines studies on argumentation and declares that his approach is through discourse, highlighting that dialogism is the real mode of operation of every discourse. He does not discard the old discipline; to the contrary, he underscores the importance of "inheriting rhetoric," which means that in discourse studies we need

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da importância dos juízos de valor, a retórica deve voltar a ser um estudo vivo, uma técnica da argumentação nas relações humanas e uma lógica dos juízos de valor."

"to read it in the light of the theoretical problems currently enunciated" (FIORIN, 2015, p.26).[6] It is in the wake of these philosophers that we carry out this study, showing that the Bakhtinian work, and especially the approach that has been called the Dialogical Analysis of Discourse (BRAIT, 2006, 2008), can also be considered a new ramification of rhetoric.

Lately we have seen an intense revitalization of rhetoric studies, which has produced countless research works in areas such as philosophy, law, and languages (linguistic, literature and classical languages) and their interconnections. However, throughout the history of rhetoric, it was viewed as (1) a technique (an *art*, in the classical sense of the word), that is, a set of rules to create persuasive discourse; (2) a teaching object; (3) a science, in terms of a systematic study of language resources (cf. GUIRAUD, 1970, p.35-36); (4) "[…] a body of ethical prescriptions whose role is to supervise (i.e., to permit and to limit) the 'deviations' of emotive language." (BARTHES, 1994, p.13); (5) a social practice, which gives the ruling classes the power of speech; (6) a lucid practice, comprised of "[…] games, parodies, erotic or obscene allusions, classroom jokes, a whole schoolboy practice." (BARTHES, 1994, p.14). It is the first two (or three) aspects that are more evident in the teaching of rhetoric in Greek and Roman Antiquity and that are related to the practice of democratic citizenship. Nevertheless, different discourse theories today have preferably studied argumentation from a more theoretical perspective (rather than a practical one), aiming at its understanding and operation and much less at questions related to the development of citizenship, which was so evident in its origins (VIDAL, 2011).

Therefore, as we notice the current and constant penetration of Bakhtinian thinking in our education, we find it important to investigate how the Bakhtinian work[7] approaches it and the contributions it can offer to studies on argumentation. Maybe the first would be that Perelman and Bakhtin most likely saw it, to use Barthes' (1994, p.13-14, original emphasis) words, as a social practice, "[…] which permits the ruling classes to gain *ownership of speech.*" We will elaborate on this further on.

This study, thus, focuses on the dialogical possibilities between rhetoric and the Bakhtin Circle's discourse theory. It aims at the contribution that the latter may offer to studies on argumentation. First we need to remember that much of what is discussed specifically in relation to rhetorical communication in Aristotle's oeuvre is viewed as characteristic to every discursive communication in Bakhtin. In the works of the Circle, *discourse* is understood in its *concrete living totality*; it is situated in space and time and has an author and an addressee (cf. BAKHTIN, 1984a, 2016; VOLÓŠINOV, 1986, among others). This understanding was somewhat the same in old rhetoric, which also viewed discourse as situated and each genre as related to concrete and defined situations, interlocutors, themes, and goals. For both, language is

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[6]   In the original: "lê-la à luz dos problemas teóricos enunciados na atualidade." (FIORIN, 2015, p.26).

[7]   The expression "Bakhtinian work" refers to the texts that were produced by Bakhtin and a group of scholars form different areas. In language studies, Valentin N. Volóchinov and Pavel Medviédev stand out (Cf. BRAIT, 2008, and others).

action. And discourse (or concrete utterance), in Bakhtinian terns, is outside the scope of linguistics. Vološinov (1986, p.78) reminds us that "[T]he structure of a complex sentence (a period)-that is the furthest limit of linguistic reach. The structure of a whole utterance is something linguistics leaves to the competence of other disciplines-to rhetoric and poetics."

However, approximations are not the only factors that promote the dialogue between the dialogic theory of discourse and rhetoric. Important concepts from the works of the Circle are especially useful to understanding and analyzing argumentation and discourse persuasion, such as *evaluative intonation*, *authoritative* and *internally persuasive discourse*, *double-voicedness*, among others. We need to point out Bakhtin's criticism to double-voiced discourse in rhetoric genres, which, according to him, is not deep-rooted, "[…] remaining as it does within the boundaries of a single language system", thus being "narrowed down to an individual polemic." (BAKHTIN, 1981a, p.325). In other words, the fact that rhetoric discourse emanates from controversies is only one aspect of argumentation, as the discursive phenomenon comprehends a broader perspective that is socially, spatially and historically contextualized and that acknowledges the ideologies involved. Besides, Bakhtin criticizes the fact that rhetoric does not admit the possibility of heterodiscourse (heteroglossia),[8] which results in a static view of language as a unique language system that has no "connection with the forces of historical becoming that serve to stratify language" (BAKHTIN, 1981a, p.325). He underscores the monologism of the compositional structure of rhetorical forms,[9] which are "oriented toward the listener and his answer"; such orientation is "usually considered the basic constitutive feature of rhetorical discourse" (BAKHTIN, 1981a, p.280). Even so, in other passages of the essay monologue is relativized as he indicates that an absolute monologue does not exist and highlights the differences between monologue[10] and dialogue.

Needless to say, when this type of dialogue is proposed, different possible approaches are used. However, a researcher may feel uncomfortable with the fact that Bakhtin and the other members of the Circle often showed suspicion about rhetoricin their writings. We will discuss this in the first section of this article, where a dialogue

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[8]   On *heterodiscourse* (in Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist's translation, *heteroglossia*), Bakhtin states that "[i]t is necessary that heteroglossia wash over a culture's awareness of itself and its language, penetrate to its core, relativize the primary language system underlying its ideology and literature and deprive it of its naïve absence of conflict." (BAKHTIN, 1981a, p.368).

[9]   The question of the monologism of rhetorical discourse continues to be controversial; that is, it depends on how one understands dialogism, monologism and that which is called "rhetorical discourse." Bialostosky (2004, p.393) reminds us that there is no consensus on "rhetorical discourse" either. He states that "His [Bakhtin's] placement of rhetoric on the monologic side of his fundamental distinction between dialogic and monologic discourse has provoked Halasek (1998) to show that rhetoric is more dialogic than Bakhtin allows, Walzer (1997) and Murphy (2001) to reaffirm its essential monologism, and Dentith (1997) to deny the distinction between dialogic and monologic discourse altogether."

[10]   On the difference between monologue and dialogue, the essay Dialogue I: The Question of the Dialogical Discourse should be consulted. It was written in 1950 and recently translated into Brazilian Portuguese by Paulo Bezerra (BAKHTIN, 2016, p.113-124).

with the Aristotelian rhetorical tradition is offered.[11] In the second section we propose a dialogue with Plato's criticism to rhetoric and possible relationships with dialogism.

