

**The Action of Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces in Religious Discourse about People with Disabilities: Reflections Based on Bakhtin and the Circle / A atuação de forças centrípetas e centrífugas no discurso religioso sobre a pessoa com deficiência: reflexões a partir de Bakhtin e o Círculo**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article analyzes the action of centripetal and centrifugal forces in utterances from the religious sphere, which reveal worldviews of the evangelical Christian segment regarding disability. For that, we selected a video available on YouTube, containing utterances by the hosts Tito Rocha and Leandro Quadros regarding disabilities, as well as the response of an internet user about the positioning of these individuals. The theoretical and methodological reflection is based on the dialogical orientation of language, considering dialogic relations, voices, and centripetal and centrifugal forces. Additionally, we drew upon studies on worldviews, the inclusion of people with disabilities, religious discourse, and Christian theology. The results reveal that the discourses of the hosts reflect and refract a Christian worldview that unifies the understanding of disability due to divine punishment caused by sin. While the internet user's comment presents movements of centralization and dispersion of this Christian perspective.

**KEYWORDS:** Dialogic relations; Centripetal and centrifugal forces; Worldview; Inclusion of people with disabilities; Religious discourse

**RESUMO**

*Este artigo analisa a atuação das forças centrípetas e centrífugas em enunciados da esfera religiosa que evidenciam cosmovisões do segmento cristão evangélico acerca da deficiência. Para tanto, selecionamos um vídeo disponível na plataforma YouTube contendo enunciados dos apresentadores Tito Rocha e Leandro Quadros relativos à temática da deficiência, bem como a resposta de uma internauta acerca do posicionamento desses sujeitos. A reflexão teórico-metodológica fundamenta-se na orientação dialógica da linguagem, sobretudo nas considerações acerca das relações dialógicas, vozes e forças centrípetas e centrífugas. Também recorremos a estudos sobre cosmovisão, inclusão da pessoa com deficiência, discurso religioso e teologia cristã. Os resultados indicam que os discursos dos apresentadores refletem e refratam uma cosmovisão cristã que unifica o entendimento da deficiência como resultado da condenação divina ocasionada pelo pecado. O comentário da*

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*internauta, por sua vez, apresenta movimentos de centralização e dispersão dessa perspectiva cristã.*

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Relações dialógicas; Forças centrípetas e centrífugas; Cosmovisão; Inclusão da pessoa com deficiência; Discurso religioso*

## **Initial Considerations**

Throughout history, the trajectory of people with disabilities has been marked by different worldviews, materialized in different discourses within the most varied spheres of human activity. This has reverberated in the ways in which these individuals have been perceived and treated throughout the course of humanity. We understand that such worldviews are directly intertwined with practices of exclusion, segregation, integration, and inclusion, which are common to the history of people with disabilities and are recurrently considered by scholars who propose to discuss them (Aranha, 2001; Sasaki, 2005; Santiago, 2011; Martins, 2015; Costa, 2018). Excluding, segregating, integrating, and including are therefore ultimately valuations that we can identify in the language used in all discursive spheres, whether political, journalistic, scientific, academic, workplace, etc., and no different in the religious sphere.

In this sense, imbued with the understanding that it is necessary to reflect on utterances that convey and crystallize ableist practices,<sup>1</sup> in the present study, we aim to investigate the action of centripetal and centrifugal forces in utterances from the religious sphere that highlight worldviews of the evangelical Christian segment regarding disability and inclusion. To this end, we considered utterances extracted from a video by professor and theologian Leandro Quadros, available on the *YouTube* platform, as well as the counterword of a subject/internet user, which appears in comments and deals with issues related to disability in her family context.

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<sup>1</sup> The term ableism has been used to name discriminatory attitudes due to disability in both international and national literature (Goodley, 2011, 2021; Mello, 2014; Gesser, 2020).

Regarding the reflections we make on language, we essentially resort to the set of texts by Bakhtin and the Circle (Bakhtin, 2008,<sup>2</sup> 1999a,<sup>3</sup> Vološinov, 1973),<sup>4</sup> and scholars who focus on their reflections (Faraco, 2009; Sobral, 2014; Brait, 2015), understanding it from a dialogical perspective in which history and the social environment are pressing factors for the study of discursive practices that emerge from the social interaction between subjects. Furthermore, our discussion is based on the considerations of scholars who reflect on the concept of worldview (Dilthey, 2019;<sup>5</sup> Sire, 2004;<sup>6</sup> Naugle, 2002),<sup>7</sup> as well as on the literature in the area of inclusion of people with disabilities (Aranha, 2001; Sasaki, 2005; Santiago, 2011; Martins, 2015; Costa, 2018), on religious discourse from a dialogical perspective (Francelino, 2019; Silva, 2017; Leite, 2017; Nascimento, 2019; Mueller, 2017),<sup>8</sup> and on Christian theology (Erickson, 2013; Grudem, 1994).<sup>9</sup>

The methodology we employ comes from the Dialogic Discourse Analysis, originating from the linguistic-philosophical discussions of Bakhtin and the Circle, especially in the writings that deal with dialogic relations between discourses, as well as in proposing a perspective of language analysis in which the “forms and types of verbal interaction” are the first aspects to be observed in the discursive study, followed by “forms of particular utterances” and “language forms” (Vološinov, 1973, pp. 95-96).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> BAKHTIN, Mikhail. Discourse in the Novel. In: BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist and Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2008. pp. 273-427.

<sup>3</sup> BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson. Introduction by Wayne C. Booth. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999a.

<sup>4</sup> VOLOŠINOV, Valentin. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Landislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. New York: Seminar Press, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> DILTHEY, Wilhelm. The Types of Worldview and Their Development in Metaphysical Systems. In: DILTHEY, Wilhelm: *Selected Works*, Volume VI: Ethical and World-View Philosophy. Edited by Rudolf A. Makkreel, Frithjof Rodi and Frithjof Rodi. Translated by James McMahan and Rudolf A. Makkreel. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019, pp. 249-294.

<sup>6</sup> SIRE, James. *Naming the Elephant*. Worldview as a Concept. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> NAUGLE, David Keith. *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002.

<sup>8</sup> MUELLER, Beatriz Gutiérrez. Religious Word as a Variant of ‘Authoritative Word’ in Bakhtin. *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso*. São Paulo, v. 12, n. 1, pp. 91-112, jan./abr. 2017. Available at: <https://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/bakhtiniana/article/view/27177/20955>. Last access: 7 jan. 2024.

<sup>9</sup> GRUDEM, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Michigan, USA: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

<sup>10</sup> For reference, see footnote 4.

In addition to this brief introduction, we structured this article as follows: first, we weave discussions based on the writings of Bakhtin and the Circle on the concepts explored, outlining dialogues with studies on worldview and religious discourse. Next, we look at the trajectory of people with disabilities throughout history. Subsequently, we present the methodology, followed by corpus analysis, and finally, final considerations.

