

Answerability, Dialogized Heteroglossia, and Context Multiplicity: A Post-Bakhtinian Study of Novelistic Discourse¹

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Abstract

In light of the Bakhtinian heteroglossia and authorial hybrid construction, the present study sets out to argue how the assimilation of alien stylistics into the realm of social and ideological discourse may transcend the limits of the centralizing logos prevalent in the orthodox poetics. In so doing, first, an analysis of the Bakhtinian concepts is provided to renegotiate his argument on the aesthetic and rhetorical capacities of the prose fiction vis-à-vis the totalitarian poetic discourse. Accordingly, as an innovation, this study suggests that the subversive potentiality of a text stems from both its carnivalesque interrelatedness with a dominant culture and its capability to transcend the limits of the said culture and to revitalize its synchronic and diachronic affiliations to other cultures. To confirm this, a good array of examples is drawn from novelistic texts. In Gunter Grass's *The Tin Drum*, the protagonist's mocking attitude towards centripetal fatherhood and his going ahead of clock strokes and hence weaving here-and-now to there-and-then so as to claim possession of his once-beloved woman is a significant case in point. Thus, not only can the marginalized utterances deal with patriarchies of the dominant culture, but also they can restructure their independent sphere based on their internal and external exigencies.

Keywords: Answerability; Context Multiplicity; Dialogism; Heteroglossia; Novelistic Utterances

1. Introduction

In his seminal work, "*Discourse in the Novel*," Bakhtin (1981) asserts that in the course of history, art and life, as two modes of being, have usually been kept

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apart, whereas their interactions, even in the unified subjects of linguistics and philosophy, are inevitable. Bakhtin's perception that language in use is naturally dialogic is assumed to provide a viable, deconstructive solution to the problem of the divorce between life and art, between the requirements of the ever-increasing resistant voices of the long-exploited and marginalized entities and those of a monologic, and at the same time, authoritarian patriarchy.¹ Bakhtin posits the allegedly 'low genres' of comedy and prose, not least the novel, as a forum, where the centripetal forces of the verbal-ideological world and orthodox poetics are challenged by the centrifugal forces of the marginalized voices—a feature which, he believes, is due to the parodic-travesty capacities of such genres. According to Lodge (2000), "this tradition is valued by Bakhtin because it offers permanent resistance to the tyranny of totalitarian 'monologic' ideologies" (p. 105)

Therefore, the present study seeks to renegotiate the Bakhtinian argument on the aesthetic and rhetorical competence of the narrative prose vs. the totalitarian poetic discourse to assert that whereas the Bakhtinian interpenetration of art and life for the deconstruction of the monologism of the poetic language and ideology is a valid possibility, it might even be more telling and significant to focus on and give full weight to the concomitant context-specificity and context-multiplicity of varied ideological and power discourses within a single narrative text that Bakhtin has somehow ignored. In other words, it can be argued that both power and ideology, as manifestations of human civilization, are simultaneously static (quasimetaphysical) and progressive (historical). Accordingly, any textual utterance, though heavily ideology-burdened and power-oriented, inevitably entails some connotation of a regressive and nesting context (as a floating signifier)—which is, in turn, first and foremost textual *per se* (especially in the case of the novel). As a result of this paradoxical episteme, the same novelistic heteroglossia propagated by Bakhtin may also be regarded as a means that permits the different marginalized, alien, and repressed voices to contribute to, and even complete, not only the centripetal-centrifugal cycle within the long-established authoritative system of the verbal-ideological utterances but also the inevitable context-multiplicity of any considered text. As long as a text manages to conceal its subjugation to a crippling alliance with a domineering context, it can serve as a forum for emancipation of other contexts, and hence an androgynous culture is to be begotten.

Although a unitary context also comprises the underground and unconscious potentialities for the survival of other-speechedness, nevertheless complete materialization of the alien discourses requires the underpinning and floating of other contexts/texts within a single text. This multicontextualized textuality can be regarded as a gradual and yet revolutionary shift from the mere attention to the heteroglot utterances within a binary of text-context to a regression and multiplicity of

contexts within a text. To this end, it is highly significant to expand the scope of the Bakhtinian hybrid construction beyond the very limits of a given context to the floating signification and nesting relation between text and context. Note that, as posited by Bakhtin, a hybrid construction signifies a play with heteroglossia. According to Bakhtin (1981), hybrid construction can be expressed as follows:

[A]n utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two languages, two semantic and axiological belief systems. (p. 304)

Illuminating though this suggestion might be, further attention is to be paid to the possibility of a full assimilation of the vertical (i.e., associative and synchronic) and horizontal (i.e., syntagmatic and diachronic) dimensions of the context within a single textual utterance. In other words, textual capacities for the subversion of the patriarchal readings are not only dependent upon the play within the text of the heteroglossia but also upon the play with a myriad of other objective and subjective subalterns from without the text.

