

DIALOGISM IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS

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[...] according to Bakhtin, [...] the dialogue can be understood as mode that denotes how language functions as well as point of view that establishes an object of study. (BRAIT; MAGALHÃES, 2014).

Dialogism: theory and (in) practice, organized by Beth Brait and Anderson Salvaterra Magalhães¹, presents research work on discourse, within the Bakhtinian framework. In his foreword, Carlos Alberto Faraco highlights its importance and writes about Beth Brait's contribution to the discussion of the Bakhtin Circle ideas in several moments in Brazil. Furthermore, he points out her most recent research on the verbal-visual utterance within a dialogic perspective². Anderson Salvaterra Magalhães, advised by Brait on his doctorate, has a recognized reputation along the same line of thought.

Taken from the introductory text by Brait and Magalhães, the words in the epigraph define the adopted theory and expose the methodology that guides the chapters. By recognizing the dialogic nature of language, the researcher her/himself takes on the role of interlocutor in relation to her/his object of study. Thus, as the organizers remind us, the object of study is not only characterized as cognoscible but also as cognoscitive. There lies the challenge of the sixteen chapters that compose the book: the production of knowledge as a result of theoretically qualified interlocution.

The coherence and unity of the book are revealed in the titles of the parts into which it is organized. All of them start with the word "dialogism" and are paramount to specific questioning, central in the Bakhtin Circle: dialogism in knowledge production, dialogism in life and dialogism in art. Following this organization, in the first part – Dialogism: Brazilian knowledge production –, we can find three chapters that deal with genre of discourse and another one dealing with translation. In the last one, Sheila Vieira de Camargo Grillo and Ekaterina Vólkova América, who study the works of the Bakhtin Circle, and who have translated three of them³ directly from Russian to

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¹ Review of BRAIT, B.; MAGALHÃES, A. S. (Orgs.) **Dialogism: theory and (in) practice**. São Paulo: Terracota, 2014. (ADD Series). 322p.

² Brait (2013) stands out, the importance of which can also be seen in the reviewed book herein.

³ Specifically: Medviédev (2012), Bakhtin (2013); Volochinov ([20--]).

Portuguese, expose the relationship of that knowledge when examining the experience of translating within the Bakhtinian concept of utterance. In the analysed case, it is transmitted and received in the scientific sphere. According to the authors, the translated utterance presupposes conceptual and stylistic tension between being faithful to the original Russian text and its reception in Portuguese; the relationship to other texts, which are not directly translated from Russian and are available in Portuguese; and, the role of socio-historical and intellectual context in which the original Russian text was produced. Thus, the chapter makes it possible to compose a dialogic approach of the translated work, besides deepening the theoretical reflection, since it discusses the translation of key-terms and places them within the intellectual context of the era in which they were produced.

In one of the three already mentioned chapters, that considers the concept of discursive genre, Adail Sobral resumes his previous reflections and reinforces a broad and detailed proposal that allows the concept to be examined. Before rendering this result, he is concerned with the distinction between discursive and textual genres, and, for that matter, develops the concepts of discourse and text. Discourse is characterized as the articulation between text-defining materiality and the enunciation situation, understood as socio-historical positions. Sobral points out the “excessive emphasis” of the formal aspect of genre, reminding us that the dialogic approach to this concept presupposes an ideological view of the world.

A similar concern about the theoretical and methodological procedures while examining the discursive genres can be found in the chapter by Anselmo Pereira de Lima who, having this objective in mind, tries to examine a very original *corpus*, which required audio-visual records: educational events that took place in a professional education center with a teacher, several students and an assistant. The dynamics of their interaction, the repetition and recreation of the activities are the core of the performed analysis. In the theoretical research on which his study is based, Lima, as well as Sobral, feels the need to distinguish text and discourse. Based on L. S. Vygotsky, Lima defines discourse as “process”, whose “product” is the text. According to this understanding, analysing discourse demands the observation of “the most important aspects that constitute the history of its development”. It is an explanatory analysis of the genesis of the phenomenon, and not a description of its manifestation. Vygotsky’s proposal that “[...] it is only in [development] movement that a body shows what it is” (VYGOTSKY apud LIMA, 2014, p.39) establishes the perspective for Lima’s discursive genre analysis.

