

## On the Dialogical Productivity in the Biographical Space / *Da produtividade dialógica no espaço biográfico*

André Luis Mitidieri\*

### ABSTRACT

In this paper we seek to situate, within Mikhail Bakhtin's thought, the set of texts in which we are able to find formulations about (auto)biographical forms and genres, as well as about the wide variety of dialogs established by them with the novelistic genre. Such contributions are mainly found in those texts regarding the notion of *chronotope* that, together with other Bakhtinian concepts, among which we shall underline the *dialogism*, are fundamental to identify the articulations that allow us to comprehend the theoretical place occupied by the "biographical space" in the context of Bakhtin's reflection. This expression, formulated from the idea of "autobiographical space," established by the French scholar Philippe Lejeune, and rethought by the Argentinian investigator Leonor Arfuch, designates the interdiscursive circumference that, nowadays, encompasses not only the autobiography, the biography and its neighboring genres, but also other cultural notations of similar order or even stylized, hybridized, shaded by (auto)biographical traces.

KEYWORDS: Chronotope; Dialogism; Biographical space; Mikhail Bakhtin

### RESUMO

No presente trabalho, buscamos situar, dentro do pensamento de Mikhail Bakhtin, o conjunto de textos nos quais podemos encontrar formulações acerca de formas e gêneros (auto)biográficos, assim como dos mais diversos diálogos por eles firmados com o gênero romanesco. Tais aportes encontram-se sobretudo naqueles escritos relativos à noção de cronotopo que, junto a outros conceitos bakhtinianos, dentre os quais, destacamos dialogismo, revelam-se como fundamentais à identificação das articulações que permitem compreender o lugar teórico ocupado pelo "espaço biográfico" no contexto da reflexão de Bakhtin. Essa expressão, formulada a partir da ideia de "espaço biográfico", estabelecida pelo estudioso francês Philippe Lejeune, e repensada pela pesquisadora argentina Leonor Arfuch, denomina a circunferência interdiscursiva que, atualmente, abriga não apenas a autobiografia, a biografia e gêneros vizinhos, mas também outras valorações culturais de ordem similar ou mesmo estilizadas, hibridizadas, matizadas por tonalidades (auto)biográficas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Cronotopo; Dialogismo; Espaço biográfico; Mikhail Bakhtin

---

\*Professor at Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz – UESC/BA, Ilhéus, Bahia, Brazil; CNPq; [almpereira@uesc.br](mailto:almpereira@uesc.br)

In order to identify, in the "biographical space"<sup>1</sup>, one of the *leitmotifs* binding the reflection lines led by Mikhail Bakhtin, we have elected the concepts of chronotope, dialogue, dialogism, discourse, enunciation, utterance, and stylization to best situate the discussions around the contact points of (auto)biographical forms and genres with the novelistic genre. The highlighted categories are closely and continuously linked with the notions of otherness and exotopy. Some interconnections of "dialogistic character" are established through the chronotopes, "but this dialogue cannot be embedded to the world represented, as it is outside of it, in the world of the author and the interpreter, of the listeners and the readers. According to Bakhtin, each style is connected to the enunciation and the discourse genres" (ZAVALA, 2009, p.159)<sup>2</sup>.

Key topics of the Bakhtinian thought, presented in the manuscript carried out between 1919 and 1924, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (BAKHTIN, 1993), would later be developed in other bases, no more neo-Kantian or phenomenological, but rather under the impact of linguistic and sociological studies. This is the case of the notion of dialogism, outlined in this book about the act that is "responsible" (simultaneously responsible and responsive or answerable) by itself, and takes place after the subject understands its role in the world. In 1925 Bakhtin was already beginning to develop the notion of chronotope, having among his sources the perspectives about space and time of the Russian physiologist Alexey Ukhtomski, German philosopher Immanuel Kant and neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer. However, the Russian thinker warned that he did not use the term in the sense used by physics, as a member of the Einsteinian theory of relativity, but coated with historicity and transmuted "into literary criticism, almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely). In this perspective, time and space are an

---

<sup>1</sup> We understand the "biographical space" as an intersection that joins the autobiography, the biography and contiguous narratives, along with the (auto)biographical forms which precede the establishment of those genres as well as other cultural notations with similar aspects or stylized, hybridized, marked by (auto)biographical traits. Leonor Arfuch (2010, p.59) comprehends the biographical space as a "confluence of multiple forms, genres and horizons of expectations – supposes an interesting field to inquire. It allows considering the respective specificities, which doesn't mean neglecting their relational processes, their thematic and pragmatic interconnections as well as the ways they are used in different spheres of action and communication" (p.59).

<sup>2</sup>"caráter dialogístico, mas esse diálogo não pode ser incorporado ao mundo representado, já que se encontra fora dele, no mundo do autor e do intérprete, dos ouvintes e dos leitores. Para Bakhtin, cada estilo está ligado à enunciação e aos gêneros do discurso" (ZAVALA, 2009, p.159).

inseparable whole, distinct only by means of an abstract analysis” (CAMPOS, 2009, p.130-131)<sup>3</sup>.

