

# DISCOURSES OF RESISTANCE: FROM PARATEXT TO TEXT, OR VICE VERSA?<sup>1</sup>

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- **ABSTRACT:** This research aims to discuss the strategies used in discourses of resistance that confront the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil from the 1960s to 1980s and whose effects are still present today. These discourses never cease to surface in different spheres through different genres. Among them we find the literary discourse, which mobilizes individual and collective memory through documents and/or personal accounts and is thus understood as one of the discourses that seek to unveil and make known the devastating consequences of the years of lead. Theoretically based on concepts offered by the dialogical perspective of discourse, *K.* (KUCINSKI, 2015) and *Os visitantes [The Visitors]* (KUCINSKI, 2016), written by journalist and writer Bernardo Kucinski, are analyzed as an articulated discourse sequence, insofar as the latter resumes the former, establishes a polemic interaction between them and makes it possible to find the values in tension that organize the whole sequence and design an outline of a discursive project and of the subject that utters it. For the purpose of this article, we underscore the dialogical relationship that is established between texts and paratexts, one of the strategies of the literary discourse of resistance that, through the establishment of voices, seeks answers to concealed events and to possible ways of making them present through language.
- **KEYWORDS:** Utterances of resistance. Paratext. Discourse stylistics. Heterodiscourse. Brazilian prose. Bernardo Kucinski.

## Necessary Remarks

What took place is indeed in the past, yet there is something that does not pass away, something that takes place but does not wholly recede into the past, a constantly returning present.

*Octavio Paz* (1985, p.289)

[T]hose really were implausible years.

*Julián Fuks* (2018, p.47)

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If we believe that these days are confusing and difficult, and find the voices that seem to disregard the harsh years of Brazilian dictatorship profoundly unfamiliar, we should turn to the discourses that were motivated by the Brazilian military dictatorship, which started in 1964 and lasted over two decades. Discourses related to it have emerged from different spheres and mobilized memory, through documents or personal accounts that gradually unveil and expose the devastating consequences of those lead years, whose effects are still present nowadays. There are still unburied dead bodies that were concealed by official discourse and the frail policies that aim to lay bare the intricate underground of military power and its supporters. A piece of evidence of this *history that never ends* is William Egan Colby's document, written on April 11, 1974, which was made known to Brazilians only recently, on May 10, 2018. Colby was the director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) at the time.

This official evidence unmask the brutal reality under the presidency of Ernesto Geisel (1974-1979). Although people were not misled about who the presidents of Brazil were during the military regime, Geisel's presidency was *deemed to be marked by political openness and the mitigation of the rigor of the regime*. Many history books and manuals continually treat this notion as a "fact." However, according to Colby's document, which comes to public light after 44 years it was written, not only was Geisel aware of the atrocities caused by the regime, which feared a democratic turn and sought to impede democracy through torture and extermination, but he also condoned what was occurring as he authorized the continuity of the adversary murdering policy.

It is in this vein that discourses about dictatorship still serve as a basis of resistance, declaring that "[w]hat took place is indeed in the past, yet there is something that does not pass away, something that takes place but does not wholly recede into the past, a constantly returning present" (PAZ, 1985, p.289). If, on the one hand, an official document, signed by an international intelligence authority, is legitimate and powerful to change the records of Brazilian history, on the other hand, other unofficial discourses, not supported by unequivocal evidence, find ways to present historical versions of this recent military dictatorship that are lost in the profound and latent nuances of official discourse.

Among these discourses, which are constituted by different genres and circulate in different spheres, literary discourse will be used here as the one that maintains "the interconnection and interdependence of various areas of culture" (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p. 2) and "is revealed primarily in the differentiated unity of the culture of the epoch in which it was created" (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p.5). This means that, through the literary discourse of resistance, some specific features of Brazilian culture are at play, in tension, at two different moments, which are brought together in the threshold, a social and affective time-space border. That is, they are dimensions under the rule of dictatorship that are affected by it and are confronted with documents and current discourses that face the painful past. In addition, because genres, whether artistic or not, "accumulate forms of seeing and interpreting particular aspects of the world" (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p.5), the utterance of resistance is the concrete utterance that supports and materializes it,

and includes the object that prompts it (in this case, the fatal, deceptive and improbable delusions of dictatorship).

We should thus discuss at least two poles in intersection and tense interaction: on the one hand, the need to retrieve and reconstruct the events that need to be talked about, written about, described and analyzed in order for them to be known, recognized, divulged and, if possible, understood in the complexity of their many facets. This process occurs through the memory of a social, historical and discursive subject and may be supported by or based on documents or personal accounts of other enunciated memories. On the other hand, as a consequence of this vital, historical and ethical necessity, language has to be mobilized so as to retrieve the painful facts, the enunciative-discursive moment that unchangeably points to the near impossibility of discussing them, giving them existence through words.

These are the reasons which define the specific features of the genre that appropriates the *prose of resistance*. It can sway between tentative documental accounts and aestheticization, the fictionalization of a past that reflects and refracts the present, the now. It also maintains and permanently places the subject at the center of a battle with language, words, and genres. Given this powerful contingency, in literary discourse of resistance, language is thematized in different ways, exposing the enunciator's (and the discourse's, for that matter) (in)ability to mention the past that "does not wholly recede into the past" (PAZ, 1985, p.289) and is marked by sequelae, vestiges. Besides, at times guilt and discursive reluctance is experienced by the survivors, who take on the responsibility for enunciating the past, trying to bring to the present the vanished dead and the horrors of the regime. From this perspective, the consolidation of the genre occurs in the threshold, the border between biography, autobiography, autofiction, autodiscourse and the collective ethics of retrieving the unbearable experiences undergone so that the resistance that language offers is also exposed. The enunciator's struggles and strategies to recapture the past – her/his arduous and almost impossible task to bring the past to the present – makes her/him assume the condition of a historical, social, cultural and collective being. In fact, with no alibi in existence, s/he is a voice among many other voices that are mobilized by the discourses that intersect in the utterance.

