ARTICLES

Readers' Notes on the Book by M. M. Bakhtin *Problems of* Dostoevsky's Creation/Poetics / Читательские заметки по поводу книги М. М. Бахтина Проблемы творчества/поэтики Достоевского / Observações de leitura sobre o livro de M. M. Bakhtin Problemas da criação/poética de Dostoiévski

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with some intriguing issues related to the book by M. M. Bakhtin Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation/Poetics (1929; 1963), namely its significance in the history of humanitarian science in the USSR; religious implications of the book; rough sketches of the scientist for the reissue of the monograph; evolution and contradictions of the philosophical and literary research methodology; continuity of the scientist's "metalinguistic" ideas with ancient (Aristotle) and Western European ("Vossler's school") roots; reflection in the reissue books of the Bakhtin ontological category "Big time"; the distinction between the concepts "creation" and "poetics" in literary heritage of Dostoevsky; the technical possibility of comparing of the changes in the meta-language of the books available in a unified terminology and name pointers in the first experience of publishing two books in one volume, carried out by the St. Petersburg publisher and philologist D. A. Yunov.

KEYWORDS: M. M. Bakhtin; F. M. Dostoevsky; Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation; Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics; Comparative analysis

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматриваются некоторые интригующие вопросы, связанные с книгой М. М. Бахтина Проблемы творчества/поэтики Достоевского (1929; 1963): ее значение в истории гуманитарной науки в СССР; религиозные подтексты книги; черновые наброски ученого к переизданию монографии; эволюция и противоречия философской и литературоведческой методологии исследования; преемственность «металингвистических» ученого идей (Аристотель) и западноевропейскими ("школа Фосслера") корнями; отражение в переиздании книги бахтинской онтологической категории «большое время»; разграничение автором понятий "творчество" и "поэтика" в отношении произведений Достоевского; технические возможности сравнения изменений метаязыка книги, доступные в виде объединенных терминологических и именных указателей в первом опыте публикации двух изданий книги в одном томе, осуществленном петербургским издателем и филологом Д. А. Юновым. КЛЮЧЕВЫЕСЛОВА: М. М. Бахтин; Ф. М. Достоевский; Проблемы творчества

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Достоевского; Проблемы поэтики Достоевского; Сравнительный анализ

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RESUMO

Neste artigo são analisadas algumas questões intrigantes, ligadas ao livro de M. M. Bakhtin, Problemas da criação/poética de Dostoiévski (1929; 1963): sua importância na história das ciências humanas na União Soviética; os subtextos religiosos do livro; os esboços rascunhados do cientista para a reedição da monografia; as evoluções e as contradições da metodologia filosófica e da teoria literária na pesquisa; a continuidade das ideias "metalinguísticas" do cientista em relação às raízes antigas (Aristóteles) e da Europa Ocidental ("Escola de Vossler"); reflexo na reedição do livro da categoria metafísica bakhtiniana do "grande tempo"; delimitação pelo autor dos conceitos de "criação" e "poética" em relação à obra de Dostoiévski; as possibilidades técnicas de comparação das mudanças da metalíngua do livro, acessíveis em vista dos índices terminológicos e onomásticos presentes na primeira tentativa de publicação das duas edições em um volume realizada pelo editor petersburguês e filólogo D. A. Iúnov. PALAVRAS-CHAVE: M. M. Bakhtin; F. M. Dostoiévski; Problemas da criação de

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: M. M. Bakhtin; F. M. Dostoiévski; Problemas da criação de Dostoiévski; Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski; Análise Comparativa

Introduction

The book concerned by M. M. Bakhtin stay current,¹ although in the last decades its heuristic potential has partly lapsed and has been reduced (simplified), has been somewhat underestimated or unclaimed, in addition to the democratic idea of the plenivalent "voices" and the social polyphony in the Soviet and post-Soviet society has lost its original actuality.² Nowadays, this research is objectively interesting above all as a fact of the history of the humanities' thought in the Soviet Union: the hidden interaction between philology, philosophy and partly theology in the concrete monograph, the innovative treatment operated by the scientist regarding the writer's unique artistic system, whose creation in the middle of the 20th century was forbidden in his homeland due to the prophetic role of the anti-utopian novel *Demons* [*Biéci*].

The purpose of this article is to analyze some circumstances – explicit, not expressed and implied by Bakhtin - related to the author's first book in the context of his scientific evolution.

¹ EN: The author refers to the 1994's edition by D. A. Iúnov, which united in a single volume the two works of Bakhtin, as indicated by the author in this article's summary.

² In this respect, we are talking about the book reviews in the West, where their perception has its specificity. Cf., for example: Jones (1990); Cf. also: Ossovsky (2003).

1 Methodological Intrigue

In 1970 in interviews with S. G. Bocharov, which happened, among others, with the formal editor of the second edition of the book, Bakhtin enunciated a very intriguing thought about the *incompleteness* in his work:

Everything that has been done in this half century on an infertile ground and under a charged sky, has been in some degree defective.

