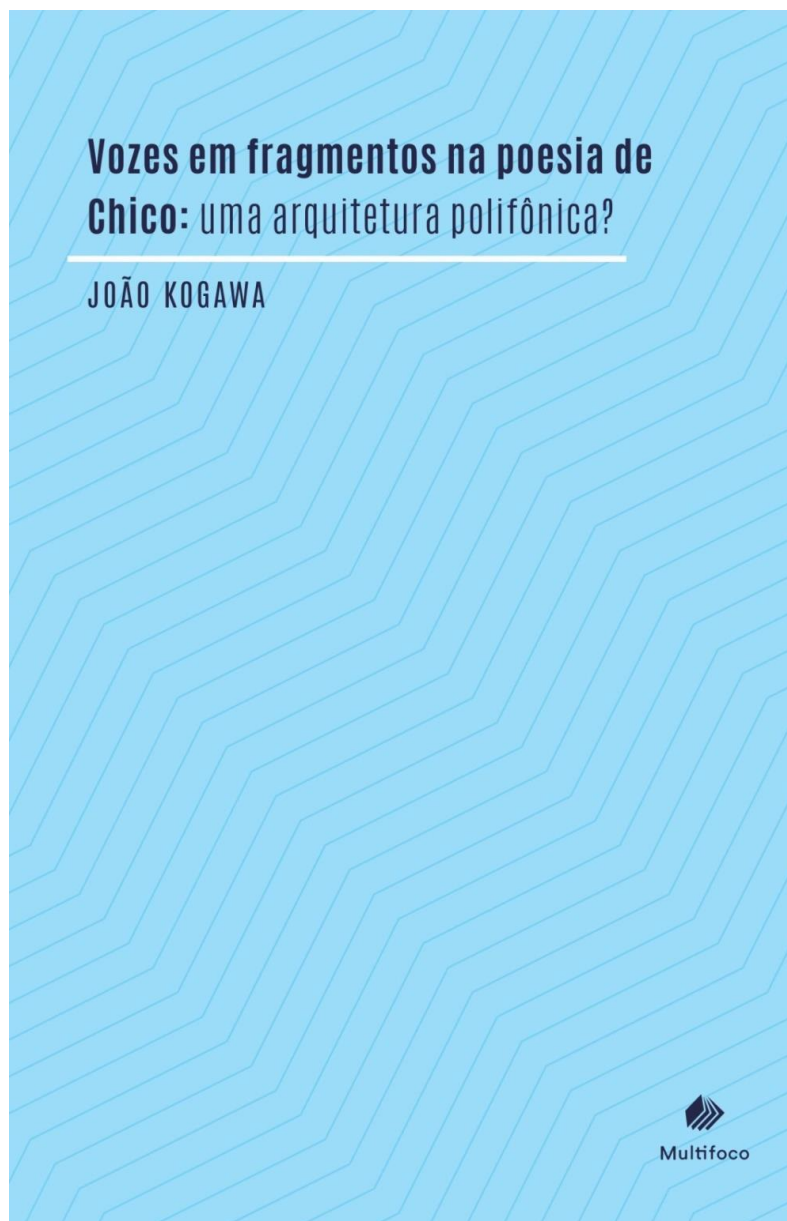**KOGAWA, João.** *Vozes em fragmentos na poesia de Chico:* **uma arquitetura polifônica? [***Voices in Fragments in Chico's Poetry***: A Polyphonic Architecture?] Rio de Janeiro: Editora Multifoco, 2018, 170p.**

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Fragmentation and core reconceptualization are two distinctive characteristics of the present times if these times are to be considered framed by the postmodern condition (or conditions). Should one understand this post-modern frame designed by the end of metanarratives, as discussed by French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, or as a release of cultural symbols, according to Danny-Robert Dufour, also a French philosopher, or as liquid times, according to Polish sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman – among other ways of trying to capture whatever has been happening with social organizations specially in Western culture –, it seems to be a consensus that core values have been reviewed. And the revision of these values leads to the reconceptualization of relations and institutions in general. People are rethinking not only social relations and identities, but also ways of theorizing, and that usually leads to a relativism of values once accepted as absolute or, at least, as solid and stable. Thus, a contemporary reader may wear a pair of post-modern glasses either to simply have a glance at this book or to thoroughly scrutinize it and wonder what it is all about.

