

Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics: Reception in Brazil / Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski: a recepção brasileira

Beth Brait*

ABSTRACT

This article furthers reflections developed in the research project entitled, *Discursos de resistência: tradição e ruptura* [Discourse of Resistance: Tradition and Rupture]/CNPq, and focuses on the aspect of the project devoted to how Bakhtin and the Circle's works have been received in Brazil. The published translations, an indisputable source of this reception, are studied through paratexts, or, more specifically, as we call them, *frame-texts*, included in the translated editions since the late 1970s. The authorship of these *frame-texts* helps to outline a clear overview of the various Brazilian articulations of the dialogical perspective, as per Bakhtin and the Circle, at different moments in time. This paper aims to focus on five editions (translations and re-translations) of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1981, 1997, 2002, 2008 and 2010), translated from Russian into Portuguese by Paulo Bezerra. The *frame-texts* included in these editions, also written by the translator, present and deepen the understanding of characteristics of the author translated, and his work, tracing the systematic and institutional development of Bakhtinian thought in Brazil, carried out by researchers who, along with the necessary *listening* to international voices, construct a characteristically Brazilian path.

KEYWORDS: *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*; Frame-texts; Reception in Brazil; Dialogical Analysis of Discourse

RESUMO

Este artigo dá continuidade às reflexões desenvolvidas no projeto/CNPq Discursos de resistência: tradição e ruptura, em sua vertente dedicada à recepção de Bakhtin e o Círculo no Brasil. As traduções, consideradas fonte indiscutível dessa recepção, são observadas a partir dos paratextos, ou mais especificamente, de seus textos-moldura, como os denominamos, que as compõem desde o final da década de 1970. A autoria desses textos-moldura ajuda a traçar um significativo panorama das faces brasileiras da perspectiva dialógica, advinda de Bakhtin e o Círculo, em seus diferentes momentos. Neste trabalho, o objetivo é focalizar as cinco edições (tradução e re-traduições) de Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski (1981, 1997, 2002, 2008 e 2010), todas feitas por Paulo Bezerra, diretamente do russo. Os textos-moldura que as acompanham, também assinados pelo tradutor, apresentam e aprofundam as qualidades do autor traduzido e de sua obra, desenhando a construção sistemática e institucional do pensamento bakhtiniano no Brasil, realizada por pesquisadores que, além da necessária escuta internacional, vão construindo um caminho com especificidades brasileiras.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski; Textos-moldura; Recepção brasileira; Análise Dialógica do Discurso

* Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo – PUCSP, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; Faculdade de Filosofia, Comunicação e Artes - FAFICLA, Departamento de Ciências da Linguagem e Filosofia; Universidade de São Paulo - USP, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; CNPq/Proc.307028/2018-6; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1421-0848>; bbrait@uol.com.br

Initial Remarks

This article furthers reflections developed in the research project, *Discursos de resistência: tradição e ruptura* [Discourse of Resistance: Tradition and Rupture]/CNPq,¹ whose preliminary results are already being published (BRAIT; PISTORI, 2020). The translations, considered an indisputable source of this reception, are focused on the paratexts, or more specifically, the *frame-texts*, as we are denominating them, comprised in these translations since 1979, with the first Brazilian translation of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (MPL)*.² Fundamental problems of the sociological methodology in the science of language (BAKHTIN/VOLOŠINOV, 1979), followed by most recent translations of the Circle's works, namely of Bakhtin (2019), and Volóshinov (2019).

The authorship and the content of the *frame-texts* help to trace an important overview of the various faces of the Brazilian dialogical perspective, coined, Dialogical Discourse Analysis (DDA), as per Bakhtin and the Circle, at different moments in time. Recognizing that the primary characteristic of the *frame-text* is to anticipate the main text, involving it in a way that presents it persuasively to readers, convincing them of its importance, we affirm that these *frame texts*, produced over more than four decades, indicate a significant differential with regard to the interlocution between Brazilian and international research.

Initially, the engagement was especially given to works produced in French. This was the case of the first Brazilian translation, and even essays, produced in France by scholars who, proficient in Russian, had access to what little was known at that moment, of the work by the group, known as, The Circle. From that beginning, translation and *frame-texts* assume a tone that can be called, “outsourced.” In other words, the reader comes across a third language, from the Brazilian researchers' with Vološinov (considered a mere pseudonym for Bakhtin...), tangling languages, cultures, contexts, epistemological and theoretical perspectives.

Beginning with the 1980s, from the point of view of the translation, and of the *frame texts*, Brazilian research, specifically linked to Bakhtin and Bakhtinian studies

¹ Along this research line, in the Project CNPq/Proc. 303643/2014-5, of which I am the coordinator, Maria Helena Cruz Pistori is an active participant, and together we have developed the work on the reception of Bakhtin and the Circle in Brazil.

² VOLOŠINOV, V. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik, Seminar Press: New York, 1973.

assumes, so to speak, the first discursive-utterance, both in the translations, done directly from Russian (BAKHTIN, 1981; BAKHTIN, 1988),³ and the *frame-texts*, authored by Brazilian researchers. Undoubtedly, a fundamental beginning in the construction of the Brazilian reception that stems from the source, and that, in debating with international researchers, includes the Russians, their archives and their libraries.

This article aims to focus on five Brazilian editions (translation and retranslations) of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics (PDP)* (1981, 1997, 2002, 2008 and 2010),⁴ all done by Paulo Bezerra, directly from Russian. The *frame-texts* included in these editions, also by the translator, present and deepen understanding of the qualities of the translated author and his work, delineating the systematic and institutional development of Bakhtinian thought in Brazil, carried out by researchers who, along with the necessary *listening* to international voices, construct a characteristically Brazilian path.