As opposed to the poetic utterances where the relationship between the words and the objects is exclusive and exhaustive, the novelistic utterances—due to their double-voiced nature and interaction with the extraliterary social dialects—can transcend the boundaries of the objects and assume an independent life of their own. In view of this and with reference to the Bakhtinian philosophy, it seems that a tangible solution for bridging the gap between the artistic utterances (as traditionally being merely expressions of monologic ideologies) and the contextual responsibilities is to shed more light on the power of generative imagination and those acts of storytelling that display a close affinity with the realities of heteroglossia. Lane (2006) has, thus, suggested that:

[Bakhtin's] answer is his concept of 'answerability' that he posits as a 'unity' based upon guilt: The individual is responsible for each realm, especially the faults of each realm, but once they are interpenetrated in this existential act of ethical responsibility generated through guilt, art and life are unified in the subject. (p. 9)

As a result of such dialogism, respect for someone else's 'I' is obtained.² As suggested by Bakhtin, this dialogism sets out 'to affirm someone else's "I" not as an object but as another subject . . . ' (Bakhtin, 1996, p. 41) However, mutual reverence is not fully realized unless the existential identity of other subjects is relayed by giving them the same or similar privileges, sovereignty, an opportunity for establishment of a kingdom of their own with no need to rely exclusively upon the heteroglot realities

of an imperialist context. In this scenario, not only can the marginalized utterances deal with the monologism of the dominant culture, but also they can reconstruct their independent context based on their internal exigencies and external requirements. Therefore, the possibility of free-floating signification or better to say contextual freedom from the patriarchal system seems to give further meanings and purposes to the sporadic emergence of the subaltern discourses (such sporadic emergence is roughly analogous to the Bakhtinian concept of carnivalism in the said reference).

In what follows, a theoretical analysis of the Bakhtinian thoughts vis-à-vis the realities of heteroglossia is provided. A principal objective of the present study is, thus, to develop a Bakhtinian framework for the analysis of a narrative text with respect to the internal stratification of the fictional voices and utterances (as manifested by the novelistic narration and focalization). Besides, the conditions of the context specificity and nonspecificity of the narratives are elaborated. For the sake of clarity, some propositions used in the present study are exemplified by reference to the texts of two seminal novels: Gunter Grass's *The Tin Drum* (1959) and Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night, a Traveler* (1979).

2. Social Stylistics as a Viable Tool for Unification of Aesthetics and Ideology

Bakhtin (1981) asserts the inseparability and oneness of form and content in the discourse so as to address the divorce between an abstract “formal approach and an equally abstract ideological approach” (p. 259) By recognizing the verbal discourse as a social phenomenon both in its entirety and its details, Bakhtin identifies such a separation of style and language from the question of genre as largely responsible for a state, where the period-bound stylistic overtones are privileged over the fundamental social tones. In other words, in the course of history, generic purposes have always been sacrificed to the unimportant vicissitudes of stylistic revisions and modifications. Bakhtin reveals the inadequacy and inauthenticity of the formal aestheticism because it cannot see beyond the triviality of the “individual and period-bound shifts the great and anonymous destinies of artistic discourse itself” (p. 259) Stylistics, Bakhtin asserts, has often ignored the social entity of the living discourse in favor of “a histological specimen made from it, with abstract linguistic discourse in the service of an artist's individual creative powers” (p. 259). Due to their negligence of the social discourses, however, these individual overtones are ultimately flat and abstract and cannot be incorporated in a more comprehensive semantic framework.