- Mikhail Mikhailovich, [...] but what is defective in your book about Dostoevsky?
- You see, would I be able to write? There I separated the shape from the main one. I couldn't talk directly about the main questions.
- On what main questions, M. M.?
- Philosophical, about how Dostoevsky was tormented all his life by the existence of God. There I was forced all the time to use subterfuge forward and backward. I was obliged to hold me by the hand. It was just the thought coming up and it had to stop... Even the church has corrupted itself. (...) If you look for an image for Dostoevsky's world in the spirit of his worldview, Bakhtin continues, it will be "the church as communication of immiscible souls... or, perhaps, the image of the Dantean world..." (BOCHAROV, 1993, pp.71-72).

Simultaneously Bakhtin reminds his interlocutor that he is a philosopher, who was constrained for ideological reasons during the Soviet period to become a literature theorist. In this regard Bakhtin spoke openly on his first visit to him, in 1961, in Saransk, about the young Muscovite scientists, V. V. Kojinov, S. G. Bocharov and G. D. Gachev:

he [Bakhtin], from the beginning, spoke to us categorically: "Have in mind that I am not a literature theorist, I am a philosopher." [...] Then... that same day or one of the following, he again spoke quite concretely a rather risky phrase for the time: "Have in mind that I am not a Marxist." And he repeated it a few times... (KOJINOV, 1992, p.113).

Further S. G. Bocharov remembers his reaction to Bakhtin's words about his book:

³ Cf. BAKHTN, M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Trans. C. Emerson. 9th ed. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003 [1963]: "the unified evolving spirit, even as an image, is organically alien to Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky's world is profoundly *pluralistic*. *If we were to seek an image toward which this whole world gravitates, an image in the spirit of Dostoevsky's own worldview* (here and hereafter the bold quotations are ours - V. N.), then it would be the church as a communion of unmerged souls, where sinners and righteous men come together; or perhaps it would be the image of Dante's world, where multileveledness is extended into eternity, where there are the penitent and the unrepentant, the damned and the saved. Such an image would be in the style of Dostoevsky's himself, or, more precisely, in the style of his ideology, while the image of a unified spirit is deeply alien to him." (pp.26-28).

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I refuted. I said we'd admit it, but that's just silence, and anyone with an ear will hear. Didn't he [Bakhtin] speak a new word about Dostoevsky with his book? And the main thing: I considered (and I consider), that that change from the philosophical critique of the beginning of the century to an eidetic structural analysis of Dostoevsky, which Bakhtin carried out in his book, was profoundly fruitful, he allowed himself to speak a "new word." [...]

– Yes, maybe, – answered M. M. – but that's all literary theory (again with a grimace). All this in the immanent circle of literary theory, but there must be a way out to another world (BOCHAROV, 1993, p.72).

This way, we see that, in the twilight of his approximately 75 years, the author of two innovative research editions on Dostoevsky's creation found with regret that neither in the 1920s nor in the 1960s - under the conditions of Soviet atheism - he was able to talk about the writer what he actually wanted... (However, in that case it would be necessary to talk not about *poetics*, but about *the author's worldview*, which was particularly embodied in the literary work).

2 Implicit and Explicit. Marxism or Idealism?

This leads to the question of what exactly the researcher silenced in his monograph on Dostoevsky, as well as the indirect hypothesis on the possibility of judging - making use of notes drafted in the wake of the additions and clarifications to the book, in the period of preparation of its re-edition, when he, not being under the oppression of ideological censorship and, consequently, self-censorship (!) - whether Bakhtin can update some previously expressed meanings and accentuate subtexts implied.

- **2.1** In the contemporary research order of Bakhtin's heritage, thanks to the publication of the scientist's works, there are *four* important texts from the methodologically point of view which reflect the author's reasoning in the process of renewal of the books (their titles often vary in impressions):
- 1) Pre-work plan of the book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* [План доработки книги *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*]⁴ / For the Reelaboration of the Book on

⁴ Cf.: *Контекст*–76 [Context-76]. Moscow, 1977, pp.295-316 (introductory essay and publications of V. V. Kójinov).

Dostoevsky" [К переработке книги о Достоевском]⁵ / Notes from 1961 [1961 год. Заметки] (ВАКНТІN, 1996, pp.329-363);

- 2) "For the Reelaboration of the Book on Dostoevsky II" [К переработке книги о Достоевском. II] (BAKHTIN, 1994b, pp.70-82) / "Dostoevsky 1961" [Достоевский. 1961 г.] (BALHTIN, 1996, pp.364-374);
- 3) "Notes 1962-1963" [Заметки 1962 г. 1963 г.] (ВАКНТІЙ, 1996, pp.375-378);
- 4) "Additions and Changes in *Dostoevsky*" [Дополнения и изменения к *Достоевскому*] (BAKHTIN, 2002, pp.301-367).

We will analyze these texts on the level that interests us, that is, of the possible additions of "senses" and enlargements of the hermeneutic perspectives carried out in the Bakhtinian interpretation of the work of the Russian classic.