What is found here, through the discussion of *frame-texts*, is articulated strictly about the reception of Bakhtin and the Circle in Brazil, seeking some forms, found in the academic and publishing spheres, to confront language from the reflections carried out by these Russian thinkers – creators of a powerful philosophical, linguistic and artistic discursivity. Discussing this reception incurs touching on activities that concretized and continue concretizing Brazilian Bakhtinian studies, which not only involve the works of Mikhail Bakhtin, but two other thinkers who provided an innovative view of language, namely Valentin Vološinov and Pavel Medvedev. I would like to emphasize that the results presented here, linked to the larger project, aim to assign how the Brazilian identity in Bakhtinian studies is constituted, carried out in the alterity among Brazilian researchers and others abroad, articulating tradition and rupture.

In this article I will not deal with theoretical specificities that involve the concept of *frame-texts*, nor the methodological routing specific to the selection and treatment of the corpus of the research, since these aspects are treated in Brait and Pistori (2020). I highlight just two aspects that, taking reference from the said work, help readers situate themselves beyond what I have presented in the preceding paragraphs.

³ TN: English versions of these correspond to the following references, respectively: a) BAKHTIN, M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and translated by Caryl Emerson. University of Minnesota Press: Minnesota, 1984; b) *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*. Translated by Vadim Liapunov. University of Texas Press: Texas, 1990.

⁴ For reference to the English version, see footnote 3a.

This is the case of the conception and the function of the *frame-texts*, maintained throughout the research, “considered elements that, on composing the whole are inserted in the tradition of an international scientific academic moment or are revealed as resistance that exposes the specificities of current trends in Brazilian science of language” (BRAIT; PISTORI, 2020, p.34).⁵ Similarly, the concept of (re)translation, provided by Matos; Faleiros (2014, p.54, our emphasis):

[...] retranslation is an entire rewriting of a source text, which coexists and is related to the rewritings of this same source text, establishing with it a network of multiple modes of (re)reading it and (re)writing it, a gesture that is, ultimately a critique [...] the (re)translation [...] aims to make evident that a (re)translation is a gesture of accretion: *adding new ways of reading and writing that text in the space of the (re)translation.*⁶

Armed with these elements and the research objective on the whole, we move on to the specificities of *PDP*, and the characteristics of its pertinent *frame-texts*.

1 Problemas da Poética de Dostoiévski /Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics⁷ and its frame-texts.

The five Brazilian editions (translations and re-translations) of *Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski /Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics⁸* (1981, 1997, 2002, 2008 e 2010) were done by the same translator: Paulo Bezerra. Researcher, and professor of Russian Literature at the University of São Paulo, Bezerra is recognized for the excellence of his work in his three fields, and for the fundamental role he plays, together with Boris Schnaiderman, in bringing Dostoevsky into the Portuguese language, and in creating and consolidating Bakhtinian studies in Brazil. In *PDP*, he undertook the translation directly from the Russian source text M. BAKHTIN *Problémi poétiki Dostoiévskovo*. 3rd. ed.

⁵ In Portuguese: “considerados como elementos que, ao compor o todo inserem-se na tradição de um momento científico acadêmico internacional ou se revelam como resistência que expõe as especificidades da ciência brasileira da linguagem na atualidade” (BRAIT; PISTORI, 2020, p.34).

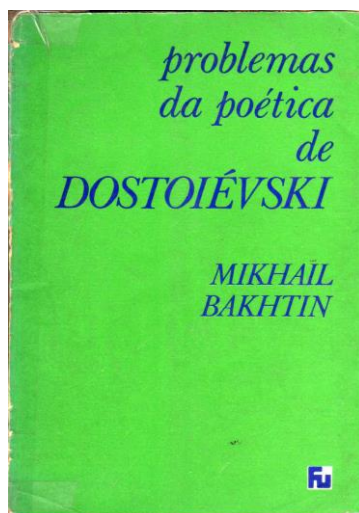
⁶ In Portuguese: “[...] retradução é toda reescritura de um texto-fonte, que coexiste e se relaciona com outras reescrituras desse mesmo texto-fonte, estabelecendo com elas uma rede de modos plurais de (re)lê-lo e (re)escrevê-lo, gesto que é, finalmente, uma crítica. [...] a (re)tradução [...] procura evidenciar que uma (re)tradução é um gesto de acréscimo: *acrécimo de novos modos de ler e escrever aquele texto no espaço da (re)tradução.*”

⁷ For reference of the English version, see footnote 3a.

⁸ For reference of the English version, see footnote 3a.

Moscow: Kbudójestvennaya Literature, 1972, to which he returns with each new edition, considered here as (re)translation, insofar as he interferes in his own translation, not to simply correct possible slips, but, from a rereading of the original and the translation, he clarifies, in the lexical filigrees, for example, essential theoretical aspects of Bakhtinian thought. Each edition has *frame-texts* signed by him, with important clarifications about the discoveries made with each (re)reading of the source text, and the consequences for the revision and amplification of the edition in question.

1.1 First Edition, 1981, and its *Frame-text*



Cover by Leon Algamis for the 1st. Brazilian edition, 1981.
Source: author's personal library

The first Brazilian edition of *Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski* (1981)/ *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*⁹ presents a *frame-text*, generically called *flap copy*, presented on the front and back flap of the dust jacket, with the title *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, and signed by the translator, Paulo Bezerra, who, at that moment was completing his master's in Language and Literature at the Catholic Pontifical University of Rio de Janeiro.

The flap copy presents the work of Dostoevsky, the author of the book, and is mainly addressed to literary scholars and critics, but ultimately reaching a much broader readership. I'm referring to researchers who, even if they are not necessarily literary

⁹ For reference of the English version, see footnote 3a.

scholars, may have been interested, professionally, in distinct and innovative ways of dealing with language. In this sense, Bezerra stands out for the fact that he does not treat “a simple book of literary criticism,” but a “book of theses”: the thesis regarding the polyphonic novel, dialogism, the carnivalization of literature, literary genres and their transformation in the works of Dostoevsky.