The *stylistics of the novel*, the *stylistics of literary prose* or *sociological stylistics* is one of the keys to ground a dialogical approach to this complex *literary discourse of resistance*. It is comprised of an ethical-aesthetic reflection that Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) promoted and developed in nearly his whole oeuvre, and especially in *Discourse in the Novel* (BAKHTIN, 1981), probably written between 1934 and 1935. This essay offers a reflection on the discursive forms of prose so as to facilitate the recognition, in the Brazilian literary discourses of resistance, of strategies used by the one who resists and allows her/his utterances to be populated by multiple voices, whether from the past or the present, harmonious or dissonant. These voices are, thus, fundamental to construe time, space and the subjects that live(d) therein.

*Discourse in the Novel* is an essay that approaches the novel in an unusual way. Especially, it shows that the novel brings into discourse, which is artistically created,

not only the social dialogue of languages, heteroglossia (or heterodiscourse, according to the latest Brazilian translation),<sup>2</sup> but also the clash between centripetal forces and centrifugal forces. Centripetal forces are oriented towards verbal-ideological centralization and the single unity/identity of language. Centrifugal forces, on the other hand, are constituted by the otherness of multiple idioms/languages at a certain moment in history and produce verbal-ideological decentralization. As Bakhtin discusses the need for a sociological stylistics or a stylistics of discourse, which bears different viewpoints in constant tension and a set of values and ways to express them, the essay decisively fosters a reflection on contemporary discourses of resistance, voices and the axiological positionings that actualize them. Besides this essay's direct contribution to our study, other concepts play a fundamental role, namely, *utterance*, *concrete utterance*, *enunciation*, *authorship*, *text*, and *paratext*. They will be explicated and mobilized at the appropriate time in this article.

## Faces of a Discourse of Resistance

Based on the theoretical and methodological assumptions aforementioned, this paper discusses, through the dialogical perspective of discourse,<sup>3</sup> the results of a research that aims at the reading of contemporary Brazilian literature related to the military dictatorship in the years of 1960-1980.<sup>4</sup> Among many significant authors, whose works are identified as prose of resistance, we find B. Kucinski, a pen name of journalist Bernardo Kucinski. His fictional output has been an important contemporary literary discourse that resists and confronts what still bleeds, causes pain, repulsion, and even discursive reluctance to those who survived the terror and therefore feel they *have to enunciate*. The trilogy comprised of *K.* (KUCINSKI, 2015),<sup>5</sup> *Você vai voltar para mim e outros contos* [You Will Return to Me and Other Short Stories] (KUCINSKI, 2014) and *Os visitantes* [The Visitors] (KUCINSKI, 2016) is an interdependent discursive set. It is actualized by the specific theme of the years of lead and the form that allows institutional and individual voices to face and confront each other. Among these voices

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<sup>2</sup> The difference between heteroglossia, a well-known term that refers to the plurality of voices that constitute discourse, and heterodiscourse is that the latter aims to underscore the social discursive tone. In *Breve glossário de alguns conceitos-chave* [A Brief Index of some Key Concepts], Paulo Bezerra includes the etymology of the terms in Russian and states that according to Bakhtin's terminology, "it is a social heterodiscourse that translates the internal stratification of language and encompasses the diversity of every cultural voice in its historical and anthropological dimension" [...] (BEZERRA, 2015, p.247, our translation). [Citation in the original: "*trata-se de um heterodiscurso social que traduz a estratificação interna da língua e abrange a diversidade de todas as vozes culturais em sua dimensão histórico-antropológica*"].

<sup>3</sup> For more on it, see Brait (2006).

<sup>4</sup> This article is one of the products of the research project *Fundamentos e desdobramentos da perspectiva dialógica para a análise de discursos verbais e verbo visuais* [Fundamentals and development of the dialogical perspective for the analysis of verbal and verbo-visual discourses]. It is financially supported by PQ/CNPq (Proc. 303643/2014-5). Other research products are Brait (2015, 2016a; 2016b).

<sup>5</sup> TN. This is the only novel from the trilogy that has been translated into English. The full title in Portuguese is *K. Relato de uma busca* [*K – An Account of a Search*].

we find the voice of the subject-as-enunciator and the strategies used to make his presence varied and tense. In this sense, according to Bakhtin's concept of language, the three novels can be characterized as a *concrete utterance*.<sup>6</sup>

This trilogy, as a *concrete utterance*, in its temporary finishedness, makes it possible to observe the values in tension that organize the whole. It indicates the access to the discursive project of the subject who seeks in the past, through memory and language, answers to events that were concealed and people who "were made disappear."<sup>7</sup> It is characterized by resistance to official, effective and long-lasting discourse, for in it fiction, memory and resistance stem from painful facts and actualize an aesthetic-ideological dimension, a discursive web that is fundamental to reflect on a specific moment of Brazilian history. By evoking different voices, the literary discourse of resistance wants to turn into story and History. This tense relation requires that the resistance discourse point to the outside of the text, denouncing and exposing the events retrieved by memory and, simultaneously, the constant search for a linguistic-discursive material concreteness that features the double orientation of the genre. Among the many strategies used, we find the expression "were made disappear" throughout *K*. The linguistic substitution of "disappeared" for "were made disappear" unveils the clash between voices and two discourses in tension: the official discourse, which confers on the missing/disappeared people the status of active subjects of an action (to disappear), and the discourse of resistance, which linguistically exposes the status of passive subjects, i.e., the ones subtracted from existence who were subdued, being given no choice or right to defend themselves. The linguistic substitution uncovers another subject in this dreadful event in which "the people had disappeared without trace" (KUCINSKI, 2015, p.22). In the second chapter of *K*, titled *The Vortex*, the narrator states that

[...] a man got up, saying he'd come specially from Goiânia for the meeting. His two sons, one 20 and the other only 16, had both disappeared. This man stuttered, he seemed dazed. He was the first to use the expression: "they were disappeared" (KUCINSKI, 2015, p.21-22).

This is just one example of the countless devices used to resist the official discourse linguistically, discursively, literarily, and existentially. It is an attempt to unveil and showcase the perverse strategies of language, narration and explanation of "facts" as well as the undeniable brute force. This is not an easy task, as we can observe in Kucinski's trilogy.

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<sup>6</sup> The concept of concrete utterance, which involves the utterance and the enunciation process, is found throughout the oeuvre of Bakhtin and the Circle. We can also refer to two books that discuss it specifically: Souza (2002) and Brait & Melo (2010).