2.2 In the first of the pointed out works, especially in its extended variant, the scientist hardly touches on religious issues, reflecting on: the problem of the speech genres, the other's word, the linguistics, the metalinguistic substances, the carnival, sometimes quoting - which seems strange to a "non-Marxist" - K. Marx... Furthermore, the very essence of global *dialogue* is delineated by it as a Marxist philosophical imperative: "K. Marx said that only the thought expressed in the *word* becomes in fact a thought for the other and for myself." (BAKHTIN, 1996, p.338) It is possible to propose that Marxist dogmatism was - in part necessary - assimilated by him at such a limited time that it did not provoke a reaction of rejection even on the level of the subconscious.⁶ Although afterwards Bakhtin reflected:

After my book (but independently of it) the ideas of polyphony, dialogue, unfinishing etc. received a very broad development. This is explained by the growing influence of Dostoevsky [? – V. N.], but, above all, certainly by the changes in the reality itself [? - V. N.], which Dostoevsky before others (and in this sense, prophetic) was able to reveal:

The overcoming of monologism. Which is monologism in a high sense. The denial of consciences with equal rights in relation to truth (understood in an abstract and systematic way). *God can live without man, but man can not live without him*;

⁵ BAKHTIN, M. Toward a Rewording of the Dostoevsky Book (1961). *In*: BAKHTN, M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Trans. C. Emerson. 9th ed. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003 [1963], pp.283-304.

⁶ Cf. about that: Vassiliev, 2001, pp.20-22; Vassiliev, 2013, pp.16-19.

Dostoevsky often interrupts, but never stifles the other voice, never ends it "from himself," that is, from another, from his conscience. This, as we say, is the activity of God in relation to man, which [God] allows himself [man] to reveal himself to the end (in an immanent development), to condemn himself, to deny himself. This is an activism of superior quality (BAKHTIN, 1996, pp.341, 342, 660).⁷

The first of the theses declared by the thinker, especially in relation to the statement "independent of it," that is, of the Bakhtin's book, and of "Dostoevsky's dependence" on the Bolshevik bureaucracy and on the propaganda, is almost undoubted: During the Soviet period there was exactly an ideological monism, a "monologism," and a total civil war, which lasted for a few decades, a plenivalent social *dialogue*... It is also questionable the scientist's second thought, that "God can do without man...," simply because he created man (from the point of view of atheism, the opposite occurs), while religion, the church, in some theological treaties, is precisely the link, the union between people, the dialogue of souls.

Then Bakhtin writes:

Man has no sovereign interior territory, he is integral and constantly on the frontier; when he looks into himself, he looks into the eye of the other or with the eyes of the other"; "This is not all Dostoevsky's philosophical theory, this is his artistic vision of the life of the human consciousness...," Dostoevsky made the spirit [? V. N.], that is, the ultimate semantic position of the personality, as an object of aesthetic contemplation, knew how to *glimpse* the spirit in a way that before him they could only see the body and soul of man. He advanced the aesthetic vision in depth, in new deep layers, but not in the depth of the unconscious, but in the high depth of *consciousness*. (...) The consciousness is much more frightening than any unconscious complexes (BAKHTIN, 1996, p.344).

⁷ Cf. also in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation/Poetics*, where Bakhtin, in our opinion, although veiled, by a quotation from the "other's word," clearly expresses his position: "His [Dostoevsky] character was a man and he ultimately represented not an idea in man, but, to speak in his own words, 'the man in man'. The idea was already a touchstone for man on man experimentation... Engelhardt underestimates Dostoevsky's deep personalism. 'The idea about himself' in the platonic sense or the 'ideal existence' in the phenomenological sense Dostoevsky does not know, does not contemplate, does not represent. For Dostoevsky, there are no ideas, thoughts, theses, that would be anyone's - they would be 'in themselves'. He represents the 'truth itself' *in the spirit of Christian ideology, as an incarnation in Christ*, that is, he represents it as a personality, which enters into interrelationship with other personalities" (BAKHTIN, 2000, pp.40-41; BAKHTIN, 2002, p.40).

⁸ Cf., in part: Vassiliev, 1991, pp.94-97; Vassiliev, 2013, pp.4-8; Vassiliev, 2015, pp.267-272.

⁹ A remarkable reaction to the Freudian treatise on human behavior, which Bakhtin probably criticized as a co-author of the ideas in the V. N. Voloshinov's book "Freudism" [Фрейдизм] (Leningrad, 1927). In English: VOLOSHINOV, V. N. *Freudianism*: A Marxist Critique. Ed. and transl. I. R. Titunik with Neal H. Bruss. New York: Academic Press, 1976.

As we see, in Bakhtin, Marxist (*matter and spirit*) and religious foundations of the conceptualization of human consciousness¹⁰ are mixed contradictorily, or even eclectically... On this level, the following materialist passage is particularly curious, whose objective is to legalize the writer's work in the Soviet scientific mentality:

Dostoevsky gives all this an *idealistic* elucidation, draws ontological and metaphysical conclusions (immortal souls etc.). However, the revelation of the *inner particularity* of consciousness does not contradict *materialism*. The *consciousness is secondary*, it is born at a certain stage of the development of the material organism, it is born *objectively*, and it dies (also objectively) together with the material organism (sometimes even before it), it dies objectively (BAKHTIN, 1996, p.348).

It is interesting, from the psychological point of view, Bakhtin's change to a Marxist metalanguage, which is difficult to explain only as self-censorship (in the draft notes) and can be understood in a more probable way precisely as the phenomenon of "ideological mimicry," already pointed out by us.