Aside from this, he makes it clear that this thesis could only be conceived thus, thanks to the works of Dostoevsky, determined “over a broader background of creative thought and the creation itself.”¹⁰ On considering these central elements of Bakhtin’s work, necessarily interconnected with the set of work written by the author of *Crime and Punishment*, Paulo Bezerra anticipates the possibility (that at times happens to this day) of readers of *PDP* consider the concepts/theses as if Bakhtin had conceived them theoretically, and took Dostoevsky just as an example, which would be, so to speak, a heresy epistemologically. Even though they can be mobilized to address language in different spheres of knowledge, these *theses-concepts* were indicated by Dostoevsky’s works. Not the opposite. From this warning, occurs a precise synthesis of all these *theses/concepts*, piquing the reader’s interest and spurring the reading.

The *flap copy*, then, functions as a *framing-text* for this first Brazilian translation of *PDP*. Due to the force of its role in inaugurating and clarifying the work, and its capacity to foreground the main questions addressed in *PDP*, it is included in all of the other editions, without the title, but with the author’s signature. This authorship, which extends to the translation, characterizes what Bakhtin (2016, p.73, our italics) calls the *second subject*, in relation to the author, designating the text he’s created as a *framing text*. “The problem of the *second subject* who is reproducing (for one purpose or another, including for research purposes) a text (another’s) and creating a framing text (one that comments, evaluates, objects, and so forth).”¹¹ It is precisely the *frame-text* and its *framing subject* that is of interest in this research. It addresses the articulation that exposes a consistent side of the reception of Bakhtinian thought in Brazil, at the beginning of the 1980s. Coupled with the translation of one of the most important works by Bakhtin,

¹⁰ In Portuguese: “sobre um fundo mais amplo, de abrangência multidisciplinar, que é o problema do diálogo como fundamento do pensamento criativo e da própria criação”.

¹¹ BAKHTIN, M. *Speech Genres and Other Early Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.

carried out directly from the Russian, is this *frame-text*, uttered/signed by a *framing subject* belonging to the universe of Brazilian research.

In 1979, in the first translation of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*,¹² the *frame-texts* were signed by, as *framing subjects*, two renowned foreign linguists¹³ – Roman Jakobson and Marina Yaguello, as recognized authorities in language studies, guarantee the quality and importance of the work that was being translated for the first time in Brazil, from the French version. Two years later, it is possible to perceive that the reception of one more work of the currently known as, the Circle, presents a new face, which can be highlighted by at least two aspects. In the first place, the translation was done directly from the Russian, without the mischief of the intermediation of a third language, which was a clear advance in the translation practice. Secondly, and no less important, the Brazilian reception takes place twice in the work of a Brazilian researcher: as a Dostoevsky scholar and of Bakhtinian studies.

Even though the flap copy as a genre, so to speak, may seem a modest text, merely an editorial requirement to pique the curiosity of the reader about the content of the book, in this case it serves a very important function: to flag the constitution of a universe within Brazilian research concerned with Bakhtinian studies, and the distinctness of this research. It is in this sense, and especially in contrast to the first Brazilian translation of *MPL* (1979)¹⁴ and the *PDP* (1981),¹⁵ which this *frame-text* functions as a mark, being here considered as cultural resistance, drawing a new silhouette of the Brazilian reception of the work, through intellectual and professional elaboration.

Next, we see that this *theory of reception* is confirmed in the *frame-texts* presented in the editions that followed, addressed in 2.2.

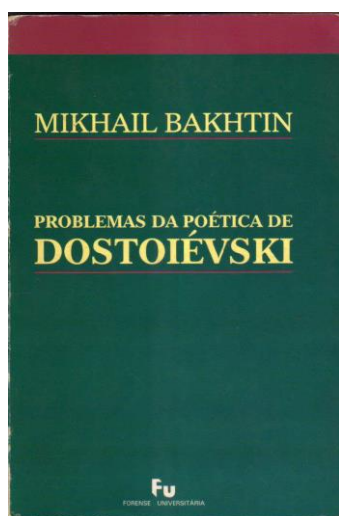
¹² For reference, see footnote 2. The English version was released in 1973, and the Brazilian version in 1979.

¹³ See Brait and Pistori (2020).

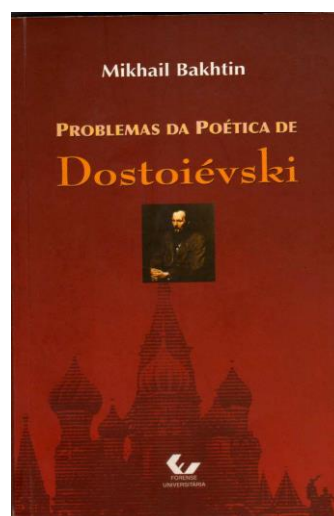
¹⁴ For reference, see footnote 2. TN: The article is referring to the Brazilian version released in 1979. The English version was released in 1973.

¹⁵ For reference, see footnote 3a. TN: The article is referring to the Brazilian version released in 1981. The English version was released in 1984.

1.2 Second Edition (1997) and its *Frame-texts*



Cover, without credits, 2nd. Brazilian edition, 1997.
Source: Author's personal library



Cover by Sílvio Dias, 3rd. Brazilian edition, 2002.
Source: Author's personal library

The second edition of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1997),¹⁶ was released sixteen years after the first, with an explanation on the second title page, that it was a revised edition, translated directly from Russian, with notes and preface by Paulo Bezerra, indicating the translator's university affiliation: Federal University Fluminenses, and the University of Sao Paulo. It also indicates the source of the translation, but without the date.

Thus, we achieve our first objective, which is to show how, through the ever-increasing research, and each translation in particular, focusing on the *frame-texts*, the reception of Bakhtin (and the Circle) occurs through the exposition of the systematic and institutional construction of Bakhtinian thought in Brazil.

In 1997, the translator, Paulo Bezerra, had already defended his dissertation and his two theses, all linked to Bakhtinian studies: Master's, *Carnivalization and history in Incidente em Antares* (1982); Doctoral: *The genesis of the novel in the theory by Mikhail Bakhtin* (1989); Teaching Credential: *Bobók, by Dostoevsky. Polemic and dialogism*

¹⁶ For reference, see footnote 3a. TN: The article is referring to the Brazilian version. The English version was released in 1984.