<sup>7</sup> TN. Kucinski uses the verb 'disappear' in the passive voice ("*foram desaparecidos*" – "were disappeared"), which is not commonly used in Brazilian Portuguese. Here it is used to refer to enforced disappearance. To convey this meaning, we will use "were made disappear" throughout the article although Sue Branford, who translated *K* into English, translated "*foram desaparecidos*" as "they were disappeared" (KUCINSKI, 2015, p. 22).

Genre is also fundamental to understand discourses of resistance. The close internal and thematic relationship between genre and reality is approached with authority by Pavel Medvedev,<sup>8</sup> a member of the Bakhtin Circle. According to him,

Each genre is only able to control certain definite aspects of reality. Each genre possesses definite principles of selection, definite forms for seeing and conceptualizing reality, and a definite scope and depth of penetration. [...]

Every [...] genre is a complex system of means and methods for the conscious control and finalization of reality. [...] It is the forms of the utterance [...] that play the most important role in consciousness and the comprehension of reality (MEDVEDEV; BAKHTIN, 1978, p. 131 and p. 133).

Medvedev helps us understand the characteristics of the discourse of resistance and the genre it embraces. The trilogy presents itself as a genre that is in an in-between place, a border, a threshold between testimony, biography, autobiography, and autofiction. The material used is pain, terror, shadows in the past and the present, including constitutively the difficulty in making itself *verb*. To *utter* means to be uttered in and by discourse, which, in this case, although individually rooted, is a metonymy of memories, pains, losses of other *selves* in the collectivity. To make this *generic* place exist and be concrete, there occurs a very original relationship between the first book of the trilogy, *K*, and the last one, *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*], among other meaningful elements. This specific relationship, which will be made explicit further on in the paper, led to a methodological decision in the sense that these two books will comprise the *corpus* of this study, knowing that this decision will not compromise the concrete utterance of resistance formed by the trilogy.

*K*. tells the story of the disappearance of Ana Rosa Kucinski Silva, a Chemistry professor at the University of São Paulo (USP) and the novelist's real sister, and her husband, Wilson Silva. Both were militants of the National Liberation Action, a revolutionary organization led by Carlos Marighela. Her father, Meir Kucinski, a Polish Jew immigrant who writes in Yiddish and dies in 1976, is the narrator of the novel. *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*], written five years after *K*. 's first edition, is a *post scriptum* of *K*., a type of a writer's nightmare, insofar as different characters, whose search and disappearance motivated the writing of *K*., knock at his door to complain about flaws, missing information, and inaccuracies in the narrative. The character-narrator, who plays the role of a writer, also complains a lot about the reception of the novel. This is what he says in the first episode, titled: *A velha com o número no braço* [*The Old Lady with the Number on her Arm*]:

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<sup>8</sup> TN. The English translation of the book *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* is signed by Medvedev and Bakhtin. The Brazilian Portuguese version is signed by Medvedev alone. This is the reason why the author refers only to Medvedev.

I was irritated when I answered the phone. Very irritated. I'd just finished reading the paper and, again, they made no reference to the novel, not even a little note in the corner of the page. The porter said, It's a lady called Regina. I had no recollection of any Regina. I asked him what she wanted. It's about a book, he answered. I thought: who knows, finally, a journalist wants to interview me. I told him to let her come. [...] Are you the writer of this book about a missing Chemistry professor? She did not wait for my answer and said, A powerful and well-written book, but there's a hideous mistake that needs correcting (KUCINSKI, 2016, p.11-12, our translation).<sup>9</sup>

Apparently *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*] is an account of complaints about the reception of *K.* made by this lady and the protagonists of each episode. It is possible to notice that the issue that motivates each new literary discourse of resistance is the complex discourse based on *creation* and *event* (story and history). As aforementioned, this aspect plays a fundamental role in the genre, somehow imposing a discursive ethics that the enunciator makes transparent in the *verbal act*, the *discursive event*. Situated between individuality and collectivity, the past and the present, events and fictionalized memories, the enunciator is still under the aegis of this discursive ethics, which does not cease with the published utterance. On the contrary, the published work makes it possible for the emergence of discursive voices to be established from its reception, which is the collective number of readers. As the author is part of this collectivity, he can revise, as the reader of his own work, details of his enunciation, which are relativized, made frail or contested by different *receivers*. It seems that this is exactly the motor of existence of this new enunciation, this new utterance, titled *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*], for it thematizes *events* and *creation* in *K.* and returns to it, as an annoying boomerang, to argue against details of the book. The enunciator, thus, restarts the play between history and fiction and mobilizes characters from the implied flesh-and-bone readers.

The writer's return to one of his works to thematize it, explain it, and justify it is not exactly new. It has been observed in literary tradition. In *Postscript to the Name of the Rose*, for example, Italian writer medievalist Umberto Eco proposes to explain the genesis and the development of the 1984 bestseller. In the first topic, *The Title and the Meaning*, he states that

Since the publication of *The Name of the Rose* I have received a number of letters from readers who want to know the meaning of the final Latin

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<sup>9</sup> TN. I will provide the English translation of a quotation when the work is not originally written in English or when there is no published English version of the work. In the original: "Atendi o interfone irritado. Muito irritado. Acabara de ler o jornal e, de novo, não havia referência alguma à novela, sequer uma notinha no canto da página. O porteiro disse: É uma senhora chamada Regina. Eu não me lembrava de nenhuma Regina. Perguntei-lhe o que ela queria. Diz que é sobre um livro, respondeu. Pensei: quem sabe, finalmente, uma jornalista querendo me entrevistar. E mandei subir. [...] O senhor é o escritor deste livro sobre a professora de química que desapareceu? Sem esperar minha resposta, continuou: Um livro forte e bem escrito, mas tem um erro muito feio que o senhor escritor precisa corrigir."



hexameter and why this hexameter inspired the book's title. I answer that the verse is from *De contemptu mundi* by Bernard of Morlay, a twelfth-century Benedictine, whose poem is a variation on the *ubi sunt* theme (most familiar in Villon's later *Mais où sont les neiges d'antan*). But to the usual topos (the great of yesteryear, the once-famous cities, the lovely princesses: everything disappears into the void), Bernard adds that all these departed things leave (only, or at least) pure names behind them. I remember that Abelard used the example of the sentence *Nulla rosa est* to demonstrate how language can speak of both the nonexistent and the destroyed. And having said this, I leave the reader to arrive at his own conclusions (ECO, 2014, p.437).