As we create these dialogues, we aim to observe how these different theoretical approaches can together be productive to understand the production, circulation and reception of verbal or verbal-visual discourses. This alliance must be carefully forged, for the way the members of the Circle understood rhetoric must be taken into account. That is why we aim to examine the rhetorical tradition of Aristotle and Plato in the Circle's oeuvre. In fact, we argue that although we might be in utter surprise when we sometimes find negative and critical comments on the old discipline (or even because of it…), this alliance may actually contribute to analyzing and understanding concrete utterances and thus to cooperating with the teaching of argumentation as it fosters the development of a critical and responsible citizenship.

Dialogue I: Bakhtinian Thinking and Aristotle's Rhetorical Tradition

Our dialogue starts with Aristotle's rhetoric, on which future developments were founded, inasmuch as the Stagirite was responsible for systematizing it and finding it a place between dialectic and analytic. He thus reconciled the antithetical pairs: true and verisimilar, *episteme* and *doxa*.[12] We will analyze some coherent and complementary aspects between the old discipline and the discourse theory of the Bakhtin Circle, but we will not prescind from pinpointing specific details and the context of each. Only then will we show their differences. First, we need to comment on the fact that Aristotle (384 BCE - 322 BCE) only defines rhetoric in the second chapter of Rhetoric: "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (ARISTOTLE, 1984a, §2, p.4624). The first chapter brings introductory notes and aims to showcase the use of rhetoric to social conviviality. And, to that extent, matters of value justify it.

> Rhetoric is useful because things that are true and things that are just have a natural tendency to prevail over their opposites, so that if the decisions of judges are not what they ought to be, the defeat must be

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[11] Part of this discussion was published in the Argentinian journal *Rétor* (PISTORI, 2013, p.60-85).However, as the objective of this study is to focus on Aristotle's and Plato's tradition, we chose to keep the essence of that text in this section.

[12] Aiming to "repair the damages" caused by Plato's position, in his rhetoric, the Stagirite collected and organized, as a coherent whole, the findings of his predecessors: *Analytic* (necessary knowledge), *Dialectic* (probable knowledge) and *Rhetoric* (opinion). He gave the latter a statute of its own: it takes on characteristics of an art/*techne*, in the sense the term was employed in Antiquity, without prejudicing philosophy and distinguishing itself from it. It becomes clear, then, that rhetoric does not aim to find the truth, be it necessary or probable, but to persuade an audience based on verisimilitude. It now consists of a logical study of argumentation – not an empirical one, a psychology of the passions and characters, and a stylistics, which are all viewed from a philosophical perspective. *Episteme*, the object of philosophy, becomes separated from *doxa*, the object of rhetoric. Aristotle still separates the two from dialectics, discussed in *Topics*, which is also of the competence of all human beings. It is based on the probable, on opinions that are "generally held" by "all or by most men or by the wise, i.e. by all, or most, or the most notable of them" (1984b, p. 398; 100b). See Crítica de Platão, in Pistori (2001, p.43-47).

due to the speakers themselves, and they must be blamed accordingly. (ARISTOTLE, 1984a, p.4622).

[...] it is absurd to hold that a man ought to be ashamed of being unable to defend himself with his limbs, but not of being unable to defend himself with rational speech. (ARISTOTLE, 1984a, p.4623).

Bakhtin, in Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity, declares that matters of value are associated not only to words, but to life itself: "To live means to take an axiological stand in every moment of one's life or to position oneself with respect to values." (BAKHTIN, 1990a, p.187-188). Besides, they are extensively found in the Circle's works. As a brief example, in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, published in Russia in 1929, Vološinov (1986, p.21) explains about the content of signs and the "evaluative accentuation that accompanies all content". He adds that "[n]o utterance can be put together without value judgment. Every utterance is above all an *evaluative orientation*. Therefore, each element in a living utterance not only has a meaning but also has a value." (VOLÓCHINOV, 1986, p.105, original emphasis). Declarations such as these attest to the Circle's understanding that utterance and evaluation are inseparable. This notion is found in different passages of their work - even in the texts from the 1920s, as we confirm below, in *Towards a Philosophy of the Act* (1920/1924):

> [...] the word does not merely designate an object as a present-on-hand entity, but also expresses by its intonation[an actually pronounced word cannot avoid being intonated, for intonation follows from the very fact of its being pronounced] my valuative attitude toward the object. (BAKHTIN, 1993, p.32).

In the well-known essay The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences, published in 1976, we read that

> Every utterance makes a claim to justice, sincerity, beauty, and truthfulness (a model utterance) and so forth. And these values of utterances are defined not by their relation to the language (as a purely linguistic system), but by various forms of relation to reality, to the speaking subject and to other (alien) utterances (particularly to those that evaluate them as sincere, beautiful, and so forth). (BAKHTIN, 1986b, p.123).

This emphasis on and connection between intonation and evaluation, which we find in the totality of the Circle's oeuvre, can also be found in *Rhetoric*. As we know the first two books deal with the discovery of evidences, with arguments – this is *inventio*. In Book III, the Greek philosopher elaborates on the other three operations of persuasive

discourse production, namely, *dispositivo*, *elocution*, and *actio* (or *pronunciatio*). He highlights the importance of intonation in the delivery of discourse and states that although such issue can be viewed as "unworthy,"[13] it is necessary, because "the whole business of rhetoric [is] concerned with appearances […] [and] [t]he right thing in speaking really is that we should be satisfied not to annoy our hearers, without trying to delight them" (ARISTOTLE, 1984a, p.4795, 1404a):

> It is, essentially, a matter of the right management of the voice to express the *various emotions*—of speaking loudly, softly, or between the two; of high, low, or intermediate pitch; of the various rhythms that *suit various subjects*. […] The arts of language cannot help having a small but real importance, whatever it is we have to expound to others: *the way in which a thing is said does affect its intelligibility.* (ARISTOTLE, 1984a, p.4795-4796, 1404a, our emphasis).

In this regard, Bialostosky (2004)[14] draws an interesting parallel between Aristotle's and Bakhtin's thinking. He states that in his theory of discourse, Bakhtin inverts the hierarchy of the operations of Aristotelian rhetoric: he rehabilitates action, the operation that was least valued, and subjects *inventio*, the most important operation, to the others, viz., *dispositio*, *elocutio* and *actio* (*delivery*). In doing so, he prioritizes enunciation itself. This means that he develops a theory of *actio/pronunciatio*, which is more than just the theory of *inventio*, proposed by the Greek philosopher. Another important aspect to discuss is that if rhetoric was oral first, in Bakhtinian work a rigid separation of oral and written culture does not exist, as language is associated to the ethical and responsible act and to intonation (the sound quality) (see BUBNOVA, 2011).

Another question we have observed, still in the first chapter of Rhetoric, is that the *response* to a given situation is conferred on discourse. For Aristotle, this understanding has to do with "fairness": "[…] in order that we may see clearly what the facts are, and that, if another man argues unfairly, we on our part may be able to confute him." (ARISTOTLE, 1984a, p.4622-4623, 1355a). Such recommendation is also offered by Bakhtin (1981a, p.280): "All rhetorical forms, monologic in their compositional structure, are oriented toward the listener and his answer. This orientation toward the listener is usually considered the basic constitutive feature of rhetorical discourse." Bakhtin compares this feature of the rhetorical discourse to everyday dialogue further on in the same essay:

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[13] "Unworthy" is used in the sense that the judge is someone simple and the "art" is so ordinary that some "succeed through practice and others spontaneously" (ARISTOTLE, 1984a, p.4618, 1354a).