Mónica Graciela Zoppi-Fontana (2005) recalls the imbrication of these categories with the excess of seeing, noting

a slip of a metaphorical sense that would characterize it as a 'point of view or vision of the world', which assumes a representational mediation, to a sense that refers to the empirical presence of speaker and their perceptual activity. The concept of *extraposition*, in turn, is based upon a physical categorization of space-time coordinates, from which the known principle that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time is made compulsory (p.112)<sup>4</sup>.

Still fragile in Bakhtin's reflection during the 1920's, the approaches around the dialogue, in metaphorical rather than in conceptual terms, are manifested in these approaches to the subjective relationships, still marked by the phenomenological vision. His texts of that time show

a species of metaphysics of the interaction, in which ones/others relationships are still based on a game that goes through the vision (the outside look and the excess of seeing are central categories here) and not properly by the language (FARACO, 2009, p.73)<sup>5</sup>.

Presented in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (BAKHTIN, 1993), however clearer in a later essay, “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” (BAKHTIN, 1990, p.4-256), the interrelationships I-for-myself, I-for-the-other and the other-for-me would be constantly reviewed, giving rise to the “non-coincidence of the subject with itself.”

Made possible by this idea of not-I-in-me, a new dimension to the dialogical relations would appear in the book from 1929: *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*.

---

<sup>3</sup> “para a crítica literária quase como uma metáfora (quase, mas não totalmente). Nessa perspectiva, tempo e espaço constituem um todo inseparável, só distintos numa análise abstrata” (CAMPOS, 2009, p.130-131).

<sup>4</sup> “um deslizamento de um sentido metafórico que o caracterizaria como ‘ponto de vista ou visão de mundo’, o que supõe uma mediação representacional, para um sentido que se refere à presença empírica do sujeito falante e sua atividade perceptual. O conceito de *extraposição*, por sua vez, apoia-se em uma categorização física das coordenadas espaço-temporais, a partir da qual se impõe o conhecido princípio de que dois corpos não podem ocupar um mesmo espaço ao mesmo tempo” (ZOPPI-FONTANA, 2005, p.112).

<sup>5</sup> “uma espécie de metafísica da interação, em que as relações um/outrem são ainda fundadas num jogo que passa pela visão (o olhar de fora e o excesso de visão são categorias centrais aqui) e não propriamente pela linguagem” (FARACO, 2009, p.73).

Representations of the subject in the concurrent roles of spectator and author of discursive acts, in interrelationship with its exteriority through metaphors related to the verbs look and see, would lead to a concept of dialogism supported in the voices that meet and face in the same utterance, representing

the different historical, social and linguistic elements that cross the enunciation. Thus, the voices are always social voices that express the valuation consciousness that respond to, that is, that actively comprehend the utterances (ZOPPI-FONTANA, 2005, p.111)<sup>6</sup>.

It is from the tension between the I that becomes the other of another for the sake of configuring his hero, removing itself from the writing as a not-I-in-me, that is,

between the authorship as a monological instance that creates the concluded characters and the authorship as a space which opens itself for the hero to win, as a subject, the possibility of not matching himself and remaining unfinished, that emerges the difference between monological novel and polyphonic novel in the book about Dostoevsky (LEMOS, 2003, p.42)<sup>7</sup>.

In this text of Bakhtin and in *Marxism and Philosophy of Language* (VOLOŠINOV, 1986), launched in that same year, the metaphor of dialogue appeared for the first time among the works of the Leningrad Circle. The last of these books expresses, as one of its conceptions, that the sign materializes between subjects with some level of social organization, the "logic of the consciousness is the ideological communication logic, on the semiotic interaction of a social group" (VOLOŠINOV, 1986, p.13). In tune with the debates promoted by the Circle, this concept binds itself to

---

<sup>6</sup>“os diferentes elementos históricos, sociais e linguísticos que atravessam a enunciação. Assim, as vozes são sempre vozes sociais que manifestam as consciências valorativas que reagem a, isto é, que compreendem ativamente os enunciados” (ZOPPI-FONTANA, 2005, p.111) For the Bakhtin Circle, or the Leningrad Circle, the conscience reveals itself as social. Therefore, the recurrent expression in the texts written by its members – *individual conscience* – “taken in absolute sense contains a *contradictio in adjecto* [...]. However, the Circle did not deny the singularity and, since the first texts of Bakhtin, insisted in claiming that each human being takes up a single and irreplaceable place, as each one responds to his objective conditions in a different way.” (FARACO, 2009, p.86). This passage is in the following form in the source text: “tomada em sentido absolute, contém uma *contradictio in adjecto* [...]. No entanto, o Círculo não negava a singularidade e, desde os primeiros textos de Bakhtin, insistia em afirmar que cada ser humano ocupa um lugar único e insubstituível, na medida em que cada um responde às suas condições objetivas de modo diferente” (FARACO, 2009, p.86).

<sup>7</sup> “entre a autoria como instância monológica que cria personagens concluídos e a autoria enquanto espaço que se abre para que o personagem ganhe, como sujeito, a possibilidade de não coincidir consigo mesmo e de permanecer inconcluso, que emerge no livro sobre Dostoiévski a oposição entre romance monológico e romance polifônico” (LEMOS, 2003, p.42).

the thought of Medvedev in *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* as well as to the fragments published as an introduction to that text from 1929, so named as “Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art” (BAKHTIN, 1984a, p.275-81)<sup>8</sup>. This material will not be presented in the same way in the second version of Bakhtin’s book presented in 1963 with the title *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (BAKHTIN, 1984b).