Evidently, Eco did not choose this passage to begin his *Postscript* by chance.<sup>10</sup> In order to answer a reader's objective question, he discusses some issues that are relevant in the works that we analyze in this paper. On the one hand, there is the fact that readers, through letters (or emails, book reviews, interviews, among others), address the writer about the published work so he can not only give them general or detailed information on it, but also satisfy their curiosity and respond to their inquiries. From the readers' point of view, only the writer can answer, clarify and explain. Due to the thematic and discursive power of *K.*, this may have happened to Bernardo Kucinski after its publication. Besides, the discussion in Eco's work about the hexameter that inspired the title of the book, however, points to two constitutive and aggravating aspects of *K.* and *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*]. They are thus uttered by Eco: "all these departed things leave (only, or at least) pure names behind them. [...] language can speak of both the nonexistent and the destroyed." He clearly mentions history and fictional stories, fiction and reality, being constituted by and alternating between writer and reader. In this vein, Eco does not simply explain the title; he warns the reader to the fact that, despite being a researcher and a medievalist, his work is in the border between *event* and *creation*. *Postscript's* next topics, namely, Telling the Process, Who Speaks?, Constructing the Reader, among others, follow Eco's well-educated and didactic rhythm and satisfy readers' curiosities about the "ingredients" used in *The Name of the Rose* and literary discourse in general.

*Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*], in its turn, is by no means a didactic text that aims to explain *K.*, its genesis, and creation process logically and rationally. It is a fictional discourse that (re)visits *K.* and enters into a polemic dialogue with it. The strategy used to create an enunciator who is also a writer and characters who are also writers and readers allows the narrative to retrieve characters, questions, information and, especially, the discursive ethics of the writer and the constitutive forgetfulness of memory, discourse, enunciation. This is actually a form of (re)writing what has been

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<sup>10</sup> The only unforeseen coincidence, which somehow makes one uncomfortable, is the word *rosa* [rose] as it is a proper name in Kucinsk and, from the viewpoint of language discussion, common and strategic in Eco.



written, enunciated, through the variegated voices of enunciatees who are ultimately a time dimension that transforms the author-as-creator into a reader of his own writing. It also throws him into a whirlwind of the social, cultural, historical heterodiscourse that he himself mobilized. As a *continuation* of the prior discourse, this new literary discourse of resistance takes the role of challenging what has already been uttered and points to the enunciator's doubts, unfinishedness and gaps regarding *facts, events, utterances* that deeply annoy the *visitors*.

As this alter-discourse titled *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*] exposes the misinformation of prior utterances, it presents itself as the *other* in relation to *K.* and showcases the language traps that especially undermine the discourse that struggles between individual and collective memory, individual and collective forgetfulness (is there any other possibility in the world of language?) At this point we must admit that both Eco and Kucinski thematize the process of creation, their literary output, and reception. Similar to what happens to the material used by the literary discourse of resistance, this material also struggles with the unfinished finishedness. Far from being a didactic genre, Kucinski's utterance entails a movement of triangulated listening between writer, work and reader, and thus establishes a dialogue, a polemic interaction between the literary works. Once again discourse displays, from a different angle, the power and significance of the language that "can speak of both the nonexistent and the destroyed" (ECO, 2014, p.437).

Due to the singular relationship between *K.* and *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*], the concrete utterance that characterizes the discourse of resistance is here comprised of these two novels and the author's paratexts. The concrete utterance, as conceived of by the members of the Bakhtin Circle, includes what in other approaches is called a paratext, viz., a text adjacent to the main text, such as the title, subtitles, a dedication, epigraphs, a preface, an afterword, among others. According to several authors, paratexts carve out the path for the reader to enter into the intricacies of the main text. Based on what we have discussed so far about the *corpus* of this study, *K.* and *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*] are constituted as otherness, one in relation to the identity of the other. The question to be posed from now on is how to distinguish – if that is at all possible in this case – between the main text and the paratexts. In a study that understands text and paratext as strategies of the discourse of resistance, the answer to the question must take into consideration some theoretical aspects so that we can analyze the paratexts and their function in the concrete utterance (*K.* and *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*]).

In theoretical terms, Gerald Genette (1997) was not the only one who approached this issue, for many other scholars have turned their attention to the importance of different paratexts chosen and/or used by writers (author's paratexts) as well as the ones that are included by the editor in the publication process (editor's paratexts). In Sabiá's (2005, p.9) study on the paratext of some Mexican literary works, his remarks help us reiterate the idea that the textual segment called *paratext* operates as the place to observe singularities and layers of interaction between author/work/reader/reading.

Readers are not directly in contact with the fictional text; their entrance into the text is mediated. This mediation is part of the global framework of communicational and pragmatic logic that underlies every literary work and is carried out through a number of instruments and strategies called “paratexts.” A paratext refers to a set of discourse and image productions that accompany, introduce, present, comment on the text, and condition its reception [...] [they function as] strategy links to engage author and reader in interaction (SABIA, 2005, p.9, author’s italics, our translation).<sup>11</sup>

In a way it is as if the writer, even having finished his creative utterance and ended his discourse, wanted to exert control over the situation, drawing readers’ attention and anticipating things they will find when reading the novel. He may also want to interfere in the narrative through an afterword. If this is so, the author’s paratexts cannot be discarded as superfluous in relation to the main text. They are a means by which he intervenes on behalf of his readers, for they say a lot about what the author expects with these hints, these meaningful cues that prepare the reading of the main text. They are a type of interactive waiting room through which the reader enters the work. In this vein, through the dialogical approach, paratexts are actually part of the concrete utterance. In our study, even before the reading of the main text, they involve enunciator and reader/interlocutor in an exciting interactive situation, and work as important anticipative strategies of the different facets of discursive *resistance*. The segments that are presented as paratexts point, as we will show further on, to a thematic dimension and to clashes with language, making evident the impossibility to say what is presented as the (un)sayable. Our study will thus focus on paratexts, as strategies of the selected discourses of resistance.