[14] See Bialostosky (2004, p.383-408). In fact, Bialostosky still shows an interesting connection between *Poetics* and Bakhtin's analysis of Dostoevsky's oeuvre based on the relationship Aristotle established between rhetoric and poetics. Onthis, see Bialostosky (2016).

The listener and his response are regularly taken into account when it comes to everyday dialogue and rhetoric, but every other sort of discourse as well is oriented toward an understanding that is "responsive" – although this orientation is not particularized in an independent act and is not compositionally marked. *Responsive understanding is a fundamental force, one that participates in the formulation of discourse*, and it is moreover an active understanding, one that discourse senses as resistance or support enriching the discourse. (BAKHTIN, 1981a, p.280-281, emphasis our).

Also in the essay Diálogo I: A questão do discurso dialógico [Dialogue I: The Question of the Dialogic Discourse]:

The question is more complex with the dialogic discourse: as we analyze a rejoinder in dialogue, *we must consider the determining influence of the interlocutor and his/her discourse, which is expressed in the relation between the speaker, the interlocutor and his/her word*. The logic object element of the word becomes the locus where interlocutors meet and the arena where their points of view and evaluations are developed. (BAKHTIN, 2016, p.123, our emphasis, our translation).[15]

However, we need to remember that, similar to Aristotle, Bakhtin resorts to axiology once again to broaden the discussion related to the understanding of the other's positioning: "Understanding is impossible without evaluation. Understanding cannot be separated from evaluation: they are simultaneous and constitute a unified integral act." (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p.142). This understanding is dialogic; it is the response to other utterances in the continuous chain of concrete utterances, even when it is not disclosed on the verbal (compositional and stylistic) plane (BAKHTIN, 1986c).

Another concept that connects and approximates the two areas is discourse *genre*, clearly discussed in the well-known essay The Problem of Speech Genres, from 1951-1953 (BAKHTIN, 1986c), but recurrent in other works since the 1920s.[16] In Brazil it is used in official documents related to the teaching of languages and, consequently, in teaching manuals. Researchers, such as Machado (2008) and Rojo (2008), have discussed in detail about the way in which the concepts of rhetorical and poetic genres form Antiquity dialogue with Bakhtin's notion of discourse genre, as the latter includes aspects related to theme, purpose, situation and audience, which were also contemplated by the Greek.

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[15] In the original: "*A questão é bem mais complexa com o discurso dialógico: ao analisarmos uma réplica, devemos considerar a influência determinante do interlocutor e seu discurso, que se exprime na relação do próprio falante com o interlocutor e sua palavra. O elemento lógico-objetal da palavra torna-se o palco do encontro de interlocutores, a arena da formação dos seus pontos de vista e apreciações.*"

[16] See Brait & Pistori (2012).

As to the way senses are produced in an utterance, the 1929 essay "Discourse in Life and Discourse in Poetry: Questions of Sociological Poetics" (VOLOSHINOV, 1983) reverberates again the old rhetoric:

> The non-verbal situation is thus in no way simply the external cause of the utterance, it does not influence it from outside, like a mechanical force. No, *the situation enters into the utterance as an essential constituent part of its sense structure*. Consequently, a real-life utterance, as an intelligible whole, is composed of two parts: (1) the verbally realized (or actualized) part, and (2) what is implied. So we may compare a real-life utterance with an 'enthymeme'. (VOLOSHINOV, 1983, p.12, original emphasis).

This is the Bakhtinian approach to *discourse* as concrete utterance, which is situated in time and space and has an author and an addressee. Besides, its sense emanates from the verbal interaction with the nonverbal. However, in this passage, Voloshinov uses rhetorical terminology to present it. He evokes the enthymeme, a rhetorical and very simple syllogism, in which one of the premises is implied. Aristotle stated that "the hearer adds it himself" (ARISTOTLE, 1984a, p. 4629; 1357a). Once again we observe that the rhetorical utterance, which can be produced by chance and by ordinary people (ARISTOTLE, 1984a; 1354a), approaches the concept of concrete utterance, the living language, which is the object of reflection of the Bakhtinian work.

In the context of this dialogue, based on consonance and coherence, we can still remember that for old rhetoric and the dialogic theory, content and form (*res/verba*) are integral elements in the production of meaning. According to Aristotle in Book III, "Our next subject will be language. For it is not enough to *know what we ought to say*; we must also say it *as* we ought; much help is thus afforded towards producing the right impression of a speech" (ARISTOTLE, 1984a, p. 4794; 1404a; our emphasis).[17] In *Discourse in Life and Discourse in Poetry*, Voloshinov declares that "[f]orm by itself need not be pleasing. […] form should be a *convincing evaluation* of the content" (VOLOSHINOV, 1983, p.20, original emphasis). And Bakhtin (1990b), discussing it in The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art, adds that

> *Content* is an indispensable constitutive moment in the aesthetic object, and artistic form is correlative to it; *outside this correlation, artistic form has no meaning at all* (BAKHTIN, 1990b, p.281, original emphasis).
>
> [...] content and form interpenetrate, they are inseparable. However, for aesthetic analysis, they are not fused, that is, they are validities of a

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17 TN. The translator of *Rhetoric* into Portuguese used the word "form" in the translation of "it as we ought": "*de forma convincente*" [in a convincing form].

different order: if form is to have a purely aesthetic significance, the content it embraces must have a potential cognitive and ethical significance. Form needs the extra-aesthetic weightiness of content, for without it form could not realize itself as form. (BAKHTIN, 1990b, p.283).

The rhetorical resonance in the Bakhtinian thinking, as we have presented so far, is manifold and varied. There are still many direct and positive references to rhetoric, such as in Discourse in the Novel (BAKHTIN, 1981a), written between 1934 and 1935. The essay's emphasis on rhetorical studies is evoked as a prescription and basis of literary criticism and traditional stylistics. We thus believe that the dialogues we have hitherto established prove the earlier assertion that old rhetoric was undoubtedly one of the sources of formation and research of the members of the Circle. Several factors also contributed to this resonance: the friendly relationship they maintained with scholars of classicism, the interest in oratory in the first period of the Russian revolution, and the creation and formation of the Institute of the Living Word (Institutzhivogoslova, IZhS). The word *slovo* in the name of the Institute once again brings the Circle close to rhetoric, as the Russian word has an equivalent meaning of the Greek word *logos*.[18]

We should pinpoint now the dissonances between the Bakhtinian thinking and rhetoric. The way we see it, the best way to do so is through the analysis of a fragmented text from 1943. This text, which has not been translated into Portuguese yet, has been referred to by Bakhtin scholars through the beginning of its first sentence: "Rhetoric, in proportion to its falsity […]."Tatiana Bubnova, who has translated it into Spanish, titled it *Acerca del amor y el conocimientoen la imagen artística*[On Love and Knowledge in Artisitic Image](BAJTIN, 1997).[19] These fragments were written after Discourse in the Novel and were published in volume V of the Complete Works in Russian, edited by Bocharov e Gogotishvili: *Sobraniesochinenii*, *tom 5: Raboty 1940-kh – nachala 1960—khgodov* - 12/X/1943.[20] The text has no specific title either – only the phrase *Ritorika, merusvoeiIzhivosti...*[Rhetoric, in proportion to its falsity…]. Although it is a rich text, we will discuss only a few elements here. It starts with the opposition between rhetoric and discourse in the novel.

