

**The *Self* and the *Other* in the Enunciation of Jorge Luis Borges / *O eu e o outro na enunciação de Jorge Luis Borges***

Juciane dos Santos Cavalheiro\*

**ABSTRACT**

This study addresses the issue of heterogeneity derived from the unfolding of the *self*, as understood by Bakhtin. It is based on the idea of self-consciousness, i.e., the one that always generates *another* to ensure their own subjectivity by means of contact with possible alterities: *others* are generated as alterity from the *self*. According to the ternary (time) and trinitarian (space) set, theorized by Benveniste and analyzed by Dufour, our analysis is circumscribed to three short stories of Jorge Luis Borges, namely: “The Other,” “August 25, 1983,” and “Borges and I,” in which the double and the duplicate are approached as the *self*, even being *others*, for it is alterity that gives the means to know the *self*.

**KEYWORDS:** Self-consciousness; Alterity; Other; Enunciation; Jorge Luis Borges

**RESUMO**

*O presente estudo aborda a questão da heterogeneidade decorrente do desdobramento do eu, tal como compreendido por Bakhtin mediante a ideia de autoconsciência, aquela que gera sempre um outro para garantir sua própria subjetividade, através do contato com possíveis alteridades: outros gerados como alteridade a partir do mesmo. De acordo com o conjunto ternário (tempo) e trinitário (espaço), teorizado por Benveniste e analisado por Dufour, nossa análise circunscreve-se à abordagem de três contos de Jorge Luis Borges, a saber: O outro, 25 de agosto de 1983 e Borges e eu, em que o duplo e o duplicado são abordados como o mesmo, ainda que outros, pois é a alteridade o que confere condições para o conhecimento do mesmo.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Autoconsciência; Alteridade; Outro; Enunciação; Jorge Luis Borges

---

\* Universidade do Estado do Amazonas – UEA, Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil; [jucianecavalheiro@gmail.com](mailto:jucianecavalheiro@gmail.com)

## Introduction

Dialogism in Bakhtin's work presupposes the inability of the subject to be recognized outside of his/her speech, being seized by the voices he/she enunciates. Therefore, to use an expression by Dahlet, enunciation lies in the category of *us*, understood as a product of a voice within the other, one influencing the other, coincidentally or not. It is "as a hybrid construction, (un)finished by competing voices and conflicted senses" (DAHLET, 2005, p.56).<sup>1</sup> Bakhtin perceives language as a process of interaction between subjects placed according to particularities of the space-time paradigm in which they are inscribed. Beyond this more punctual dialogue – regarding the exchange of subjective positions – it is proposed to conceive the very nature of dialogism in the sense that this proposal is essentially a dialogue to come, perpetually unfinished, always to be modified and/or altered. Thus, alterity is necessary for the constitution of subjectivity, as it becomes present in the search for the self, a search for the self in the other.

In this study, we propose to analyze the subjectivity of characters in Borges's short stories based on Bakhtin's understanding of *self-consciousness*: "the hero's self-awareness was penetrated by someone else's consciousness of him, the hero's own self-utterance was injected with someone else's words about him" (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.209).<sup>2</sup>

In the West, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the idea of *double* is "in a close connection with the thought of subjectivity," regulating the binary subject-object relationship. Until then, a unitary conception of the world prevailed (BRAVO, 1998); that is, from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, if there was any tendency to unity, even when it came to *doubles*, "the *double* starts representing heterogeneity" (BRAVO, 1998, p.264).<sup>3</sup> Consequently, within the *other* – which, at times, is the *same* – the *self* searches for substance to shape its subjectivity. Such conception of alterity, in its turn, will be broadened – especially in the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century - so as to encompass, with no defined

---

<sup>1</sup> TN. When there is no published English version of the work, direct quotes will be translated into English, and the text in the original language will be provided as footnotes.

Excerpt in the original in Portuguese: "como uma 'construção híbrida', (in)acabada por vozes em concorrência e sentidos em conflito".