2.3 In the observations "Dostoevsky 1961" [Достоевский. 1961 г.], through the mental change from the category of *author* to the phenomenon of the divine principle, ¹¹ it is possible to assume that Bakhtin reasoned about Dostoevsky's higher goal as an artist: "Dostoevsky's characters have their whole life and destiny developed in the discussion, in the dialogical position occupied by them"; "Every experience of the character is on the borderline of his consciousness and the consciousness of the other, he becomes aware of himself and the other. Dostoevsky's character is always in front of the mirror, that is, he looks at himself and his reflection in the consciousness of the other." (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.368). It is even possible to think that Bakhtin alludes to the *methodological* problem in

¹⁰ By the way, the commentator of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* – S. G. Bocharov sees here a hermeneutic revelation of Bakhtin: "This beautiful formula: Dostoevsky 'was able to envision [sic!] the spirit...' [...] This *theological* aspect of authorship theory potentially present in both 'The author and the character in the aesthetic activity' and the book on Dostoevsky, M. M. B.(akhtin) lets slip right here, in a private, laboratory text." (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.478).

¹¹ Cf. in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation*: "The result of this ideological approach is that, before Dostoevsky, there is not a world of objects, elucidated and organized by his monological thinking, but a world of consciousnesses that elucidate each other, a world of connected human semantic orientations. In them he seeks a higher and more authoritative guidance and does not understand it as his true thinking, but as another true person and his word. In the image of the ideal man or in the image of Christ, he sees the resolution of ideological searches. This higher image or voice should crown a world of voices, organize it and subjugate it."; "...as the ultimate limit of his artistic project, but in his work this image did not find its realization in this way." (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.68).

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the following context: "The goal we have set exists from a series of determined limitations. Above all, we will not touch the content... concrete posed by Dostoevsky's ideological problems, that is, we will not engage in the unfinished dialogue of Dostoevsky's work in its essence..." (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.371). In that context, the scientist's careful reservation is remarkable:

Dostoevsky's work never left the agenda of **Soviet** literary theory; the objectives of poetics remained in the background in the face of the very important objectives of the historical study of Dostoevsky's time and in the face of the objectives of the critique of isolated reactionary ideas in Dostoevsky's journalistic texts and in part of the isolated voices in his polyphonic novels (this critique continued the *tradition of revolutionary democrats*, especially Saltikova-Chedrina and Gorki). (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.374).

2.4 In 1962-1963 "Notes" [Заметках], where there is also much reflection on the poetics of Dostoevsky, Bakhtin postulates: "The problem of the crime as Dostoevsky's central problem. Crime and sin." (BAKHTIN, 2000, 375) If that, in fact, is so, so that the scientist cannot manifest himself before, what was left outside the limits of authorial verbalization in the book discussed? Is it only the religious category of *sin*, which has remained at the level of the figurative sense as a general ethical and human value, as the antithesis of obedience to the law and virtue? It is also possible to disagree with the scientist about the "central problem" of the classic's work. We would define it as reflecting the contradictory complexity, the dialectics of the human soul.

2.5 In "Additions and changes in *Dostoevsky*" [Дополнения и изменения к [Достоевскому]," partly inspired by the analysis of new works on the work of the classic, we find draft and revised materials from the book for its Italian and Russian re-edition (in the first case it is possible to assume a great freedom of thought of the scientist), in the end, used only in part by the author. ¹² In our opinion, here Bakhtin is more accurate, for example:

Dostoevsky's bipolarity and its social (and) personal motivations (epilepsy); if polyphony were only the result of personal bipolarity, illness, etc. and nothing else, it could not ... become a positive

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¹² Cf. about that: Bakhtin, 2002, pp.505-506.

revelation, a step forward in the development of fictional literature. The sad days passed, and *thanks to God*, but the work remained, like images, and that is very good. Epilepsy, if it was in fact one of the reasons for polyphony, does not underestimate it ([Iu. V.] Mann). The voices change, but the polyphony remains. Polyphony is not Dostoevchina; Dostoevchina is a reactionary monological bagasse of polyphony. Or it is the cult of bipolarity and irresolution transferred to the psychological plane. There are also other shades of Dostoevchina (BAKHTIN, 2002, pp.301-304). ¹³

In expanding the representation about the writer's religiosity, Bakhtin reflects:

In Dostoevsky everything lives only on its borders with what is opposed to it. Love borders on hate... Faith lives only on the border with the lack of faith and understands the lack of faith, is reflected in it; the atheism, on the border with faith. The high is integrated in the low, virtue in sin, purity in vice; the lack of faith knows everything that faith knows, faith knows everything that the lack of faith knows; the *carnavalized* contact of faith with the lack of faith (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.344).

3 The Influence of Structuralism on Bakhtin's Late Methodology

In view of this, he operates implicitly, in our view, precisely with the fashion categories in the 1960s in structuralism, for example: "The contrastive carnavalized pairs: the front and the back; youth - old age, life - death, wisdom - dumbness etc." (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.328) in what could reveal the attention of the scientist to the work of the Semiotic School of Tartu. 14

4 The Search for God vs. Carnavalization in Bakhtin's Interpretation of Dostoevsky's Poetics

Paradoxically, Bakhtin disapproves Dostoevsky as a realistic artist, for example:

The carnival sensation in Tolstoi, Turguenev, Goncharov hardly exists at all. They represent life in their tracks. Dostoevsky, the life that leaves the tracks, the rupture with the normal and natural course of life; all life is taken from the inner space to the *threshold*. The most interior space (the living room) is transferred to the square (scandals, dethronements,

¹⁴ Cf., in particular: Vassiliev (2010; 2012, 2013).