In those six pages, the scholar asserts that in a strictly formal analysis,

each element of its form is permeated with living social evaluations. For this reason a purely formal analysis must take each element of the artistic structure as a point of refraction of living social forces, as a synthetic crystal whose facets are structured and cut in such a way that they refract specific rays of social evaluations, and refract them at a specific angle (BAKHTIN, 1984a, p.276).

Later, when he addresses the dialogue in Dostoevsky, he ponders that, in this work in particular,

there is an intersection, consonance, or interruption of rejoinders in the open dialogue by rejoinders in the heroes’ internal dialogue. Everywhere a *specific sum total of ideas, thoughts, and words is passed through several unmerged voices, sounding differently in each*. The object of authorial intentions is certainly not this sum total of ideas in itself, as something neutral and identical to itself. No, the object of intentions is precisely the *passing of a theme through many and various voices*, it’s rigorous and, so to speak, irrevocable *multi-voicedness* and *varivoicedness* (BAKHTIN, 1984a, p.278-279).

As the dialogization of multiple voices is noted particularly in the novel, the text dating from 1934-1935, “Discourse in the Novel” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.259-422), begins by stating that because there is no direct, but always mediated, relationship of the discourse with the world, the novelistic genre is characterized as a pluristylistic, plurilinguistic and plurivocal phenomenon. If the first and last adjectives can be understood from their composites (plural styles and voices), the second one goes beyond the aspect of linguistic plurality involved in the concept of plurilingualism, equivalent to heteroglossia in the Bakhtinian vocabulary. Both terms are related to the

---

<sup>8</sup> The chapter “A respeito de Problemas da obra de Dostoiévski” (p. 195-2002), in the Bakhtinian book published in Portuguese as *Estética da criação verbal* (BAKHTIN, 2010), is not found in its equivalent translation to English, named as *Speech Genre and Other Late Essays*. The same chapter, translated among two other fragments from the 1929 edition, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art* (BAKHTIN, 1984a), appears as the Appendix 1 in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (BAKHTIN, 1984b).

same notion of a wide network, formed by languages and social languages, sometimes by individual languages. When represented in discursive genres, the heteroglossic or plurilinguistic diversity brings, with its interpretations of the most diverse societies, value judgments, nominative or qualitative potentials, classificatory procedures and visions of the world.

Among the main species of stylistic units which the novel in general uses, the ones that interest us are the stylizations, which are presented in the most varied

forms of semiliterary (written) everyday narration (the letter, the diary etc.) [...] Various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech (moral, philosophical or scientific statements, oratory, ethnographic descriptions, memoranda and so forth (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.262).

The Russian thinker draws attention to the role played by rhetorical forms in the understanding of literary prose at all times, stating that, in the specific case of the novel,

its intimate interaction (both peaceful and hostile) with living rhetorical genres (journalistic, moral, philosophical and others) has never ceased; this interaction was perhaps no less intense than was the novel's interaction with the artistic (epic, dramatic, lyric). But in this uninterrupted interrelationship, novelistic discourse preserved its own qualitative and was never reducible to rhetorical discourse (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.269).

By combating the centripetal mechanisms of axiological-verbal unification, the centrifugal forces of the real heteroglossia materialize themselves in literary and prosaic genres, especially in the novel, through the dialogical procedures here observed. For example, “in stylisations, in skaz, in parodies and in various forms of verbal masquerade, ‘not talking straight,’ and in the more complex artistic forms for the organization of contradiction” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.274). Connected to pluristylistic and plurilinguistic traces, the plurivocal feature of the novelistic plan is justified by the understanding of the dialogue as a privileged arena for confrontation of conflicting or, somehow, concordant, social voices.

By differentiating poetry from novel, Bakhtin promotes a constant assumption in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (BAKHTIN, 1993) and in the Leningrad Circle's productions: the inaccessibility, through experience, of the “pure data.” The author reaffirms such assumption in “Discourse in the Novel” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.259-422)

by considering that the object brings something already seen or pronounced, that is always present in the voice of the one who enunciates it. The mutually oriented dialogical relationship, involving the discursive set and the plural voices that make it up, this internal dialogization of discourse, shall not be confused with the “traditional notion of ‘dialogue’, understood as ‘just a compositional construction of the discourse’” (CAMPOS, 2009, p.122)<sup>9</sup>; it “encounters an alien word not only in the object itself: every word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.280).

It is in the novelistic genre that the internal dialogization becomes one of the fundamental traits of the prosaic style, specifically shaped as literary; however, it

can become such a crucial force for creating form only where individual differences and contradictions are enriched by social heteroglossia, where dialogical reverberations do not sound in the semantic heights of discourse (as happens in the rhetorical genres), but penetrate the deep strata of discourse, dialogize language itself and the world view a particular language has (the internal form of discourse)—where the dialogue of voices arises directly out of a social dialogue of 'languages' (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.284).