Rodolfo Vianna’s study also elects, as its main focus, the concept of discursive genre to analyse the informative journalistic genre. Since he is interested in the macro-characteristics that are relatively stable in the genre, and not in its details and variable elements, Vianna organizes his reflection around the polarization between informative and opinionated journalistic genre. Along this path, and taking into consideration the constitutional history and transformations of the journalistic sphere, he analyses how

the genre is composed, having as main reference the *Style Guide*⁴ of the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*. Through the analysed *corpus*, Vianna registers the importance of the objectivity effect, the ideological positioning of the communication vehicle and the functioning of the activity sphere in the construction of the informative journalistic genre. All of the above configure a relative objectivity criterion.

The second part of the book – Dialogism in life – comprises seven chapters dedicated to several objects. The reflection of Anderson Salvaterra Magalhães, whose aims are related to the objectification process in journalism and with the current challenges of the press, allows for a productive interlocution with Vianna’s chapter. Instead of polarizing, Magalhães prefers to examine the articulation of the objectification and subjectification processes in the journalistic activity. The development of the analyses of the *corpus*, laureate articles from the Rio de Janeiro newspaper *O Dia*, and the conclusions are guided by the inclusion of an ethical component. Along the lines of Bakhtinian, Magalhães sees objectification as an inter-subjective exercise, ruled by ethical responsibility.

The study made by Beth Brait and Bruna Lopes-Dugnani examines street language. It analyses the manifestations of June 2013 in Brazil – a moment of special interlocution, which could not be left outside the Bakhtinian perspective – with the objective of understanding the discourses expressing claims, as well as the subjects who enunciate them and their forms of enunciation. Based mainly on the concept of verbo-visual utterance, previously developed by Brait, the analysis focuses mainly on two types of utterance, the poster and the mask, weapon and shield, which comprise the game of telling, at the same time, serious and playful. The reflection outlines the crowd, finding “versions of the same”, collective voices, and discourse reiterations. Thus, it figures out the “genesis of discourse”, by incorporating consolidated discourses from the workplace, of violence, and even of nationalism. The article also presents another perspective, and by looking closely at the participants, it is able to identify, among the collective, individual traits, mainly in the handwriting and in the gestures.

Still focusing on verbo-visual utterances, Miriam Bauab Puzzo selects three covers of *Veja Magazine* that feature ex-president Lula, in different historical moments. She analyses them admirably, characterizing the journalistic, as well as historical interlocution being promoted; describing its architectural form, constituted in the articulation of verbal and visual language; and examining its evaluative tone that changes according to the historical moment.

Based on Bakhtinian thought and placed in a theoretical dialogue with rhetoric and new rhetoric, Maria Helena Cruz Pistori’s chapter examines the repercussion of a crime that occurred in 1997 and its trial in the pages of the newspapers *Folha de São Paulo* and *Correio Brasiliense*. In the study of this object, which aims at capturing the relationship between legal and journalistic discourses, the values, specificities and coercions of these spheres are revealed. The characterizations are not timeless; they

⁴ Original title in Portuguese: Manual de redação.

do not represent the legal and journalistic sphere of any period as they deal with the contemporary press and legal system. The perspicacious *corpus* analysis leads to the following conclusion: “[...] independence and autonomy of the legal system, next to freedom of speech for the press [...] are not democratic contradictory values, but they are mutually open to influence at different levels in our liberal market economy.”

In an original proposal, Vinícius Nascimento turns to dialogism to assess his contribution to the formation of translators/interpreters of sign language and Portuguese. With this aim, he explores pertinent concepts of Bakhtinian framework to set ground for the interlocution between translators/interpreters and deaf people, being able to extract a proposal for the education of these professionals.

Still in the second part of the book, two chapters examine textbooks. Cláudia Garcia Cavalcante and Regina Braz Rocha write about *Text Practice for Students*⁵ by C. A. Faraco and C. Tezza, and *Writing Classes*⁶ by B. Brait, J. L. C. A. Negrini, and N. R. P. Lourenço, respectively. The first article focuses on the interaction between author and student/reader promoted by the textbook and how it guides activities in the classroom. The analyses, mainly in the Text Practice section, identify the author’s enunciative standpoints and those given to students/readers, as well as qualify the relationship established between them. The second article approaches grammar and verbo-visual literacy, and makes us wonder: “What contributions can grammar teaching offer to develop verbo-visual literacy to high-school students?”. The article scrutinizes the selected textbook and proves how it concretely answers this question by examining the proposed activities that deal with verbo-visual utterances.