Well, in *Vozes em fragmentos na poesia de Chico* [Voices in Fragments in Chico's poetry], as indicated by the question posed in the subtitle – uma arquitetura polifônica? [a polyphonic architecture?] –, the reader finds a compelling theoretical exercise around the Bakhtinian concept of *polyphony* which contributes to the understanding of the political struggle evident in and through the ethical and aesthetic work with language in a period of the Brazilian history that has been the object of conceptual dispute: the military dictatorship. But in order to engage Kogawa's discussion and profit from its richness, the relativism which may derive from a post-modern stance must give place to a questioning grounded in modern values. Otherwise, one runs the risk of missing the point. How is that? This should be answered by a short analysis of the structure of the book.

Kogawa is presently a Professor of Discourse Analysis at the Federal University of São Paulo, Brazil, and has already published *Linguística & Marxismo*: condições de emergência para uma teoria do discurso francesa no Brasil [*Linguistics & Marxism*: emergency conditions for a French theory of discourse in Brazil] (KOGAWA, 2015). For quite some time, he has been focusing on how discourse has been theorized in the Brazilian academic field, and this new book corroborates his path of reflection. Just after the usual acknowledgments, there is a very informative preface written by Renata Coelho Marchezan, who highlights the relevance of the book within the context of the works

around the Bakhtin Circle that face the challenge of working with a fruitful and widespread thinking – the dialogic thinking – without falling into trivialization. Among the vulgarized concepts, polyphony is undoubtedly one of a very difficult approach, and Marchezan anticipates that Kogawa identifies and problematizes the homogenization of the concepts of polyphony, dialogism and heterodiscursivity. This is the first hint that there is no conceptual relativism, but conceptual refinement in *Vozes em fragmentos na poesia de Chico* [Voices in fragments in Chico's poetry].

In the introduction, Kogawa clearly states the aim of the book, which is to propose "a reading of the concept of polyphony in Bakhtin" (p.17).[1] He announces that he does that by pursuing the philosophical basis of the concept and by analyzing the relation between author and hero in the lyrics of some songs composed by Chico Buarque de Hollanda during the military dictatorship in Brazil. Kogawa anticipates that he tackles polyphony through its negative, that is, by identifying a non-polyphonic way of uttering. He selects song lyrics in which the voices of socio-economically marginalized groups are personified in a samba musician, a prostitute, a bricklayer, among others, to compose a discursive chain in which one does not find multiple and equipollent social voices but different ways of maintaining positions. He provides readers with the details that corroborate such statement in Chapter 3.

It is in the first chapter that Kogawa actually lays the modern foundations of his discussion. This does not mean that the discussion is dated. On the contrary, it stands highly relevant in times when core and basic concepts, such as the concept of dictatorship, have been relativized and consequently emptied. In the book, he draws special attention to the concept of polyphony, and through the analysis of a specific discursive chain of Chico's poetry, he proceeds to a conceptual refinement, pointing out that it is actually a rather rare discursive phenomenon and that, consequently, non-polyphonic ways of uttering are not to be belittled. Under the umbrella of dialogism, it is the ethical responsibility that ensures the historical and cultural relevance of taking part in the discursive chain.

This conceptual work is developed in the first chapter in four stages. Firstly, the dialogic nature of language is defined as he visits important works of the Circle, such as Vološinov's *Marxism and the philosophy of language* (1986). Based on this book,

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[1] Original text: "uma leitura do conceito de polifonia em Bakhtin."

Kogawa discusses the idea of language neither as an abstract system, nor as an individual solipsist production, but as a living reality resulting from the relations established in and through social groups. He argues that language has a dialogic, social and historical nature and that singular instances of language actualization present a material manifestation which produces meaning in a sociocultural frame. This is crucial to the understanding, on the one hand, of the conceptual discussion over polyphony and, on the other, of the semantic processing of the discursive chain selected from Chico's poetry. The dialogic, social and historical nature of language actualizes and gives visibility to what is called into question in the author/hero relation analyzed in the lyrics.

Secondly, the author/hero relation is scrutinized not only but specially through the examination of the essay Author and hero in aesthetic activity (BAKHTIN, 1990). Kogawa carefully makes reference to the most recent translations into Portuguese of the essays and books of the Russian thinker. This carefulness allows him to discuss issues of recent Brazilian history in accord with the agenda of Bakhtinian studies in Brazil. One may find, then, a very profitable discussion around the manner how the aesthetic positions of author and hero reveal the ethical responsibility implied in the discursive chain of Chico's lyrics.