The novelistic language shows a multilingual stratification, obtained by the links it establishes with “the intentional aim, and with the overall accentual system inherent in one or another genre” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.288), be them oratory, advertising, journalistic, literature considered lower (as the serial novel) and the various genres of high literature. The novelistic weaving gathers parodies, various aspects of stylization and presentation of professional-oriented languages, languages of generations, social groups etc. which “may all be drawn in by the novelist for the orchestration of his themes and for the refracted [indirect) expression of his intentions and values” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.292). In English comic novels, the parodical stylizations of these languages stand out, as well as “compact masses of direct authorial discourse – pathos-filled, moral-didactic, sentimental-elegiac or idyllic [...] the direct authorial word is thus realized in direct, unqualified stylizations of poetic genres (idyllic, elegiac, etc.) or stylizations of rhetorical genre (the pathetic, the moral-didactic)” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.302).

---

<sup>9</sup> “tradicional de ‘diálogo’, entendido ‘apenas como forma composicional da construção do discurso’” (CAMPOS, 2009, p.122).

When the Bakhtinian language got free from the neo-Kantian substrate, to immerse “directly in the social life of language, using linguistics weapons – or nomenclature – to better combat it” (TEZZA, 2003, p. 252),<sup>10</sup> the distinction between author-person and author-creator reappeared in the essay “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” (BAKHTIN, 1990, p.4-256). The scholar later reminds us in “Discourse in the Novel” that the novelist uses

words that are already populated with the social intentions of others, and compels them to serve his own new intentions, to serve a second master. Therefore the intentions of the prose writer are *refracted at different angles* [emphasis in the original], depending on the degree to which the refracted, heteroglot languages he deals with are socio-ideological alien, already embodied and already objectivized (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.300).

In such a way, the writer channels the social voices towards his discourse, which reflects and also refracts such voices. The author does not simply promote the transcribing reproductions of social languages; instead, he represents them in the novelistic tissue that, consequently, does not bring the heteroglot layers to its interior, but presents, as a whole, images of this heteroglossia, obliquely pierced by the “founding displacement of the aesthetic act.” In “Discourse in the Novel”, this literary creation movement is thus synthesized “(now under the assumptions from the philosophy of language) in the following way: it is about saying 'I am I' in the language of another one; and to say, in my language, ‘I'm the other'” (FARACO, 2009, p.93)<sup>11</sup>.

It is worth noting that, unlike the analysis and theoretical contributions aimed at the novel of the socialist realism, texts produced by intellectuals pertaining to the Bakhtin Circle promoted the same conception, previously detailed, that linguistic signs cannot be mere reflections of the world. Although these signals point to an external reference, their most important quality is to coat the social universe of meanings, in acts never careless of ethical value, which are always refracted. In this case, to refract means that

---

<sup>10</sup>“diretamente na vida social da linguagem, usando as armas – ou a nomenclatura – da linguística para melhor combatê-la” (TEZZA, 2003, p.252).

<sup>11</sup>“(agora sob os pressupostos da filosofia da linguagem) da seguinte maneira: trata-se de dizer ‘Eu sou eu’ na linguagem de outrem; e de dizer, na minha linguagem, ‘Eu sou outro’” (FARACO, 2009, p.93).



with our signs, not only do we describe the world, but we build – in the dynamics of history and deriving from the multiple and heterogeneous character of human groups’ concrete experiences – several interpretations (*refractions*) of this world (FARACO, 2009, p.50-51)<sup>12</sup>.

Heteroglossia in the Novel (BAKHTIN, 1991, p.301-329) underlines three questions in the process of introducing and organizing the social heteroglossia in the novelistic prose:

The first question refers to the external forms of the novel. To advance the understanding of heteroglossia as a set of different languages brought by characters who speak in their own languages and original discourses, one has to think about the real social world as external to the written world. These worlds, however, are related rather than excluding. The characters’ discourses and interspersed genres, intermixed with outer forms, make up the prosaic discursive tissue (CAMPOS, 2009, p.123).<sup>13</sup>

Within the novel, and anyhow, the characters’ speeches are “verbally and semantically autonomous; each character’s speech possesses its own belief system, since each is the speech of another in another’s language, thus it may also refract authorial intentions of the author and consequently may to a certain degree constitute a second language for the author” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.315). Moreover, the words of a given character “almost always influence authorial speech (and sometimes powerfully so) sprinkling it with another’s words (that is, the speech of a character perceived as the concealed speech of another) and in this way introducing into it stratification and speech diversity” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.315).

The double-voiced orientation of the novelistic heteroglossia serves two speakers; at the same time it expresses the direct intention of the character who speaks and the refracted authorial intention. In a discourse formed also by two senses and two expressions, these “[...] And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated,

---

<sup>12</sup>“com nossos signos, nós não somente descrevemos o mundo, mas construímos – na dinâmica da história e por decorrência do caráter sempre múltiplo e heterogêneo das experiências concretas dos grupos humanos – diversas interpretações (*refrações*) desse mundo” (FARACO, 2009, p.50-51).