In the third and last part of the book – Dialogism in art –, literature could not be left out, but there are chapters that explore an art exhibit, *Jorge Amado and Universal*⁷, and advertisement texts of a theater play. Adriana Pucci Penteado de Faria e Silva presents a sensitive analysis of the art exhibit, suitable to the artistic object, and is meritorious in showing how to approach a multiple object, founded on a theory which was originally conceived to analyse verbal texts. Familiar with Jorge Amado’s work, the researcher, without losing her rigor, seems to walk through the exhibit, listening to and making it possible to hear the author’s voice, who is sometimes the narrator, and that of the characters, making it possible to see what she sees. She is also conducted by the curator’s voice, his enunciations, which according to the analysis, reflect and refract Amado’s poetics.

Jean Carlos Gonçalves brings theater to the third part of the book. In a broad reflection about the theater, which takes into account not only the spectacle, but also the written play, construction and scenic reception phases, rehearsals, talks with the public, specialized reviews, etc., Gonçalves examines two selected verbo-visual utterances that

⁵ Original title in Portuguese: Prática de texto para estudantes.

⁶ Original title in Portuguese: Aulas de redação.

⁷ Original title in Portuguese: Jorge Amado e Universal.

advertise the spectacle *Black Circus*⁸. He analyses and contextualizes the spectacle, the company, and characterizes its marketing statute dialogically, its way of *invitation*, which echoes Picasso, the circus universe and theatrical symbols.

Elaine Hernandez de Souza brings us fables and makes a careful analysis, with an explicit methodology, of the differences found in *The Ant and the Grasshopper* by Aesop, La Fontaine, and Lobato; taking into account the illustrations, she also describes the non-converging relationship between the verbal text and the drawings. Souza thus considers fables verbo-visual utterances and characterizes the dialogical relationships established between the fables, between the linguistic and imagery materiality, between each fable and its socio-historical context, as well as between everyday life and art found in the texts.

The two last chapters look into *Barren Lives*⁹ and *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*¹⁰. Maria Celina Novaes Marinho places *Barren Lives* under dialogical focus and characterizes the articulation of voices, which builds the architecture of the text. Marinho recognizes the characters as “beings who speak, not only being spoken of by the author”. She signals identity groups who are defined in their struggle against each other, and examines the representation of the different voices, citation forms, appreciative tones, the relationship between the internal and external world. There we find precise theory, fine analysis and equilibrium between the two.

In the last chapter, Sandra Mara Moraes Lima wants to listen to the maternal voice, which echoes in *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*. She states that her objective is not to analyse the whole work, but she intends to “promote a reflection about language and man, his being/doing in the world”. Firstly, she looks for the role of the mother’s speech in the acquisition and construction of child language within Bakhtin’s theory, then, the author dedicates herself to the recognition, in Riobaldo’s words, of the resonance of the mother’s voice, a voice that he has always “revered”. Following this path, and accepting the proposition of the analogy that considers the work by Guimarães Rosa “a portrait of Brazil”, the chapter examines how this literary text refracts women’s role in society, as well as the role of mestizas in building the country’s identity.

Dialogism: theory and (in) practice is a broad and dense study that allows for the understanding of Bakhtin’s ideas, the promotion of their debate and development. As we tried to show, the book insists mainly on one or another concept, over which more is written, thus bringing light to its actuality and productivity. By showing the contribution of Bakhtin’s ideas operating on the present domains of discourse studies, the book guides the reader into recognizing the articulation of voices that presides and clarifies the most varied *corpora* analysed. Thus, theoretical contributions and analyses results, besides methodological questionings and educational applications, are assembled herein.

⁸ Original title in Portuguese: Circo Negro.

⁹ Original title in Portuguese: Vidas Secas.

¹⁰ Original title in Portuguese: Grande Sertão: Veredas.

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