¹³ For reference, see footnote 3.

judgements and recognitions); the influence of the Gothic novel and sentimentalism... (BAKHTIN, 2002, pp.328-329).

Compare the contradictory reflections of the scientist in the first and second editions of the book:

In his notepad, Dostoevsky gives an extraordinary definition of his artistic creation: "In the face of full realism, finding man in man (...), the depths of the human soul" or what romantic idealists understood as "spirit" to differentiate from "soul" becomes the object of a prosaic, sensible and objective-realistic representation in Dostoevsky's creation. In both cases he was "ingenuous," and the romantic irony itself couldn't eliminate that ingenuity..., Dostoevsky is not a psychologist. But at the same time Dostoevsky is objective and can *call himself* a realist with full rights (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.77).

At the very end of his creative path, Dostoevsky defines the particularity of his *realism* in his notepad: "Find, in a full realism, in the man of man (...) They call me a psychologist: it is not true, I am only a realist in the highest sense, that is, I represent all *the depths of the human soul*." More than once we will have to return to that extraordinary formula (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.71).

In the spirit of Soviet literary theory, Bakhtin interprets Dostoevsky's duality as an artist and thinker: "As a novelist, he *represented* the thought, he was an artist of ideas and not a one-sided herald of certain *reactionary* points of view (which he defended as a journalist)." (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.358).

In that case, perhaps Bakhtin again approaches the outline on which he opened with S. G. Bocharov, cf: "The interest in the world, in which I will not be. The problem of ethical solipsism. (...) That is the encyclopedic problem and the theme of all Dostoevsky's creation. Their contemptuous depth, which we will not touch." (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.348).

Thus, the office notes of the scientist in the process of finalizing the book hardly allow to see new horizons, hidden earlier, of his possible approach to Dostoevsky's artistic dialogue, and in part even provide foundations for conclusions about his completely Marxist interpretation of the writer and even formal structuralist (carnavalization as a systemic artistic procedure, binary oppositions, etc.).

5 Approaching Dostoevsky's Theology

However, in both editions there are cautious approaches (often through the introduction of a discourse that is foreign, but not strange to the author) to theological issues, for example:

In response to Kanavelin, Dostoevsky outlines in his notepad: "It is not enough to define morals by means of the truth of your convictions. The question must still be constantly raised: are my convictions true? Christ is the only verification of them. But it is no longer philosophy but faith, faith, that is the red light ..."; "In these thoughts it is important for us not the Christian confession itself of Dostoevsky, but those living *forms* of his ideological thinking, which reach here his awareness and his clear expression. (...) He prefers to remain in error, but with Christ... It is an extremely characteristic questioning of the ideal image (how Christ would act) ... (BAKHTIN, 2000, pp.68-69);

[...] The comparison of Dostoevsky's dialogues with Plato's seems to us to be generally unimportant and unproductive, since Dostoevsky's dialogue is not at all a purely cognitive and philosophical dialogue. Its most important equivalence is with the biblical and gospel dialogues. The influence of John's dialogue and some of the Gospel dialogues in Dostoevsky is unquestionable, since the platonic dialogues were simply out of his interest. John's dialogue in its structure is internally endless, for the opposition of the soul to god - in conflict or in peace - is understood in him as irrevocable and eternal. However, the biblical dialogue does not lead us to the most important artistic particularities of Dostoevsky's dialogue (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.173)

[...] it is applicable to all those characters that definition of the person of Ivan Karamázov given by Zóssima. He gave it to him, of course, in his church language, that is, in the sphere of that Christian idea in which he, Zóssima, lives. (...) ... But thank the creator, who has given you a superior heart, capable of suffering with this martyrdom, "eternal philosophizing and eternal seeking, our dwelling is in heaven." May God allow the resolution of your heart still reach you on earth, and may God bless your path! (...) To all the main characters of Dostoevsky is given "an eternal philosopher and an eternal quest..." (BAKHTIN, 2002, pp.97-98).

... "Bobok" - one of Dostoevsky's tales with the shortest storyline - is almost a microcosm of his entire work. Many, and indeed the most important, ideas, themes and images of his work ... appear here in an

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¹⁵ Paraphrase of two letters of the apostle Paul "To the Philippians" (chap. 3, verse 20) and "To the Colossians" (chap. 3, verses 1-3). Cf.: "We, however, are citizens of heaven. It is from there that we anxiously await the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," "Therefore, since you have been raised with Christ, seek the things from on high, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God," "Aspire to things above and not things on earth," "You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

extremely acute and manifest form: the idea that "everything is permitted," if god and the immortality of the soul do not exist ... is linked with this the unrepentant confession... (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.162).