(1997).¹⁷ In addition, Bezerra has held a post as professor and researcher in two renowned Brazilian Universities: Federal University Fluminenses, and the University of São Paulo (from 1990). In addition, prior to these posts, he was a professor at other Institutes of Higher Education. His title as professor, indicated on the title page, along with that of translator, is a mark of his institutionalized role in research, with activities developed through research lines, courses, projects etc., focusing on themes related to Russian studies (language and literature), Bakhtin, Dostoevsky, dialogism and polyphony in the novel, Brazilian literature, and translation.

In the preface to the second Brazilian edition – a robust 8-page essay – Paulo Bezerra’s status as Bakhtinian researcher-translator is strongly affirmed. He justifies this second edition as the result of a “careful revision” of the first one, aiming to “correct some imprecisions [...], contributing to a *better apprehension of the theoretical reflections of Bakhtin for the Brazilian reader*”¹⁸ (1997, p.V, our emphasis), and a synthesis of the theoretical reflection of Bakhtin, and the need for a translator of stature:

A theoretical reflection with a level of depth and breadth, and constructed with the formal rigor characteristic of Bakhtin, requires the translator to have the awareness and the responsibility to produce a text shaped in a language that qualitatively reaches the heights of the object translated. It is the minimum required of a translator, and this was our concern in revising the initial text of this book, *after two decades of continuous studies of the works of Bakhtin*, and fifteen years after its first edition (BEZERRA, 1997, p.V, our emphasis).¹⁹

Bezerra then informs us that, between the release of the first and the second editions, the source text in Russian had been restored in its entirety, implicating consequences that affect the translation with regard to achieving theoretical rigor, such as the need for the substitution of certain terms, as well as revisions to some of the titles of

¹⁷ In Portuguese, respectively: *Carnavalização e história em Incidente em Antares* (1982); *A gênese do romance na teoria de Mikhail Bakhtin* (1989); *Bobók, de Dostoiévski. Polêmica e dialogismo* (1997).

¹⁸ In Portuguese: “corrigir algumas imprecisões [...]”; apresenta a razão que motivou a (re)tradução: “tornar o texto *conceitualmente mais preciso* [...]”, contribuindo para uma *melhor apreensão das reflexões teóricas de Bakhtin pelo leitor brasileiro*” (1997, p.V, our emphasis).

¹⁹ In Portuguese: “Uma reflexão teórica com o nível de profundidade e abrangência e construída com o rigor formal como o faz Bakhtin tem de encontrar no tradutor a consciência e a responsabilidade de produzir em sua língua um texto calcado numa linguagem qualitativamente à altura do objeto traduzido. É o mínimo que se exige de um tradutor, e foi essa a nossa preocupação ao rever o texto inicial deste livro, *após duas décadas de estudos permanente da obra bakhtiniana* e quinze anos após sua primeira edição (BEZERRA, 1997, p.V, destaques nossos).”

chapters. An example of this, among others, is the concept of the so-called, *comical-serious* genre, replacing the *serious-comical*, based on the theory of Carnival and Bakhtin's category of Carnivalization. This aspect is very important with regard to the modifications that do not imply a straightforward textual revision, but, on the one hand, required contact with the restored source text, demonstrating Bezerra's continuous researcher/translator engagement, and, on the other, require that Bakhtinian theory be taken as a parameter for the changes. Without a doubt, a form of demonstrating our hypothesis: the *frame-text* is a register of the stage of construction of Bakhtinian studies in Brazil, as the unfolding of the preface reiterates.

In the subsection, A revolutionary theory, which covers the rest of the essay, Bezerra initially provides a Brazilian Bakhtinian studies literature review, at the point of this second edition, affirming the consecration of Bakhtin's name in university circles, including in translations, various scholarly books, dissertations and theses, justified by the affirmation that "Bakhtin is currently studied in practically all the graduate courses in Brazilian literature, literary and linguistic theory, making his books a mandatory bibliographic reference in our academic life" (BEZERRA, 1997).²⁰ He states that Bakhtinian studies have extended beyond the domain of Literature, reaching Linguistics, Anthropology, Philosophy, and History, citing the *100 years of Bakhtin Colloquium* (1995) as evidence.²¹ Further characterizing this panorama, Bezerra references articles by Boris Schnaiderman, and their deepening in understanding Bakhtinian works, as well as his own contributions in broadening Bakhtinian studies, which includes: translating *PDP* for the first time in Brazil, and directly from Russian; defending a dissertation and two

²⁰ In Portuguese: "Bakhtin é hoje estudado em praticamente todos os cursos de pós-graduação em literatura brasileira, teoria da literatura e linguística, o que torna seus livros bibliografia obrigatória na nossa vida acadêmica" (BEZERRA, 1997, p.VII).

²¹ O *Colóquio Intenacional – Dialogismo: Cem Anos de Bakhtin* was held from the 16th to the 18th of October, 1995, at the Maria Antona University Center- University of São Paulo, as an activity previewed by the Construction of meaning, and acquisition of languages Project/ International Accord CAPES/COFECUB/USP/Université de Paris X/Nanterre, which I organized, acting, at that moment, as the head of the Linguistics and coordinator of the Accord. As an event of the Linguistics Department and the Graduate Program in Semiotics and General Linguistics, of the College of Philosophy and Human Sciences, exactly 25 years ago, with support from many organizations – FAPESP, CNPq, CAPES, COFECU – the event represented the first grand scale international colloquium, with national researchers from various Brazilian and foreign universities, who participated in 9 roundtable sessions. The event opened with a conference entitled, *Bakhtin 100 degrees (A Brazilian experience)- Bakhtin 40 graus (Uma experiência brasileira)*, proffered by Boris Schnaiderman, honoree at the Colloquium. One of the results was the book, *Bakhtin, dialogism and making meaning - Bakhtin, dialogismo e construção de sentido*, BRAIT, B. (Org.) Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP, 1997. [2. ed. 2013]

academic theses along this line of knowledge; producing comparative studies of Dostoevsky and Machado using the key concept of polyphony; along with various classes taught and articles published. Thus, Bezerra takes over and highlights this condition of researcher/translator/professor who “has been systematically studying the archive of Bakhtinian theory” (BEZERRA, 1997, p.VIII).²²

