



## **Dialogism Between Concept and Critical Application: From Theoretical Foundations to the Horizons of Narrative Analysis**

**Derar BENNADJI**

University Khenchela Abbas Laghrour

[bennadji.derar@univ-khenchela.dz](mailto:bennadji.derar@univ-khenchela.dz)

**Nourelhouda MAHDAOUI**

University Khenchela Abbas Laghrour

### ***Abstract:***

*This research paper aims to approach the concept of dialogism in modern critical and literary thought. It does so by reviewing the foundations laid by Mikhail Bakhtin for viewing the novelistic text as a multi-voiced space, where diverse discourses and ideologies interact, revealing social and cultural structures. The study highlights how language transforms into an arena of conflict and meaning production, making literature a vital field for negotiating values and perceptions. The paper also addresses the concept's evolution with Julia Kristeva through the formulation of intertextuality, which opens texts to a broad interpretive horizon. On the other hand, it sheds light on the presence of dialogism in Arab criticism and its mechanisms of application in narrative analysis through hybridization, stylization, and pure dialogue. The paper concludes that dialogism represents a fertile framework for understanding the novel as a critical discourse open to multiplicity and difference, capable of re-shaping the text's relationship with the reader and reality.*

**Keywords:** *Dialogism, Polyphony, Ideology, Intertextuality, Arab Criticism*

## **Dialogisme entre concept et application critique : des fondements théoriques aux horizons de l'analyse narrative**

### **Résumé :**

*Cet article de recherche vise à aborder le concept de dialogisme dans la pensée critique et littéraire moderne. Pour ce faire, il passe en revue les fondements posés par Mikhaïl Bakhtine pour considérer le texte romanesque comme un espace polyphonique, où divers discours et idéologies interagissent, révélant ainsi les structures sociales et culturelles. L'étude met en évidence la manière dont le langage se transforme en un champ de conflit et de production de sens, faisant de la littérature un domaine essentiel pour la négociation des valeurs et des perceptions. L'article aborde également l'évolution du concept avec Julia Kristeva à travers la formulation de l'intertextualité, qui ouvre les textes à un large horizon interprétatif. D'autre part, il met en lumière la présence du dialogisme dans la critique arabe et ses mécanismes d'application dans l'analyse narrative à travers l'hybridation, la stylisation et le dialogue pur. L'article conclut que le dialogisme représente un cadre fertile pour comprendre le roman comme un discours critique ouvert à la multiplicité et à la différence, capable de remodeler la relation du texte avec le lecteur et la réalité.*

**Mots-clés :** *Dialogisme, Polyphonie, Idéologie, Intertextualité, Critique arabe*



## **Introduction:**

Dialogism is considered one of the most important theoretical shifts in contemporary literary criticism. It reads the text as a lively space where multiple voices meet and diverse ideological stances engage in dialogue, rather than treating it as a mirror reflecting a single, unified voice. In Mikhail Bakhtin's view, the novel becomes a field for the competition of meanings and the negotiation of signs, where language reveals its social, cultural, and political tensions and transforms into a tool for the production of consciousness, not merely an aesthetic medium. Thus, characters are not just tools for narration; they are bearers of cognitive frameworks and class-based and historical references that contribute to creating a discursive structure open to multiple interpretations. Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality further expanded this idea, placing the text within a network of referential relationships that give it a cumulative significance and open new paths of reading for the reader. In the Arab context, as soon as these ideas were received, they were employed as analytical tools that break the monopoly of a single discourse and give a presence to the marginal, the everyday, and the values of cultural intersection in narrative reading, through tools such as hybridization, stylization, and direct dialogue. Consequently, dialogism does not merely provide a critical technique; it reshapes the text's relationship with the reader and reality, making reading an active interpretive practice that allows for a multiplicity of readings and the deconstruction of intellectual hegemonies both inside and outside the text.

## 1. Ideology in Bakhtin's Thought: Polyphony and the Structure of Discourse

Mikhail Bakhtin<sup>1</sup> is considered one of the prominent theorists in modern critical thought. He worked on linking literary form with social structure, thereby rejecting the view of literature as a purely aesthetic construct and instead proposing it as a space for ideological conflict. Within this framework, two central concepts occupy a fundamental place in Bakhtin's project: the ideological structure of discourse and polyphony (dialogism).