6 Philosopher vs Philologist

This is linked to the extremely interesting question about Bakhtin's general scientific methodology, which was partly dealt with in the book on Dostoevsky, that is, how he represents himself in it – as a philologist or philosopher... ¹⁶ The scientist's notes, which precede the re-edition of the book, reveal the philosopher preferentially, which is also corroborated by the votes (demands) on the part of the publisher and its reviewers on the elimination of the corresponding non-Marxist terminology and in particular the concepts preferred by Bakhtin: intention, intentional (BAKHTIN, 2002, pp.480-483). According to the observations of S. G. Bocharov, "... these draft texts (and above all 'The Observations of 1961') contain this *philosophical* commentary on the theory of the polyphonic novel, which is not openly revealed in the book itself," "The withdrawal of the terms 'intention' and 'intentional' was undoubtedly a sacrifice on the part of the author and represented a significant loss to the unity of the *philosophical language* of the book, since these terms were among those central and cardinal to corroborate and strengthen that unity"; "... however in the next edition, the 'third', ... that term ... returns to it little by little in two places; the purpose of this ... was to point out its presence in the philosophical language of the author..., and later in another case." (BAKHTIN, 2002, pp.486-492).

7 The Dostoevsky's Veiled Laughter

In the preliminary materials for the re-edition of the book, is remarkable the Bakhtin's fervor for the *carnival* ideas, which he transfers to Dostoevsky's poetics, in fact changing the entire research methodology, for example:

The *reduction* of laughter in Dostoevsky's work, The problem of laughter in Dostoevsky's work; (BAKHTIN, 1996, p.375)

¹⁶ Cf: BOCHAROV, 2006; BONIETSKAIA, 2016.

We think that our conception allows us to feel more correctly that line of the artistic prose tradition, which Dostoevsky performs. It is possible to speak of two lines: an *epic* line and a *dialogic* line. (...) The dialogical line took for that and absorbed the *grotesque-carnival* line. In the dialogical line matured the future elements of polyphony; (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.328)

Where does carnivalization in literature come from? Carnival is a special kind of spectacle form, a show without a limelight, in which everyone participates... The arena is the square (and the streets nearby); Carnival is inserted in many European languages, in the background of gesticulation, in the imaginative thinking of the European people; The material and bodily symbols, connected with the fecundity of the earth and the body. The indecencies of carnival. (...) The carnival reversal of everything, crisis and rebirth; (BAKHTIN, 2002, pp.340-343)

The carnival force of Míchkin..., In the center of the novel ("The Idiot" - V. N.) is the image of Prince Míchkin in his carnivalesque ambivalence...: In the novel "The Demons," the whole life in which the demons act is represented as carnivalized hell... (BAKHTIN, 2002, pp.346-347)

In its essence, the entire fourth chapter of Bakhtin's renewed book, the most expressive for its literary historicism, is dedicated to the final foundation regarding the artistic loan of the genre, operated in Dostoevsky's work, from the ancient, medieval and later literatures through the realization of carnival images and procedures. If we compare the conceptual apparatus of the book, we see that in the first edition the term *carnival* and the words derived from it do not actually appear, while in the second edition this concept, varying endlessly, is found ten times...¹⁷ Correspondingly, in "Problems of Dostoevsky's work" Rabelais' name is not mentioned at all (!), but in "Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics" he appears very actively...¹⁸

8 "The Code of Rabelais" vs. "the Code of Dostoevsky"

In other words, after the change from the "Dostoevsky code" (in the 1920s) to the "Rabelais code" (in the 1930s-1950s), Bakhtin tends to see, if not a literal influence of the French author on the Russian classic, in any case a global action of elements from the ancient literary tradition and Western Europe in his works. It is possible to think that he is not a great humanist, who wrote about the tragic disagreements of the soul, "offended

¹⁷ Cf.: Terminological index (BAKHTIN, 1994, p.594); Terminological index (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.766; BAKHTIN, 2002, pp.747-749).

¹⁸ Cf. also Wellek, 1980.

and humiliated," but about the feeric festive element embodied in his works... Metaphorically Bakhtin is probably right, but in methodological terms it is unlikely that his images satisfy a rigid literary comparativism.

In this regard, let's take up two replicas produced by respected readers of Bakhtin's books:

It's hard to criticize Bakhtin if you consider the terrible conditions of his biography, but you do it with a dignified and "academic" tone. There is no intention to reproach him for a universalism that has a totally shapeless character: this fervor "is discovered," to you it is also well known, but it would certainly be horrible... if in following Bakhtin, his defenders would reveal "the popular comic creation" in all periods of world literature" (V. M. Jirmúnski for V. B. Chklóvski 6.IX.1970); (JIRMUNSKI, EIKHENBAUM, 1988, p.321)

In the scientific relationship, Tiniánov in a certain sense overcame Bakhtin: concrete ideas are often false and preconceived concepts ..." (I. M. Lotman to B. F. Egorov. 31.VII.1984). (LOTMAN, 1997, p.331).

9 From Metaphysics to Metalinguistics

We are obligated to write in detail about a brilliant and undoubtedly innovative trace of the second edition of Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky: the theory of metalinguistics. ¹⁹ In this case, let us also pay attention to two circumstances connected with this conceptual idea of the scientist.

First of all, at the time of writing about 'metalinguistics', the preparatory materials for the re-edition of the book on Dostoevsky had not yet been published: "Additions and changes in *Dostoevsky*." In this connection, there is the possibility of adding *all* of Bakhtin's statements (especially those that framed his book) on the new discipline of the humanities, for example:

We talk about the word and not about the language, because we have in mind the concrete and varied life of the word in its integrity and not the language as an object of linguistics, obtained through the abstraction of some essential aspects of the concrete living word. These aspects are studied by the *philosophy of language and by metalinguistic disciplines*. Our following analyses have, in their foundation, a *metalinguistic*

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¹⁹ Vassiliev, 1992 (the article was submitted for publication on 21.12.90); Vassiliev, 2013b.

character, which certainly does not exclude their closer connection with linguistics.