Thirdly, the actual idea of discursive chain is specially discussed. Kogawa demonstrates that, in the dialogic thinking, the reality of language is necessarily interactional and that one may distinguish dialogism from monologism in the way the author relates to the hero. If language is predominantly dialogic, the way aesthetic relations are created can vary, and this variation can display a dialogic or a monologic tendency. Although he does not explicitly refer to the essays that were recently made public, viz., Diálogo I: a questão do discurso dialógico [Dialog I: the issue of the dialogic discourse] (BAKHTIN, 2016a) and Diálogo II [Dialog II] (BAKHTIN, 2016b), he refers to the edition in which those essays are first published in Portuguese. The rhetoric composition of his reading of Bakhtin's work indicates the coherence found in the essays of the Russian thinker despite the non-linear way his thoughts were disseminated both in Russia and elsewhere.

Fourthly, Kogawa poses the following question: When is a discourse polyphonic? He then ends the conceptual discussion by insisting that the polyphonic condition, that is, the equipollence of different social voices in the relation the author establishes with the

hero, is a very peculiar and rather picturesque aesthetic arrangement. And because of that, it is not ethically suitable for every single historical condition of uttering.

In the second chapter, the elements that trigger the poetic chain analyzed are identified and described. The political scenario is depicted in its consonances and dissonances. The military dictatorship is neither denied nor mythicized. It is described as a time of constraints with multiple tendencies but also of creative responses. Based specially on the work of the journalist Elio Gaspari, Kogawa describes the military political position as segmented into two tendencies that are internally in tension: the so-called military soft line and hard line. This way, the dictatorial government is presented not as a coherent political block, but as a controversial and dynamic historical instance. And it is this dynamism that constitutes the ground for the creative and responsible answers produced.

In the third and last chapter, Kogawa analyzes the heroic types designed by Chico, especially in the lyrics of four songs: Geni e o Zepelim [Geni and the Zeppelin], O malandro nº 2 [Number 2 Rascal], Construção [Construction] and Pedro, pedreiro [Pedro, bricklayer]. He shows that the songs constitute responsible ways of uttering in that specific historical moment and, from this perspective, consist of critical responses whose goal involves the deletion of the heroes' voices, turning them into imaging constructions. This way, the instantiated author/hero relation is non-polyphonic. In his words, "the author-creator builds a hostile environment for his characters and that implies a world permeated by disparities […] From this perspective, in this chapter, those artistic worlds serve as ways of concretizing this critical discourse, which is constituted as anti-conservative" (p.118).[2] Kogawa demonstrates then that this critical stance is realized by the mobilization of three axiological dimensions: (i) religious, (ii) political, and (iii) economic. And he continues, "By mobilizing its criticism, the authorial voice directly or indirectly stands beside the dispossessed as a means of denouncing certain everyday insensibilities which aim at the less prestigious portions of the bourgeois society" (p.118).[3]

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[2] Original text: "O autor-criador constrói um ambiente hostil para as personagens e isso implica um mundo permeado por disparidades [...] Sob essa ótica, neste capítulo, esses mundos artísticos servem como concretização desse discurso crítico que se configura como anti-conservador."

[3] Original text: "A voz autoral, ao mobilizar sua crítica, coloca-se, direta ou indiretamente, ao lado dos despossuídos como forma de denunciar certas insensibilidades cotidianas que têm as parcelas menos prestigiadas da sociedade burguesa como alvo."

The religious axiological dimension, for example, is decisive to process the criticism evident in Geni e o Zepelim [Geni and the Zeppelin]. In the song, the city is redeemed by a prostitute. Despite any pride or self-preservation, she sacrifices herself to save the citizens who, in the end, forget what she did and cruelly and cowardly stone her. Enunciatively, this is constructed through a contrast between the values projected onto Geni, the prostitute who is presented in the third person, and those supported by the chorus, whose voice in direct quotation takes a hypocritical moralistic tone.

> Thus, the song is a clash of voices in which, on the one hand, there is the voice of the chorus representative of morality and 'good manners' and, on the other, there is the authorial positioning – aesthetic excess of seeing – as a configurator of a universe that questions the dogmatic values of the city (p.145).[4]

Framing the songs through these axiological dimensions, Kogawa dialogically shows the sociolinguistic stratification evident in the selected poetic chain. He demonstrates that the way Chico Buarque, as an author-creator, relates to the heroic types in the lyrics constitutes a valid response to the dictatorial context in which that chain was triggered. Although this response presents a non-polyphonic architecture, its ethical commitment justifies and values such poetry. Thus, the voices in fragments to which one listens when reading this book do not correspond to the fragments of liquid meanings one may come across in post-modern functioning. On the contrary, these fragments display the firmness of a brave stance during fierce times.

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[4] Original text: "Assim, a canção é um embate de vozes em que, de um lado, situa-se a voz do coro representante da moral e dos 'bons costumes'; de outro lado, há o posicionamento autoral – excedente da visão estética – como configurador de um universo que questiona os valores dogmáticos da cidade."

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