Continuing the intellectual pursuit, the writer of the preface produces a critique of *PDP*, beginning with the fact that the work reveals “an author who is characterized by his most absolute theoretical fearlessness,” especially with respect to the “audacious and unexpected way the Bakhtin discusses the function of the author in the works of Dostoevsky,” disconcerting “readers who have a more or less traditional theoretical education, with his absolute novelty, which he brings on relativizing, up to a certain point, the stance of the author in the polyphonic novel created by Dostoevsky” (BEZERRA, 1997, p.VII).²³

From these statements, which evaluatively inform and stimulate the reader’s interest, Bezerra provides a true lesson in theory with regard to Bakhtinian reflections, still very relevant, which starts from the hypothesis that “Dostoevsky’s characters display a noteworthy inner independence in relation to the author in the structure of the novel.”²⁴ Through a competent “reading,” by an authority in the subject, he touches on fundamental points in the Bakhtinian argument to affirm that Bakhtin “admits that the characters in the works of Dostoevsky have a freedom and independence in relation to the author, but makes it very clear that, as the entire Dostoevskian novel is dialogic, the author also participates in the dialogue, but is also simultaneously its organizer” (BEZERRA, 1997, p.VIII).²⁵ He mentions the text, a re-elaboration of 1963’s *PDP*, highlighting, that from then on, the philosophical view of Bakhtin and, the fact that the man-character is a product of discourse, considering that “in the polyphonic universe, both the discourse of the hero,

²² In Portuguese: “vem estudando de forma sistemática o acervo teórico bakhtiniano” (BEZERRA, 1997, p.VII).

²³ In Portuguese: “um autor que se caracteriza pelo mais absoluto destemor teórico”, especialmente no que diz respeito à “maneira ousada e inusitada com que Bakhtin discute a função do autor na obra dostoiévskiana”, desconcertando “o leitor de formação teórica mais ou menos tradicional pela absoluta novidade que ele traz ao relativizar, até certo ponto, a posição do autor no romance polifônico criado por Dostoiévski” (BEZERRA, 1997, p.VII).

²⁴ In Portuguese: “as personagens de Dostoiévski revelam uma notória independência interior em relação ao autor na estrutura do romance”.

²⁵ In Portuguese: “admite liberdade e independência das personagens em relação ao autor na obra dostoiévskiana, mas deixa claro que, sendo dialógica a totalidade do romance dostoiévskiano, o autor também participa do diálogo, mas é ao mesmo tempo seu organizador” (BEZERRA, 1997, p.VIII).

and the discourse about the hero, derive from the dialogical treatment, or rather, “the author participates in the dialogue, in isonomy with the characters, but exerts very complex and complementary functions.”²⁶ He reiterates and furthers the idea that Bakhtin develops the theme of the author as an aesthetic phenomenon. The text referred to here is, ‘The author and the hero in aesthetic activity’, written around 1924, comparing the treatment of the author-character, both in *PDP* (1929). According to him, it presents a more conceptual and more precise treatment, constituting “the key to understanding Bakhtinian theory” (BEZERRA, 1997, p.X).²⁷ Furthermore, he emphasizes that it is in ‘The author and the hero in aesthetic activity’ that is found the fundamental affirmation for the idea of the author in Bakhtin: “The author-creator helps us to understand also the author-man [...]. As one can see there is a direct relation between the artistic creation and the human being as a creative essence [...]” (BEZERRA, 1997, p.XI).²⁸

This radical synthesis of essential points in the preface to the second Brazilian edition allows us to affirm that these *frame-texts*, on anticipating the reading of the translation, present elements essential to the comprehension of the Bakhtinian text, beyond those that were found (and continue to be found) on the same *flap copy* in the two editions. If in this sense it can be considered fundamental at the end of the 1990s, making it possible to dive deeply into the *PDP* and its author, its pertinence resounds to this day in research linked to the knowledge of Bakhtinian thought. On including other works referring to the philosophical-artistic-literary incursions of *PDP* through the theory of the novel, constitutively related to the thesis defended there, the translator-preface-writer develops more deeply a fundamental aspect for the comprehension of, for example, the Bakhtinian concepts of *author* and *character*, *author-character*, *polyphonic universe*. Complex themes that are in a constant simmering state, in discourse studies, and literary language in general.

However, if one eye looks toward the epistemological, and revolutionary differential, represented by the set of works by Mikhail Bakhtin, the other maps the broad and diverse Brazilian reception of the Russian thinker, including critically and ironically,

²⁶ In Portuguese: “[...] o autor participa do diálogo, em isonomia com as personagens, mas exerce funções complementares e muito complexas.”

²⁷ In Portuguese: “chave para a compreensão da teoria bakhtiniana” (BEZERRA, 1997, p.X).

²⁸ In Portuguese: “O autor-criador nos ajuda a entender também o autor-homem [...]. Como se vê, existe uma relação direta entre a criação artística e o ser humano enquanto essência criadora [...]” (BEZERRA, 1997, p.XI).”

of what is read by the author of *PDP* as post-modern, and believed in trendy concept (discussed to this day) of the *death of the author*. This dimension of the *frame-text* is essential to the historiographic knowledge, so to speak, from the modes Bakhtin's (and the Circle's, in general, we might add) Brazilian reception has been unfolding. In this case, the preface-writer-translator-researcher-professor, who is part of this reception, mobilizing it in various ways, presents his point of view, showing the diversity and, in a certain sense, the impertinence, according to him, of certain readings.