Concerning the stylistics of the novel, it should be noted that the novel has historically been regarded as an abstract ideological commentary affected by the unitary language of the poetic discourse. Therefore, recognition of a concrete and at the same time principled approach to the stylistics of the novel may pose a serious

challenge to the monologism of the poetic discourse.³ In his attempt to differentiate the discourse of the novelistic prose from that of poetry, Bakhtin (1981) points to the different heterogeneous multilayered linguistic unities in the novel and suggests that, “the novel as a whole is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice” (p. 261). The Russian scholar explains that there exist five basic types of compositional-stylistics unities within the novelistic discourse as follows:

Direct authorial literary-artistic narration (in all its diverse variants); stylization of the various forms of oral everyday narration (*skaz*); stylization of the various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (the letter, the diary, etc.); various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech (moral, philosophical or scientific statements, oratory, ethnographic descriptions, memoranda and so forth); the stylistically individualized speech of characters. (p. 262).

Note that the novelistic whole is created by the combination of all these subordinated, yet somehow autonomous, stylistic unities, where “the internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects” results in the appearance of the novelistic heteroglossia [*raznorecie*] (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 262). With regard to the act of story-telling in terms of the stratified language of the novel, it is concluded that the multiple stylization of the novelistic discourse gives it the privilege of narrating multilayered stories so that the orthodox system of aesthetic utterances can be deconstructed. This paves the way for the emergence of multiple points of view, as well as multiple focalizations, within the narrative of the novel. Note that as a consequence of the dialogized heteroglossia, textual concepts and meanings can significantly transcend the boundaries of any autobiographical author.⁴ As put by Barthes (1977):

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture. (p. 146)

In the present study, however, we suggest that the text of a narrative prose with all its different stylistic unities can also go beyond the numerous centers of acentralizing culture, construct a cultural system of its own, and attach itself to the alien and unnamed cultures, which may or may not coincide with the very historical context of the considered text. Bakhtin (1981) also admonishes readers to adapt his words to their own interests, and hence he suggests:

[Language] lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and personal language . . . but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's intentions: It is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own. (p. 292)

Italo Calvino's novel *If on a Winter's Night, a Traveler* provides a good example for the multilayered narrative structure, through which the contribution of the reader to the dialogized heteroglossia in terms of the multiple stylistics of the novel, as well as the role of the reader in the creation of the meaning is emphasized. Calvino's work can be regarded as a metanarrative because it is a narrative about narrativity, where the readers are actively involved in the process of meaning creation through the ambiguities and uncertainties in the chains of events in one narrative layer or another. Due to such a possibility for constructing a regressive and nesting system within the novelistic world (i.e., the boxing of increasingly smaller stories within the larger ones), Calvino's strategy can clearly be demonstrated as the subversion of any impression of the orthodox poetics (i.e., literary conventions and genres). Accordingly, Calvino (1979) states that:

"Reading," he says, "is always this: There is a thing that is there, a thing made of writing, a solid, material object, which cannot be changed, and through this thing we measure ourselves against something else that is not present, something else that belongs to the immaterial, invisible world, because it can only be thought, imagined, or because it was once and is no longer, past, lost, unattainable, in the land of the dead . . ." "Or that is not present because it does not yet exist, something desired, feared, possible or impossible," Ludmilla says. "Reading is going toward something that is about to be, and no one yet knows what it will be . . ." (There, now you see the Other Reader leaning forward to peer beyond the edge of the printed page at the ships of the rescuers or the invaders appearing on the horizon, the storms . . .) "The book I would like to read now is a novel in which you sense the story arriving like still-vague thunder, the historical story along with the individual's story, a novel that gives the sense of living through an upheaval that still has no name, has not yet taken shape . . ." (pp. 44-45)

As it can be understood from the aforementioned Bakhtinian stylizations, the interrelations and interpenetrations between different layers of authorial speech, narrator's speeches, inserted genres, and the speech of the various intra and extradiegetic characters pave the way for realization of the dialogized heteroglossia in terms of the novelistic whole. Therefore, Bakhtinian multiple stylization can be summarized as a critique of the traditional stylistics that disregards the novelistic stylistic whole as a genre and instead deals exclusively with the description of the individual language (individual dialect) or the individual speech (parole) "of a given novelist or at best the languages of a given novel" (Bakhtin, (1981, pp. 263-264). Even in the second case where the language of the novel is taken into account, it is predominantly concentrated on the elements of epic representation mainly occurring in the direct authorial speech (as opposed to the elements of the novelistic representation). It can be explained by the fact that some approaches have completely excluded the artistic prose, not least the novel, from the aesthetic, poetic purview and reduced it erroneously to the purely rhetorical composition. Bakhtin posits that:

Novelistic discourse is poetic discourse, but one that does not fit within the frame provided by the concept of poetic discourse as it now exists. This concept has certain underlying presuppositions that limit it. The very concept—in the discourse of its historical formulation from Aristotle to the present day—has been oriented toward the specific 'official' genres and connected with specific historical tendencies in the verbal ideological life. Thus, a whole series of phenomena remained beyond its conceptual horizon. (p. 269)

Clearly, different aesthetic and rhetorical utterances have historically been conditioned by an overarching system of unitary language, which is also responsible for the divorce between the stylistics and the society.