<sup>13</sup> “A primeira questão apresentada refere-se às formas exteriores do romance. Para avançar na compreensão do pluringuismo como conjunto de linguagens diferentes trazidas pelas personagens que falam nas suas linguagens e nos seus discursos originais, é preciso pensar o mundo social real como exterior ao mundo escrito. Esses mundos, entretanto, são associados, e não excludentes. O discurso das personagens e os gêneros intercalados, entremeados às formas exteriores, compõem a malha discursiva prosaica” (CAMPOS, 2009, p.123).

they-as it were-know about each other (just as two exchanges in a dialogue know of each other and are structured in this mutual knowledge of each other); it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.324).

The Russian thinker stresses the relevance of intercalating other discursive genres in the process to introduce and organize the heteroglossia in the novel. In addition to those genres already listed as important to the formation of pluristylistics and the heteroglossia itself, found in novelistic narratives, he points to other genres, both literary (interspersed novels, lyrical pieces, poems, and dramatic farces) and non literary (aphorisms, genres of customs and religious, philosophical maxims). The author thinks that, by joining the novelistic tissue, any other genre will have to maintain the autonomy, the structural elasticity, the stylistic and linguistic originality that characterize it. However, he highlights a group of genres

that play an especially significant role in structuring novels, sometimes by themselves even directly determining the structure of a novel as a whole – thus creating novel-types named after such genres. Examples of such genres would be the confession, the diary, travel notes, biography, the personal letter [...] (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.321).

By entering the novelistic utterance, these genres, as well as others, can make up new subgenres, such as the biographical novel and the epistolary novel. In this case, we have what the scholar calls hybrid constructions, of capital importance for the development and maintenance of the novelistic genre among creators and readers. The term encompasses each utterance “that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.304) two or more utterances, styles, languages, ways of speaking, semantic and axiological belief systems.

This so constituted mixture, of social languages within a single utterance, of linguistic consciousness separated by a time or by a social difference (or both) of languages, Bakhtin calls hybridization. This category, along with the dialogized interrelation of languages and pure dialogues, makes it possible to relate the procedures for the creation of the language template in the novelistic genre. However, the internal dialogization shall not be confused with hybridization and the form that best

characterizes the “internally dialogized interillumination in language systems is the stylization:

Two individualized linguistic consciousness must be present in it: the one that *represents* (that is, the linguistic consciousness of the stylizer, and the one that is *represented* which is stylized. Stylization differs from style proper precisely by virtue of its requiring a specific linguistic consciousness (the contemporaneity of the stylizer and his audience), under whose influence a style becomes a stylization, against whose background it acquires new meaning and significance (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.362).

Any defects, errors, anachronisms or updates noticed when the word, the shape, the movement etc. reach the stylization may become purposeful and organized in another type of clearing, which is fairly close to it: the variation. Usually transformed into hybridization, the variation

freely incorporates material form alien languages into contemporary topics, joins the stylized world with the world of contemporary consciousness... tests the stylized language in situations that would have been impossible for it on its own (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.363).

Thus, the dialogue in the novel is always connected to other languages, to other genres and their hybrid modes, not running out in the words of the characters. Its immense variability can be illustrated by “A dialogue of social forces perceived not only in their static coexistence, but also as a dialogue of different times, ages, epochs and days, a dialogue that is forever dying, living, being born” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.365). Through dialogues and monologues, the novel makes subjects and ideological universes represented in its weaving recognize their own perspectives on others’ points of view. The ideological language translation operates in it, as well as the overcoming of its apparently strange character (Cf. BAKHTIN, 1981, p.366).

“Discourse in the Novel” proves to be a crucial production in the Bakhtinian reflective picture due to the heteroglossia, or plurilingualism, and to the:

express comprehension of heteroglossia as a *social phenomenon*. The word 'express' is relevant here because, although the social nature of the word was already implied in all his previous philosophical works, it was not explicit in its systematic *genre* dimension [emphasis in the

original], thus understood not as a neutral set of similar and recurring forms, on the sidelines of history, but as social and concrete stratifications, of uses of language in everyday life; before being an aesthetic category, the genre is an inseparable aspect of any verbal moment (TEZZA, 2003, p.251-252).<sup>14</sup>

Carlos Alberto Faraco (2009, p.58) states that, for Bakhtin, the heteroglossia is less worthy in itself than the ways through which the novel interacts with the vividness of language, the dialogization of social voices, that is, its socio-cultural congregation “and the dynamics that it establishes: they will support each other, they will illuminate each other, partially or completely counteract and dilute each other, promote parody and imitation, create polemics in a veiled or explicit way, and so on”.<sup>15</sup> So, autobiographical and biographical forms, among other discourses and genres, are situated among the authentic bilingual and double-voiced novel embryos, as the V section of the essay “Discourse in the novel”, entitled The Two Stylistic Lines of Development in the European Novel (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.366-422).

The Bakhtinian reflection contemplated the biographical space in “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” (BAKHTIN, 1990, p.4-256). Farther ahead, besides finding continuity in “Discourse in the Novel” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.259-422), the discussions around the same theme would continue in all those texts in which the notion of chronotope were addressed: The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel) (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.10-59); Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Towards a Historical Poetics (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.84-258); From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse (p.290-302); Epic and novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel (p.3-40).