From the point of view of a closely linguistic approach, it is impossible to see essential and basic differences between the monological and polyphonic uses of the word in the novel (generally in artistic prose). Dialogical relations (also including the dialogic relations of the speaker with his word) are the object of *metalinguistics*. The bivocal words. We will characterize here a set of phenomena that has long attracted the attention of literary theorists who deal with stylistic issues (and also linguists, some, for example, from *Vossler's* school). From our point of view, the *Vosslerians* were concerned not so much with strictly linguistic problems as with *metalinguistics*, that is, they studied phenomena not in the system of language, but in the forms of its living functioning in different fields of culture (predominantly artistic). These phenomena, when studied in their essence, that is, as phenomena of a dialogical nature, leave the limits of strict linguistics, that is, they are *metalinguistics* (BAKHTIN, 2002, pp.355-356)

What's new here is that Bakhtin relates the origin of the source of "metalinguistics" to the works of the German philologist K. Vossler's school (1872-1949), whose works are not mentioned in either of the two editions of the book!, and at the same time positions the "metalinguistic disciplines" as something isolated from the "philosophy of language" itself, which before, for example in V.N. Voloshinov's book *Marxism and philosophy of language* (1929), written in close contact with Bakhtin, did not separate.²⁰ However, Vossler's idea was also reflected in Bakhtin's book on Rabelais.²¹ From this it is possible to conclude that, in his main monographic researches, Bakhtin adapted the idea of Vossler, which served as an impulse for his own reflections.

Secondly, the term *metalinguistics* itself arouses interest, since it appears for the first time in Bakhtin in the work "The Problem of Text in Linguistics, Philology and Other Human Sciences" (1959-1961), that is, in the period immediately before the re-writing of the book on Dostoevsky, where the general outlines of the new science will be pointed out. Some time ago we had proposed that this term was borrowed by the scientist of the works of the American structuralists,²² but resigned and transferred in an original way to a concrete philological field: applied to the analysis of the artistic-verbal forms. Later, at the presentation of the XIV Bakhtin International Conference, the Finnish researcher M. Lähteenmmäki (2011) tried to substantiate the American status of the term, as L. A.

²⁰ Cf. also: Vassiliev, 1998; Alpatov, 2005.

²¹ Cf., in particular: Alpatov, 2005, p.30; Popova, 2008.

²² Cf., for example: Hemp, 1964, pp.109-110.

Gogotichvili did before in his comments on Bakhtin's work "The Problem of the Text...."

During the oral discussion of M. Lähteenmmäki's presentation (D. V. Bosnak, N. L. Vassíliev), reflections on the ancient philosophical origins of the term metalinguistics resonated in analogy with the *physical - metaphysical* dichotomy.

His hypothesis is imposed, since Bakhtin's scientific mentality is grounded in ancient Greek-Roman philosophical thought.

Lähteenmmäki came to a more radical conclusion regarding a solid, though indirect, influence of the work of American structuralists on Bakhtin's metalinguistic ideas.

However, we may disagree with this, because Bakhtin's ideas about the "the other's word" are indissolubly linked to the work of the scientist produced in the 1920s and in part of his contemporaries (L. P. Iakubinski, V. V. Vinogradov etc.).

To rexample, in part III of the article "The Problem of Content, Material and Form in Verbal Artistic Creation" (1924), devoted to the delimitation of strong linguistic and extralinguistic (aesthetic) substances in literary discourse, he comes very close to the term mentioned:

The *metaphysics* of the word... very often takes place in the poetic research of the poets themselves (among us V. Ivanov, A. Bieli, K. Balmont): the poet takes the already aesthetized word, but thinks of the aesthetic aspect as belonging to the essence of the word itself and thus justifies its mythical or *metaphysical* greatness (BAKHTIN, 2003, p.299)

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²³ Cf.: Bakhtin, 1997, pp.641-642. Cf. also: Alpatov, 2005, pp.341-342; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metalinguistics.

²⁴ Cf.: "In the 1st century B.C. the Greek scientist Andronicus de Rhodes decided to put in order ... that is, to correct and rewrite again the manuscripts of Aristotle. In his edition, Andronicus, following a group of compositions related to physics (ta physika), placed a group of treatises, in which Aristotle examined questions about the problems of existence and knowledge. Andronicus collected these works under the name "What [goes] beyond physics" ("ta meta ta physika"). Over time, this term has come to mean all philosophical studies in general..." (ASMUS, 1976, p.5). This also gives rise to Bakhtin's "internal form" of understanding of the term metalinguistics: "what is beyond the limits of the attention of linguistics."

²⁵ Cf., for example, the concept of M. Scheler "metassociology," whose works are cited by Bakhtin in "Проблемах творчества Достоевского" [Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation] (vol. 2. p.60, 469 – comments).

²⁶ Lähteenmäki Mika. Contextualising Baxtin's Linguistic Ideas: The Case of Metalinguistics // Linguistic Historiography. Vol. 39. № 2/3 (2012). pp. 305–326.