By consideration of the history of thought in philosophy of language, in linguistics, and in stylistics in the light of the sociohistorical destinies of European languages, which is closely connected to the destinies of ideological discourse, and concerning the fulfillment of that ideological discourse in a given social sphere in a determined phase of its historical development, it is clear why the basic content of this well-established "system of language," "monologic utterance," "the speaking individuum," despite the introduction of different subtle nuances of meaning, has remained unchanged. As a result of these tasks and destinies of discourse, a number of verbal-ideological movements, along with various specific genres of ideological discourse, and hence the philosophical conceptualization of discourse itself come into being, not least the concept of "poetic discourse, which is the heart of all concepts of style" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 270).

The weak and strong points of these stylistic categories are more understandable if seen under specific historical destinies and ideological discourse's task performances. These categories originate from and are conditioned by "historically aktuell forces at work in the verbal-ideological evolution of specific social groups; they comprise the theoretical expression of actualizing forces that [are] in the process of creating a life for language... These forces are the forces that serve to unify and centralize the verbal-ideological world" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 292).

Our argument, however, is that although linguistic and ideological discourses have indeed conspired in the course of history to propagate a faked-up narrative of oneness and unison, and although the very claim of concord entails the existence of discord and cacophonies (as truly suggested by Bakhtin); nevertheless, different manifestations of language and ideology can ontologically transcend their allegedly determined destinies and live out of the centripetal-centrifugal cycle that is inevitably a verification of the same top-to-down relations and hierarchies (though in the guise of a subversion of the status quo). By the same token, ideologies and power structures can be restructured and revitalized both horizontally (diachronically) and vertically (synchronically). In this context, it seems helpful to extract the possible paradigms of dialogism—in a historical sense—within the stylistic and ideological discourses of the novelistic prose so as to endow different voices with more autonomy and symbiosis. The merit of this paradigmatic and associative sense of dialogism is that it reaffirms and negates the hierarchies concomitantly. Again, a viable tool for achieving this concomitancy is to cast doubt on the patriarchal stylistics and ideologies by resort to the grotesqueness and Bakhtinian carnivalism.

In Gunter Grass's *The Tin Drum*, for instance, the foregoing statements can well be elaborated. In this novel, the first-person narrator Oskar Matzerath's dwarfism (a suggestion of his physical inappropriateness) and his self-imposed speechlessness by the first two-thirds of the novel have naturally prepared the ground for his ineluctable exile and exclusion from the patriarchal readings of the text and context, that is, Oskar is inappropriate for both art and life. According to Michel Foucault, the human body is, *inter alia*, the locus in which different lines of power development come together in a unique set. Each historical era has its specific system of idealizing the kinds of bodies that closely conform to its horizons and exigencies. However, based on its internal requirements and expectations, the indocile body of alterity (i.e., otherness—as represented by Oskar in Grass's novel) naturally challenges the so-called docile body propagated by the authoritarian narrative discourse. In *The Tin drum*, Oskar alleges that, at the age of three, he chose to have a developmental disability and a hunchback to ward off his unfortunate subjugation to the dominant and ideal body of phallogocentric adulthood. This is a mechanism used by Oskar to point to the potentiality within his dwarfish, and yet subversive, stature to