<sup>2</sup> BAKHTIN, M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

<sup>3</sup> Excerpt in the original in Portuguese: "o duplo começa a representar o heterogêneo".

limitations, both the collapse of the subjective unity and the fragmentation of the *self*. This would come to characterize, at least in aesthetic terms, literary modernity and, from its consciousness, modernism in literature. Nonetheless, it is important to consider the fact that the latter was not limited to organized movements, even though they are its most legitimate representation.

Within the scope of Physics, two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. In Human Sciences, through dialectic artifices, two or more bodies can merge into one. Besides, one body can be split into two or more, aiming at its cognitive multiplicity within the same analog time and metaphysical space. That is apparent in Jorge Luis Borges's short stories chosen for this analysis, for in them only chronological time isolates the narrator from himself. Duplicity is, thus, configured as that which creates subjective unity.

In this sense, when speaking of *self-consciousness*, we understand it as a way of perceiving the *self* – inscribed in a non-pleonastic but reiterative manner:

In the category of *I*, my exterior is incapable of being experienced as a value that encompasses and consummates me. It is only in the category of the *other* that it is thus experienced, and I have to subsume myself under this category of the other in order to be able to see myself as a constituent in the unitary pictorial-plastic external world (BAKHTIN, 1990, p.35; emphasis in original).<sup>4</sup>

That is what happens, for instance, in the myth of Narcissus or in Borges's short stories and poems, which are specifically about the *mirror* and/or the *double* – taking into account the characteristic polysemy of the literary work – in which the search for subjectivity turns out to be circumscribed upon the recognition of alterity. The same happens in the image duplication when observing a subjective mirror, for it is in the mirror that the *self* and the *other* are confounded into a double, non-duplicated but singularized identity according to their own subjectivity. Bakhtin draws attention to a certain menacing vigilance of the *self* from its *other* – that is, a *duplicated self*. He, thus, claims that “the context of his *self-consciousness* is muddled by the context of the *other's* consciousness of him, and his inner body is confronted by an outer body that is divorced from him – an

---

<sup>4</sup> BAKHTIN, M. Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity. In: HOLQUIST, M. LIAPUNOV, V. (Ed.). *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*. Translation and notes by Vadim Liapunov. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990. pp.4-256. (Slavic Series; no. 9).

outer body living in the eyes of the *other*” (BAKHTIN, 1990, p.60; emphasis in original).<sup>5</sup> This abstraction may be materialized: It is known that Borges’s statement, according to which he would have emotional restraints – not to say *fear* – regarding mirrors, is autobiographical. However, even if it is not autobiographical, Borges’s ellipsis would be placed in the open (and not completely calculated) space, between fiction and the amount of fiction that relates to the biography of the *self*, be it literary or not.

## **1 About the *Self* and the *Other***

The issue on the *other* – which possibly concentrates the most expressive part of the Western literature produced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – recognizes one of its most singular characteristics of unity in the multiplying expropriation of its character. It is to the point that they – oftentimes – are configured as a founding alterity which recognizes the *self*. Expanding this line of reasoning, it can be stated that, so far, the appropriation of the *other*, at least in symbolical terms, has conferred on literature the reconfiguration of the *self*, not in a dichotomous or excluding manner, but in a dialectical or coincidental one.

However, this perspective is not exclusively contemporary. Although the authors prior to the period mentioned above were possibly not aware that they were multiplying themselves on behalf of the constitution of a *self*, the same can be perceived since the origin of the Western aesthetic production. In other words, it may not be improper to assert that in the production of a past as remote as the production of cave paintings, the so-called contemporary literature – which is often associated with a possible literary theory – has observed issues that had already been mentioned, but of which still lacked a conscious conceptualization. In the caves of Lascaux, for instance, there is a recurrence of what has become conventionally called a *positive hand* and a *negative hand*. For the first one, the artist would “stamp” the palm of his hand directly onto the stone; for the second, he would spread his hand and blow paint over it, leaving the interior with a stone contour, like a “decal”; for the first, there would be an allusion to “the world of the living” or men; for the second, there would be a viable interpretation of “the world of the dead” or gods. Thus, taking into consideration that one hand (positive or negative) will not exist

---

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 4.

if not dialoguing with the other, which is the same, the same hand is responsible – by means of altering only the process – for the representation of the man-god dialectic.