The chronotope eliminates the tension between space and time, observed at the beginning of the Bakhtinian thought, as it blends space-time indices in a concrete and intelligible whole, consisting of “a space-time with unit value. It always carries a

---

<sup>14</sup>“compreensão expressa do plurilinguismo como um *fenômeno social*. A palavra ‘expressa’ é relevante aqui porque, embora a natureza social da palavra já estivesse implícita em todos os seus trabalhos filosóficos anteriores, ela não se explicitava na sua dimensão sistemática de *gênero*, entendido não como um conjunto neutro de formas semelhantes e recorrentes, à margem da história, mas como estratificações sociais, concretas, dos usos da linguagem na vida cotidiana; antes de ser o gênero uma categoria estética, ele é uma face inseparável de qualquer momento verbal” (TEZZA, 2003, p.251-252).

<sup>15</sup>“e a dinâmica que aí se estabelece: elas vão se apoiar mutuamente, se interiluminar, se contrapor parcial ou totalmente, se diluir em outras, se parodiar, se arremedar, polemizar velada ou explicitamente e assim por diante” (FARACO, 2009, p.58).

worldview, a vision of human being” (AMORIM, 2009, p.36)<sup>16</sup>. In addition, it nominates a collective locus,

a type of spatial-temporal matrix where several stories are told or written. It is connected to genres and their trajectory. The genres are typical collective forms, which contain typical temporalities and thus, consequently, typical visions of human being (AMORIM, 2006, p.105)<sup>17</sup>.

In turn, the concept of exotopy implies

a tension between at least two places: the place where the subject who lives and looks from where he lives, and the one that, being outside the experience of the first subject, tries to show what he sees from the other’s look (AMORIM, 2006, p.101)<sup>18</sup>.

This notion is not replaced by the concept of chronotope<sup>19</sup>, nor could the differences between such concepts contradict them. In the text where Bakhtin (1981, p.84-258) returns to themes of creation and author’s place, his views about exotopic category do not change:

He distinguishes *the time that represents* from *the time represented* [emphasis in the original] to answer the following question: from what spatial-temporal point does the author consider the events that he chronicles? He answers this questions, then, emphatically re-stating the concept of exotopy, without naming it though. Even in the case of an autobiographical or confessional writing, the author remains out of the world that is represented by him (AMORIM, 2006, p.104-105)<sup>20</sup>.

---

<sup>16</sup> “uma unidade espaço-tempo dotada de valor. Ele carrega sempre uma visão de mundo, uma visão de homem” (AMORIM, 2009, p.36).

<sup>17</sup> “uma espécie de matriz espaço-temporal de onde as várias histórias se contam ou escrevem. Está ligado aos gêneros e a sua trajetória. Os gêneros são formas coletivas típicas, que encerram temporalidades típicas e assim, conseqüentemente, visões típicas do homem” (AMORIM, 2006, p.105).

<sup>18</sup> “uma relação de tensão entre pelo menos dois lugares: o do sujeito que vive e olha de onde vive, e daquele que, estando de fora da experiência do primeiro, tenta mostrar o que vê do olhar do outro” (AMORIM, 2006, p.101).

<sup>19</sup> The notion of chronotope is posterior to the concept of exotopy and also to the Bakhtinian works focused on language.

<sup>20</sup> “Ele distingue o *tempo que representa* do *tempo representado* para responder à seguinte questão: a partir de que ponto espaço-temporal o autor considera os acontecimentos que narra? Responde, então, reafirmando enfaticamente o conceito de exotopia, embora sem nomeá-lo. Mesmo no caso de uma escrita autobiográfica ou confessional, o autor permanece de fora do mundo que é por ele representado” (AMORIM, 2006, p.104-105).

The Bakhtinian formulations concerning (auto)biographical forms and genres precede the studies on the biographical space, carried out by Philippe Lejeune since the edition of his fundamental text *Le pacte autobiographique* (1975). When dealing with issues related to the autobiography and the novel, this author infers that practitioners of the fictional narrative, as André Gide and François Mauriac do “something different from a more or less questionable school parallel: they assign the autobiographic space where they desire their works to be read” (LEJEUNE, 2008, p.42)<sup>21</sup> when they apparently lower the autobiographical genre to glorify the novel. The contrast between both genres, by means of their coincidences and singularities, does not ignore the question: “Which would be this truth of which the novel allows us coming closer, but the author’s personal, individual, close truth, that is, what every autobiographical project aims at” (LEJEUNE, 2008)<sup>22</sup>.

The theoretician also says that, instead of opposing the genres, one should think them in relation to the other. The relief effect thus obtained “is the creation, by the reader, of an ‘autobiographical space’” (LEJEUNE, 2008, p.43)<sup>23</sup>. Reading is a determinative criterion to try to define this place, composed mainly of the autobiography, confessions, memoirs, personal journal genres; of some epistolary, essay and hybrids texts (novels with autobiographical modulation, *roman-fleuve* or *Bildungsroman*) etc. When rereading his own conclusions in the article “Le pacte autobiographique”, Lejeune (1983) grants more elasticity to the space where now fit: *Fils*, an autofiction by Serge Doubrovsky; a few “marginal” cases of autobiographical poems; the film *Sartre pair lui-même*.