The term "ideology" was formed through multiple cumulative layers of knowledge, "It is 'a social and historical concept, and therefore carries within it the traces of numerous social and political developments, conflicts, and debates It represents an accumulation of meanings, much

---

<sup>1</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin(1975-1895)

Was born Bakhtin in Russia, and studied at Saint Petersburg University, and worked as a professor in a small town of Saransk after he spent a long period of his life in exile in Kazakhstan. A lot of his works emerged from a group of thinkers known as the "Bakhtin Circle," and some of his works it is believed that they may have been published under other names, and the most famous of those names is Valentin Voloshinov. Bakhtin was a critic of formalism, and he proposed that language is a diverse phenomenon, lived, and oriented toward action, where the meaning emerges from a dialogical relationship between speakers and interlocutors. Heteroglossia is the term that Bakhtin invented to indicate the operation of the vocal diversity of language and culture, which creates a field of signs that exist in their turn in a struggle over meaning. For Bakhtin, the carnival of the Renaissance, as it is documented by Rabelais, is a manifestation of the non-homogeneity of culture and a motive for resisting the official languages of authority (see: Chris Barker, Dictionary of Cultural Studies, trans.: Jamal Belqassem, Ru'yah for Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, 2018, pp. 89, 90).



like pivotal concepts such as the state, freedom, matter, or man<sup>12</sup>.

According to the Bakhtinian approach, language has multiple facets, which makes it loaded with an ideological weight Mikhail Bakhtin sought to "He sought to 'synthesize the thesis of the ideologically-oriented school and the 'antithesis' of the Formalists. As such, Bakhtin is a 'post-formalist': he transcends Formalism, but only after absorbing and assimilating its teachings"<sup>13</sup>.

Mikhail Bakhtin's view of language and literature differs from traditional conceptions that consider literature to be merely an aesthetic or artistic medium, For Bakhtin, language "is not used solely for literary purposes, but also to diagnose the ideologies and values present in reality... [as] the uniqueness of literature, according to Bakhtin, lies in its being a distinct form of ideology and, at the same time, a reflection of other ideologies."<sup>14</sup> Thus, within its literary use, language is not an aesthetic decoration, nor is it neutral and devoid of other conceptions; rather, it is loaded with values, ideas, and orientations that express a specific reality, and through it, social, intellectual, and political reality is embodied.

This is what gives literature a special and unique quality among other arts, as it combines an artistic function with an

---

<sup>2</sup> Abdullah Al-Arwi, *The Concept of Ideology*, Arab Cultural Center, Beirut, Casablanca, 1993, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, trans.: Fakhri Saleh, Arab Institute for Studies and Publishing, Beirut, 2nd ed., 1996, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> Ahmad Al-Jarati, *Representations of Modern Literary Theory in Contemporary Novel Criticism*, Al-Naya for Studies, Publishing, and Distribution, Damascus, 1st ed., 2014, p. 45.

ideological one. It is not just a reflection of reality but enters into a dialogue with other ideologies, revealing their tensions and interactions within society.

Bakhtin presents a profound intellectual vision related to his understanding of ideology through language and discursive practice, as he sees it..."It is born in the practice of speech, and it is not merely a product of social life, but rather it produces lived social relations and reproduces these relations, It is born from the clash of sign with sign and idea with idea in the process of dialogic interaction, which creates an ideological environment that establishes a solid shell around the human being from which he cannot escape, Human consciousness lives in this ideological environment and develops within it, It does not come into direct contact with existence, but rather seeks its relationship with it through this surrounding ideological world And this referred-to ideological world is nothing but language and speech practice, such that the concept of the linguistic sign, heavy with emphasis and enriched with meanings and counter-meanings, is identical to the concept of the ideological sign."<sup>5</sup>

According to the Bakhtinian approach, ideology transforms into an active force in the production and reproduction of social relations, and language plays the role of the working mediator between human consciousness and reality, to take on the role of the ideological mediator. This conception makes the linguistic sign not just a tool of communication, but a space for ideological struggle, where different ideas and conceptions confront each other, which gives it a changing character.