overthrow the tall-stature patriarchy of the history. Under Nazi regime where Oskar lives, the myth of fascism's invincibility seems to prevail. However, the myth of patriarchy and oligarchy is to be finally shattered by Oskar's subversive intention to mock and by his jealousy toward the success of canonical masculinity. The narrator's innate tendency towards subverting the orthodox paterfamilias is intensified, through the narrative, by his ironically casting doubt on the authenticity of the allegedly love affair between Alfred, his father, and Maria Truczinski, a young girl dearly beloved by Oskar. On the one hand, by mechanically designating Oskar as an abnormal and diminutive figure (reminiscent of the Foucauldian concept of nomination)⁵, the outer phallogocentric context has managed to emasculate and withhold the narrator-cum-protagonist from a gender role and hence from the possession of any women, especially that of Truczinski. On the other hand, Oskar's marginalized voice in the narrative text serves as a forum for formation of a heteroglot and carnivalesque context, to the effect that, through his grotesque and shocking utterances, Oskar has enjoyed the privilege of making a decisive claim over Maria. As such, Maria is to be conceived of as Oskar's first and true love and, thus, Oskar retrospectively reminds us of the pleasure-giving "fizz powder" in an effort to take over the throne of female ownership not given to, and perhaps appropriated from, him. He frequently asks Maria: "Don't you remember? Please, surely you remember. Fizz powder. Three pfennigs a packet. Just think about: woodruff, raspberry, how beautifully it foamed and fizzed, and that feeling, Maria, that feeling!" (Grass, 1959, p. 161). Therefore, by inclusion in his narration of different centrifugal manifestations of marginalized utterances, Oskar has sought to cancel Alfred's possession of Maria in the world outside. Oskar's dubious narration, which is also filled with elements of the magic realism, can be seen as a viable tool for subversion of the logocentric context by the text as a floating signifier (note that in this study, both text and context are floating signifiers within human aesthetic appreciation, whereas the combined individuality and collectivity is signified). Alfred's impotence is frequently emphasized and his love affair and privacy with Maria are grotesquely disturbed by Oskar's rash entrance. On the other hand, the existence of a subaltern female consciousness beyond the discourse of patriarchal subconscious can be traced back vis-à-vis the absences in the narrator's complex act of story-telling. Due to the carnivalesque nature of his utterances, Oskar, thus, proceeds to endanger both Alfred's and Jan Bronski's phallogocentric powers and seems to rebel against their bestial exploitation of his lost mother, Agnes. Here, Oskar's narration ends by saying:

She screamed: Go away, and he wanted to go away, but he couldn't, because Oskar was on top of them before he could go away, because I had plunked down my drum on the small of his back and was pounding it with the sticks, because I couldn't stand listening any more to their go away go away, because my drum was

louder than their go away, because I wouldn't allow him to go away as Jan Bronski had always gone away from my mother; for Mama had always said go away to Jan and go away to Matzerath, go away, go away. And then, they fell apart. But I couldn't bear to see it. After all, I hadn't gone away. That's why I am the father and not this Matzerath who to the last supposed himself to be my father. But my father was Jan Bronski. Jan Bronski got there ahead of Matzerath and didn't go away; he stayed right where he was and deposited everything he had; from Jan Bronski I inherited this quality of getting there ahead of Matzerath and staying put; what emerged was my son, not his son. He never had any son at all. He was no real father. (Grass, 1959, pp. 161-162)

Evidently, Oskar's strategy is to unify anachronic and synchronic dimensions of time and space by a text-centric worldview, whereas Alfred conceives of time and space as thoroughly disintegrated. Entangled in the matrices of his disastrous life, Alfred—while being on top of Maria to have an orgasm—is unfortunately obsessed by the strokes of the bedside clock as he declares, “It's a quarter of” (Grass, 1959, p. 161). On the other hand, Oskar's voice as a node for subversive imagination and dialogic evolution of the past and present associations provides a cathartic method for dealing with the notion of a mere transcendent episteme and hence challenges the prevailing cultural orthodoxy using a subaltern tune. Consequently, self-awareness is advanced and “previous utterances and future responses are assimilated and structured in the here and the now” (p. 177). More importantly, such a novelistic narration tends to reverse orthodoxies of the Western beliefs. Through an analepsis concerning his attendance at the church, Oskar also recounts:

And Oskar was kneeling at the left-side-altar, trying to teach the boy Jesus how to drum, but the rascal wouldn't drum, offered no miracle. Oskar had sworn back then and swore again outside the locked church door: I'll teach him to drum yet. Sooner or later. (Grass, 1959, p. 183)

At this point, Oskar is to completely overturn the European system of belief and culture by satirizing the patriarchal ideologies of Christianity and disclosing their impotencies. Creating a cheerful feeling of carnivalesque, Oskar's mocking attitude manages to challenge the Grand narratives and invincibility of such hypocritical systems.