When in the turn of the 20th century Nietzsche claims that “God is dead,” he does not intend to say, as of that moment, that God (or the *Other*) is dead, but that, in a conscious way, within Western culture, he could state and support the historical and cultural end of a supposedly absolute and uppercase alterity (the *Other*) as a founding element for the recognition of the *self*. Therefore, one can understand the “death” of the *Other* as a closely connected element to recognize the *self*, as a convergent instance between opposites that are only apparently excluding. Based on this consideration, Matos (2010) analyzes a possible identification between the Freudian psychoanalytic theory and Fernando Pessoa’s poetry. He does that when he verifies that the *death drive* is – and if it is not, then nothing will be – a *life drive*, because it is only from the *Other* as a limit (death) that a dialogue with the *self* (life) may be established. In this sense, it will not be just a poetic resource for Pessoa; above all, it will be a conceptual elaboration, a neologicistic creation from the reflexive verb to *other oneself*, to recognize *one* in a direct relation with *oneself* as *alterity*.

In Bakhtin’s understanding, the aesthetic universe can only be grasped by means of a relationship of alterity between consciousness and subjects. This allows us to assert that the subject does not constitute himself/herself through one of (his/her) subjectivities, but by an “active responsive understanding” that constitutively crosses a *self* (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.75).<sup>6</sup> Paulo Bezerra, in his preface to the second Brazilian edition (1997, p.XI) of *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*,<sup>7</sup> states that “the central idea of Bakhtin’s thought is the concept of the *other*, of familiarity, understanding, dialogue. In this sense, its humanistic aesthetics can be synthetized in the communicative ‘*self-other*’ pair.”<sup>8</sup> In this study, our look falls upon the “active responsive understanding” that the *self* has of *himself/herself* and the *other*, perceptible in the *self-consciousness* and the discourse of the characters of Jorge Luis Borges’s short stories selected for this analysis.

---

<sup>6</sup> BAKHTIN, M. M. The Problem of Speech Genres. In: EMERSON, C.; HOLQUIST, M. (Ed.). *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986. pp.60-102. (Slavic Series; no. 8).

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 2.

<sup>8</sup> Excerpt in the original in Portuguese: “ideia central do pensamento de Bakhtin é a ideia do outro, ideia da familiarização, do entendimento, do diálogo. Neste sentido, sua estética humanística pode ser sintetizada no par comunicativo ‘eu-outro’”.

## 2 Borges according to Subjective Alterity

The theme of the *other* in Borges is present in his short stories and poems as well as in his theoretical expressions. That is noticeable, for example, in his *Book of Imaginary Beings* (BORGES, 2006, p.62),<sup>9</sup> in which there is, synthetically, the presence of the *double* in Western literature: In *William Wilson*, by Edgar Allan Poe, “the Double is the hero’s conscience,” reached only when he murders the *other* and ends up meeting his own death; in Yeats’s poetry, “the Double is our other side, our opposite, the one who complements us, the one we are not nor will ever become.” It is apparent that Borges, upon including the *double* in *The Book of Imaginary Beings*, regards it as a being, as imaginary as, for example, the phoenix, the sphinx, fairies, and the Minotaur.

Aware of his time, as well as of Western culture as a whole, Borges took to the extreme the issue of alterity – or multiplicity – in relation to the *self*. According to him, the *other* is already a multiple of the *self*; besides, more than one self is any numerical possibility to infinity, such as  $x$ .

In the short story *The Other* (BORGES, 1979),<sup>10</sup> Borges fictionalizes an occurrence at a bench overlooking the Charles river, in the north of Boston, Cambridge. The river brings him Heraclitus’s inheritance and immediately makes him think about time. The narrative takes place in 1969, though it was only written in 1972. It is about an encounter between the narrator (*self*-Borges) and a young man (*other*-Borges), who lives in 1918.