---

<sup>5</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle, p. 9



Furthermore, Bakhtin's concept of "dialogic interaction" indicates that meanings are not produced in isolation but through the continuous friction between signs and ideas, which creates an ideological environment that shapes human consciousness and influences its understanding of the world.

This approach confirms that language is not merely a tool for conveying information, but rather a field for cultural and intellectual dialogue and conflict. It also reveals the remarkable intellectual and analytical power of the "Bakhtinian" approach in addressing ideology as a linguistic-social process.

Thus, a literary work cannot be fully understood unless all its dimensions are considered, including the ideological, social, and economic aspects that contribute to its formation. Likewise, understanding literature cannot be partial or limited to the study of only one of its elements; rather, it must be examined in its total context related to social and economic laws. This is because any attempt to understand a literary work must take into account the tangled links between these elements, and not isolate any part from the general context that constitutes the literary entity.

It is undesirable to study a literary work directly, limiting the study to it being an element of the ideological environment, because in reality, it is an element of the literary world with its own distinctiveness and uniqueness<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> See, Tzvetan Todorov, Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle, p. 87.

Hamed Lahmidani summarizes all forms concerning the relationship between ideology and the novel through the following main points:<sup>7</sup>

- The novel is a system of relationships, and a system is not established in itself except through contradictions. The primary material for creating contradictions.
- The novel is the ideological ideas pre-existing in reality, and they enter the novel in two different situations: either every ideology is on an equal footing with others... or some of them are subordinated to others by artistic and deceptive means that distract the reader from knowing what is happening in a conspiracy against their perceptual faculties. In the first case, the novel has a dialogic character, and in the second case, the novel has a monologic character with a dialogic appearance.
- When a novel declares an explicit contradiction between the author's opinions and opposing ideologies and conceptions, the vision in it becomes clearly monologic in character, and the most successful means to cover this direct ideological stance is usually poetic energy. To capture the reader's attention, the author must charm them with creative means.
- The novel in these three cases ranges between integrating ideology as a stance that expresses private interests, but through a purely non-ideological discourse, because a successful novel is first and

---

<sup>7</sup> See, Hamid Al-Lahmadani, *Novel Criticism and Ideology*, Arab Cultural Center, Beirut, 1st ed., 1990, pp. 42-44.



**Soumission : 10/01/2025    Acceptation : 01/06/2025    Publication : 20/09/2025**

foremost a creation, and ideology as a cognitive search in ideologies, but also in a creative way.

- The novel does not reflect the ideologies of reality, but rather it is itself part of the ideological field because it is an intellectual adventure in the midst of human struggle. It employs ideologies and breaks into the world of ideological struggle or cognitive search. Above all, it differs from ideology because it simultaneously possesses the power of the creative.
- Ideology in the novel enters it as raw material for the construction of its structure, i.e., as a formal element. Therefore, it is often connected to the political concept, even if its embodiment in the novel gives it a different character, because it places it in a state of collision with other ideologies, going to the limits of exposing their ultimate purposes.
- The preference between the monologic novel with an ideological thesis and the dialogic novel with a cognitive dimension is arbitrary, because every novel has its own means of influencing readers, although we can note that the monologic novel convinces its singular ideology by means of a strong creative charge, while the dialogic novel, by virtue of its cognitive nature, does not need such a charge because it achieves the same effect through the democracy of expression and some internal harmony. Does this mean that knowledge also has its own aesthetics? This is what we believe to be true for the dialogic novel.
- Dealing with ideology in novelistic creation should always take into account the nature of this art's

relationship with ideology and how it embodies it, and the integration into it as a creative and ideological discourse at the same time.

Ideology in the novel "is usually connected to the conflict of the heroes, while the novel as an ideology remains an expression of the author's conceptions by means of those very conflicting ideologies."<sup>8</sup> It is not just an external conflict between characters; it is also an expression of the intellectual tensions within the literary work, and this conflict between ideologies is used as a tool to convey the author's conceptions and his own vision of the world.

The conflict between these ideologies gives the novel intellectual depth.