At this point, we may reinforce the Bakhtinian concept of *framing context*, employed in another article about the reception of Bakhtin in Brazil,²⁹ defining it as the “complex interrelationship of the text (object of study and reflection) and of the *framing context* to be created (that questions, objects, etc.), in which scientific, cognizant, and evaluative thought is carried out.” (2016, p.76; our emphasis).³⁰ As this argumentative reflection anticipates the translated text, one of the inherent functions of the *frame-text* remains clear: to prepare the reader; to *frame* the reader's reading, and to anticipate aspects that readers may not know in relation to the text before them. Given that the author of the *frame-text* is an authority on the subject, the reading is done, inevitably, taking into account, accepting or not, the advertency contained within the information. This means that the *concrete utterance*, in the Bakhtinian sense, must be understood as the indissociable articulation between the *frame-text* and the translation. To conclude these remarks on *frame-text* and the fundamental role represented by Paulo Bezerra as a *second subject*, *framing-subject* configured in the set of *translation+frame-texts*, there is one more element that characterizes the context of reception, Bakhtin's framing context. It is the absence of a clear distinction, from the point of view of the titles, between *Problemy tvorčestva Dostoevskogo* [Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation/Works]/1929,³¹ and *Problémi poétiki Dostoiévskovo/ Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics/1963*[1984 -English version].³² The date of the first Russian version (1929) is presented in the preface, as it

²⁹ See Brait; Pistori (2020, p.34).

³⁰ In Portuguese: “complexa inter-relação do texto (objeto de estudo e reflexão) e do *contexto emoldurador* a ser criado (que interroga, faz objeções, etc.), no qual se realiza o pensamento cognoscente e valorativo do cientista” (2016, p.76; grifos nossos).

³¹ TN: Here we offer two choices for the translation of ‘*tvorčestva*’ – 1) ‘Creation’, as per Grillo, in her forthcoming article; 2) ‘Works’, as per the literal translation of the author's version in Portuguese - *Problemas da obra de Dostoiévski*.

³² For reference, see footnote 3a. TN: There are no discrepancies with regard to the title of the second version in its English and Portuguese translations - all versions translate *poétiki* as *poetics* or *poéticas*. In Portuguese the full title is: *Problemas da poética de Dostoiévski*.

could not otherwise not be the case, but always as *PDP*. There are, meanwhile, elements that suggest the existence of two editions, such as the reference to the texts with regard to the rewriting of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, addendum 1 (commentary), and 2 (without a title) which appears later in the 4th Brazilian edition of *Estética da criação verbal* [Aesthetics of Verbal Creativity] (2003, pp.337-357), and in the 4th and 5th Brazilian editions of *PDP* (2008, pp.311-317; 318-338; 2010, pp.311-317; pp.318-338). If we compare the summary of *Problemy Tvorčestva Dostoevskogo* (Leningrad: Priboj, 1929) [accessed here through the Italian translation - BACHTIN, Michail M. (2010/1929)], we note that, included among other differences, in the 1963 edition, there are some methodological observations, which serve as fundamental text for what Bezerra notes in the preface to the second Brazilian edition: "It is worthy to note still that in the book on Dostoevsky, the metalinguistics are already outlined as method of analysis and hypothesis of a future synthesis of the philology with the philosophy that Bakhtin imagined as a new and specific discipline of the Humanities, capable of coherently joining linguistic, philosophical, anthropological and literary theory" (BEZERRA, 1997, p.X).³³ This means that the edition is the same as the 1963 version, although it is registered as 1929. Bezerra (on another occasion) explains and emphasizes the reason for the different titles: "at that time (referring to 1963, the year of the re-release of the 1929 book, under the new title *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics...*) the concept of Bakhtinian poetics was already central to the works of Bakhtin, which is evidenced by the inclusion of the new chapter, 'Characteristics of Genre and Plot Composition in Dostoevsky's Works',³⁴ a truly poetic history of literary genres, which includes the theory of carnivalization and the set of Dostoevsky's works."³⁵

This second edition presents, in the fourth chapter, one more *frame-text*. Unsigned, comprising three paragraphs, the text highlights Dostoevsky's status as one of the major novelists of all time, and the originality of Bakhtin's analysis carried out in

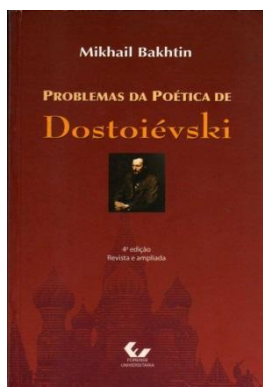
³³ In Portuguese: "Cabe observar ainda que no livro sobre Dostoiévski, a metalinguística já se esboça como método de análise e hipótese de uma futura síntese da filologia com a filosofia que Bakhtin imaginava como disciplina humana nova e específica capaz de reunir em contiguidade a linguística, a filosofia, a antropologia e a teoria da literatura" (BEZERRA, 1997, p.X).

³⁴ For reference, see footnote 3a, p.V.

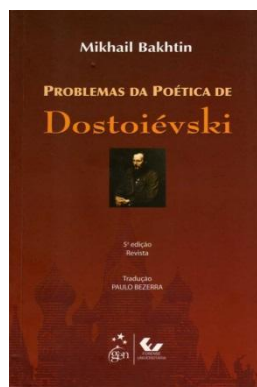
³⁵ In Portuguese: "àquela altura (refiro-me a 1963, ano da reedição do livro de 1929 com o novo título de *Problemas da poética...*) o conceito de poética bakhtiniana já era central na obra de Bakhtin, o que se comprova pela inclusão do novo capítulo Peculiaridades do gênero, do enredo e da composição das obras de Dostoiévski, uma verdadeira poética histórica dos gêneros literários, na qual está incluída a teoria da carnavalização e o conjunto da obra de Dostoiévski."