## **1 Worldviews from the Dialogical Perspective of Language: Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces, Dialogic Relations, and Voices**

The reflections present in this section are guided by the dialogical perspective of language and consider the premises/collaborations of Leite (2017) and Nascimento (2019), according to which the Circle's reflections have proven productive in the analysis and interpretation of utterances from the religious sphere. In this sense, in view of our objective, we understand that the worldviews of the evangelical Christian segment regarding disability are materialized in voices, imbued with valuations, and crossed by the speeches of others. Such speeches reveal dialogic relations that enable the action of (de)centralizing forces, depending on the recovered utterances, as well as the purpose of the speakers involved in the communicative process.

Before entering the conceptual discussion itself, it is important to highlight that the intellectual project of Bakhtin and the Circle considers language in its dialogical dimension, as a stratified and axiologically saturated phenomenon, whose meaning relationships are established among utterances, based on the dialogic relations, in discursive interaction.

As explained by Brait (2015), dialogic relations are the phenomenon treated as an object of metalinguistics, proposed by Bakhtin (1999a, p. 181),<sup>11</sup> or by what nowadays in the Brazilian context is conventionally called Dialogic Discourse Analysis (ADD). As such, they permeate any and all discourse and constitute the condition without which there cannot be utterance. As the Russian philosopher expresses, dialogic relations occur outside the language, and are inseparable from the discursive sphere, since it is in interaction that

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<sup>11</sup> For reference, see footnote 3.

subjects come into contact with different voices that maintain the most diverse relationships among one another (agreement, disagreement, controversy, confrontation, etc.).

In this sense, the dialogical theory of language simultaneously considers the social and individual character of voices, so that a given utterance — as it is a space of struggles open to different meanings — can manifest particular evaluations of the enunciator, as well as worldviews shared more broadly by him. For this reason, it is urgent to mention that, according to Vološinov (1973, p. 34),<sup>12</sup> “every ideological product bears the imprint of the individuality of its creator or creators, but even this imprint is just as social as are all the other properties and attributes of ideological phenomena.”

For Bakhtin (1999a),<sup>13</sup> each voice echoes a social position. In the author’s view, the confrontation of different voices makes different points of view, accents, and refractions of the world resonate. In this sense, it is worth highlighting that the voice of an enunciator shapes that of another, since every effective saying is sometimes constituted as a response, sometimes as a material that can be responded to, taken up, refuted, etc.

From this perspective, according to Sobral (2014, p. 25),<sup>14</sup> “every utterance creates something new, but it can only be done based on what already exists, under the penalty of not being understood.” It is also worth remembering, as Faraco (2009, p. 52)<sup>15</sup> suggests, that “the semiotic material can be the same, but its meaning in the concrete social act of enunciation, depending on the social voice in which it is anchored,” can acquire another meaning. For this reason, it is necessary to understand that discourses are not neutral, but are permeated by axiological positions, and are inseparable from the spheres of activity in which they circulate.

Thus, according to Bakhtin (2008),<sup>16</sup> language is permeated by the action of two opposing forces in constant tension. One, centralizing and unifying (centripetal force), and

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<sup>12</sup> For reference, see footnote 4.

<sup>13</sup> For reference, see footnote 3.

<sup>14</sup> In Portuguese: “todo enunciado cria o novo, mas só pode fazer a partir do já existente, sob pena de não ser compreendido.”

<sup>15</sup> In Portuguese: “o material semiótico pode ser o mesmo, mas sua significação no ato social concreto de enunciação, dependendo da voz social em que está ancorado.”

<sup>16</sup> For reference, see footnote 2.

the other, decentralizing and separating (centrifugal force) the verbal-ideological world. In other words, the first is in favor of the maintenance and stabilization of current ideological instances and tends to silence diversity, configuring itself as monologizing. Here, monologism constitutes an effect of meaning, since the very dialogical nature of discourse contradicts such a homogenizing view of language, especially when we consider that “alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward” (Bakhtin, 2008, p. 285).<sup>17</sup> The second, therefore, plays a role of destabilization, with a view to dismantling any attempt at verbal-axiological unification. Regarding this aspect, Faraco (2009, pp. 69-70)<sup>18</sup> observes that centrifugal forces “continuously corrode centralizing tendencies,” highlighting multiplicities of social voices and breaking dominant paradigms.

Concerning religious discourse, it is important to emphasize the challenge involved in undertaking a fruitful discussion about it without going through complex issues, since religion cannot be considered from a universalizing and homogeneous point of view. This also applies to understanding the discourses that constitute this sphere. Under this complexity, Francelino (2019, p. 251)<sup>19</sup> states that, similarly to any other discursive sphere, in the religious sphere “(...) there are specificities related to the way in which subjects reflect and refract the world, their worldviews, their values, beliefs and convictions and all these aspects permeate the utterances” produced in it.

However, even considering the heterogeneity inherent to religious discourse, we understand that, in general, it is constituted from an authoritative word, in the sense given by Bakhtin (2008),<sup>20</sup> setting in motion centripetal (centralizing) forces in an attempt to establish an absolute and unquestionable truth. The authoritative word presents an enunciative-

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<sup>17</sup> For reference, see footnote 2.

<sup>18</sup> In Portuguese: “corroem continuamente as tendências centralizadoras.”

<sup>19</sup> In Portuguese: “(...) há especificidades relacionadas à forma como os sujeitos refletem e refratam o mundo, suas cosmovisões, seus valores, crenças e convicções e todos esses aspectos permeiam os enunciados.”

<sup>20</sup> For reference, see footnote 2.

discursive composition that projects an effect of monological meaning, aiming to hinder the dialogue intrinsic to every communicative event (Mueller, 2017).<sup>21</sup>

With regard to the focus of this discussion, religious worldview, Dilthey (2019)<sup>22</sup> considers that it would consist of the interpretation of reality based on man's interaction with the invisible, that is, it would take place at the interface of human and spiritual experience. Residing in the religious worldview are conflicts between good and bad beings, the human experience based on one's own senses, and the understanding of a spiritual world that transcends these senses.

From this perspective, according to Naugle (2002, p. 31),<sup>23</sup> "(...) in the entire history of 'worldview' no philosophical school or religious community has given more sustained attention to or taken more advantage of this concept than Protestant evangelicals." The interest of the subjects of this religious segment has its origin attributed to two theologians, namely, the Scottish Presbyterian James Orr (1844-1913) and the Dutch neo-Calvinist Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920). Both were influenced by the theological doctrines of John Calvin (1509-1564) and are co-responsible for introducing the notion of worldview into current Christian thought (Naugle, 2002).<sup>24</sup>

According to Naugle (2002),<sup>25</sup> Orr exhaustively sought to present a Christian vision of God and the world. The Scottish theologian argues that believing in the Jesus Christ presented in the biblical narrative would mean adhering to other convictions, committing oneself in the same way to an understanding of God, of man, of sin, of redemption, of human destiny, only proposed by Christianity.