## Paratext, Tradition and Rupture

The novel *K*, we are analyzing does not have the subtitle *Relato de uma busca* [Account of a Search].<sup>12</sup> In this edition, before the 29 fragments (or unnumbered chapters, or concise short stories), which mainly tells the story of a father who tries to find out about the disappearance without a trace of his daughter and son-in-law in 1970, the author brings three paratexts. They are meaningful to the discussion of the specificities of the discourse of resistance: a dedication, three epigraphs and a message

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<sup>11</sup> In the original: “lectores no entramos nunca en contacto con el texto novelesco de modo directo sino de forma mediatizada. Esta mediatización se inscribe en el marco global de la lógica comunicacional y pragmática que subyace a toda obra literaria y se efectúa por medio de una serie de instrumentos y estrategias que se engloban bajo el nombre de “paratexto”. Tal término se refiere a un conjunto de producciones, del orden del discurso y de la imagen, que acompañan al texto, lo introducen, lo presentan, lo comentan y condicionan su recepción [...] ellos en una estrategia de inscripción del autor y del lector en una situación interactiva.”

<sup>12</sup> TN. The author of this article uses the 2nd edition of *K*, published by Editora Expressão Popular in 2012, which does not bring the subtitle *Relato de uma busca* [Account of a Search] either.

to the reader (To the Reader). In later editions<sup>13</sup> they were either discarded or partially used. This also happened to Enio Squeff's illustrations, which, although playing an important role in the meaning production and reception of the work (Squeff made the drawings as a reader), they will not be analyzed here. As they are found throughout the verbal text, analyzing them would imply a verbo-visual analysis, that is, the articulation between word and image, which merits a different analysis regarding the production of meanings and the authorship of the whole utterance.<sup>14</sup> Neither will we analyze the texts through which Kucinski individually thanks those who supported him - including his wife - with critiques and suggestions, the use of Yiddish and the maps of the streets of Warsaw as well as the language of the forsaken.

As we take into consideration that the discourse of resistance is characterized, among other aspects, by the ability to mobilize social voices, paratexts will also be analyzed from this perspective, that is, as heterodiscourse. Either separately or altogether they enunciate and mobilize discourses of resistance, defining the target of the enunciator's confrontation, the object of resistance. They also establish an alliance with the reader. This is a *hidden dialogue* that qualifies the reader as someone who can, in anticipation, understand the different facets that have motivated and supported the discourse that is ahead of her/him. At this moment, the enunciator hints at the reader with his words or the words of other enunciators, brought into his discourse, which includes meaningful voices of the lusophone literary tradition.

The dedication in *K.* (KUCINSKI, 2015, p. 8) is the first place in which the voice of the author-as-creator is present by means of delicate verses:

To her friends who lost her  
suddenly  
a world of intimacy fell apart

As a symptom of the brutality of the events, the disappearance, the irreversible upheaval of a vast universe in which the missing person was the protagonist, this dedication anticipates the fact that the discourse is grounded in a personal story and in History, shared by collectivity.

As to the epigraphs, they also anticipate facets of the discourse that begins with the dedication. They show how difficult it is for the enunciator to actualize it. In this sense, he evokes discourses of three lusophone renowned writers, namely, João Guimarães Rosa, Fernando Pessoa, and Mia Couto. Our analysis of the three excerpts will not be in-depth, showing detailed information on the writers, the peculiarities of

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<sup>13</sup> TN. The author refers to the Brazilian editions.

<sup>14</sup> The concept of text that grounds our reflection here stems from the oeuvre of Bakhtin and the Circle. For them text is not a verbal expression only (written or oral); it is the materialization of different planes of expression, which makes possible the understanding of *visual*, *musical* texts, for example. Besides, a text must be understood as a semiotic and ideological dimension, actualized by a situated individual or collective subject who belongs to a context, a culture and is in dialogue with present, past and future interlocutors/discourses. See Bakhtin (1986b) and Brait (2016c).

the works from which they are drawn and their meanings within the narratives and in dialogue with other works. However, based on these epigraphs it is possible to state that the reader will come across a testimony offered in great power about a historical and cultural period of Brazilian history and will face discursive questions, also uttered with vigor, that refer to the (im)possibility to narrate and retrieve the experiences that are to be narrated.

We start with the excerpt of *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*. It points to the construction of and the difficulties in the knowledge that discourse intends to acquire.

What I tell you is what I know and you don't know, but the main things  
I want to talk about are those which I do not know if I know but which  
you perhaps do.  
(ROSA, 1963, p. 192).

A first-person enunciator directly addresses his interlocutor, whom he calls “mister”<sup>15</sup> in order to raise questions related to telling, to narrating what he wants to tell, to the intertwined relations between who is telling and who is listening/reading, and especially to what one knows and does not know. It is a play of identity/otherness/complementarity between subjects, objects of knowledge, author/reader, engendered dimensions of discourse, given its unescapably interactive nature. In this sense, the enunciator that accepts this epigraph evokes the tradition that raises these questions and becomes part of it. As he creates the story, he makes History, as the following epigraphs confirm.

What oppresses me is not the pain  
Of not believing or knowing  
But only [and mostly] the sheer horror  
Of seeing mystery face to face  
Of seeing and understanding it  
In its whole purpose of being mystery.  
(PESSOA, 2015, p.460, our translation).<sup>16</sup>

By evoking the six verses of the poem titled *The Mystery of the World* (First Faust, First Theme) by Fernando Pessoa, Kucinski connects it to the first epigraph so as to add, from a deeply allegorical stance, the issue of pain, oppression, the horror related to seeing and understanding mystery, which cannot be rationally explained. It

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<sup>15</sup> TN. The translators of Rosa's novel did not use the word “mister” (*senhor*) although it is in the original in Portuguese: (“*conto ao senhor...*”).

<sup>16</sup> This poem is found in *Primeiro Fausto* [The First Faust], whose first theme is titled *The Mystery of the World*. It has yet not been translated into English. In the original: “*Não é a dor que já não pode crer / Que m'oprime, nem a de não saber, / Mas apenas [e mais] completamente o horror / De ter visto o mistério frente a frente, / De tê-lo visto e compreendido em toda / A sua finalidade de mistério.*”

is a philosophical vision, connected to testimony and the simultaneous impossibility to enunciate it.

I light the fire of a story  
and I douse my own self  
When I have finished these jottings, I shall  
once again be a voiceless shadow  
(COUTO, 2006, p.7).