Ideology enters the novel in an aesthetic form and is quickly adapted by the novelist to serve their novelistic worlds and to respond to the specificity of the novel's subject matter, as well as the perspective upon which they build their vision of this world. Thus, we are confronted with the presence of ideology in the novel.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, "the speaking human in the novel is always an ideologue to one degree or another, and their word is always an ideological statement, and the special language in the novel is always a special point of view on the world that is called a social value, and the word as an ideological statement is what becomes the subject of depiction in the novel".<sup>10</sup>

The celebration of Dostoevsky by Bakhtin is due to the fact that he was able to open up his novelistic world to the

---

<sup>8</sup> Hamid Al-Lahmadani, *Novel Criticism and Ideology*, p. 37.

<sup>9</sup> See, *The reference itself*, p. 33.

<sup>10</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Word in the Novel*, trans.: Youssef Hallaq, Ministry of Culture Publications, Damascus, 1st ed., 1988, p. 110.



conflict and interaction of ideologies without imposing and proving any specific ideology. This contributed to the continuous openness of the novelistic art to what it received from time, stimulating the reader's faculties and adopting different interpretations and readings.<sup>11</sup>

## **2. The Novel as a Dialogic Discourse: Bakhtin's Approach to the Concept of Polyphony**

Mikhail Bakhtin made a prominent contribution to literary and critical theory with the concept of dialogism, which arises from the interaction of more than one voice within literary texts. These voices resonate with their intellectual, social, and cultural backgrounds, resulting in a divergence of perspectives and visions that turns the text into a dialogic arena for different orientations. The term "dialogism" "draws our attention to the inherent ambiguity in language and to the ways in which subjects dialogically create meaning through the socially derived and shared medium of language. Dialogism involves the continuation of a state of dialogue in which every word takes its place".<sup>12</sup> Bakhtin believes that every "meaning is dialogic; it passes from mouth to mouth, and it is used in different contexts and with various intentions. Here, meaning is considered the result of relationships between signs and the negotiation of meaning between the speaker and the addressee. Language takes a form and becomes meaningful in the space between us and our audience, and the text must be analyzed

---

<sup>11</sup> See, Ahmad Al-Jarati, *Modern Literary Theory in Contemporary Novel Criticism*, p. 51.

<sup>12</sup> Chris Barker, *Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, p. 186.

as a dialogic relationship between the addressed subject and the contextual text, The basis of Bakhtin's understanding of language is a critique of Saussure's semiotics, as it involves what is dead, neutral, and static. This research appeared to announce many post-structuralist claims"<sup>13</sup>.

Dialogism also finds the construction of meaning as a dynamic, vital process involving signs that can carry a different set of meanings and connotations for multiple social actors in different social, cultural, and historical situations."<sup>14</sup>

Bakhtin believes that the literary and, in particular, the novelistic work is "a framework in which a group of voices or multiple discourses interact, engaging in dialogue while being influenced by various social forces such as classes, sectarian interests, and others. Every grammatical or semantic change in what is expressed, whether in daily life or in literature, is due to the relationship between the speaker and their listeners, to what the speaker expects in terms of reactions and to what they were influenced by from previous statements... For Bakhtin, the individual will play its decisive role within the framework of social life in the production of both literary and non-literary discourse".<sup>15</sup> The novelistic world is an interactive space where multiple voices intersect, representing different social classes and groups, It is a dialogic space where different points of view and ideologies intersect, and discourse is shaped according to the expectations of the speaker (the sender of the discourse), the recipient, and the context of their interaction.

---

<sup>13</sup> The reference itself, the page itself.

<sup>14</sup> The reference itself, the page itself.

<sup>15</sup> Mejean Al-Rowailey & Saad Al-Bazai, *The Literary Critic's Guide*, Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca, 3rd ed., 2002. p. 318.



**Soumission : 10/01/2025    Acceptation : 01/06/2025    Publication : 20/09/2025**

Based on this, the novel, according to Mikhail Bakhtin, is "a dialogic art form that draws inspiration from all cultural forms that reject the absolute hegemony of the single voice or the single vision. It works to dismantle the cultural and political centralism of the dominant class and opens the way for dialogue, interaction, and communication."<sup>16</sup>

We can deconstruct this statement as follows:

- The novel is a dialogic art form = It supports diversity and difference in visions and ideologies.
- Draws inspiration from cultural forms = Openness to other genres and arts.
- Rejects the dominance of the single voice = Breaking the centralism of the single voice in favor of polyphony.
- Dismantles cultural and political centralism = Openness to the marginal and the everyday.
- Opens the way for dialogue, interaction, and communication = It rejects monologism and celebrates dialogue.