PDP, also included in the two editions that follow this one. In this case, it is clearly an editorial *frame-text*, and not authorial, and lacking MANY consequences with regard to the reflections developed here.

The third Brazilian edition, published five years later, *Problemas da Poética de Dostoiévski* [Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics, 1984] (2002), includes the same *frame-texts* as the second edition: flap copy, preface to the second Brazilian edition, and the fourth chapter. With the exception of the cover, which is very different from the previous version (as previously presented here), it constitutes a reprinting. We move on, therefore, to the framing texts of the following edition.



Cover by Sílvio Dias for the 4th Brazilian edition, 2008
Source: author’s personal library



Cover, design not credited, 5th Brazilian edition, 2010
Source: author’s personal library

The fourth Brazilian edition of *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (2008) appears six years after the third edition, explaining, on the second title page, that it is a 4th revised and expanded edition, translated directly from Russian, with notes and preface by Paulo Bezerra, stating his academic institutional affiliations: Fluminense Federal University – University of Sao Paulo.

The preface, entitled *A study a sign of its time*³⁶, signed by Bezerra, is another consistent *frame-text*, which, throughout the 18 pages, reaffirms the authority of the translator-researcher-professor-essayist, addressing and anticipating fundamental aspects of the text with which the reader will soon engage. He explains, in the first section, that this edition anticipates, by one year, *PDP*’s [Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics] 80th anniversary, suggesting its vitality is the main reason for its durability over time, as well

³⁶ In Portuguese: “Uma obra à prova de seu tempo.”

as its “capacity to broaden in its reception” (BEZERRA, 2008, p.V).³⁷ Directly following this, he shares what characterizes this (re)translation, addressing the status of *PDP* as a consecrated work in Brazil, and abroad. He explains the reasons for carrying out this careful revision, which include both the direct translations from Dostoevsky’s novels, justified by the problems of the existing editions in Portuguese, and the careful attention to theoretical-conceptual aspects: “[...] besides recreating the spirit of the work in the language closest possible to the original, the direct translation allows for a *much broader and deeper understanding of the characteristics of Bakhtinian theory* [...]” and “of the properties of Dostoevsky’s discourse” (BEZERRA, 2008, p.VI; our emphasis).³⁸

He clarifies, furthermore, that this ‘edition comes ‘beefed-up’ with two essential texts: both written by Bakhtin (1961) regarding *PDP*,” entitled “*PDP – the guise of commentary*”, and “*Sketches of reformulating PDP*,” which was inserted in *Aesthetics and Verbal Art*,” where the idea of the *foreign body* is proposed. In the words of Bezerra, translated to *PDP*, these texts broaden and fine tune the concepts of dialogism, monologism, polyphony, the relation author/character, I-other, unfinished, among others.

However, once again it is important to highlight that the revisions undertaken in the editions do not implicate only subtle practices in style and translation, which on their own are justified, but the rigor in relation not only to Dostoevsky, but especially the Bakhtinian perspective, its nuances, specificities and, consequently, the treatment necessary for the knowledge of its most innovative and significant constructs. This theoretical dimension even reaches the inclusion of the annexes, which help in understanding the ideas and the reformulations from the 1929 text, thus facilitating ways of reading Bakhtin in perspective. It is, undoubtedly, a demonstration of the new phase in which the construction of Bakhtinian studies were found.

The section that follows, entitled ‘A revolution in the poetics of the novel,’³⁹ presents and discusses the pertinent idea that the *PDP* “[...] represents an authentic revolution in the theory of the novel as a specific genre and product of a historical poetics”

³⁷ In Portuguese: “capacidade de ampliar-se na recepção” (BEZERRA, 2008, p.V).

³⁸ In Portuguese: “[...] além de recriar o espírito da obra na linguagem mais próxima possível do original, a tradução direta permite uma *compreensão muitíssimo mais ampla e profunda das peculiaridades da teoria bakhtiniana* [...]” and “das propriedades do discurso dostoiévskiano” (BEZERRA, 2008, p.VI; *itálicos nossos*).

³⁹ In Portuguese: “Uma revolução na poética do romance.”

(BEZERRA, 2008, p.VII),⁴⁰ which has continuity in other important texts present in *Questions of literature and aesthetics*, the theory of the novel (1988). In addition to explaining this aspect in depth, Bezerra highlights the value and the potential of the carnivalesque elements in the serio-comical genre, which becomes important even to the comprehension of the masterpieces by Brazilian writers, such as Machado de Assis, Erico Verissimo, and Mario de Andrade, among others.

Next, the section, Dialogism and polyphony,⁴¹ revisits, with breadth and precision, the way in which Bakhtin discusses the function of the author in the works by Dostoevsky – an issue covered in the Preface of the second Brazilian edition (1997), now remobilizing the complex relationship *author-characters*, always of interest to the researcher of artistic or other discourses. I'd like to highlight here a statement that, in my view, synthesizes and avoids many misconceptions around the theme, and especially the role of the author in the polyphonic novel genre:

[...] the dialogue of the author with the hero, and in Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel, a constructional procedure of the characters, and at the same time, the affirmation of the presence, not ostensive, although efficient, of the author in this process. Without injuring ever the integrity of the character, as a constituent of Dostoevsky's polyphonic arrangement, neither erases nor neutralizes the presence of the author and his active conception in the novelistic set, on the contrary, it's an effectively new and original condition of materialization of this presence and this conception in the structure of the polyphonic dialogue (BEZERRA, 2008, p.XII).⁴²

The next section, which bears the curious title of, 'The Bakhtin who is Bakhtin', is centered on a panorama of reception of Bakhtin's works, in Brazil and abroad. Bezerra situates the main contributions to the knowledge of Bakhtin in Brazil, among other names. The reflections on literature and culture by Boris Shnaiderman, and Jose Guilherme Melquior deserve mention. Other Brazilian researchers who deserve mention are those

⁴⁰ In Portuguese: “[...] representa uma autêntica revolução na teoria do romance como gênero específico e produto de uma poética histórica” [BEZERRA, 2008, p.VII]

⁴¹ In Portuguese: “Dialogismo e polifonia.”