This is the third time a first-person enunciator, leaving the same traces of telling, writing and his manuscripts, brings to light the issue of history/story that, as it is illuminated by the voice of the subject-as-enunciator, is extinguished and becomes a *voiceless shadow* in a pendulous movement between singular and universal, individual and collective. The play with the words *light*, *douse* and *shadow*, and the reiteration of the first subject pronoun 'I' allude, poetically and tragically, to the purpose of writing and to the fact that, insofar as it is event-voice, it becomes greater than the enunciator who turns it into light, visibility and hearing. By retrieving Mia Couto, *K.*'s subject-as-enunciator finds another place in literary tradition to anticipate events that are decisive in the utterance which the reader will come across after that: the constitutive relationship between telling a story and making History, being a story and, at the same time, being History. In the third epigraph he goes a little further. When we find the passage from which the epigraph was taken, we observe two things. Here is the passage.

I want to place time in its unruffled order, with all its pauses and pliancy<sup>17</sup>.  
But my memories are disobedient, uncertain of their desire to be nothing  
and their fondness of stealing me away from the present. I light the fire  
of a story and I douse my own self. When I have finished these jottings,  
I shall once again be a voiceless shadow. (COUTO, 2006, p.7).

The two sentences prior to the epigraph explicitly refer to an enunciator's desire to bring order to a time of waiting and ongoing suffering and, at the same time, to the desire of his memories that rob him of the present. These aspects are related to the internal movements of writing. By not bringing these two sentences to light, *K.*'s enunciator goes directly to the pendulous movement of bright/dark, which is fostered by the writing/writer relation and graphically interferes in the quotation, as the epigraph is written in verse and not in prose. As he uses the quotation as a poem, he establishes a co-authorial dialogue with Couto and showcases his interpretation of the passage. Besides selecting the other's discourse through a syntax that works in favor of the ongoing discursive

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<sup>17</sup> TN. The word in Portuguese is *sofrência*, a neologism in Portuguese. According to Rio-Torto (2007), Couto creates this neologism by blending the verb *sofrer* (suffer) and the suffix *-ncia* (related to action, process). Thus, *sofrência* means an ongoing suffering, which is not equivalent to the word chosen by the translator (pliancy).

project, the enunciator becomes part of the quoted discourse, changing its genre and somehow signing it.

If language is an element that makes telling possible by untangling worlds, the three epigraphs, in their thematic closeness, are heterodiscourses; that is, they are aesthetic and social voices enunciated from the diversity of the Portuguese language (Brazil, Portugal and Africa) and the axiological positioning of their enunciators. By writing in the same language that is made *other*, each subject utters relations with life, society, culture, memory, forgetfulness, and, as enunciators, with the (im)possibility to (re)present discourses in motion, which is inherent to language.

We must highlight another paratext<sup>18</sup> because of the same power of anticipation the epigraphs have.

To the reader<sup>19</sup>

Everything in this book is invented but almost everything happened. I let recollections flow directly from my memory just as they came, after being buried for years, without confirming them through research, without completing them or shaping them with records from the time. There are references to documents in just two stories and then only as a recourse in the narrative.

Then, adopting story-telling techniques, I put these memories in imaginary situations. I brought together incidents that had happened at different times. Other incidents I made up almost entirely. I invented solutions to fill gaps that came from what I'd forgotten or from what my subconscious had blocked.

Each fragment emerged as a complete, separate story. They appeared not in chronological order, but arbitrarily, as buried memories came to the surface. Often they took on unexpected shapes. This again forced me to treat the incidents as literature, not as history.

The book's unity comes from K. This is why the fragment that introduces him comes straight after the opening. And the fragment that puts an end to his suffering is almost the last in the book. The order of the other fragments is arbitrary (KUCINSKI, 2015, p.132).

In this direct contact with the reader, who is textually and affectively called forth (Dear reader), the author-as-creator of the narrative is presented as the voice of the author-as-person. He states that "Everything in this book is invented but almost everything happened." From this point he explains, in a very didactic way, the genesis

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<sup>18</sup> In later editions, the text To the Reader is partially published in relation to the 2nd edition.

<sup>19</sup> TN. In Portuguese, this text starts with "*Caro leitor*" (*Dear reader*).

and the characteristics of his enunciation. He makes it clear that he made little use of documents and when he did, he used them as *narrative resources*. He also mentions that when he had memories, recollections, forgetfulness, subconscious blockage, he resorted to story-telling techniques, creating settings, situations that were either idealized or that had happened at a different time. He filled the gaps and created solutions. Even the order of discourse, the organizations of the fragments is explained as a possible resource, introducing the father at precise instances in the novel.

As a means of anticipating the readers' possible interpretations and readings, the *author's* voice, a voice of the highest authority, steers the readers' path so as to confuse them and push them to an in-between place that only the utterance and the genre adopted can clarify (if they can!): "Everything in this book is invented but almost everything happened." The play between *creation* and *event* (story and history), explained in details in this paratext, actually seems another form of stating that, through language, it is impossible to separate them as they are fatally imbricated and that in narratives, in a very special way, the present seeks to retrieve the past and to open a place for language in which events have to be uttered in order to exist and be understood.

In *K.*, besides these paratexts, the textual syntax of the set of 29 fragments is peculiar. This brings about enunciative consequences that indicate and signal different forms of authorial presence and its relation with otherness. The first fragment, titled Letters to someone who doesn't exist (KUCINSKI, 2015, p. 16-17) and the last one, titled Postscript (KUCINSKI, 2015, p. 130), fracture the set syntactically and semantically as they frame the other fragments. Both are written in the first person singular, in the present, in italics, and give the same place and date of writing, viz., "Sao Paulo, 31 December 2010." This peculiar information undoubtedly refers to the author, who struggles for the possibility of saying (between existence and shadows). He also presents himself as another voice that interferes in the narrative to frame the other 27 fragments, narrated in the third person by *K.*, the father, the one who conducts and is responsible for the search. These fragments embrace this voice, this heterodiscourse, which is *uttered* from a place and a time that made the painful *enunciation* possible. If the paratexts (dedication, epigraphs, among others) aim to warn the reader about the nature of what is being uttered and who the utterer is, the first and last fragments hint at the same direction once again, underpinning and intermingling *creation* and *event*.

In *Os visitantes [The Visitors]* the author's voice is also present, on the first plane, through two epigraphs, a dedication, and a warning to the reader.