To summarize, the novel is not merely a narration of events according to an exclusionary, monologic vision and perspective. Rather, it is a critical space that aims to deconstruct dominant structures and grant the marginalized a voice equivalent to the center.

In the novelistic text, "voices multiply, then they integrate and intersect in dialogic relationships and coexist within the consciousness of individuals, especially in the creative consciousness of the artistic novelist, All of them are capable of occupying a place in the novel The novel has room for all

---

<sup>16</sup> Ahmad Al-Jarati, Representations of Modern Literary Theory in Contemporary Novel Criticism, p. 21.

types of writing and styles, for the speech of professionals and generations, and for social dialects For this reason, it is difficult to study discourse separately from its external purposes and intentions The novelist uses polyphony in their novel without stripping it of the characteristics that others have endowed it with."<sup>17</sup>

"There is a dialogic form used by all novelistic genres, which is the speech of characters. Characters in the novel have their own perspective and degrees of literary and semantic independence, A dialogic text differs from a monologic text in that the narrator's speech, judgments, and information are not the only reference, The references multiply with the multiplicity of characters, and the speech of the characters is the speech of others for the narrator. It influences the narrator's discourse about them, plants it with strange words, and diversifies its layers. Consequently, it introduces linguistic multiplicity."<sup>18</sup>

The importance of dialogism lies in deconstructing the authority of a single voice within the text, in favor of an open text where meaning is plural and not reduced to a dominant discourse, Polyphony enables the possibility of resistance and change The idea of dialogism in Bakhtin's theory lies in revealing the "decentralization of the ideological world in the novel, both verbally and semantically, Literary consciousness has lost the fixed, unassailable place for ideological discussion, and language is no longer perceived as a myth or an absolute form of

---

<sup>17</sup> Latif Al-Zaytouni, Dictionary of Novel Criticism Terms, Library of Lebanon Publishers, Dar Al-Nahar for Publishing, Lebanon, 1st ed., 2002, p. 83.

<sup>18</sup> Latif Al-Zaytouni, Dictionary of Novel Criticism Terms, p. 84.



thought, but rather is plural to the extent that it can be described as carnivalesque".<sup>19</sup>

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism reveals a fundamental shift in understanding the novelistic text, as it moves literary consciousness from a traditional, centralized conception of ideology to a space where voices and ideas interact freely and dynamically. In this view, ideology loses its absolute status and opens up to multiplicity and questioning, leading to a text that is not closed but is rather open to dialogue and interpretation.

Language, in this view, is not a mere vehicle for conveying a transcendental or static thought; it transforms into an arena for conflict between different points of view, a dynamic reflected in his description of it as "carnavalesque". This description does not signify chaos as much as it points to creative multiplicity and dissonance, where discourses intersect and debate to reveal the complexity of human consciousness and the entanglement of social worlds.

On the level of the "authentic novel, one can sense behind every utterance the nature of social languages with their internal logic and necessity... and the image of this language in the novel is the image of the social horizon of the social idéologème, welded to its discourse and its language".<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, "behind all these languages, the images of the speakers appear in their individualized social and historical guise".<sup>21</sup> Language is not just a means of

---

<sup>19</sup> The Dialogism of Ideology in Bakhtin, on the link: <https://alrai.com/article/336210>.

<sup>20</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle, p. 124.

<sup>21</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, The Word in the Novel, p. 114.

communication; it is a tool that reflects the speakers' social and historical backgrounds, Every character in the novel speaks in a language or dialect that carries their class and cultural imprint, which gives the novel a realistic feature and helps the reader understand the contexts in which the characters operate.

This linguistic multiplicity is a facet of "dialogism," where different voices coexist within the text, each with a perspective and background, enriching the novel intellectually and culturally and bringing its linguistic world closer to the real world.