The latter production opens space for autobiographical, memorial or testimonial documentaries, and to other textualities that can be read, in a widened sense, as autobiographical. As pointed out by Jovita Maria Gerheim Noronha (2008, p.9), Lejeune’s research extends,

at the same time, to other forms of auto-representation - the cinema, the plastic arts, the correspondence -, which will allow it also to

---

<sup>21</sup> “algo diferente de um paralelo escolar mais ou menos contestável: designam o espaço autobiográfico em que desejam que seja lido o conjunto de suas obras” (LEJEUNE, 2008, p.42).

<sup>22</sup> “Qual seria essa verdade da qual o romance permite chegar mais perto, senão a verdade pessoal, individual, íntima, do autor, isto é, aquilo que todo projeto autobiográfico visa?” (LEJEUNE, 2008).

<sup>23</sup> “é a criação, pelo leitor, de um ‘espaço autobiográfico’” (LEJEUNE, 2008, p.43).

revisit the concept of 'pact' and to evaluate its relevancy and adequacy to these ways of expression of the self.<sup>24</sup>

Sliding to the daily writing and the personal journal, he will later investigate “transformations arising from the changes on supports: from the notebook to the computer (1998), from the private practice to the self-exposure in the Internet, to the blogs (1999)” (NORONHA, 2008, p.9)<sup>25</sup>.

The “father of the Pact” deals equally with the biographical genre, the story of life and the romanticized biography. In all these genres, as well as in the other genres previously mentioned, there is always a life, at least in fractions, to be narrated, told or represented, and not only by means of a first-person narrative or the dissimulated self-confession in other points of view. For such reason, we deem it appropriate to use, based on Leonor Arfuch (2010), the term biographical space to name the interdiscursive sphere that shelters not only the autobiography, the biography, and other genres with (auto)biographical features, but also other similar cultural notations, stylized, hybridized, shaded by (auto)biographical tonalities.

Lejeune (2008) confesses to having reformulated, based on the wide variety of dictionary entries, the classic definition of autobiographical genre - “a retrospective narrative in prose that a real person makes of his own existence, focusing especially on his individual history, and in particular the history of his personality” (p.49)<sup>26</sup>. Explicit in the quotation, the notions of discourse, prose, historical reference and subject bring up the problems of otherness, authorship, enunciation and utterance implied in his texts. All these are constantly present in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, in whose extension other concepts - chronotope, dialogism, dialogue, style, event, exotopy, discursive genres and sense - allow for the understanding of the biographical space as a spatialization, where in a given moment converge “dissimilar forms, which may be considered in a symptomatic interdiscursivity, significant by themselves, but without resigning to a temporalization, a search for inheritances and genealogies, to claim the

---

<sup>24</sup>“ao mesmo tempo, a outras formas de autorrepresentação – o cinema, as artes plásticas, a correspondência –, o que lhe permitirá, inclusive, visitar o conceito de ‘pacto’ e avaliar sua pertinência e adequação a esses modos de expressão de si” (NORONHA, 2008, p.9).

<sup>25</sup> “transformações decorrentes das mudanças de suporte: do caderno ao computador (1998), da prática secreta à autoexposição na Internet, aos blogs (1999)” (NORONHA, 2008, p.9).

<sup>26</sup> “narrativa retrospectiva em prosa que uma pessoa real faz de sua própria existência, quando focaliza especialmente sua história individual, em particular a história de sua personalidade” (LEJUNE, 2008, p. 49).

*presence* and *absence* relationships [emphasis in the original] (Cf. ARFUCH, 2010, p.22)<sup>27</sup>.

Bakhtin already widened such space when he retroacted to (auto)biographical forms of the classic Antiquity, of the Middle Ages, of the Renaissance, also reaching the time interval from which Philippe Lejeune inaugurates his approaches to the autobiographic space: the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Russian intellectual advances, never leaving the USSR, towards Greece and Rome, to the African or Asian extensions of the Hellenism and the Roman empire, to places nowadays known as Germany, Spain, France, England, Italy, etc. The French theoretician contemplates mainly the productions of his own home country, whereas Leonor Arfuch moves from her own land towards other lands, lingering on the migrating passages of Argentinians that descend from Italians, the *oriundi*, to the country of their ancestors in the 1980's.

A little before that, after the death of Bakhtin as “author-person” in the same year when the *Le pacteau to biographique* (LEJEUNE, 1975) and *The Dialogic Imagination* (BAKHTIN, 1981) are published, Bakhtin as “author-creator” experiments a history of rediscovery and increasing fame (Cf. MORSON; EMERSON, 1990). Less famous due to the elasticities that he visualizes in the biographical space, but that were hidden by his immersion in the novelistic genre and the soon canonized texts, as those centered in Dostoevsky and Rabelais, the nomadic citizen already distinguished, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the scope of the literary theory, the writer as historical being from the authorial instance.

In the second half of the same century, Alexander Nehamas, Michel Foucault, Seymour Chatman and Wayne Booth, among others, undertake discussions of such size, but it is beyond our scope doesn't come to terms now to recompose their readings in order to find in them a probable Bakhtinian source. Judging by the definition of Julio Cortázar (1969), the Russian thinker would never be a *fama*, that is, the allegory of people comfortable with the order, accommodated and cautious; he is still, in the position occupied by his authorship, what he was as while a man: a *cronopio*, an *outsider*. He does not supply an instructions manual; and even if surpassed in his neo-Kantian, phenomenological or even formalist formularizations, he initially covered the

---

<sup>27</sup>“formas dissimilares, suscetíveis de serem consideradas numa interdiscursividade sintomática, por si só significantes, mas sem renunciar a uma temporalização, a uma busca de heranças e genealogias, a postular relações de *presença* e *ausência*” (ARFUCH, 2010, p.22).



same territory by which Martin Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel, Emanuel Lévinas and Merleau-Ponty have passed from one side; and from the other side, the linguistics, the Slavic formalism, the sociology of literature and the French structuralism.