> Rhetoric, in proportion to its falsity (*ritorika, v merusvoeilzhivosti*) tends to provoke real terror and hope. That belongs to the essence of the rhetorical word (ancient rhetoric emphasized similar effects). (True) art and knowledge, on the contrary, seek to be free from these feelings. In their own way, tragedy and laughter achieve this freedom.

[18] On this, see Pistori (2013) and Brandist (2012).

[19] We believe this title obscures an important part of the content of the text, that is, the part related to rhetoric.

[20] BAKHTIN, Mikhail.[Ritorika, merusvoeiIzhivosti...] In: *Sobraniesochinenii*, *tom 5: Raboty 1940-kh – nachala 196—khgodov* [*Complete Works in Seven Volumes*, vol.5. Texts from the 1940s to the beginning of the 1960s], ed. S. G. Bocharov; L. A. Gogotishvili, Moscow, 1996]. (BAJTIN, 1997).

The fusion between praise and invective as the supreme artistic objectivity (the voice of totality) (BAJTIN, 1997, p.138, our translation).[21]

Bakhtin highlights, in a negative way, rhetoric's ability to cause fear or hope "in proportion to its falsity." The appeal to emotions – to *pathos* – is one of the possible evidences in rhetoric (alongside *ethos* and *logos*). Therefore, it has indeed belonged to "the essence of the rhetorical word" since Antiquity. Conversely, knowledge and art, according to him, "seek to be free from these feelings"; tragedy and laughter are freedom achievers, able to fuse "praise and invective" and to "neutralize lie," as he states further on in the text (BAJTIN, 1997, p.141). Discourse in art – in literature – is opposed to "falsity," to "lie, which is directly proportional to violence" (BAJTIN, 1997, p.141, our translation).[22] This text establishes a close dialogue with the other texts from the 1920s, viz., Art and Answerability [1919], The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art[1923/1924] and Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity[1924/1927], in which Bakhtin relates knowledge, ethics and aesthetics very closely together. Throughout the text, the rhetorical "falsity," violence and lie are still kept at a distance from art (literature):

Words want to influence and determine from the outside. An element of external pressure is incorporated into the very task of convincing. [...]

A word does not know whom it serves. It comes from the obscure and is ignorant of its origins. The authentically good man, loving and disinterested, has not used the organized word, infected by violence and lie. He has not become a writer [...]. The word was stronger than man, and under its power, he could not feel responsible. He felt he was a strange spokesman of the alien truth, being kept under a supreme power [...]. The creative process is always a process of violence, realized by the truth about the soul. So far truth has never been close to human beings; it has never come to him from within, [but has always come] from the outside, as something owned. As a revelation, it has never been honest, always silencing something, always surrounded by mystery and, consequently, by violence. Triumphing over man, truth was violence and man was not its child. We do not know if truth or man is to blame for that. Man

encounters the truth about himself as if it were a weak force. (BAJTIN, 1997, p.142-143, our translation).[23]

As we can see, the text continues placing against art a word that is stronger than man; it does not belong to him, comes from the outside and takes over him. Man is not responsible for the word: it is the authoritative word, the word of power, of the church, about which Bakhtin discusses in the fourth section of the essay Discourse in the Novel, entitled The Speaking Person in the Novel (BAKHTIN, 1981a). The (good) man does not own the word, which is unfamiliar to him as it is "infected by violence and lie." In fact, it belongs to very few. Further on in the text, Bakhtin presents the creative process as a process of violence, which, nevertheless, is effectuated through the truth about the soul. This ethics of the truth, made possible by art, is opposed to the lie and the violence of the menacing authoritative word. Therefore, on the one hand, there is power, which intends to define the truth of the world based on the outside, on itself, and not on contextualized senses. This power is deficient in dialogicity and unfinishedness, for "a *finished* whole cannot be seen from within, only from the outside" (BAJTIN, 1997, p.145, original emphasis, our translation).[24] It is from this perspective – of the institutionalized power that characterizes the world – that Bakhtin views rhetoric, based on the understanding that it is the organized word, the word of falsity, owned by few:

> The rhetorical lie. The lie in art. The lie in forms of seriousness (conjoined with fear, threats, and violence). There still is no form of force (power, government) without the inevitable ingredient of lying. (BAJTIN, 1997, p.146).[25]

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[23] In the Spanish translation: "*La palavra quiere influir desde fuera, determinar desde fuera. En la própria tarea de convencimento está incluído un elemento de la presión exterior. (...) La palavra no sabe a quién sirve, llega de la oscuridad y desconhoce sus raíces. Su seriedad está vinculada cone l miedo y la violência. El hombre autenticamente bueno, desinteressado y amoroso todavia no há tomado la palabra, no se ha realizado en las esferas de la vida cotidiana, no há tocado la palabra organizada, infectada por la violência y a la mentira, este hombre no se hace escritor. (...) La palabra solía ser más fuerte que el home, él no podía ser responsable, al encontrarse en el poder de la palabra; se sentía el vocero de la verdade ajena, en cuyo poder supremo se encontraba (...). El processo creativo es sempre el processo de violencia que la verdade comete sobre el ama. La verdad nunca ha sido, has ahora, consanguínea del hombre, nunca le há llegado desde su interior, sempre desde el exterior. Siempre ha sido una posesa. Siendo revelación, la verdade nunca ha sido sincera; sempre callaba algo, se rodeaba de mistério y, por lo tanto, de violência. Triunfando sobre el hombre, la verdade era violência, el hombre no era su hijo. No se sabe quién tiene la culpa de eso, la verdade o el hombre. El hombre se encuentra con la verdade acerca de sí mismo como con una fuerza mortecina.*" (BAJTIN, 1997, p.142-143).

[24] In the Spanish translation: "*un todo concluído no puede ser visto desde el interior, sino tan sólo desde el exterior.*" (BAJTIN, 1997, p.145).

[25] Translation by Leonidas Donskis. [DONSKIS, L. *Modernity in Crisis*: A Dialogue on the Culture of Belonging. New York, NY: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2011, p. 133).In the Spanish translation: "*La mentiraretórica. La mentira em uma imagen artística. La mentira en las formas de la seriedade (su fusión com el miedo, la amenaza y la violência). Todavía no existe una forma de fuerza (poderio, poder) sin un ingrediente necesario de la mentira.*" (BAJTIN, 1997, p.146).