The epigraphs (KUCINSKI, 2016, p. 5) are powerful assertions and include the source texts from which they were taken. The first one, "Come, let us go down and there confuse their language," comes from the Bible (Genesis 11, 7).<sup>20</sup> This is the time when incommunicability was imposed on humans in opposition to a single language that would allow a perfect understanding between people. The second, "Facts are scarce;

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<sup>20</sup> GENESIS. New King James Version. **BibleGateway.com**. Available at: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=genesis+11&version=NKJV>. Access on 11 Aug. 2019.



words are numerous,”<sup>21</sup> comes from one of the most renowned Jewish literature writers, Shmuel Yosef Agnon (1888-1970), a Nobel prize winner in 1966. Both epigraphs refer to the relationship between life and language, language and lack of understanding, excess of words in opposition to the scarcity of facts, and *heteroglossia* in opposition to a single language. The reference to the confusion between humans due to the large number of languages is connected to the reflection of a great writer, whose oeuvre is known for the way he approaches, among other important aspects, the conflict between language and life. It is not by coincidence that the first *visitor*, the one who starts the narrative and is the protagonist of the first *short story*, the first complaint, is a Jewish woman:

It's about the holocaust. You mister writer write that the Germans kept record of everyone who was killed, but this is not true! [...] most people would go straight to the gas chamber. [...] I said I was sorry. She said: What is the point of being sorry? You mister writer need to correct it; the way it is written is a disrespect to millions who were made disappear (KUCINSKI, 2016, p.12 and p. 13, our translation).<sup>22</sup>

The thematic closeness to the epigraphs in *K.* establishes a strong syntactic and semantic relationship between both texts. In the second one, however, the idea of the linguistic incomprehension, the divine anathema, the curse from which humans cannot be freed, is highlighted. This human condition is worsened by the fact that the more humans use language, its forms of understanding and its relation to life, the more the abundance of words blots out the facts. Thus, what is the author-as-creator, the enunciator, left with except to use words, be assisted by language and, at the same time, challenge his discourse, which is constantly put to a test, confronted by inaccessible facts, events, recollections, forgetfulness and documents? This is exactly what the reader will find in the 12 *short stories* that comprise *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*]. They refer to specific fragments of *K.* that are called in question by the merciless visitors who challenge the writer to be faithful to *reality* and/or to what they consider to be reality.

This new discourse of resistance (with the different contextualized meanings discussed herein) is *a discourse about a discourse, an utterance about an utterance*. In a way, it is a strategy of the enunciator who, using the metaphor of visitors, *enunciates* and *is enunciated* again, reveals himself, (re)visits his prior discourse with the aim of searching for *flaws*, the *flaws* pointed out by the enunciatees – he is one of them – so he can have a new opportunity to approach the *notorious facts*.

A dedication is in the following page (KUCINSKI, 2016, p. 6, our translation). At the bottom of the page, which corresponds to the last line, we read: “In memoriam of

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<sup>21</sup> In Portuguese: “*Os fatos são escassos, as palavras numerosas.*”

<sup>22</sup> In the original: “*É sobre o holocausto, o senhor escritor escreveu que os alemães registravam todas as pessoas que matavam, mas isso não é verdade! [...] a maioria ia direto para a câmara de gás [...] Eu disse que lamentava. Ela disse: De que adianta o senhor escritor lamentar? O senhor escritor precisa corrigir; como está é um desrespeito aos milhões que foram desaparecidos.*”

Ana Rosa Kucinski Silva and Wilson Silva.”<sup>23</sup> This new discourse, therefore, explicitly refers to the discourse of resistance to the military dictatorship in Brazil and the difficult task to confront it through language. It is dedicated to two very close people to the author, who *were made disappear* and who motivated *K.* At this point of the enunciation, they are, as it were, *found*. The relationship between the dedication and the paratexts in *K.* becomes evident because of the direct and explicit enunciation, which is made possible by *uncoveredness*. If *K.* is dedicated “[t]o her friends who lost *her*,” *Os visitantes [The Visitors]* is dedicated to the missing people who are named. The expression “in memoriam” also gives them visibility, demonstrating that the search has come to an end.

In *Os visitantes [The Visitors]* readers are also warned (KUCINSKI, 2016, p. 9, our translation) about the nature of the account they are to find:

Everything here is invented  
but almost everything happened.<sup>24</sup>

We see that, while in *K.* the paratext To the reader is half page long, in *Os visitantes [The Visitors]* it is radically more concise. It comes in the form of two verses and essentially summarizes the first line of To the reader, which is “Everything in this book is invented but almost everything happened.” The form used in *Os visitantes [The Visitors]*, however, is more disturbing and direct as it confers on the narrative, through anticipation, a bigger and wider realm of creation, for “[e]verything here is invented.” The subject *everything*, which is the same of the first line of To the reader, is now followed by the deictic *here*, replacing the adverbial *in this book*. This is a fundamental difference in terms of enunciation, for it places the enunciator in the enunciative field. Linguistically speaking, the main clause clarifies that the narrative is anchored in creation and that the enunciator and his nature are part of this fictional stance. This statement, however, is followed by a comma, which separates the first clause from the second, and the adversative conjunction *but*, which relativizes, opposes and, in a way, destabilizes the first clause, introducing the *event* in the world of fiction, even if modified by the adverb *almost*: “but almost everything happened.” This disturbing indication, in addition to the epigraphs, mixes once again *creation* and *event* – even if it is in this order, which confers on the author-as-creator’s language the difficulties to reveal *experiences*. It is the *visitors’* responsibility to show the traps of the genre chosen by the writer-as-character, and it is his duty, as the enunciator, the author-as-creator, to mobilize them as a means to retrieve the writing of pain, horror, using this new discourse as another attempt, through literary discourse, to reveal *history* through fiction.

In this new discourse of resistance, authorship is established beyond the epigraphs and dedication. Unlike *K.*, it is narrated in first person and places the *writer* as the

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<sup>23</sup> In the original: “*Em memória de Ana Rosa Kucinski Silva e Wilson Silva.*”

<sup>24</sup> In the original: “*Tudo aqui é invenção, mas quase tudo aconteceu.*”

enunciator, who simulates to be *K.*'s empirical author. However, the abundant enunciative and discursive traces he leaves helps the reader realize that he is just another character, another visitor who joins the others to discuss how (im)possible it is for the events to *be made verb*, that is, the concrete utterance comprised of the two works and the attempt to metonymically tell about the horrors of dictatorship.