Reaching the re-appropriations of Jean-Paul Sartre and poststructuralism, there is an “obscuring mist”, as Bakhtin said, or “some nebula” which Paul Valéry (1991, p.64) does not dare call lighting, and that under any form is reached by Philippe Lejeune and Leonor Arfuch. Thus, the passage covered since *Art and Answerability* (BAKHTIN, 1990) until *O pacto autobiográfico: de Rousseau a Internet* (LEJEUNE, 2008) and *O espaço biográfico: dilemas da subjetividade contemporânea* (ARFUCH, 2010) makes us see, among many other things, that under varied ways the Bakhtinian dialogism leads the game which the (auto)biographical forms and genres have been establishing with the novelistic genre and, thus, productively modifying their ways of existing.

#### REFERENCES

- AMORIM, M. Cronotopo e exotopia. In: BRAIT, B. *Bakhtin: outros conceitos-chave*. São Paulo: Contexto, 2006, p.95-114.
- AMORIM, M. Para uma filosofia do ato: válido e inserido no contexto. In: BRAIT, Beth (Org). *Bakhtin, dialogismo e polifonia*. São Paulo: Contexto, 2009, p.17-43.
- ARFUCH, L. O espaço biográfico: dilemas da subjetividade contemporânea. Trad. Paloma Vidal. Rio de Janeiro: EdUERJ, 2010.
- BAKHTIN, M. Discourse in the Novel. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, p.259-422.
- \_\_\_\_\_. From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, p.259-422.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Epic and Novel. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, p.3-40.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, p.41-82.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Appendix I. Three Fragments from the 1929 Edition. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*. In: BAKHTIN, 1984a, p.275-281.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984b.

\_\_\_\_\_. The *Bildungsroman* and its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of Novel. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Trans. Verner W Mc Gee. Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986, p.10-59.

\_\_\_\_\_. Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity. *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Ed. Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov; trans. and notes by Vadim Liapunov; supplement translated by Kenneth Brostrom. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990, p.4-256.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Trans. and notes Vadim Liapunov. Ed. Vadim Liapunov and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

CAMPOS, M. I. B. Questões de literatura e de estética: rotas bakhtinianas. In: BRAIT, Beth (Org). *Bakhtin, dialogismo e polifonia*. São Paulo: Contexto, 2009, p.113-150.

CORTÁZAR, J. *Cronopios and famas*. Translated by Paul Blackburn. New York: Random. House, Pantheon Books, 1969.

FARACO, C. A. *Linguagem & diálogo: as ideias linguísticas do Círculo de Bakhtin*. São Paulo: Parábola, 2009.

LEJEUNE, P. *Le pacte autobiographique*. Paris: Seuil, 1975.

LEJEUNE, P. Le pacte autobiographique (bis). *Poétique*, Paris, n. 56, p.417-433, 1983.

LEJEUNE, P. *O pacto autobiográfico: de Rousseau à internet*. Trad. Jovita Maria Gerheim Noronha. Belo Horizonte: Editora da UFMG, 2008.

LEMOIS, C. T. G. de. A função e o destino da palavra alheia: três momentos da reflexão de Bakhtin. In: BARROS, D. L. P. ; FIORIN, J. L. (Org). *Dialogismo, polifonia, intertextualidade: em torno de Bakhtin*. São Paulo: EDUSP, 2003, p.37-43.

MORSON; G. S.; EMERSON, C. *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990.

NORONHA, J. M. G. Apresentação. In: LEJEUNE, Philippe. *O pacto autobiográfico: de Rousseau à internet*. Belo Horizonte: Editora da UFMG, 2008, p.7-10.

TEZZA, C. *Entre a prosa e a poesia: Bakhtin e o formalismo russo*. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2003.

VALÉRY, P. Existência do Simbolismo. In: VALÉRY, P. *Variedades*. Trad. Maiza Martins de Siqueira. São Paulo: Iluminuras, 1991, p.73-76.

VOLOŠINOV, V. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of the Language*. Trans. I.R. Titunik and I.R. Titunik. Harvard: The Harvard University Press, 1986.

ZAVALA, I. O que estava presente desde a origem. In: BRAIT, Beth (Org). *Bakhtin, dialogismo e polifonia*. São Paulo: Contexto, 2009, p.151-166.

ZOPPI-FONTANA, M. G. O outro da personagem: enunciação, exterioridade e discurso. In: BRAIT, B. (Org). *Bakhtin: dialogismo e construção do sentido*. Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP, 2005, p.108-118.

Translated by Elaine Cristina Medeiros Frossard - [elaine\\_cmf@yahoo.com.br](mailto:elaine_cmf@yahoo.com.br)

Received March 04, 2013

Accepted June 19, 2013