In turn, Kuyper's Christian worldview consists of a sensitive holistic and spiritual understanding of Christianity, which presupposes a resignification of cultural aspects and human thought in its entirety. According to Sire (2004, p. 33),<sup>26</sup> Kuyper can be considered one of the most influential theologians for having expanded Orr's approach, assuming a

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<sup>21</sup> For reference, see footnote 8.

<sup>22</sup> For reference, see footnote 5.

<sup>23</sup> For reference, see footnote 7.

<sup>24</sup> For reference, see footnote 7.

<sup>25</sup> For reference, see footnote 7.

<sup>26</sup> For reference, see footnote 6.

Christian worldview that conceives Calvinist doctrine “as a comprehensive worldview,” in which all aspects of human life would be predetermined by the omniscience of God.

Given the fluctuation of such a concept and seeking to consider it in its interface with language studies, in this article, the notion of worldview that we adopt cannot be based outside the linguistic scope and is essentially constituted by it. It is through the discursive interaction of social-historically situated subjects that varied worldviews are manifested, reflected, and refracted in their discursive practices, imbued with axiological positionings of the social environment in which they are circumscribed.

In this sense, Bakhtin (2008)<sup>27</sup> recognizes that language is crossed by worldviews. To the author, it is through “concrete utterances” that “life enters language” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 63).<sup>28</sup> That is, the discourses we produce about all aspects of human existence are permeated by valuations of the subjects who enunciate them. For this reason, the philosopher understands that in discursive interaction there is a diversity of worldviews that materialize in social voices. Therefore, the choice of signs and the meanings attributed to them are related to the way in which each social group understands and interprets the reality in which it is inserted.

From this axiological perspective, the worldview shared by the subjects, in a given community, constitutes a driving force for the constant dialogue produced in the tension of these voices. In this sense, when considering the centrality of language in the materialization of worldviews, it is possible to observe how these are constituted in discursive practices.

To conclude this section, it is important to emphasize that the analysis of the action of centripetal and centrifugal forces makes it possible to observe the confrontation of worldviews, considering the dialogic relations mobilized in the discourses, since the worldview is reflected and refracted in the voice of a subject situated in a given space and time.

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<sup>27</sup> For reference, see footnote 2.

<sup>28</sup> BAKHTIN, Mikhail. The Problem of Speech Genres. In: BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Texas: University of Texas Press, 1986. pp. 60-102.

## 2 People with Disabilities Throughout History: Discourses and Worldviews

The concept of disability is complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and debatable (World Health Organization; The World Bank, 2011), and, currently, its theorization is at the center of several social scientific endeavors, which deal with the body, subjectivity, culture, and society (Goodley, Hughes, Davis, 2012). Therefore, in order to (re)discuss issues related to disability, it is necessary to explain the point of view that one intends to take on this phenomenon, in order to mitigate any misunderstandings.

In this study, the look we take at discursive materiality, as we will see below, assumes the disability grounded on discussions that emerge from studies based on social theories anchored in Vygotsky's (1993)<sup>29</sup> pioneer reflections. Founded on postulates of historical and dialectical materialism, the Belarusian psychologist promotes a shift in his work in the field of defectology, from the idea of disability marked by biological aspects inherent to the human being. On the other hand, he notes that this condition is derived from the interactions of people with disabilities with the barriers imposed by the social environment, through their psychological, organic, and individual particularities. This conception represents a yaw in the ways of conceiving and treating people with disabilities in society, favoring the development of the perspective of social inclusion.

In this context, under the aegis of the inclusivist paradigm and given the multifaceted nature of the notion of disability, we resort to the definition contained in *Lei Brasileira de Inclusão* [Brazilian Inclusion Law] (LBI), whose legal document is the result of broad debate with society and agencies/entities representing this portion of the Brazilian population. According to the LBI text,

A person with a disability is considered to be someone who has a long-term impairment of a physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory nature, which, in interaction with one or more barriers, may obstruct their full and effective

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<sup>29</sup> VYGOTSKY, Lev Semenovich. *The Collected Works of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky*. Volume 2: The Fundamentals of Defectology (Abnormal Psychology and Learning Disabilities). Edited by Robert W. Rieber and Aaron S. Carton. Translated by Jane E. Knox and Carol B. Stevens. New York: Plenum, 1993.

participation in society on equal terms with other people (Brasil, 2015, art. 2<sup>nd</sup>).<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, the meaning of disability attributed in the aforementioned legal document is coherent with the Vygotskian perspective when considering the social environment in the interactive processes of people with disabilities. Various impediments/obstacles can emerge from this disability that restrict the disabled person's full participation, placing him/her in profound social disadvantage. As discourse analysts, we cannot fail to elucidate the fact that the different discourses that permeate various human activities can also constitute barriers. The most heterogeneous worldviews about people with disabilities are engendered in these discourses. As a result, it turns out that "(...) as determining as the bodily characteristics, with their limitations, disabilities, functionalities, or potentialities may be, it is the social reading made from this condition, it is the look of the other and the meaning attributed to it" (Meletti, 2013, p. 14).<sup>31</sup>

Another aspect that we must consider, from the dialogical perspective of language, is the understanding that the inclusion proposal arises as a response to what has already been said. That is, the inclusivist paradigm responds to utterances from the past, responsible for the constitution of worldviews that placed people with disabilities under practices of exclusion, segregation, and integration, prior to inclusion movements.

The social exclusion of people with disabilities appears in history as the first social response given to this population, predominantly in the Ancient Age (Costa, 2018; Hughes, 2012), the result of the worldviews that permeated the forms of treatment given to them. In some ancestral societies, due to adverse living conditions, the presence of vulnerable, elderly, sick, seriously injured, and disabled members often resulted in their elimination, since they could not contribute to collective activities considered essential to survival as well as personal and community protection (Martins, 2015).

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<sup>30</sup> In Portuguese: "Considera-se pessoa com deficiência aquela que tem impedimento de longo prazo de natureza física, mental, intelectual ou sensorial, o qual, em interação com uma ou mais barreiras, pode obstruir sua participação plena e efetiva na sociedade em igualdade de condições com as demais pessoas."

<sup>31</sup> In Portuguese: "(...) tão determinante quanto as características corporais, com suas limitações, incapacidades, funcionalidades ou potencialidades, é a leitura social feita dessa condição, é o olhar do outro e o sentido atribuído a ela."

Likewise, the extermination of people with disabilities and/or their expulsion from social life was present in Western societies in ancient times. In Greek civilization, the aim was to create a high standard of human beings, through the cultivation of certain heroic virtues, which were manifested in work with the body and spirit. Because the person with a disability did not meet the designated standard of virtue, he was contrary to it, and could not aim for a human life in its entirety that would serve the polis (Martins, 2015).