The *self*-Borges, the narrator of the short story, lives in three times: He departs from his present (1972) – future in relation to the time of the narrative – and returns to the past (1969), the moment of the enunciation, from when he returns to an even more remote past, the time that the *other*-Borges has as his present (1918). As for the *other*-Borges, interlocutor of the *self*-Borges, he also lives in three times: He departs from his present (1918), “listens” to his future from what is reported by the 1969-*self*-Borges, but is enunciated by the author-creator-Borges only in 1972, the moment from when he takes literary substance. Therefore, three times are simultaneously circumscribed in the

---

<sup>9</sup> BORGES, Jorge Luis. *The Book of Imaginary Beings*. Translation by Andrew Hurley. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> BORGES, Jorge Luis. *The Other*. In: BORGES, Jorge Luis. *The Book of Sand*. Translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni. New York: Penguin Books, 1979. pp.3-10.

relationship established between author-creator-Borges, *self*-Borges and *other*-Borges: The past of the first will always be the present or the future of the other two whereas the present of the third will be the past of the others who are not him, and the present of the second will be the past of the first and the future of the third.

Thus, it is during the process of literary creation that the simultaneous perception of the three times – past, present, future – is established. However, the *self*-Borges claims that they are about two settings and two times when he proposes a new encounter with his interlocutor on the following day: “on this same bench, which existed in two times and two places” (BORGES, 1979, p.10).<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the *self*-Borges is not Borges, but only a part of him.

Regarding both settings, the *self*-Borges informs his interlocutor that they are “in the city of Cambridge,” (BORGES, 1979, p.4)<sup>12</sup> in 1969 whereas the *other*-Borges disagrees, and says he is “in Geneva, on a bench, a few steps from the Rhone” (BORGES, 1979, p.4).<sup>13</sup> While the *self*-Borges speaks in the plural, “We are,” the *other*-Borges speaks for himself only, “I am.” The *self*-Borges is aware of the *other*-Borges, since he is no more than his own past. However, in this case, the reverse is untrue; not every past is conscious, for memory is selective – though not consciously selective. The *self*-Borges says:

The meeting was real, but the other man was dreaming when he conversed with me, and this explains how he was able to forget me; I conversed with him while awake, and the memory of it still disturbs me. The other man dreamed me, but he did not dream me exactly. He dreamed, I now realize, the date on the dollar bill (BORGES, 1979, p.10).<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, dream and waking state get (con) fused from the perception and the memory of the *self*-Borges, who, if he were the *other*-Borges, would also have dreamed about the 1969-encounter in 1918 (then future); however, he can only remember one detail of such dream: The date on the dollar bill. It is from that reminiscence that the author-creator-Borges can establish an association between the dream he had, as the

---

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 10.

<sup>12</sup> See footnote 10.

<sup>13</sup> See footnote 10.

<sup>14</sup> See footnote 10.

*other*-Borges, and the waking state he narrates, as the *self*-Borges. The *other*-Borges states, “If you have been me, how can you explain the fact you have forgotten your meeting with an elderly gentleman who in 1918 told you that he, too, was Borges?” The *self*-Borges considers, “Maybe the event was so strange I chose to forget it” (BORGES, 1979, p.8).<sup>15</sup>

Just as there are three times, there are also three settings: The one where the *self*-Borges is in when the fact fictionally occurred (the bench opposite Charles River, in Boston, in the year of 1969), the setting of the *other*-Borges (the bench close to the Rhone, in Geneva, in the year of 1918), and the setting of the author-creator-Borges (not divulged, in 1972).

We now have come to verify the issue of alterity: In fact, it concerns a duplicated Borges. The *self*-Borges realizes it when he states, “your name is Jorge Luis Borges. I, too, am Jorge Luis Borges” (BORGES, 1979, p.4).<sup>16</sup> Although they are the *same*, they are not, for there is a temporal distance separating them. This is verified once again by the *self*-Borges when he declares that “The man of yesterday is not the man of today” (BORGES, 1979, p.7).<sup>17</sup> Therefore, according to *self*-Borges’s own realization, “We two, seated on this bench in Geneva or Cambridge, are perhaps proof of this” (BORGES, 1979, p.7).<sup>18</sup>

Nonetheless, according to Dufour, “*In order to be one (subject), it is necessary to be two, but once you are two, you are already three. One equals two, but two equals three*” (DUFOUR, 2000, p.100; emphasis in the original).<sup>19</sup> He also observes, from Benveniste’s pronoun system, that the trinitarian set (I-you-he), unfolded into two dyads – “I-You,” on the one side, and “(I-You)/He,” on the other – provides a double articulated matrix,<sup>20</sup> observable in different metalanguages. In fact, “the trinitarian set operates as a type of device that controls and corrects the unitary ‘mistake’” (DUFOUR, 2000,

---

<sup>15</sup> See footnote 10.