On the other hand, there is art, which, according to Bakhtin, liberates man and makes possible the dialogic participation of everyone in ethic reality. This understanding is in line with his interest in works that emerged in times of disintegration of stable verbal ideological systems, a historical change that provided the novelistic prose with a rich soil. It is also in line with his interest in heterodiscourse, multi-language interaction, and his criticism to "the primary language system underlying its ideology and literature" (BAKHTIN, 1981a, p.368), which views language as single, "Ptolemaic" and excludes, thus, heterodiscourse. In short, it is in line with the historical moment in which Bakhtin lived, that is, a time of historical changes in the emerging Soviet Union, which did not foster democratic political procedures such as the ones promoted by the West, but made possible the dialogue between the sectors of society that had had no access to literacy and art before.

To close this section we would like to quote two passages of *Mikhail Bakhtin*: An aesthetic for democracy, an important read of the Bakhtinian works by Ken Hirschkop (1999). In our opinion, it well expresses the connection between Bakhtinian thought and democracy:

> Bakhtin does not write about language and culture sub specie aeternitatis but a language and culture which have decisively broken with traditional forms: a vernacular language, in which all have a right to speak, in which no speaker holds absolute authority, and where subjects should adhere to a moral code they elaborate together. (HIRSCHKOP, 1999, p.viii).

> […] conceptions of language and discourse structure democratic principles form within, informing the very critical standards we use in assessing actually existing democracy. (HIRSCHKOP, 1999, p.45).

If we take these aspects into account, we find another point of consonance between rhetoric, which in the beginning was closely connected to Greek democracy, and Bakhtinian thought. The changes the discipline has undergone throughout the centuries, especially its institutionalization, may justify how this tradition was absorbed by and integrated into Bakhtinian studies.

Dialogue II: Bakhtinian Thinking and Plato's Rhetoric

> Then, my friend, he who knows not the truth, but
> pursues opinions, will, it seems, attain
> an art of speech which is ridiculous, and not an art at all.
> Plato (2007, p.523, 262 c)

As we seek to establish a dialogue between old rhetoric and Bakhtinian thinking, we must also examine, even if briefly, the way Plato's texts echo in the Circle's works. We cannot ignore that, in terms of rhetoric, Aristotle responds to Plato, his master, in disagreement or maybe in a complementary way. This dialogue reflects and refracts the way Bakhtin and the Circle also respond to the Greek philosophers (and to those who succeed them). Thus, new links in the constitutive chain of rhetorical thinking are forged. At first, however, when we read that "[r]hetoric, in proportion to its falsity tends to provoke real terror and hope" (BAJTIN, 1997, p.138), we imagine that Bakhtin refers to the image of rhetoric as a discourse that is emotional, manipulative, empty, and deceitful. This discourse, in fact, had already been criticized by Plato. Nevertheless, this is not the only aspect of rhetoric that Bakhtin and the Circle point out in their work, nor is this the only one with which they dialogue. This discussion will focus on this aspect first and then we will underscore the concept of dialogism through an investigation of the rhetoric of Plato, or more properly still, in Plato.

Rhetoric, in proportion to its falsity...

In Plato's time (428/427 BCE - 348/347 BCE), the definitions of the terms *philosophy*, *rhetoric* and *sophistic* were not clear and the latter two were hardly differentiated.[26] The distinction seems to occur through the "virtues of the soul of the philosopher," which embodies moral virtues: "Plato seems less concerned with offering definitions of the philosopher and sophist than with opposing through dramatic conflict the *person* of the philosopher, Socrates, to a number of different sophists and rhetoricians" (McCOY, 2008, p. 3, original emphasis).[27]

Similar to the Dostoevskyian hero analyzed by Bakhtin, the character Socrates "[…] is not only a discourse about himself and his immediate environment, but also a discourse about the world." (BAKHTIN, 1984a, p.78). By the same token, for both Plato's Socrates and Dostoevsky, "[t]he truth about the world […] is inseparable from the truth of the personality" (BAKHTIN, 1984a, p.78).

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[26] Edward Schiappa (1990) argues that the term "rhetoric" was coined by Plato when he was writing *Gorgias* in around 385BCE. He justifies it by stating that the art of rhetoric had not been conceptualized it as such until the 4th century BCE. He still reminds us that Protagoras and Gorgias did not use the term as their works focused on *logos* and that Herodotus, who knew the works of the sophists well, did not use it either.

[27] See Bréhier (2004, p.99): "In the Greece of that time, the definition of a philosopher was never based on his relation to other genres of scientific or religious speculation, but on his relation to and differences with the speaker, the sophist, the politician. Philosophy is the discovery of a new way of intellectual life that cannot be separated from social life by any means." [In original; "*Dans la Grèced'alors, le philosophe ne se définit nullement par rappor aux autres genres de spéculations, scientifiques ou religieuses, mais bien para son rapport et se differences avec l'orateur, le sophiste, le politique. La philosophie est la découverte d'une nouvelle forme de vie intellectuelle, qui ne peut au reste se séparer de la vie sociale.*"] Also see Pagotto-Euzebio (2018, p.5) on the role Isocrates played in the teaching of rhetoric, which he called philosophy: "It would be easier and apparently obvious to state that Isocrates was a rhetoric teacher. However, he did not call his work activity that way. As he never used the word rhetoric (*rhetoriké*) in his oeuvre, the fact the Isocrates used the term *philosophía* to define his work activity makes us somehow reconsider the meaning of these words in the educational and cultural context of the Athens of the 4th century BCE". [In the original: "*O mais fácil, aparentemente óbvio, seria dizer que Isócrates era um professor de retórica. No entanto, não foi assim que ele denominou sua atividade. Sem nunca ter utilizado a palavra retórica (rhetoriké) em suas obras, o fato de Isócrates usar o termo philosophía para definir seu trabalho nos obriga, de algum modo, a reconsiderar o sentido dessas palavras no contexto educativo e cultural da Atenas do século IV a.C.*"]

The polemic around rhetoric, its social role, and especially the content rhetors taught started with the Sophists' teaching of rhetoric in the 5th century BCE. Henri-IrinéeMarrou (1990), a historian of education in Antiquity, reminds us that our knowledge about the Sophistsis comprised of few fragments, doxographical reports, and chiefly Plato's dialogues. Plato concedes the possibility of rhetoric, but considers *episteme*, the search for truth, superior to *doxa*, the opinion, which is inclined to deceit, is available to most people, and seduces them into degeneracy. According to Socrates, in Phaedrus, "[…] he who knows not the truth, but pursues opinions, will, it seems, attain an art of speech which is ridiculous, and not an art at all" (PLATO, 2007, p.523, 262c). We could state that Plato concedes to "good rhetoric," a "philosophical" rhetoric that seeks the truth.[28]

In his defense of "good" rhetoric, in *Gorgias*, a dialogue of his youth (or a transitional work, that is, the first work of the second period which focuses on rhetoric),[29] he addresses the topic of rhetoric very explicitly. Gorgias defines his art as the power to persuade, through words, jurors in the court, senators in the council and assemblymen. Socrates, a character in the dialogue, states that it manufactures persuasion and questions him about the object of persuasion. He makes the sophist embarrassed as he ends up saying that rhetoric can serve good or evil ends and that it is a "part of something which has nothing beautiful about it" (PLATO, 1984, p. 248, 463a), "a thing which is irrational" (PLATO, 1984, p.249, 465a) and that "shrewdly guesses at what is pleasant, omitting what is best" (PLATO, 1984, p.249, 464e). In short, this dialogue aims to showcase, through Socrates' words, that cultural development grounded in political eloquence, instead of education, destroys every sense of morality. Other dialogues, such as *The Sophist* (PLATO, 1922), return to this discussion.