Like the Greeks, the Romans generally adhered to practices of extermination of people with disabilities, with the exception of those who belonged to economically favored classes, who could have their lives spared, although they were banned from social life (Santiago, 2011). The Law of the Twelve Tables,<sup>32</sup> for example, in the Fourth Table, which provides for parental power and marriage, in Law I, grants the right to the father to take the life of his own child if he had a congenital disability (Meira, 2021). When not annihilated, there is evidence that children with disabilities were abandoned to their own fate, being placed on the banks of the Tiber River (Santiago, 2011). Once found by a commoner or slave, such a child was raised for the possibility of profit for his/her owner, by being used as a means of entertainment in Rome's fairs, or as beggars (Oliveira, 2010; Martins, 2015).

Therefore, it can be seen that whether in ancestral societies or in civilizations of Classical Antiquity, eliminating people with disabilities, causing them to die, was a habitual practice during such periods and apparently did not represent a problem of ethical or moral order to those communities (Aranha, 2001). However, with the emergence of Christianity and its expansion along with the Roman Empire, other worldviews about people with disabilities began to gain strength, especially from the understanding that they are also creatures of God, deserving of compassion and tolerance, which contributed to the reduction of their extermination.

In this scenario, attitudes of charity-punishment and protection-segregation come into play, coexisting in the treatment given to people with disabilities during the Middle Ages. Charity-punishment was a practice adopted by the church that used punishments in order to

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<sup>32</sup> The Law of the XII Tables represented a rich source of knowledge for Roman law, for a period of approximately one thousand years, and still exerts great influence on the elaboration of modern legislation (Meira, 2021).

correct those who did not observe its doctrines (Santiago, 2011). Human beings, made in the image and likeness of God, could not present any characteristic in their bodies that would distort the notion of divine perfection. Thus, people with disabilities were considered imperfect and sinful, condemned by God. In order to save them, attitudes of punishment were recommended “(...) through imprisonment and whipping, to expel the demon” (Tomporoski; Lachman; Bortolin, 2019, p. 25).<sup>33</sup>

In turn, protection-segregation is associated with the confinement of people with disabilities in churches, nursing homes, hospices, and convents, environments that usually had subhuman conditions. Due to its religious values, society believed it was ensuring the well-being of this stratum of the population, while keeping the community free from adverse situations involving disability (Martins, 2015). This practice reverberated in the paradigm of social segregation, in which people with disabilities were confined in welfare institutions, generally built far from large urban centers, and were left incommunicado and deprived of socializing with other members of their community.

From the rise of the bourgeoisie, with the end of the Middle Ages, and the democratic revolutions during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, the worldview regarding disability as an organic dysfunction began to be outlined in Modernity, laying the foundations for what later became known as the social integration paradigm. In this context, science was made available to people with disabilities as an instrument for the recovery and normalization of their human condition (Santiago, 2011), based on the assumption that it was possible to treat them to be integrated back into the social life from which they had been restricted. It is important to highlight that the worldview that reverberated treatment practices for people with disabilities, within the scope of medicine, for their subsequent integration into society, implied that such subjects were “the focus of change, although the need for transformations in society was recognized” (Costa, 2018, p. 26).<sup>34</sup>

The inclusion paradigm emerged in the 1980s and with greater expressiveness in the 1990s (Sasaki, 2005), as a response to integration movements, based on the worldview, as

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<sup>33</sup> In Portuguese: “(...) por meio do aprisionamento e açoitamento, para expulsão do demônio.”

<sup>34</sup> In Portuguese: “o foco da mudança, embora se reconhecesse a necessidade de transformações na sociedade.”

already mentioned, that a process of reform and restructuring of society was necessary, so that people with disabilities could participate in all human activities under conditions of equality. In this sense, the transition between integration and inclusion practices represents more than a semantic change in politically correct terms. Although they have sometimes been used as synonyms, there are essential distinctions in values and principles that guide such practices (Mittler, 2003).

Thus, aligned with the perspective of inclusion, and driven by the interest of building a fairer, plural, and inclusive society, we follow the procedures of our study, from the constitution, analysis, and interpretation of our *corpus*.

### 3 Methodological Procedures: Paths to Understanding Dialogues

The concrete utterances analyzed were extracted from a video<sup>35</sup> available on the *YouTube* platform, involving religious-themed speeches given by professor and theologian Leandro Quadros. For a more accurate description of this enunciator's profile, we collected information available on his official electronic portal,<sup>36</sup> in the “*quem sou*” [Who I am] tab, and on the Lattes Platform. According to the information, Leandro Quadros is a professor, theologian, writer, and host of the television and radio programs *Na Mira da Verdade* [Aiming the Truth] and *En La Mira de La Verdad* [On Targeting the Truth], on the *Novo*

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<sup>35</sup> Although this *corpus* presents a verbal-visual dimension, and considering the importance of works that consider such semiosis in their analyses is notable (Brait, 2009, 2010, 2013), it is mandatory to mention that we operate a section exploring the verbal dimension, since it is an oral production in which was evident, after the transcribing process, the presence of pertinent aspects in its linguistic materiality in the view of the proposed objective. In this sense, it is not our intention to undertake discussions about visual elements, such as: gestures, facial expressions, filming angles, among others, which constitute the enunciative whole. We understand that the analysis we now present is configured as one of several different possibilities for reading our *corpus*, so that the emphasis on the verbal aspect also allows us to construct valuable meanings on the action of (de)centralizing forces reverberated in the speeches of the enunciating subjects when refracting worldviews about disability from a religious point of view. The theoretical-methodological decision of this study, from our perspective, appears to be as legitimate as the path outlined in other works such as Assumpção *et al.* (2023), Josiowicz and Deusdará (2022), Azzari, Amarante and Andrade (2019) – which, even in the face of a verbal-visual materiality, do not approach, in their discussion, aspects related to conceptual and methodological perspective regarding verbal-visuality, operating a section focusing on the verbal dimension, without compromising the expressive plan and the production of meaning of their *corpora*.

<sup>36</sup> <https://leandroquadros.com.br/>

*Tempo* [New Era] network. He has a degree in Social Communication from the *Universidade do Vale do Paraíba* (UNIVAP, 2002-2007), and a master's degree in theology from the *Universidad Adventista del Plata*, Argentina (2010-2013).<sup>37</sup>

Our *corpus* is made up of two materialities. The first consists of utterances from the video entitled *Por que nascem crianças com deficiência? A BÍBLIA RESPONDE*<sup>38</sup> [Why are children born with disabilities? THE BIBLE ANSWERS], lasting 2 minutes and 14 seconds and with 41,048 views.<sup>39</sup> The video was published on March 24, 2012, on the *IgrejaOnline* [OnlineChurch] channel, with around 38.4 thousand subscribers. This is a clipping of an excerpt from the Christian religious themed television program *Na Mira da Verdade* [Aiming at Truth], presented by Tito Rocha and Leandro Quadros, in which Tito performs the function of mediating the interaction, in the form of a question and answer, between viewers and Leandro during a live broadcast of the program. The second materiality, in turn, is composed by a comment made by an internet user, whose name has been preserved,<sup>40</sup> in response to the video.