<sup>16</sup> See footnote 10.

<sup>17</sup> See footnote 10.

<sup>18</sup> See footnote 10.

<sup>19</sup> Excerpt in the original in Portuguese: “*Para ser um (sujeito), é preciso ser dois, mas quando se é dois já se é três. Um é igual a dois, mas dois é igual a três*”.

<sup>20</sup> “On the one hand, the syntagm, the metonymy, the continuity, the apposition, the “e” – in short, the *transitivity*; on the other hand, the paradigm, the metaphor, the disjunction, the opposition, the “or” – in short, the *intransitivity*.” This citation in the original in Portuguese: “Por um lado, o sintagma, a metonímia, a continuidade, a aposição, o ‘e’ – em suma, a *transitividade* -; por outro lado, o paradigma, a metáfora, a disjunção, a oposição, o ‘ou’: em suma, a *intransitividade*” (DUFOUR, 2000, p.104).



p.103).<sup>21</sup> In a certain way, that is what happens to Bakhtin's analysis of Dostoyevsky's *The Double*, when he analyzes Golyadkin's intrigue with his double, a moment when Bakhtin notices three voices,

[...] into which Golyadkin's voice and consciousness have been dismantled: his "I for myself", which cannot manage without another person and without that person's recognition; his fictitious "I for the other" (reflections in the other), that is, Golyadkin's second substituting voice; and finally the genuinely other voice which does not recognize Golyadkin and yet is not depicted as actually existing [...] (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.217).<sup>22</sup>

The dissociation between the *self* and the *other*, between temporality and spatiality, reappears in the short story called *August 25, 1983* (BORGES, 1999a),<sup>23</sup> one of the last written works of Jorge Luis Borges. As in the previous short story, the duplicated *self* and the *other* are Borges, in singular. There is the 61-year-old Borges, who, upon checking in at a hotel in Adrogué, realizes that his name is already written in fresh ink. Upon entering the room, he hears a voice to which he used to listen in his own recordings. They introduce one another: The older one, who is 84 years old, awaits death while the younger one reminisces on how he had begun writing a draft of the story which they were all experiencing.<sup>24</sup>

Unlike the previous short story, the narrator here is the one who is temporally more distant at the time of the writing. There is an exact 23-year distance: "But yesterday was my sixty-first birthday." "When in your waking state you reach this night again, yesterday will have been your eighty-fourth. Today is August 25, 1983" (BORGES, 1999a, p.490).<sup>25</sup> However, though separated by time, spatiality is the same: "Here? We've always been here. It's here in this house on Calle Maipú that I am dreaming you. It is

---

<sup>21</sup> Excerpt in the original in Portuguese: "o conjunto trinitário funciona como uma espécie de dispositivo de controle e correção do 'erro' unário".

<sup>22</sup> See footnote 2.

<sup>23</sup> BORGES, Jorge Luis. *August 25, 1983*. In: BORGES, Jorge Luis. *Collected Fictions*. Translated by Andrew Hurley. New York: Penguin Books, 1999a. pp.498-493.

<sup>24</sup> This is verifiable in the poem *Adrogué* (BORGES, 2000).

BORGES, Jorge Luis. *Adrogué*. In: COLEMAN, Alexander (Ed.). *Jorge Luis Borges: Selected Poems*. Translation by Willis Barnstone et al. New York: Penguin Books, 2000. pp.133-135.