This aspect of Plato's Socratic dialogues – the ethical and responsible action on the development of the other – evokes positions taken by Bakhtin in his first writings, the ones that seek a *prima philosophia*, such as Art and Answerability (BAKHTIN, 1990c) and *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (BAKHTIN, 1993), which are more axiological than ontological in nature (FARACO, 2017). In the dialogue we have proposed in this paper, we know that the act that has ethical value in Bakhtin does not directly correspond to the issue of good or bad rhetoric in Plato. However, as we corroborate this possible and pertinent approximation, we remember Bakhtin's own words: "Historically language grew up in the service of participative thinking and performed acts, and it begins to serve abstract thinking only in the present day of its history." (BAKHTIN, 1993, p.31).

The ethical and responsible act, the participative thinking (BAKHTIN, 1993, p.18, p.20 and p.29, among other passages) are found in Socratic dialogues and these

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[28] According to Barilli (1985), Plato's objective is to take away the rights most people have to arbitrate, choose, and decide. He adopts an anti-democratic stance and argues against common sense. For Plato, the philosopher plays a priority role and is alone worthy of wisdom, as *doxa* is neither science nor technique, inasmuch as it is inclined to deceit, being at the service of the majority and seducing them into degeneracy.

[29] In general, Plato's dialogues are classified according to two or three periods of his life: early life, middle life, and later life. From the first period, the dialogues are Hippias Minor, Laches, Charmides, Lysias, Entipron, Ion, Hippias Major, Protagoras, Apology, Criton and the first book of Republic, Gorgias, Menon, Euthydemus, Cratylus, and Menexenus. From the second, Phaedo, The Symposium, Phaedrus, The Republic, Theaetetus, The Sophist (someplace it in his later life), and from the third, Critias, Laws, Philebus, The Statesman, and Timaeus. (CHAUÍ, 2002).

Bakhtinian texts, which defend that cognitive judgement is axiological and do not separate ethics from knowledge and aesthetics: "[…] that which is found to be on hand by cognition is not a *res nullius* but the reality of ethical actions in all their variety, and the reality of aesthetic vision." (BAKHTIN, 1990b, p. 275). "In this acceptance of the ethical and the cognitive into its proper object resides the distinctive kindness of the aesthetic, its mercifulness. It does not choose, as it were, anything, it does not divide anything, does not abolish anything, does not push away and detach itself from anything." (BAKHTIN, 1990b, p.279). According to Faraco (2017),

> [Bakhtin] is interested in the lived life, based on the perspective of a consciousness that is responsible and participative. [...] Thus, living is acting from oneself in relation to the other (seeTPA), positioning oneself axiologically (see A&H), and participating in the open dialogue, the universal symposium (see TPA). Three active verbs weave living, namely, acting, valuing, and interacting.[…]
>
> From a Bakhtinian perspective, in interactions we do not exchange messages; we dialogize axiologies. (FARACO, 2017, p.52 and p.55).[30]

For Bakhtin, if dialogue, which is always axiological and occurs in verbal interaction, were based on rhetorical "falsity," it would not contribute to cognitive judgment (ethical and aesthetic). This is because the theoretical-philosophical conceptions that are expressed in an aesthetic object are connected to the concrete world of human acts and "are necessarily connected with the ethical constituent in content, with the world of performed action, the world of event. […] [W]hat is cognitively *true* becomes a constituent of ethical performance or accomplishment" (BAKHTIN, 1990c, p.287-288, our emphasis).

Dialogism is "[o]vercoming the monologic model of the world. The rudiments of this in Socratic dialogue"[31]

The second aspect of the dialogue between Plato and Bakhtinian thinking refers to possible connections between dialogism and especially Socratic dialogues, which are frequently mentioned by Bakhtin in his studies about the novel. In fact, some Socratic dialogues discuss rhetoric, but none constitutes one of the traditional rhetorical genres. In different moments of his work, Bakhtin approaches rhetoric as one of the roots of

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[30] In the original: "*Interessa-lhe [a Bakhtin] a vida vivida na perspectiva de uma consciência que age responsável e participativamente. (...) Assim, viver é agir responsavelmente a partir de si e em correlação com o outro (cf. PFA), é posicionar-se axiologicamente (cf. A&H), é participar do diálogo aberto, do simpósio universal (cf. PFA). Três verbos ativos – agir, valorar, interagir – tecem o viver. [...] Na interação vista pelo olhar bakhtiniano, não se trocam mensagens, mas se dialogizam axiologias.*" (FARACO, 2017, p.52 and p.55).

[31] Bakhtin (1984b, p.292).

the novel as a genre.[32] According to him, the Socratic dialogue as a genre belonged to a special realm of literature called the serio-comical (counterposed to the serious genres, such as the epic, the tragedy and the history). For Bakhtin, "*Socratic dialogue*, which replaced tragic dialogue, was the first step in the history of the new genre of the novel. But that was mere dialogue, *little more than* an external form of dialogism" (BAKHTIN, 1984b, p.291, our emphasis).

As we know, the practice of *dialogue*, which, as a genre, disseminated philosophy and even rhetoric, had been forgotten in philosophical reflections for centuries. Its importance was acknowledged only in the 20th century not only in Russia, but through different authors, such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin and the Circle, our focus here. In terms of using the concept of *dialogue* to understand language, Ivanova's (2011) article "*O diálogo na linguística soviética dos anos 1920-1930*" [The Dialogue on the Soviet Linguistics of the 1920s and 1930s] (2011, p.239-267) shows the level of closeness between Voloshinov's and Jakubinsky's works. Moreover, Brait (2013) retrieves the concept of dialogue to show to which extent in the 20th century it integrates language studies under different perspectives in a consistent and diversified way. Besides the aforementioned authors, she adds Emile Benveniste and warns us to the fat that

> [t]o see dialogue being valued in language studies and its metamorphosis into dialogism means, therefore, to discuss the transition from a linguistics of language to a linguistics of discourse, the moment when these two concepts play a decisive role. If we take into account that the concept of dialogue and the need to theorize about it is the hallmark of the 20th-century linguistics, present in several theoretical approaches, the focus of our study seeks support from some founders of this conception, namely, Émile Benveniste (1906-1976), Lev Jakubinsky (1892-1945), Valentin Voloshinov (1895- 1936),and Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975). As we get to know some of their works, we are offered elements to realize how the concept of dialogue provides a new perspective on national tongues and languages, which, at a certain moment, is categorized as dialogism (BRAIT, 2013, p.98, our translation).[33]

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[32] In Forms of the Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel (BAKHTIN, 1981b), From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse (BAKHTIN, 1981c), Epic and Novel (BAKHTIN, 1981d), Discourse in the Novel (BAKHTIN, 1981a), as well as in Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book (BAKHTIN, 1984b).