According to Bakhtin, the discourse of the other is summoned, which creates a polyphony within the novel. The novel transforms into a double-voiced discourse, which takes the form of "internal dialogue, This is what we find in humorous and satirical discourses, in parody, in the deconstructive discourse of the narrator and characters, and finally in the discourse of the interspersed expressive genres, All of them are double-voiced discourses with an internally dialogic form, In all of them, there exists a seed of latent, undispersed dialogue, centered on itself, which is a dialogue of two voices, two concepts of the world, and a dialogue of two languages."<sup>22</sup>

The verbal diversity of the novel "enters and is physically embodied in the images of the speakers, or enters as a pervasive background for dialogism, thereby determining the special impact of the direct novelistic word."<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Novelistic Discourse*, trans.: Muhammad Barrada, p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Word in the Novel*, p. 109.



### **3. From Dialogism to Intertextuality: Transformations of the Concept and Possibilities of Interpretation**

It is well-known that the nature of science is built on a cumulative property Julia Kristeva<sup>24</sup> followed Bakhtin's thought and developed it into the concept of intertextuality, where she sees every text as a textual interaction. It is clear that Julia Kristeva benefited from Bakhtin's intellectual legacy, which resonates in her research. We find terms such as: "idéologème," "dialogisme," "polyphonie," and "le discours carnivalesque"<sup>25</sup> The concept of dialogism provided the foundational key idea for the concept of intertextuality developed by Kristeva, Intertextuality is a tool for reading texts in light of their historicity and multiplicity of voices, where the text is not seen as an independent unit; it is an accumulation of meanings and has multiple references, The phenomenon of intertextuality forms "written geological layers, occurring through a non-specific re-assimilation of the text's materials, such that the

---

<sup>24</sup> Julia Kristeva(-1941)

Was born in Bulgaria, and was schooled inside Marxist and Russian formalism, Kristeva emigrated to France, where she studied initially with Roland Barthes. She wrote for the journal (Tel Quel) and worked as a professor in each of the universities of Paris and Columbia (New York). Kristeva undertook the development of structural criticism and created a methodology she named semanalysis which seeks to uncover the signification and a group of categories and clashing conceptions. She affirmed that the oppressiveness of the dominant symbolic system can be observed in some types of modernist literary and artistic practices through the rhythms, pauses, and absences in the texts which form a new language. Also, her work was concerned in a special way with gender and subjectivity, according to Lacanian psychoanalysis (see: Chris Barker, Dictionary of Cultural Studies, p. 282).

<sup>25</sup> Mohamed Al-Wahabi, "Intertextuality According to Julia Kristeva," *Alamat Journal*, no. 54, vol. 14, 2004, p. 381.

various passages of the literary text appear as transformations of passages taken from other passages, within a comprehensive ideological component, Intertextuality emerged with Kristeva's transformative analyses in the novelistic text."<sup>26</sup>

No expression is created out of a vacuum, and every subsequent expression has a relationship with a preceding one. The term Bakhtin uses to denote this interconnectedness between one expression and other expressions is the term dialogism, "This key term is fraught with a confusing multiplicity of meanings, and so I have preferred to do what I did previously when I translated the term 'metalinguistics' into 'translinguistics': thus, to convey a more comprehensive meaning, I will use the term intertextuality, which Julia Kristeva used in her presentation of Bakhtin, reserving the term dialogism for specific examples of intertextuality, such as the exchange of responses between speakers or for Bakhtin's own understanding of a person's individual identity".<sup>27</sup>

In its simple meaning, intertextuality is "every relationship between two utterances that is considered intertextual... so every two oral products or two utterances that engage in dialogue with one another enter into a special kind of semantic relationship that we call dialogic relationships."<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, it can be said that intertextuality is one of the forms of dialogic relationships, as every utterance echoes in previous texts and discourses.

---

<sup>26</sup> Said Alloush, Dictionary of Contemporary Literary Terms, Lebanese Book House, Beirut, Sociopresse, Casablanca, 1st ed., 1985, p. 215.

<sup>27</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle, p. 121.

<sup>28</sup> Hamid Al-Lahmadani, The Stylistics of the Novel: A Theoretical Introduction, Dirasat Publications: Sal, Casablanca, 1st ed., 1989, p. 91.