²⁷ Cf. also: Бахтин M.M. Собрание сочинений [Bakhtin M. M. Collected works]. vol. 2. pp.465–466 (S. G. Bocharov's comments).

In the book *Marxism and Philosophy of Language*, his third part analyses the problem of the "interrelationship between the author's discourses and those of others." (VOLOSHINOV, 1995, pp.326-380).

10 A Window to the "Big Time"

From the 1940s onwards, the concept of "great time" gradually crystallized into Bakhtin's work and later became central to his worldview. (VASSILIEV, 2017). In his book on Dostoevsky (1963), these reflections appear only as an echo, in passing, in relation to the dialogue and the polyphony of opinions in the global context of the fixation of intellectual history in the "noosphere":

Some researchers (Viach. Ivanov, V. Komarovich) apply the ancient (Aristotelian) term "catharsis" (purification) to Dostoevsky's works. If we understand this term in a very broad sense, we can agree with this (without catharsis in a broad sense there is no art in general). However, tragic catharsis (in the Aristotelian sense) is not applicable to Dostoevsky. The catharsis, which closes Dostoevsky's novels, could, of course, be inadequate and somewhat rationalistic - let us express it this way: nothing conclusive has yet happened in the world, the last word in the world and about the world has not yet been said, the world is open and free, everything is yet to come and will always be to come (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.187)

However, in the interview with the Polish journalist Z. Podgujevitsu (1971), dedicated to his own evaluation and other interpretations of Dostoevsky's work, Bakhtin already expresses himself more categorically about this:

Nowadays, Dostoevsky is that high point achieved in the field of the dialogical understanding of human thought and human search. Certainly, this does not mean to devalue all the previous links. Socrates remains Socrates. *In general terms I have this term - great time*. Thus, nothing ever loses its importance in great time. In this, they remain with equal rights Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Socrates, as well as all the ancient writer-thinkers. *In that great time is also Dostoevsky*. In that sense, I consider that nothing dies, but everything is renewed (BAKHTIN, 2002, p.461)

11 From "Creation" to "Dostoevsky's Poetics"

Regarding the change of the name of the second edition of the book on Dostoevsky (*Problems of Creation/Problems of Poetics*), which has been deformed in a funny but humanly natural way in the summary of the corresponding volume of "Bakhtin's Collected Works," we will note three. In the first place, the term *poetics* is actively used by the scientist still in the article "The Problem of Content, Material and Form...," for example: "This work is an attempt at a methodological analysis of the concepts and fundamental problems of *poetics* on the basis of general systematic aesthetics," "Some contemporary Russian works *in poetics* served as a starting point for our research, whose fundamental theses we subjected to a critical analysis..." (BAKHTIN, 2003, p.265)

Secondly, in Bakhtin's view, this term is conceptually already that of *creation* [tvórchestvo], about which the researcher wrote in his notes "Dostoevsky, 1961":

Dostoevsky's poetics (in the introduction as a goal of an inaugural research).

A textologically immense work published in drafts, written in four volumes, the study of the creative history of individual works.

Finally, a study paper from Dostoevsky's time. Dostoevsky's work never left the agenda of Soviet literary theory.

The tasks of poetics renounced the previous plan in the face of the very important objectives of the historical study of Dostoevsky's time... (BAKHTIN, 1996, p.374).²⁸

In this way, Bakhtin somewhat isolates himself from the external circumstances of studying Dostoevsky's *biography* and *work*, focusing his attention on the writer's self-expression technology.

In the third place, in the preface to the first edition of the book, Bakhtin observes:

Within the limits of this book, the theoretical problems themselves were only presented. It is true that we have tried to point out a solution for them, but despite that, we do not feel entitled to name our book otherwise than as *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation* (BAKHTIN, 2000, p.7)

In this regard, the scientist cites L. P. Grossman's book *Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Moscow, 1925) (BAKHTIN, 2000, pp.20-24, 38-39, 73-74, 145-146 and others) with

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²⁸ Cf. Bakhtin (2003). For reference, see footnote 3. pp.36-40.

sympathy and repeatedly, which at that time aroused an unwanted closeness, a feeling of duplication of themes.

12 "Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation" and "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics": Continuity or Confrontation?

For the first time, the two editions of Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky (1929, 1963) were released under the same cover by D. A. Iunov in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the day of the scientist's birth, with the indexes of names and terms, (BAKHTIN, 1994) which allows detailed monitoring of the evolution of the researcher's metalanguage, textual parallels, variations, extrapolations, decreases and additions.

A productive and partly provocative question is: which of the two essays in Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky is closest to the methodology of the "Bakhtin's Circle," taken as a unitary creative body, producer of a set of expressive monographs in the human sciences in the late 1920s?

Let us Draw the Conclusions

It is possible to discuss what is most important in science: the facts (positivism) or the original ideas and hypotheses (heuristics), although they are difficult to prove. In Bakhtin's books on Dostoevsky, innovative thoughts are invigorated with: historical and literary non-trivial parallels, artistic facts, an unusual intellectuality, an erudition, a precise composition and a logical exposition, an academic stylistic, based on different scientific "voices" (ancient, Christian, Western European, pre-revolutionary, Soviet). The scientist's word about the writer remained in the Great Time, but the *dialogue* about Dostoevsky and the interpretations of his work continue...

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Received April 25,2020 Accepted Jan. 31,2021