Furthermore, the narrator-cum-protagonist of Grass' novel posits that, “will he drum now, or can't he drum, or isn't he allowed to drum, either he drums or he's

no real Jesus; if he doesn't drum now, Oskar's more Jesus than Jesus is" (Grass, 1959, p. 81). As suggested by Daram and Kharrasi (2014):

The narrator's speech-acts intentionally parody the Christian values and create a heteroglot world of words, through which the authority of European mental experience is challenged. As a result, the silenced tongues, unfelt feelings, and unvoiced utterances come into play trying to renegotiate the overarching forces of logos so that they can finally provide themselves with a paradigm of ideological autonomy. (p. 179)

This well demonstrates the double-voiced nature of Oskar's speeches and acts, in which otherness is continually resisting and reversing the terms and conditions of an overarching, monopolistic selfhood. On another occasion, Oskar, while trying to step into Christ's shoes, assume a Jesus-like responsibility, and make piety of a teenage girl and her colleagues, says that, "the idea seemed to have originated with her companions, who despite their sinister underworldly look were afraid to approach me, the hunchback, for they sensed my hidden greatness" (Grass, 1959, p. 232). Elsewhere, he dares to comment that, "If Jesus had had a hump, they would never have nailed him to the Cross" (Grass, 1959, p. 296). Thereupon, Oskar feels an urgent need to render his own account of both text and context (i.e., story and history, respectively).

3. Novelistic Discourse vs. Verbal-Ideological Limits of Poetics Discourse

As suggested by Bakhtin, monologic utterance, 'not something given [*dan*]' but 'always posited [*zadan*]' in essence and in opposition to the realities of heteroglossia at every moment of its linguistic life, theoretically entails the historical process of linguistic unification and centralization, which demonstrates the centripetal forces of language (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 270). However, through its very imposition of constrains and generative forces on heteroglossia, this monologism inevitably enters a process of mutual, although still relative, linguistic understanding with the other, alien words so as to guarantee a kind of 'correct language' and to defend an already formed language from the pressure of growing heteroglossia. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 270). To justify his point, he, thus, explains:

We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a worldview, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a *maximum* of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life. Thus, a unitary language gives expression to forces working towards concrete verbal and ideological unification and

centralization, which develop in vital connection with the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization. (p. 271)

As a result, one dominant language [dialect] reigns over and enslaves the others, illuminates them with the True Word, subsumes the savages and lower social strata into a unitary language of culture and truth, and canonizes ideological systems. Therefore, Bakhtin (1981) posits that “the centripetal forces of the life of language, embodied in a ‘unitary language,’ operate in the midst of heteroglossia” (p. 271). Language is always stratified not only into linguistic dialects (as posited by the formal linguistic markers, especially phonetic), but also in languages that are socioideological, that is, languages related to social groups, classes, gender, generations, and so on. Literary language is just one of these heteroglot languages, and hence stratified. This stratification and heteroglossia is both a static invariant of linguistic life and a guarantee of its dynamics and, consequently, centrifugal forces operate incessantly alongside with the centripetal ones. Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject is a dialogized intersection of centrifugal and centripetal forces.⁶ As said before, in the realm of the novel, hybrid construction, especially when intensified by the narrator’s internalization, unbalancing, and appropriation of the generative words provides a viable tool that, in light of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque as well as the grotesque and irresponsible narrative expressions, can give more weight to the possibility of dialogism.

In brief, as opposed to the language of poetry that revolves around the centralizing forces of verbal-ideological context, the language of the novel is historically formed by the decentralization forces on the lower levels “on the stages of local fairs and at buffoon spectacles” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 273). In view of this, the inclusion in the novelistic narration of the grotesque, multileveled, and inscrutable expressions significantly enhances the novel’s capacities for the resistance to, and escape from, a monolithic patriarchal context, which in turn paves the way for the ultimate multiplicity of the novel (both in terms of its text and context). Times and again throughout Grass’s *The Tin Drum*, for example, Oskar provides the readers with admonishing glances at his freakishness and abnormality. He is an inmate hospitalized in a mental institution, an outcast from the Grand narrative of the orthodox society, and a dwarf in stature as well. His seemingly unreliable narrative is echoed through the provision of a carnivalesque world of vague utterance that, to quote Derrida (2008), “says nothing, promises nothing, neither refuses nor accepts anything” (p. 75). Furthermore, further sociopolitical significance can be attached to the undecidability of Oskar’s narration: Such narrative irresponsibility, especially when intensified by the deliberate authorial self-erasure from the text, signifies “the formal gesture of refusal as such,” a manifestation of “passive aggressivity,” through which different social codes and orthodox performances are challenged (Žižek, 2006,