<sup>25</sup> See footnote 23.

here, in this room that belonged to Mother, that I am taking my departure” (BORGES, 1999a, p.490).<sup>26</sup>

According to Dufour (2000, p.145), the ternary sequence falls upon *time* whereas the trinitarian set refers to *space*. In this regard, three times are necessary, i.e., temporality presents itself as a more anachronic than a diachronic sequence due to the fact that “a circulation of subjects behind the inflexibility of grammatical persons” is required (DUFOUR, 2000, p.145).<sup>27</sup> In the case of the short story, there is a *self*, the *self*-Borges-narrator, who is dreaming about the *other*: “‘I am the dreamer,’ I replied, with a touch of defiance” (BORGES, 1999a, p.490),<sup>28</sup> but who is tripartite, as every *one* is already *three*. However, at this pace, *one* turns into *other*, as this *other* is also the *self*, though not the *same*: “But I am Borges, and I am dying in a house on Calle Maipú (BORGES, 1999a, p.490).<sup>29</sup>

As the *subjectum* of the act that postulates time, I am extratemporal. The other always stands over against me as an object: the exterior image of him stands over against me in space and his inner life stands over against me in time. I myself as *subjectum* never coincide with me myself: I – the *subjectum* of the act of self-consciousness – exceed the bounds of this act’s content (BAKHTIN, 1990, p.109).<sup>30</sup>

Both the ternary sequence and temporality, as for the trinitarian set and spatiality, are occurrences

*of the same crucial structure of symbolization*. Such equivalence is the tool that will grant the unity of different symbolization systems to be established: thanks to it, we can travel around these systems and move from one to another without hiatus” (DUFOUR, 2000, p.146, emphasis in the original).<sup>31</sup>

In Borges’s short story, the difference and, at the same time, the plenitude between space and time are that which turns the *self* into the *other* and, concurrently, the *same*;

---

<sup>26</sup> See footnote 23.

<sup>27</sup> Excerpt in the original in Portuguese: “uma circulação de sujeitos por trás da fixidez das pessoas verbais”.

<sup>28</sup> See footnote 23.

<sup>29</sup> See footnote 23.

<sup>30</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>31</sup> Excerpt in the original in Portuguese: “de uma mesma estrutura fundamental da simbolização. Essa equivalência é a ferramenta que vai permitir estabelecer a unidade dos diferentes sistemas de simbolização: graças a ela, podemos viajar nesses sistemas e passar de um para outro sem hiato”.

space continues to be the *same* – yet *another* – due to the action of *time*, according to the literary possibilities conferred under the “house on Calle Maipú” (BORGES, 1999a, p.490).<sup>32</sup>

Borges raises the *double* to its most extreme potency as a reflexive *other*, from which the *self* and the *other* – a modified *self*, who is combined with the alterity that falls upon the *self* – configure each other as the foundation of the short story *Borges and I* (BORGES, 1999b).<sup>33</sup> The *self* of the short story will be, perhaps, the one who walks around Buenos Aires, who likes both the taste of coffee and Stevenson’s prose. As for the *other*, he will be Borges, to whom things happen, or vice versa. Regarding the relationship between them, it is described as “hostile,” given the fact that the *self* lives or lets himself live so that the *other* is able to “plot his literature.” That literature, in its turn, is the reason the very and first *self* exists – if such *self* is, at least, autonomous in relation to *alterity*. To the *self* all there is left is to lose himself, to survive for only a few instants within the *other*: “I shall endure in Borges, not in myself (if, indeed, I am anybody at all), but I recognize myself less in his books than in many others” (BORGES, 1999b, p.324).<sup>34</sup> In a way, the *self* hopes for “the desire to hide from it, to avoid attracting attention to himself, to bury himself in the crowd, to go unnoticed” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.212).<sup>35</sup> Such submission of the *self* towards the *other* is, on the one hand, a way not to contemplate himself, to become only a shadow of the *other*; on the other hand, it is a way to stay alive, to know himself from what his self-consciousness reveals of him and of the other.

By the end of the short story, after the *self* has pointed out peculiarities of himself and the *other*, the characters come together, literarily: “I am not sure which of us it is that’s writing this page” (BORGES, 1999b, p.324).<sup>36</sup>

In *The Death of the Author*, Barthes notices that writings destroy all voices, because it is “that neuter, that composite, that oblique into every subject escapes, the trap where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes” (BARTHES, 2004, p.57).<sup>37</sup> According to Barthes, it is not the author who speaks, just as

---

<sup>32</sup> See footnote 23.