To choose the video, our selection criteria considered research carried out on the *YouTube* platform, using the descriptor “*deficiência e religião*” [disability and religion] in the search tool. Among the main results, we found that the matter was being dealt with by Leandro Quadros in some posts.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, for analysis, the previously mentioned video was selected because it discusses the topic in a more comprehensive way, focusing on the birth of people with disabilities from a particular religious point of view. In turn, with regard to choosing the comment, we considered the following aspects: first, its relevance and reach

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<sup>37</sup> As additional education, Leandro also has a completed specialization in Scientific Journalism (2008-2010), from UNIVAP, and two ongoing specializations in Positive Psychology and Coaching, and Digital Marketing and Sales, both from *Centro Universitário União das Américas Descomplica, Uniamérica*. Accessed on: 26 Aug. 2023.

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owWYwTLne6g> 29 Feb. 2024.

<sup>39</sup> Counted on August 26, 2023.

<sup>40</sup> To protect the identity of the internet user, in compliance with ethical issues involving scientific practice.

<sup>41</sup> Some of them: *Por que Deus permite que algumas crianças nascem com deficiência? [Why does God allow some children to be born with disabilities?]* Prof. Leandro Quadros; *Por que Deus EXCLUIU os DEFICIENTES em levítico? É PRECONCEITO dEle? [Why did God EXCLUDE the DISABLED in Leviticus? IS IT HIS PREJUDICE?]* - Leandro Quadros; *A BÍBLIA RESPONDE - Como Deus julgará um deficiente mental? [THE BIBLE ANSWERS - How will God judge a mentally disabled person?]* Last access: 26 Aug. 2023

on the platform, totaling 28 likes and 3 replies; second, the formulation of the enunciative positioning, viewing the extent and elaboration;<sup>42</sup> and thirdly, the fact that the enunciator positions herself as a mother of two children with disabilities, revealing a tension of worldviews between her utterances and Leandro's and Tito's speeches, in which it was possible to examine the action of centripetal and centrifugal forces.

In relation to the *corpus* analysis process, for the full transcription of the video utterances, we were guided by the signs for conversation transcription proposed by Marcuschi (2003), once, like Brait (1999), we consider that conversation and interaction are intertwined concepts, since participants engage in a given conversation because they are guided by the purpose of interacting. In this *corpus*, specifically, the signs of pauses (+), hesitations (eh, ah), truncations (/), vowel lengthening (:), repetitions (or or) were used, prioritizing a “clean and legible transcription, without an overload of complicated symbols,” as suggested in Marcuschi (2003, p. 9).<sup>43</sup> Additionally, the use of double quotation marks was included to indicate the presence of quoted speeches (“ ”). Then, after the transcription was carried out, and based on careful readings, we prioritized the utterances in which the subjects' position revealed their worldviews regarding disability.

Regarding the comment, its movement for analysis was performed through a screen capture, ensuring that elements such as: number of likes, indication that the comment was edited, as well as its time stamp were preserved (available “4 years ago”). In this sense, we discussed the main axiological positions identified in the utterances, considering their relationship with other discourses that circulate about the topic, comparing them. Furthermore, we sought to highlight the enunciative context in which the discursive interaction takes place, pointing out who the enunciating subjects are in this process, the space-time in which they are located, who the speeches are intended for, among other elements pertinent to the analysis. Finally, we focused on the enunciative mechanisms contained in the language forms of these discourses.

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<sup>42</sup> Some comments were short in length, with little input for analysis.

<sup>43</sup> In Portuguese: “limpa e legível, sem sobrecarga de símbolos complicados.”

#### 4 (De)centralizations in Utterances from the Evangelical Christian Segment on Disability

The materiality under analysis, as mentioned, is part of the transcription of the video *Por que nascem crianças com deficiência? A BÍBLIA RESPONDE*, recorded during the broadcast of the program *Na Mira da Verdade*, and by the comment of an internet user in response to the aforementioned video. In the initial moment of interaction between the hosts of the program, Leandro Quadros and Tito Silva, we have the following question, read by the latter, sent by an unidentified viewer: “In the Word of God is there something that explains the birth of people with some type of physical or mental disability?” Following the question, host Tito carries out a kind of contextualization:

**Tito:** Is there anything that the Bible can eh:: comfort us/ or or or why people like this are born? Is it related to sin? Isn't it related to sin? Is it God giving some kind of condemnation? Because there are texts in the Bible that say that :: it would be ::m would be ::m eh: condemned until: (+) third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh generation. And what is that? Is there anything/is there any relationship to the birth of people like this?<sup>44</sup>

Given this panorama, here is Leandro's response:

**Leandro Quadros:** So, actually Titus, here ah: people who are born with physical defects, this is really a consequence of sin, right:? When we read Psalms 51 here, (+) we realize that sin is such a serious thing that it says in Psalm 51 verse 5, “I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”<sup>45</sup> So we are born sinners and diseases, right:? genetic degenerations, physical defects are consequences of sin. Now, God promises in I Corinthians 15:51 to 55/ he promises to transform our corrupt body into an incorrupt body (+) transform our perfect body into a perfect body/ our imperfect body into a perfect body. And here's a text that I really like, right:? which is in Isaiah 35 verse 8, which has a promise (+) for families (+) who have loved ones with mental problems. It says “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness (+); the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those (+): the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”<sup>46</sup> In other words, God will create a new world in which even those who were crazy will have the possibility of being happy in this new world. Then God, at the return of Christ, will

<sup>44</sup> In Portuguese: “Existe alguma coisa que a Bíblia pode eh:: nos confortar/ ou ou ou por que que nascem pessoas assim? Está relacionado com o pecado? Não está relacionado com o pecado? É Deus que dá algum tipo de condenação? Porque existe textos na Bíblia que fala que que:: seria::m seria::m eh: condenados até: (+) terceira, quarta, quinta, sexta, sétima geração. E o que que é isso? Tem alguma coisa/ tem alguma relação com o nascimento de pessoas assim?”

<sup>45</sup> The biblical verses quoted by Quadros were translated according to the King James Version of the Holy Bible, 1611.

<sup>46</sup> For reference, see footnote 45.

take away the consequences of sin. Trust this, feed this hope, because the return of Christ is the solution to all our problems.<sup>47</sup>

With the purpose of understanding, in the light of the Scriptures, the reason why a person is born with a disability, the viewer's question does not foresee or lead to any positioning. On the other hand, considering that speeches do not arise randomly, as they constitute a link in the chain of verbal communication (Bakhtin, 1986)<sup>48</sup> and maintain dialogic relations with other speeches, it is necessary to note that the utterance made by Tito cannot be analyzed as a simple mediation of the interaction between Quadros and the viewer, nor as a mere contextualization of the question asked, free from a positioning. It is important to consider it as a single act (Bakhtin, 1999b),<sup>49</sup> which carries within it a position and an evaluation. For this reason, it is possible to observe that, although the viewer's question has a comprehensive nature, there is a directing in Tito's contextualization that will guide Quadros' response.