p. 384); consequently, as it has already been discussed, this is assumed to prepare the ground for a politics of subtraction (i.e., text-context multiplicity), so that the shift from a mere “politics of ‘resistance’ or ‘protestation’” to “a politics which opens up a new space outside the hegemonic position and its negation” can be achieved (Žižek, 2006, p. 381). As posited by Bakhtin (1981), the heteroglossia of the clown, which may ridicule every kind of logocentrism, has “a lively play with the “languages” of poets, scholars, monks, knights and others, where all “languages” were masks and where no language could claim to be an authentic, incontestable face” (p. 273).

The fact of heteroglossia has traditionally been ignored by the linguistics and stylistics, which have only offered a self-sufficient authorial monologue presuming passive listeners beyond its own boundaries. Here Bakhtin demands for an escape from the language of unity and instead a movement towards a real ideologically-filled “language consciousness” which allows for actual dialogism and other-speechedness (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 274). The novelistic verbal divergence, as opposed to the poetic linguistic convergence, offers further possibilities for breaking through the totalitarian system of patriarchy and gives the alien utterances the privilege of being expressed and voiced. This idea can be well justified by the very nature of the prose utterances, which are more close to the folk texts and contexts and are further removed from the unifying agents of the literary monologism. Bakhtin (1981) argues that:

The world of poetry, no matter how many contradictions and insoluble conflicts the poet develops within it, is always illumined by one unitary and indisputable discourse. Contradictions, conflicts and doubts remain in the object, in thoughts, in living experiences—in short, in the subject matter—but they do not enter into the language itself. In poetry, even discourse about doubts must be cast in a discourse that cannot be doubted. (p. 286)

Thus, in poetry, the word enters an exhaustible play with the wealth and multiplicity of the object and hence cannot go beyond its own context. The poetic word, thus, forgets the object’s “own history of contradictory acts of verbal recognition, as well as that heteroglossia that is always present in such acts of recognition” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 278). This does not mean, however, the impossibility of dialogized heteroglossia in the realm of poetry. As mentioned by Bakhtin, a certain extent of heteroglossia (other socioideological languages) exists in the “low” poetic genres, such as satiric and comic genres. Heteroglossia can also be introduced into high poetic genres (e.g., epic and poetic drama), mainly in characters’ speeches. In such a context, it is a gesture of one of the characters, because the poet always speaks in his own language and never makes use of an alien language. The writer of prose, nevertheless, contradicts this principle and explicitly introduces other voices. In view

of this, the language of poetry when faced with its stylistic limits, becomes authoritarian, dogmatic, and conservative and tries to free itself from the impact of extraliterary social dialects. Besides, Bakhtin believes that at any given moment, languages of various epochs and periods of socioideological life cohabit with one another. Through the interaction and counteraction of different everyday languages, each with its own socioideological position, a dialogized heteroglot is achieved. Poetry tries to depersonalize ‘days’ in languages, whereas prose intensifies differences between the days, offers them individualized embodiment and at the same time sets them in an unresolvable ideological contradiction. In brief, as truly suggested by Bakhtin (1981):

At any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: It represents the coexistence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. These ‘languages’ of heteroglossia intersect with each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying ‘languages.’ (p. 292)

For a better understanding of the prose capabilities for transcending the limits of a dominant text or context (i.e., in-text and out-text realities, respectively), Gunter Grass’s *The Tin Drum* (as a prose fiction) is again taken into account. Dialogism is the main feature of any prose texts that is often absent from the mere poetical and aesthetical utterances, which are generated from a top-to-down and wiser-than-us perspective. In this view, it is reasonable why the present study has utilized prose as a forum for the formation of the alterity discourse. Considering Oskar’s irresponsible and mocking utterances, as an example, it can be observed the narrator-cum-protagonist of Grass’s novel craves to articulate his own truth. His gnomish stature is also proposed to challenge the authenticity of the docile and ideal body of a fat and full-grown Nazism. On the other hand, Oskar’s narrative voice is to liven up the magic realist norms of an underground counterculture in the realm of textual utterances so as to defy the eugenic Nazi formulations, authority, and expectations.