<sup>33</sup> BORGES, Jorge Luis. *Borges and I*. In: BORGES, Jorge Luis. *Collected Fictions*. Translated by Andrew Hurley. New York: Penguin Books, 1999b. p.324.

<sup>34</sup> See footnote 33.

<sup>35</sup> See footnote 2.

<sup>36</sup> See footnote 33.

<sup>37</sup> BARTHES, Roland. *Image Music Text*. Translated by Stephen Heath. London: Fontana Press, 1977.

it is not Borges, for he claims that the other “has written a number of sound pages” which, nevertheless, do not belong to him or to none else, but “to language itself, or to tradition” (BORGES, 1999b, p.324).<sup>38</sup>

## Final Remarks

Upon analyzing alterity in Borges’s short stories, we verified, from the tension between the *self* and the *other*, the inadequacy of restricting ourselves to a binary logic, having been necessary for us to consider, as theorized by Benveniste and analyzed by Dufour, the ternary (time) and trinitarian (space) set. We also took into account Bakhtin’s understanding of *self-consciousness*, without which it would not be possible to hear the singing of three voices in Borges’s short stories (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.221).<sup>39</sup>

In Jorge Luis Borges’s work – from many frequent mirrors, makers of *others* – the *Other*, as death in potency, gives support to his own existence, as the motor of life and future. Moreover, soon, it is only based on the idea of death, by means of a distance from himself, that the same Borges will be able to be a *self*, though *another*. Only then will he be aware of his existence.

## REFERENCES

- BAKHTIN, M. O autor e a personagem na atividade estética. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Estética da criação verbal*. Trad. Paulo Bezerra. 4. ed., São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2003, p.3-192.
- BAKHTIN, M. Os gêneros do discurso. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Estética da criação verbal*. Trad. Paulo Bezerra. 4. ed., São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2003a, p.261-306.
- BAKHTIN, M. O problema do texto na linguística, na filologia e em outras ciências humanas. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Estética da criação verbal*. Trad. Paulo Bezerra. 4. ed., São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2003b, p.307-336.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski*. Trad. Paulo Bezerra. 4. ed., Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 2008.
- BARTHES, R. A morte do autor. In: *O rumor da língua*. Trad. Mario Laranjeira. 2. ed., São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2004.
- BEZERRA, P. Prefácio à segunda edição brasileira. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Problemas da Poética de Dostoiévski*. Trad. Paulo Bezerra. 2. ed., Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 1997, p.V-XII.

---

<sup>38</sup> See footnote 33.

<sup>39</sup> See footnote 2.

BORGES, J. L. *O livro dos seres imaginários*. Trad. Heloisa Jahn. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. *O fazedor*. Trad. Josely Baptista. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2008.

\_\_\_\_\_. *O livro de areia*. Trad. Davi Arrigucci Jr. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Nove ensaios dantescos & a memória de Shakespeare*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2011.

CAVALHEIRO, J. A concepção de autor em Bakhtin, Barthes e Foucault. In: Revista *Signum*. Londrina: Ed. UEL, 2008.

DAHLET, P. Dialogização enunciativa e paisagens do sujeito. In: BRAIT, B. (Org.). *Bakhtin, dialogismo e construção do sentido*. 2. ed. revisada. Campinas, SP: Editora da UNICAMP, 2005.

DUFOUR, D-R. *Os mistérios da trindade*. Trad. Dulce Duque Estrada. Rio de Janeiro: Companhia de Freud, 2000.

BRAVO, N. F. Duplo. In: BRUNEL, P. (org.). *Dicionário de mitos literários*. 2. ed., Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1998.

MATOS, M. Investigação sobre a morte de Alberto Caeiro. In: CAVALHEIRO, J. (Org.). *Literatura, interfaces, fronteiras*. Manaus: UEA Edições, 2010.

Translated by Carolina Kossoski Felix de Moraes Rezende -  
[carolinak.traducao@gmail.com](mailto:carolinak.traducao@gmail.com)

*Received October 03, 2014*

*Accepted April 09, 2015*