The last fragment, titled *Post-mortem* (KUCINSKI, 2016, p.76-83) also has a different time location in relation to the prior fragment, titled *O visitante derradeiro* [The last visitor] (KUCINSKI, 2016, p.69-75), which starts with "Two years have gone by."<sup>25</sup> The same happened in *K.*. At this moment, it makes reference to facts related to the missing people: "The Chemistry Institute acknowledged their ignominy, publicly apologized, and established a memorial to honor the missing professor. The Truth Commission completed their report despite the fact that they had not discovered anything" (KUCINSKI, 2016, p.76, our translation)<sup>26</sup>. It also includes the whole transcription of the interview given by an agent of repression "who knows what really happened" and who wrote a book in which everything was told. The last paragraph, however, reconstructs the imaginary about the doubts of those who, even today, do not believe in the horrors inflicted by the military regime:

A trick. A young prosecutor said that it is a trick, a lie, that nothing happened, that the bodies were not incinerated in a baking oven. My ex and I knew it was true. We've always known (KUCINSKI, 2016, p.83, our translation)<sup>27</sup>.

## Final remarks

The literary discourses of resistance we have selected could show a lot more than what we have discussed in terms of strategies so that, *in and through* language, we could disclose the atrocities experienced during the military dictatorship in Brazil and the difficulties encountered to present them and make them present. The vast Brazilian prose of resistance, written during and after the years of lead, plays this role with value, diversity, testimonial power and aesthetic-existential documental force. Many historians, literary critics and discourse analysts study these works due to their importance in terms of historical, literary and discursive reflections. This paper, however, based on the dialogical perspective of language, aimed at discussing an aspect of the discourse of resistance, that is, the use of *paratexts*. These textual segments are many times ignored

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<sup>25</sup> In the original: "*Passaram-se dois anos.*"

<sup>26</sup> In the original: "*O instituto de Química deu-se conta de sua dupla ignomínia. Pediu desculpas públicas e ergueu um marco em homenagem à professora desaparecida. A Comissão da Verdade concluiu seu relatório sem nada descobrir.*"

<sup>27</sup> In the original: "*Um truque. O jovem procurador disse que é um truque, que é mentira, que não aconteceu, que os corpos não foram incinerados num forno de assar melão. Eu e minha ex sabíamos que era verdade. Sempre soubemos.*"

by readers, who do not see them, as they want to go straight to the main text, or by the editors, who find them abundant, too explanatory, or unnecessary. The objective of our reading was to acknowledge them as one of the strategies of the discourse of resistance.<sup>28</sup> It is not a strategy that lacks literary tradition; on the contrary, it is a discursive resource found in different works and time periods, whose function is to be a space of anticipation (or continuation) in which language points to issues that will be (or have been) approached explicitly (or not) by what is considered the main text. Paratexts, such as dedications and epigraphs, are also found in other types of discourse. This is the case of the academic discourse, where they are found in dissertations, theses, articles, chapters, and books.

The paratexts that comprise the *corpus* of this paper, as we could observe, metonymically introduce the theme to be addressed and problematize the relationship between life and language, creation and events. Both *K.* and *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*] show the degree to which different voices are made present and woven so as to build the discourse of resistance that is represented by these two novels of B. Kucinski's trilogy. As part of the concrete utterance, these paratexts simultaneously guide and mislead the readers, pushing them into each work and into the relationship that is established between them. As readers enter into both works, they will notice that, although each one is a discursive construction, the relationship between them is similar to the one between a text and its paratexts in a given concrete utterance. This is undoubtedly a fundamental rupture in relation to what is normally considered a paratext.

*K.* is an utterance and as such it is impossible to understand *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*] without it. In this sense, *K.* is also a paratext in relation to the second enunciation. However, the opposite is also true: *Os visitantes* [*The Visitors*] makes readers go back to *K.* and reread what was uttered in a different way. Given the questions about constitutive authorship and otherness, associated to the mobilized heterodiscourses (paratexts among them), and the difficulty to know *facts* and make them known, this utterance of resistance, comprised by the two novels, is so valuable that it makes the dialogue between the novels reflect on what goes beyond the ones who *were made disappear*. Thus, through the literary discourse of resistance it points to today and to a necessary and collective memory that seems to dangerously escape.

BRAIT, B. Discursos de resistência: do paratexto ao texto. Ou vice-versa? *Alfa*, São Paulo, v. 63, n.2, p.251-272, 2019.

- *RESUMO: O objetivo desta pesquisa é discutir estratégias de discursos de resistência que tomam como objeto de enfrentamento à ditadura militar vigente no Brasil no período compreendido entre as décadas 1960 e 1980, cujas sequelas se fazem sentir até hoje. Dentre*

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<sup>28</sup> In *Sobras e sombras de memórias da resistência* [Residues and Shadows of the Memory of Resistance] (BRAIT, 2015), we studied the paratexts and their function in *Zero*, a novel by Ignácio de Loyola Brandão (2004).

esses discursos, que não cessam de emergir em diversas esferas, por meio de diferentes gêneros, o discurso literário será entendido como um dos que, mobilizando memória individual e coletiva, pela via de documentos e/ou relatos, procura desacobertar e fazer conhecer os efeitos devastadores dos anos de chumbo. Com base em fundamentação teórica oferecida pela perspectiva dialógica do discurso, as narrativas *K. Relato de uma busca* (2012) e *Os visitantes* (2016), do jornalista e escritor Bernardo Kucinski, serão consideradas como sequência discursiva articulada, na medida em que a segunda retoma a primeira, instaura uma interação polêmica e possibilita a observação dos valores em tensão que organizam o todo e delineiam faces de um projeto discursivo e do sujeito que o enuncia. Para efeito deste artigo, será destacada a relação dialógica estabelecida entre textos e paratextos, uma das estratégias do discurso literário de resistência que, pela instauração de vozes, busca respostas para acontecimentos escamoteados e para formas possíveis de presentificá-los pela linguagem.

- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Enunciados de resistência. Paratexto. Estilística discursiva. Heterodiscurso. Prosa brasileira. Bernardo Kucinski.*

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