Initially, observing some linguistic marks,<sup>50</sup> we can see that the use of the sign "comfort" reveals a certain worldview of the enunciator in relation to disability, whether physical or mental, negatively refracted as a type of affliction or misfortune that lacks

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<sup>47</sup> In Portuguese: Então, na verdade Tito, aqui ah: as pessoas que nascem com defeitos físicos, isto é realmente uma consequência do pecado, né:? Quando nós lemos aqui os Salmos 51, (+) nós percebemos que o pecado é uma coisa tão séria que diz assim no Salmo 51 verso 5 ó "eu nasci na iniquidade e em pecado me concebeu a minha mãe". Então nós nascemos pecadores e as doenças, num é:? as degenerações genéticas, os defeitos físicos são consequências do pecado. Agora, Deus promete em I Coríntios 15.51 a 55/ ele promete transformar o nosso corpo corrupto em um corpo incorrupto (+) transformar nosso corpo perfeito em um corpo/ nosso corpo imperfeito em um corpo perfeito. E aqui tem um texto que eu gosto muito, né:? que está em Isaías 35 verso 8, que tem uma promessa (+) para as famílias (+) que têm queridos com problemas mentais. Diz assim "e ali haverá bom caminho, caminho que se chamará o caminho santo (+) o imundo não passará por ele, pois será somente para o seu povo (+) quem quer que por ele caminhe não errará nem mesmo o louco". Ou seja, Deus criará um novo mundo em que até aqueles que foram loucos terão a possibilidade de serem felizes neste novo mundo. Então Deus, na volta de Cristo, vai tirar as consequências do pecado. Confie nisso, alimente essa esperança, porque a volta de Cristo é a solução pra todos os nossos problemas.

<sup>48</sup> For reference, see footnote 28.

<sup>49</sup> BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Edited by Vadim Liapunov and Michael Holquist. Translated by Vadim Liapunov. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1999b.

<sup>50</sup> It is pertinent to emphasize that linguistic marks are populated with social, historical, and ideological meanings. They can be present in syntactic, semantic, and lexical choices, offering the analyst clues that help in understanding hidden meanings in the analysis and interpretation process. Immersed in dialogic relations, as well as in a tense game between unification and decentralization, the forms of language are mobilized in different discourses, from different voices within the enunciative whole.

consolation. This interpretation can be corroborated by the signs “sin” and “condemnation,” which manifest dialogic relations with other discourses in the religious sphere in which disability is seen as a hereditary consequence of sin.<sup>51</sup> This view will be taken up and reinforced by Quadros in his response, revealing that this consequence appears in the presenters’ speech as a condemnation, which can be attributed to several subsequent generations. In this sense, the worldview shared by both maintains relations with the understanding of disability as a result of divine punishment, common during the Middle Ages (Costa, 2018).

Therefore, Leandro Quadros’ utterance does not appear only as a response to the viewer’s question,<sup>52</sup> but also as a reply to the contextualization made by Tito. At the beginning of his speech, it is possible to observe the use of the term “physical defects,”<sup>53</sup> which also appears in some translations of the Bible (such as, for example, the Jerusalem Bible [physical defect] and the Geneva Bible [defect]). In other words, Quadros dialogues with the biblical worldview about disability, which understands it as a flaw and/or imperfection.

It is worth remembering that the use of signs occurs through a tension between social-ideological forces, and their choice and use reveal particular axiological positions. In this regard, Vološinov (1973, p. 37; emphasis added)<sup>54</sup> explains that “*the sign and its social situation are fused inextricably fused together*. The sign cannot be separated from the social situation without relinquishing its nature as sign.” For this reason, we must consider the enunciative context from which the theologian’s voice emerges, which manifests itself as a voice of authority, since he speaks from the position of teacher and presenter, in addition to resorting to the Scriptures to justify a position (Psalm 51,5; I Corinthians 15,51-55; Isaiah 35,8).

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<sup>51</sup> A detailed discussion of the doctrine of sin, from a Christian perspective, can be found in Erickson (2013), more precisely in part VI of his work.

<sup>52</sup> His answer is not only addressed to the viewer who asked the question, but also to his social audience: congregation and other viewers.

<sup>53</sup> The terms “physical defects” (in Portuguese: “defeitos físicos”) and “defects” (in Portuguese: “defeitos”) are presented in the Portuguese editions of the Jerusalem Bible and Geneva Bible respectively. However, in their English versions, the translations are “disfigured or deformed” and “misshapen member” in the same order.

<sup>54</sup> For reference, see footnote 4.

As discussed, religious discourse seeks to constitute itself in line with an absolute and unquestionable truth. For this reason, the authoritative word (Bakhtin, 2008)<sup>55</sup> is a fundamental part of its development, enabling the action of centripetal forces. In this way, by engaging in dialogic relations with discourses on issues related to disability, the enunciator sets in motion centralizing forces that seek to stabilize the meanings and, consequently, the worldviews embedded in these discourses. We also cannot lose sight of the fact that this centralization silences discourses from other spheres, such as, for example, the scientific sphere, by disregarding factors that highlight the relationship between disability and genetic conditions, and acquired causes, among others.

Next, we see the alignment of Quadros' speech with what had already been valued by Tito, when Quadros confirms that disability is a condemnation of sin: "really a consequence of sin, right:?" It is observed in this utterance that the sign "right:?" acts as an element of agreement, capable of instigating the interlocutor to assume a convergent position with that of the hosts. At this point, it is worth noting that, despite there being no consensus in the religious sphere, in Quadros' voice there is a centralizing force that seeks to standardize the Christian worldview regarding disability, by relying on the biblical text. Using Psalm 51,5 ("I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me"), he concludes: "we are born sinners and diseases, right:? genetic degenerations, physical defects, are consequences of sin," reinforcing the ideas of the heredity of sin and condemnation, historically present in some worldviews regarding people with disabilities, among them the evangelical Christian segment. Added to these ideas is the worldview in Modernity that disability would be a disease that can be healed, as is the case of deafness, perceived in medicine as a pathology, reverberating hegemonic narratives, generally from hearing subjects, of recovery of the deaf, through cochlear implants and speech therapy.

Then, quoting Paul's first letter to the Corinthians ("he promises to transform our corrupt body into an incorrupt body (+) transform our perfect body/ our imperfect body into a perfect body"), the presenter's voice echoes the speech of common rehabilitation during the medical-clinical paradigm, in which practices of normalizing the disabled body

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<sup>55</sup> For reference, see footnote 2.

constituted one of the main forms of treatment for this stratum of the population, aiming at their reintegration into the communities where they had been deprived of social life (Santiago, 2011). This rescue movement is essential in the process of analysis and interpretation, because, according to Vološinov (1973, p. 95),<sup>56</sup> it is necessary to consider “the study of the connection between concrete verbal interaction and the extraverbal situation – both the immediate situation and, through it, the broader situation.”

In this regard, it is worth highlighting that a given worldview cannot be considered in a particular way, since it is associated with a position shared by certain historical groups/periods. Leandro Quadros is a person who speaks about aspects related to people with disabilities from a point of view outside this human condition, and whose speech belongs to a specific time and space that dialogue with other positions about disability.