[33] In the original: "*[E]ncontrar a valorização de diálogo dentro dos estudos da linguagem, assim como sua metamorfose em dialogismo, significa, portanto, discutir a passagem de uma linguística da língua para uma linguística do discurso, momento em que esses dois conceitos desempenham papel decisivo. Considerando que o conceito de diálogo e a necessidade de teorizar sobre ele é uma das marcas da linguística do século XX, presente em várias tendências teóricas, o recorte aqui estabelecido busca apoio em alguns fundadores dessa concepção: Émile Benveniste (1906-1976), Lev Jakubinskij (1892-1945), Valentin Voloshinov (1895- 1936) e Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975). O contato com alguns dos trabalhos desses autores oferece elementos para observar como a concepção de diálogo produz uma nova visão de língua, de linguagem, explicitando-se, num certo momento, como dialogismo.*" (BRAIT, 2013, p.98).

The "Socratic dialogue" as a genre, which Bakhtin studied, was carried out not only by Plato, but also by Xenophon, Antisthenes, Aeschines, Alexamenos, and others. However, we have had contact only with the writings of Plato and Xenophon and fragments of writing of Antisthenes. In his preface to one of the editions of Plato's *Dialogues*, Nunes makes clear that

> [Plato] did not create the Socratic dialogue. He was only one of the first to cultivate this literary genre and its most remarkable representative. After him, from Aristotle on – let us put it this way – Socratesrelinquishes his position as the director of the debates and vanishes from thestage. The playwright takes over the ongoing display of his ideas without resorting to concise questions and answers, which Socrates really enjoyed and were well illustrated in Plato's *first writings*. All the *literary part* of Aristotle's workwas lost, but through Cicero, who came to know it, we have an idea of how they were written. The dialogued passages of his work are extremely reduced. As a rule, the playwright displays his own ideas through long speeches (NUNES, 1980, p.6, our emphasis, our translation).[34]

The Socratic dialogue is almost a memorialist genre, a written account of the memory of Socrates' actual speeches, organized in a brief narrative. This is how Bakhtin understands it – as one of sources of the novel, a dialogic "variety in the development of the novel" (BAKHTIN, 1984a, p. 109). The other one is the Menippean satire. "The Socratic dialogue is not a rhetorical genre" (BAKHTIN, 1984a, p. 109); it has a folk-carnivalistic base, and it is deeply rooted in the oral stage of that Greek society.

Bakhtin bringsan in-depth discussion on Socratic dialogues and shows enthusiasm and admiration for the genre. An example is Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel, in which Socratic dialogue connects philosophy to the initial development of the novel as a genre: "We possess a remarkable document that reflects the simultaneous birth of scientific thinking and of a new artistic-prose model for the novel. These are the Socratic dialogues. For our purposes, everything in this remarkable genre, which was born justas classical antiquity was drawing to a close, is significant." (BAKHTIN, 1981d, p.24). In Bréhier's words (2004, p.96, our translation)[35], "[…] the Socratic dialogues are not only an examination of people, but also a review of their

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34 In the original: "*Não foi ele [Platão] o criador do diálogo socrático, senão um dos primeiros a cultivar esse gênero literário e o seu mais notável representante. Depois dele, a partir de Aristóteles, digamos, Sócrates cede o seu posto de diretor dos debates e desaparece do cenário, assumindo o autor da peça a responsabilidade da exposição corrida de suas ideias, sem o recurso das perguntas e respostas concisas, tão do gosto de Sócrates e tão bem ilustrado nos primeiros escritos de Platão. Da obra de Aristóteles perdeu-se toda essa parte literária; mas, por intermédio de Cícero, que ainda chegou a conhece-la, podemos fazer uma ideia de como seriam redigidas. A parte dialogada é muito reduzida; de regra, o autor da peça expõe em discursos longos suas próprias ideias*." (PLATO, 1980, p.6).

35 In the original: "Les dialogues socratiques sont, en effet, pour le moins autant un examen des personnes qu'un examen de leurs opinions: l'interêt porte même plutôt sur le premier que sur le second." (BRÉHIER (2004, p.96).

opinions; however, they are more interested in the former than in the latter." In Plato, the dialogic composition is counterposed to rhetoric: the dialogues are like the encounter of souls that occurs through short interventions, with no digressions or strange elements, in an analytical effort to decompose discourses; besides, their objective is not to defeat the adversaries. They play the role of questioning the interlocutor or putting him to the test so that he can realize whether or not he agrees with himself. This is different from rhetorical discourse, which is spoken by only one person.

However, in terms of dialogism, these are genuine reflections, especially the dialogues of the first and the second periods of his life. In the late dialogues the method becomes close to rhetoric, albeit the continuance of the structure. In other words, the dialogues are more conclusive, unlike the ones in the first two periods, and arrive at an ethical and moral "truth." In this regard, Bakhtin (1984a, p.110) states that

> In Plato's dialogues of his first and second periods, the dialogic nature of truth is still recognized in the philosophical worldview itself, although in weakened form. Thus the dialogue of these early periods has not yet been transformed into a simple means for expounding ready-made ideas (for pedagogical purposes) and Socrates has not yet been transformed into a "teacher." But in the final period of Plato's work that has already taken place: the monologism of the content begins to destroy the form of the Socratic dialogue. Consequently, when the genre of the Socratic dialogue entered the service of the established, dogmatic worldviews of various philosophical schools and religious doctrines, it lost all connection with a carnival sense of the world and was transformed into a simple form for expounding already found, ready-made irrefutable truth; ultimately, it degenerated completely into a question-and-answer form for training neophytes (catechism).

In Protagoras, one of the Socratic dialogues of the first period, which can be regarded as more ethical that philosophical, we read:

> I think you're right, Critias. *For those present at discussions such as this should give joint but not equal ear to both of two discussants*. For it's not the same: one should hear both jointly, not assigning equal importance to each of the two, but instead more to the wiser, less to the unwise. For my part, Protagoras and Socrates, I think you should accede, and disagree with each other over arguments but not dispute. (PLATO, 1996, p.197, emphasis our).