4. Conclusion

Using a post-Bakhtinian approach to the problems of dialogism and discursiveness, this study has sought to structure an autonomous sphere of alterity based on its internal and external exigencies. To this end, the aesthetic and rhetorical capacities of the prose fiction vs. the totalitarian poetic discourse—as outlined by Bakhtin—have also been reexamined. It should be noted that Bakhtin has intended a sociodialectical principle operating through the stratified, heteroglot utterances of

other-speechedness, a functional and yet thematic principle working through the tempospatial, chronotopic nature of the novelistic languages. In this context, the present study has deeply delved into a network of inner interpenetrations of words, a carnivalesque sense of rejoinder from within, where various voices, speeches, and points of view mutually compete and interact. This, in turn, leads to the daily emergences of alien languages ironically from the matrix of a long-established, authoritarian correct language, which guarantees the chronotopic survival of different, even opposing discourses in the dialogue. As an innovation, the present work has theorized that the subversive potentiality of a text stems not only from its carnivalesque interrelatedness with a dominant culture but also from its capability to transcend the limits of the same culture and to affirm its historical and ahistorical affiliations to other cultures. When stylistics (as a fixed, trans-historical, and transcendental existence) is assimilated into the realm of the social and ideological context (in terms of an unrepeatable intersection of a fictional world with a given place and time in human history), the monologic practice of patriarchal truth and belief may be subverted both from within and from without. Furthermore, if heteroglossia of a text is dialogized, the meaning of its author can be freed from its autobiographical concept so as to cover different marginalized and suppressed voices. Concerning the act of story-telling in terms of the stratified language of the novel, the multiple stylization of the novelistic discourse gives it the privilege of narrating multilayered stories so that the orthodox system of aesthetic utterances can be deconstructed. This paves the way for the emergence of multiple points of view, as well as multiple focalizations, within the narrative of the novel. Therefore, as a consequence of the dialogized heteroglossia, textual concepts and meanings can significantly transcend the boundaries of any autobiographical author and reconstruct their own independent sphere of being.

Notes

¹By “dialogic,” it is denoted that every speech act comes from pervious utterances and anticipates a future response. I can add here that no utterance is begotten in a vacuum: Every single utterance is engaged in a triad of a possibility (potentiality), process, and outcome. The outcome of a given utterance, for example, may resume the potentiality for a further utterance. It can also be a detailing or specification of one of the previous or simultaneous utterances.

²As put by Bakhtin, “To be means to communicate . . . to be means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself. A person has no internal sovereign territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary; looking inside himself . . . looks into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 287).

³According to Bakhtin, in the last decades of the twentieth century, much attention was paid to the problems of composition and artistic techniques in prose but yet “the same arbitrary judgmental observations about language—in the spirit of traditional stylistics—continued to

reign supreme, and they totally overlooked the authentic nature of artistic prose” (*Dialogic*, 260).

⁴Barthes’s statement about the death of the biographical subject, the literary subject, the author—in addition to the Foucault’s rejection of the historical human subject as the origin of knowledge, and instead the speculation of epistemological discourse as conditioning any scientific output in different periods of history, and hence proposition of a theory of discursive practice—paves the way for a divorce between the voice and its origin and, consequently, enables the author to enter into his own death and hence the act of writing begins. This concept can be viewed also as an illumination and at the same time the justification of polyphonic possibilities within a narrative, where through the consideration of the role of the reader a dramatic change occurs.

⁵As posited by Joseph Carroll, three chief constituents of Foucauldian cultural critique are: “deconstructive epistemology; Freudian psychology in a textualized Lacanian form; and Marxist social theory in a textualized Althusserian or Jamesonian form” (p. 90). Deconstructive epistemology tells us how insignificant the constraints of “reality” on the human mentality are. Carroll adds, “things are what they are because we name them or describe them in one way rather than another” (p. 90). Freudian psychology suggests that the most innate characters of human psych are repressed because they are taboo. Oskar’s narrative voice, as explained in the text, proves to be dangerous and frightening to the logos. Marxist social theory, adds Carroll, “tells us that all forms of social polity, short of a communitarian utopia, are exploitative and oppressive” (p. 90). In our contemporary cultural critique, the victims of such repressive system are not only proletarians but more often the women, as well as the ethnic and sexual minorities (Carroll, 2013, *Style*, 47, p. 1).

⁶Bakhtin says, “[every utterance] is a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies in the life of language,” adding that “the word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way” (Bakhtin, 1984, 272-3).

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