In this sense, when we think about issues relating to disability, we understand that in different periods and groups, this issue was understood and valued considering different worldviews that have developed throughout history. It is also worth remembering that disability only became a cause for concern after the emergence of the first social and political organizations that assumed power over the lives of individuals, since for many millennia until the emergence of the first civilizations, it was believed that people with disabilities lived in a similar way to other people (Santiago, 2011).

Therefore, Leandro’s answer ends by returning to the idea of comfort/consolation brought by Tito in the context of the question, referring to the return of Christ (“God, at the return of Christ, will take away the consequences of sin. Trust in this, feed this hope, because the return of Christ is the solution to all our problems”). In this way, disability is refracted as a problem to be solved, recovering two worldviews: the first associated with a common understanding of disability under the medical-clinical paradigm; and the second, guided by a religious perspective, which sees the solution of the problem not from a human, terrestrial perspective, but from a transcendental dimension.

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<sup>56</sup> For reference, see footnote 4.

Given these valuations evoked in Tito and Leandro’s speech, we have as one of the responses from internet users the following comment,<sup>57</sup> available on the *YouTube* platform:

“I do not agree. I am Christian, I have two disabled children and two non-disabled children. When I became pregnant with Daniel, God told me that he would be a boy and that I should name him Daniel. So I did. Daniel has a congenital malformation, called agenesis of the corpus callosum, he can’t walk, he can’t talk. Sometimes I questioned God, why he gave my son the name and why he came this way. And over time I understood. That was the only way for God to get my attention, because my heart was made of stone, I was part of sects and they didn’t preach Jesus, I led my life in the wrong way. When Daniel came, my only way out was God, because the doctors say the child won’t be able to do this or that, and I truly met a God who is called I am. Daniel and Samira, who also has malformation, taught me and still teach me a lot, they teach me to love without restriction, to be grateful for the smallest things, when my son learned to sit at two years old I cried, because what for many parents is something “simple” for me, every discovery and learning is a miracle. Just as life is a miracle in itself. God did not punish me with them, but rather saved me. Oh, and I firmly believe that many things are not God’s will, but rather his permission to mature us spiritually and mentally. Kisses loved ones.” Additional information: comment published 4 years ago (edited) with 28 thumbs up.

Although the enunciator Leandro uses different passages from the biblical text in order to corroborate his worldview about disability as a result of inequity (Psalm 51,5; Isaiah 35,8; I Corinthians 15,51-55), it is possible to visualize a confrontation with the position of the hosts regarding the topic based on the internet user’s comment. In her speech, the enunciator – mother of Daniel and Samira, children with physical disabilities, and two other children – establishes an axiological position of denial, since she opposes the point of view elucidated by Leandro and Tito, through utterances that inaugurated with the negative “I don’t agree” try to distance themselves from these dominant voices, generating decentralization.

<sup>57</sup> In Portuguese:

 há 4 anos (editado)

Nao concordo . Sou cristã ,tenho 2 filhos deficientes e 2 não deficientes . Quando fiquei grávida do Daniel Deus disse pra mim que seria um menino e que eu deveria por o nome de Daniel . Assim eu fiz . O Daniel tem uma má formação congênita,chamada agenesia do corpo caloso,ele não anda ,não fala . Por vezes questioneei Deus ,o porquê de ele ter dado o nome pro meu filho e ele ter vindo dessa maneira . E com o tempo fui entendendo . Que era a única maneira de Deus chamar minha atenção ,pois o meu coração era de pedra ,eu fazia parte de seitas que não pregavam Jesus ,levava a minha vida de forma errada . Quando veio o Daniel ,minha única saída foi Deus ,pois os médicos dizem que a criança não vai poder fazer isso ou aquilo, e eu conheci verdadeiramente um Deus que chama eu sou . Daniel e a Samira que também tem má formação,me ensinaram e ainda me ensinam muito ,me ensina a amar sem restrição,a ser grata pelas mínimas coisas ,quando meu filho aprendeu a sentar aos 2 anos eu chorei ,pois o que pra muitos pais é algo "simples" pra mim cada descoberta e aprendizado é um milagre . Assim como a vida é em si é um milagre.Deus não me "castigou"com eles ,mas sim me salvou .

Há e eu acredito firmemente que muitas coisas não são vontade de Deus ,mas sim permissão dele para nos amadurecer espiritual e mentalmente. Beijos amados

Mostrar menos

 28  Responder

*Bakhtiniana*, São Paulo, 19 (2): e63573e, April/June 2024

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Subsequently, after demonstrating disagreement with the hosts' speech, the internet user identifies herself as belonging to the same religious segment, "I'm a Christian," whose belonging is reaffirmed as she reports her religious experiences, which suggests an approach between her daily life and the faith that she claims to profess: "God told me," "I sometimes questioned God," "I truly knew a God," "God did not 'punish' me" and "I firmly believe that many things are not God's will." It is interesting to note that by contradicting the host's point of view, indicating an axiological position of denial, a movement towards decentralization of religious discourse about disability is evident, revealing how heterogeneous the manifestations of worldview can be within the same religious segment. Added to this is the fact that the mother's speech, which cannot be understood in isolation, also seems to resonate with the world view of other mothers/relatives of people with disabilities, who, through living with their loved ones, and other experiences, assume divergent valuations about this human condition, re-emphasizing the understanding of disability as a consequence of sin.

There is a tension between the hosts' speeches and the comments of the internet user, who lives daily with a son and daughter with congenital physical disabilities. In this tension, it is possible to perceive essentially dispersion movements between the voices in such speeches, despite there being moments in which the mother's utterance seems to preserve aspects of the worldview shared by Tito and Leandro. One of these moments, in which such voices seem to align in a direction of centralization, concerns the mother's speech about "it was the only way God could get my attention," when she reflects on the condition of her children's disability. This perception of the mother appears intertwined in a causal relationship marked by the sign "because," followed by the utterance "my heart was made of stone, I was part of sects that did not preach Jesus, I led my life in the wrong way," which evokes the worldview signaled in the speeches of Tito and Leandro regarding disability as a hereditary consequence of sin.

This incidence of centripetal force in the utterance is evidenced not only in the approach to understanding disability as a result of practices considered sinful, but also in the idea that any teaching outside the precepts proclaimed by Jesus would distance people from

God's will, and can be understood as "sect." As Naugle (2002)<sup>58</sup> reminds us, when recovering Orr's reflections, from a Christian perspective, believing in Jesus Christ would imply committing to the various doctrines that constitute this worldview, including the idea that Christ would be the only way to reconnect man to God (Grudem, 1994).<sup>59</sup> That is, teachings other than those coming from Jesus would ultimately result in misconduct. Therefore, those who do not observe the Scriptures would deserve punishment, as they would live their "life in the wrong way," which for the internet user possibly justified the birth of her children with disabilities.