Here we notice not only Plato's criticism to the rhetoric that only seeks to defeat the adversary, but also the embryo of what Bakhtin will call the active responsive understanding. In fact, the dialogues from the first and second periods are less monologic

or dogmatic than the ones from his later life. They are known as aporetic dialogues, that is, they question the different modes of conceptualizing virtue, such as courage, piety, friendship. As this is their main topic, they denounce the fragility of these concepts, but their question is left unanswered. In other words, not only are they more *ethical* than philosophical, but they also seem to be unfinished texts to the readers. When studying Protagoras, it was common for scholars to approach the two positions in relation to virtues – Socrates' and Protagoras' – as equipollent. Thus, it was possible to realize that both Socrates and the sophists had contributed to the result of questioning, that is, a cultural hybrid that associates the traditional virtue of courage with wisdom and (implicitly) with the other civic virtues. This reminds us of Bakhtin, when he discussed the problem of the content of the work of art: "This reality of cognition is not consummated and always open." (BAKHTIN, 1990b, p.277).

James Zappen (2004), in *The Rebirth of Dialogue*:Bakhtin, Socrates and the Rhetorical Tradition, declares that the Socrates in Bakhtin is different from the one passed down to us in the Western philosophical tradition: "Bakhtin's Socrates is not a rhetor but a *respondent*, not an answerer but a *questioner*." (ZAPPEN, 2004, p.37, emphasis our).

> Bakhtin, however, invites an alternative reading of the Socratic dialogue as a free and creative interplay of the ideas – as an interplay of ideas within the texts, between the texts in their contextual relationships to each other, an within the texts as situated in their extratextual historical context. Thus situated, the Socratic dialogues resonate with the voices of other people – of Homer and Simonides, Pericles and (perhaps Plato) Thucydides. (ZAPPEN, 2004, p.67).

Now we turn to a short passage in which Bakhtin discusses this question:

> As our starting point we have contemporary reality, the living people who occupy it together with their opinions. From this vantage point, from this contemporary reality with its diversity of speech and voice, there comes about a new orientation in the world and in time (including the "absolute past" of tradition) through personal experience and investigation. It is canonical for the genre that even an accidental and insignificant pretext can ordinarily and deliberately serve as the external and most immediate starting point for a dialogue; the "todayness" of the day was emphasized in all its randomness (accidental encounters, etc.). (BAKHTIN, 1981d, p.26-27).

Bakhtin reminds us that in Socratic dialogue, the search of this unofficial and unfinished "truth" through dialogue occurs through syncrisis, when different points of view are confronted to one another, and anacrisis, when the interlocutor is provoked

to express his own ideas: "[…] a means for eliciting and provoking the words of one's interlocutor, forcing him to express his opinion and express it thoroughly." (BAKHTIN, 1984a, p.110). Thus, the examination and confrontation of ideas, and the creation of new ideas through dialogue challenge people's monologic discourse as they simultaneously support conflicting cultural ideas.

> At the base of the genre lies the Socratic notion of the dialogic nature of truth, and the dialogic nature of human thinking about truth. The dialogic means of seeking truth is counterposed to *official* monologism, which pretends to *possess a ready-made truth*, and it is also counterposed to the naive self-confidence of those people who think that they know something, that is, who think that they possess certain truths. Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction. (BAKHTIN, 1984a, p.110, original emphasis).

This is how this perspective of Plato's Socratic dialogues approaches Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, according to which every discursive communication is part of an uninterrupted dialogue, every utterance is "a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances" (BAKHTIN, 1986c, p.69), encompassing written or oral production of any type. Similarly, all understanding is active, evaluative, and contains the germ of a response.

In short, as we reflect on the rhetorical conceptions in the oeuvres of Bakhtin and Plato, we can state that, although both reject a rhetoric that is not aware of ethical tenets, their agreement ceases when in the Plato of the late years dogmatism and "the monologism of the content begins to destroy the form of the Socratic dialogue" (BAKHTIN, 1984a, p.110). On the other hand, the understanding of the Socratic dialogues of Plato's early and middle years, as presented by Bakhtin, surely contributes to the understanding of dialogism and the unfinished dialogue of every communication.

To Conclude

This study, a dialogical exercise, is an active responsive understanding of the Bakhtinian work, which was initially closely connected to rhetorical studies, especially with old rhetoric. In other words, as we read the members of the Circle, they always seem to establish this possible dialogue with rhetorical teachings, because verbal discourse is inevitably oriented toward prior discourses, whether the author's or the others', as part of the continuous chain of discursive communication throughout history. In fact, this study was carried out from a discursive perspective – not from a philosophical one, which could have been done.

We highlight that this approach, in our opinion, allows the understanding of dialogical studies in continuance with rhetorical studies, incorporating them.[36]It also allows the understanding of the way the theoretical approach developed in the work of the Circle can contribute to studies on argumentation. Moreover, we believe that the Bakhtinian thinking, presented as a dialogical theory of discourse, has evident potentialities for the teaching of argumentation, particularly in relation to the proposition of more open (unfinished) views and understandings of reality that are not simply dichotomized [Bakhtin criticized the rhetorical genres, stating that the rhetorical double-voicedness is not very deep (BAKHTIN, 1981a, p.354)]. This is especially important not only because we know that the Bakhtinian thinking is constantly used in education studies, but also because society frequently tends to polarize positions.

If today rhetorical and argumentative studies are less connected to the practical and educational aspects of the old discipline, the Bakhtinian perspective prompts possible reflections on the full development of an ethical and responsible citizenship, attempting to overcome the negative aspects indicated by Plato (and Bakhtin) and to incorporate the positive aspects indicated by Aristotle (and Bakhtin). Besides, if for Bakhtin, as we pointed out, knowledge and the use of rhetoric were associated with an official culture, when we see rhetoric from the Bakhtinian perspective as a whole, the teaching of argumentation can (and should) lead us to the appropriation of the word: the productivity of the alliance of these theoretical approaches to the understanding of discourse, however it is expressed, should go beyond the social practice that confines the power of discourse (in its production, circulation, or reception) to a small segment of society.

Acknowledgement

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[36] Some examples: Pistori (2018, 2016, 2015, 2013).

PISTORI, M. Retórica, argumentação e análise dialógica do discurso. **Alfa**, São Paulo, v. 63, n.2, p.273-302, 2019.

- *RESUMO: Este texto propõe um diálogo entre a antiga retórica e análise dialógica do discurso, baseada na obra de Mikhail Bakhtin e o Círculo. Busca observar como os ensinamentos retóricos ecoam no pensamento bakhtiniano, buscando convergências e divergências entre ambos. Primeiramente, o diálogo proposto é com a retórica aristotélica, a seguir com as críticas de Platão a seu uso e funcionamento. Nosso objetivo é compreender as relações e possibilidades dialógicas entre a retórica e a obra do Círculo, defendendo a produtividade de aliança entre esses dois aportes teóricos na compreensão e produção do discurso e da argumentação. Considerando que são várias as concordâncias, mas também as críticas em relação à retórica encontradas naquela obra, é importante compreendê-las para que a aliança teórica se dê em bases epistemológicas confiáveis e seja produtiva.*

- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Retórica. Argumentação. Bakhtin e o Círculo. Aristóteles. Platão.*

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