⁴² In Portuguese: “[...] o diálogo do autor com o herói é, no romance polifônico de Dostoiévski, um procedimento de construção das personagens e, ao mesmo tempo, a afirmação da presença não ostensiva, porém eficaz, do autor nesse processo. Sem ferir jamais a integridade da personagem, como constituinte do arranjo polifônico, o procedimento polifônico de Dostoiévski tampouco apaga ou neutraliza a presença do autor e sua concepção ativa no conjunto romanesco, conseguindo, ao contrário, criar condição efetivamente nova e original de materialização dessa presença e dessa concepção na estrutura do diálogo polifônico” (BEZERRA, 2008, p.XII).

who have applied Bakhtinian thought to linguistic studies. Bezerra then follows with a long excerpt (almost 10 pages) dedicated to the pioneering reading Julia Kristeva carried out on Bakhtin, detailing and responding to this reception, which he considered erroneous, demonstrating, through a strong and devastating argument, based especially on the “conception of dialogism as intertextuality” and on the fact that Kristeva states that Structural Linguistics and Psychoanalysis “were the deep foundation of Bakhtinian thought.” Considering the robust reception Kristeva received in Brazil, Bezerra situates her followers, harshly, demonstrating that they have read Bakhtin via Kristeva, in other words, they haven’t read Bakhtin. As incredible as it may seem, this jumbled access to Bakhtin continues to occur to this day, especially when neophyte researchers join intertextuality and dialogism, as if they were the same thing. Thus, the critique is pertinent, since *intertextuality* is a concept that is not in any of Bakhtin’s works (nor in the works of any other thinkers of the Circle) and comes from Kristeva’s reflection – leading us to paraphrase Bezerra, The Kristeva that is Kristeva!

The fifth Brazilian edition of *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* ([1984] 2010),⁴³ although revised, presents the same *frame-texts* that comprise the fourth edition. For this reason, although there are slight alterations to the texts, it is outside the scope of the objective of this broader research and this particular article.

Some Brief Final Remarks

The *frame-texts* that accompany the Brazilian translation and retranslations of *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* were a prime set of texts for confirming the hypothesis that has driven this research. On the one hand, the idea, previously presented in the study on the reception of *MPL* (BRAIT; PISTORI, 2020), based on (MATOS; FALEIROS, 2014, p.54), that the (re)translations of a work constitute the access to the knowledge produced in a source language, in a given space-time, instating its existence, through the target language, in a new space-time, in another culture, incorporating it to new systems of production, circulation and reception of knowledge. The (re)translation, as previously stated, is a gesture of accretion: *the addition of new modes of reading and writing that*

⁴³ For reference, see footnote 3a. TN: Publication date 2010 refers to the Brazilian version of the fifth edition.

text in the space of (re)translation. On the other hand, and concomitantly, as well as the (re)translation, the *texts* that they frame, umbilically joined to it, aim to attend to the need to anticipate the reading and conduct the reader to this *new mode of reading*, commenting, evaluating, interacting directly with the reception of the speech; explaining the qualities and the literary or theoretical originality of a work or of an author, and, also, the chronotopic urgency to Bakhtinianally summarize the issues of the day and place that involve translation and (re)translation.

The Brazilian *frame-texts* of the translations of *PDP*, except for the fourth cover, were written by Paulo Bezzerra, professor, researcher, translator, specialist on Dostoevsky and Bakhtin, among other Russian thinkers, literary critic, and one of the consolidators of Bakhtinian studies in Brazil. This *institutionalized specialization*, both in the academic and publishing arena, displays his proximity and familiarity with the primary sources, as well as the active participation in the production of a Brazilian Bakhtinian perspective, both through the (re)translation, and through the theoretical studies elaborated and by the explicit and attentive awareness in relation to how we receive Bakhtinian thought. The set of *frame-texts* of *PDP* construct the image of this *second subject* in the Bakhtinian sense, actively establishing it in at least three spheres presented: the (re)translation, the theoretical, since great spaces of these frame texts are dedicated to the fundamental themes developed by Bakhtin in *PDP*, and the evaluative reception of the work in Brazil and abroad.

Proof that the *frame-texts* construct, and mirror, tradition and rupture regarding Bakhtinian studies in Brazil, can be found in the significant difference between the translations of the 1979 version of *MPL*, and the 1981 version of *PDP*. If the first translation of *MPL* was done from the French version, with frame-texts (preface and presentation) by the two renowned foreign linguists, Brait and Pistori (2020), who point out, the translation of *PDP*, done directly from the Russian, published just two years later, in 1981, through its *frame-texts*, demonstrates a maturation in the reception of Bakhtinian studies in Brazil.

From the very first Brazilian translations of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, the translator's expertise in Bakhtinian studies and Russian literature is demonstrated through the *frame-texts. textos-moldura*. This authorial *second subject* is announced from the flap copy of the first edition, through the dialogical relationship existing between the *frame-*

texts, which construct the image of a researcher-translator, systematic scholar of the archives of Bakhtinian theory, and the translation of which they are shaped, revealing the critical stance in relation to the different phases, and different groups represented in the reception of Bakhtin in Brazil over the decades.

I end my remarks on the *frame-texts* of *PDP*, aware that this study will have to be contemplated as the Brazilian translation of *Problemas da Criação de Dostoiévski* (Problems of Dostoevsky's Creation)⁴⁴ by Sheila Grillo and Ekaterina Volkova Américo is released. Certainly, as was the case with the second translation of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (2017), done directly from the Russian, the *frame-texts* will demonstrate the vitality of Bakhtinian studies in Brazil, through a new generation of translator-researcher-professors, who take on and display their *second subject* nature in relation to the text translated.

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⁴⁴ This refers to the first (1929) version of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, and not the second (1963) version.

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Translated by Jennifer Sarah Cooper - jennifersarahj@gmail.com;
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7799-6633>

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