On the other hand, as the internet user directs her speech towards a possible unification with the utterances of the program's hosts, in another fragment, we can see the incidence of centrifugal forces with regard to the theme of punishment, in the face of the discursive tension that crosses the worldviews engendered. By saying "God didn't 'punish' me with them, but rather saved me," Daniel and Samira's mother re-emphasizes the sign of punishment attributed to disability, giving them new contours with an evaluative tone of salvation. In other words, the perspective of disability as divine punishment, prominent above all as a reflection of a common medieval worldview, suffers diametrically opposite refractions, assuming a salvific value from the enunciator's point of view, causing a movement to destabilize these discourses. It is also noted that this utterance shows more clearly, a direct objection to Tito and Leandro's speech, since the sign "punished" appears in quotation marks, in order to signal the mother's recovery from the speeches of the aforementioned hosts.

Another aspect in the internet user's utterance, in which we can see tensions between centripetal and centrifugal forces, refers to the excerpt "When Daniel came, my only way out was God, because the doctors say the child won't be able to do this or that." Once again in this utterance, there is a movement to approach the hosts' speeches, when the mother constructs the idea of God as a last resort capable of solving her dilemma ("my only way out was God"), that is, the birth of her child with disabilities ("When Daniel came"). From this

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<sup>58</sup> For reference, see footnote 7.

<sup>59</sup> For reference, see footnote 9.

discursive materiality, the perception of disability as a problem is evoked, that is, something that needs to be remedied, treated and/or recovered, according to the medical-clinical paradigm, in which the emphasis of such a condition is attributed to biological aspects of the subject with disabilities, without any significant changes in the social environment for their inclusion (Costa, 2018).

In the final section of the mother's speech, in "(...) I firmly believe that many things are not God's will, but rather his permission to mature us spiritually and mentally," we also find valuations of disability linked to doctrines that constitute the Christian world view. From the internet user's axiological point of view, disability is refracted as something that constitutes or does not constitute God's will/permission, a doctrine dear to the assumptions that support such a worldview (Erickson, 2013; Grudem, 1994).<sup>60</sup>

By valuing her children's condition of disability as a strategy from God to mature her "spiritually and mentally," that is, to prepare her in the Christian faith, aiming at her possible redemption, we see in the mother's utterance an emptying of the subjectivity of the person with disabilities, their values, principles, and faith, through the refraction of a divine providence in which such a subject appears stripped of his soul and his existence. This axiological positioning assumed by the internet user evokes the notion of God's providential care, one of the doctrines that underlie the Christian world view, in which all events of human existence originate from him (Grudem, 1994).<sup>61</sup>

## **Final Considerations**

Throughout history, the issue of disability has been understood from different worldviews intertwined in the ways in which people with disabilities have been discussed in different cultures and times. When it comes to discourses that are manifested in the religious sphere, the situation is no different, as we saw in the investigation undertaken into centripetal

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<sup>60</sup> For reference, see footnote 9.

<sup>61</sup> For reference, see footnote 9.

and centrifugal forces in utterances from the evangelical Christian segment that address the issue of disability.

The dialogic relations carried out by the hosts, Tito and Leandro, based on speeches that circulate in the religious sphere, manifest a Christian worldview that tends to unify the understanding of disability as a consequence of condemnation motivated by some hereditary sin. To this end, enunciators appropriate an authoritative word, materialized in several biblical discourses that supposedly justify such a vision, ignoring tensions that destabilize these utterances themselves.

Regarding the internet user's comments, different valuations on issues relating to disability are evident from an uninterrupted process of successive approximations and distancing in the face of the hosts' utterances about this condition. Likewise, it is noticeable that these different valuations, in the mother's comment, arise as a response to a range of ways, which have crossed society over time, of treating and conceiving people with disabilities. In their utterances, there are crystallized values that are configured as a counter-discourse, another worldview on the subject, highlighting, above all, the understanding of disability as a divine providence, as well as a re-emphasis on the idea of punishment.

In this sense, the analysis reveals the action of two opposing movements through a tension of voices: one that seeks to stabilize/unify, and the other that seeks to destabilize/disperse a certain worldview regarding disability in religious discourse. While the centripetal force naturalizes a problematic view on the subject, refracting the person with a disability deprived of their uniqueness and subjectivity, the centrifugal force dismantles such homogeneity, bringing a different accent and highlighting a different worldview on the subject.

Finally, we believe that in order to give new meaning to the situation of people with disabilities, it is necessary to combat all forms of discrimination that occur in the most varied spheres of human activity, including the religious sphere. Only in this way will it be possible to solve hostile and segregating practices that place these individuals at a social disadvantage.

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## Statement of Author's Contribution

Both authors made substantial contributions to the following aspects: 1. Conception and design/analysis and interpretation of the data; 2. Writing of the article or significant critical revision of the intellectual content; 3. Final approval of Portuguese and English versions for publication; 4. They have responsibility for all aspects of the work in terms of guaranteeing the accuracy and integrity of any part.

## Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

## Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso* [*Bakhtiniana. Journal of Discourse Studies*] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

### Review I

The text presents clarity, organization, basis, and internal, thematic and propositional coherence. The contribution is important to different areas of knowledge and creates an important space for the Dialogic Discourse Analysis. APPROVED

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Reviewed on September 28, 2023.

### Review II

The article in question deals with the “action of centripetal and centrifugal forces in religious discourse about people with disabilities” in a well-founded way. The text is well written, theoretically well-founded and the analyses meet what is expected from a study that purports to be Bakhtinian. I only draw attention to methodological issues. As the author(s) assume(s) the dialogical perspective of language and focus on discourses as an object of analysis, I suggest reviewing the expressions “given” and “analysis of givens” which do not correspond, from a methodological point of view, to a Bakhtinian perspective, since nothing is “given,” everything is constructed by dialogical relationships between the researcher(s) and their object(s). Another point was the choice to “erase” elements of hesitation from oral statements, as if only verbal had meaning in the analysis. Given this sanitization of the *corpus*, can it be said that the analysis would have been closer to a content analysis? Do forms not have a meaningful effect on the production of discourse? By erasing hesitations, they are interfering (although they inevitably already are because they start from a transposition from

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oral to written) in markers that also reveal, from this perspective, positions and values. For Bakhtin, extralinguistic is primordial, sometimes even more important than the linguistic itself (see the text “The Problem of Speech Genres”). Added to this, there is the question of which transcription model was adopted to transpose the oral statements into written form, in addition to the fact that it is not clear whether elements of the presenters’ statements were “erased” or elements of the viewer’s statements were not erased. Therefore, I recommend that these points be reviewed so that the article can be published. Furthermore, the article presents great contributions to the studies of the Bakhtinian discourse, as well as to discussions about disability and religion. MANDATORY CORRECTIONS [Revised]

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Reviewed on December 07, 2023.

#### **Review IV**

The author(s) made the suggested adjustments, which allowed greater alignment with the announced theoretical basis. I recommend approval. APPROVED

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