#### **4. Dialogism in Arab Criticism: From Reception to Mechanisms of Application**

Among the pioneering studies that represented the first forms of reception of Bakhtin's works are two studies: 'Faisal Darraj's 'The Novelistic Relationship in Production Relations'... and the second study revolves around Hamed Lahmidani's concept of Goldmannian understanding and 'Bakhtinian' dialogism... in his critical book *From the Analysis of a Socio-Structuralist Approach to the Novel: The Teacher Ali as a Model*.<sup>29</sup>

In the writings of Mohammed Miftah, some fragments of Bakhtin's dialogism are present, represented in a study titled: *The Role of Background Knowledge in Creation and Analysis*. At this level, his awareness of the importance of Bakhtin's dialogic theses, which established what is known as the theory of intertextuality, is evident. At the same time, we note the absence of any reference to the term dialogism<sup>30</sup>.

In a study titled *Dialogism in the Poetic Text*, the concept of "dialogism" is present and its presence is made explicit from the very title, while Bakhtin's name is absent from the entire study.<sup>31</sup>

Under the title *Linguistic Multiplicity Toward a New Vision for the Trajectory of the Arab Novel*, in his book *Modern Critical Theory*, Ahmed Al-Jurti discusses the efforts of the Moroccan critic Mohammed Berrada, Al-Jurti sees that Berrada advocated for the effectiveness of

---

<sup>29</sup> Moajeb Bin Saeed Al-Zahrani, *Towards a Dialogical Reception: An Approach to the Forms of Reception of Mikhail Bakhtin's Writings in the Arab Context*, College of Arts, King Saud University, undated edition, 2002, p. 20.

<sup>30</sup> See, The reference itself, p. 178.

<sup>31</sup> See, The reference itself, p. 179.

Bakhtinian theory in providing what he considers to be a productive reading of the Arab novel, one that reveals its aesthetic and human specificity, specifically linguistic multiplicity Bakhtin considered this to be one of the most important artistic components that distinguishes the novel from other cultural discourses, and through which the various social and ideological values rooted in reality are diagnosed.<sup>32</sup>

Based on this understanding, Berrada believes that the history of the Arab novel should not be viewed only as a response to social contexts or as an imitation of Western narrative techniques, but rather as a result of the interaction of a set of methods and styles that contributed to creating a new social imaginary, which helps in interpreting external reality.<sup>33</sup>

In light of the concept of linguistic multiplicity, Berrada re-evaluated the achievements of the Arab novel and how it diagnosed the questions, concerns, and transformations that Arab reality was producing. He believed that the novel *Zainab* was not a product of the Western romantic novel and an imitation of its artistic style, but rather that its achievement is manifested in its use of the phenomenon of linguistic multiplicity to capture the transformations of society and re-diagnose them through its expressive fabric.<sup>34</sup>

According to Mohammed Berrada, the phenomenon of linguistic multiplicity contributed to the creation of a new social imaginary capable of revealing what ideologically driven political discourses conceal. However, the 1950s

---

<sup>32</sup> See, Ahmad Al-Jarati, *Representations of Modern Literary Theory in Contemporary Novel Criticism*, p. 267.

<sup>33</sup> See, The reference itself, the page itself.

<sup>34</sup> The reference itself, p. 268.



**Soumission : 10/01/2025    Acceptation : 01/06/2025    Publication : 20/09/2025**

witnessed a decline in linguistic multiplicity as a result of the dominance of socialist realism concepts, which offered reductionist approaches to the literary experience. In contrast, the 1970s saw a strong return to linguistic multiplicity, which Arab novelists employed to deconstruct pre-packaged ideologies and open up to the marginal and the everyday. During the experimental phase, linguistic multiplicity was used fruitfully to stylize the various discourses that reality abounds with.<sup>35</sup>

Thanks to this application, the Arab novel achieved several gains, most notably:<sup>36</sup>

1. The fragmentation of the text's homogeneity by breaking the singularity of language, which allowed for the multiplicity of values and opinions and highlighted the multiplicity of languages of truth.
2. The transformation of the novelistic form by integrating linguistic levels related to metafiction, which shakes the realist contract and poses new questions to the creative process.
3. The generation of a new social and artistic imaginary that allows the self to search for its otherness through an existential experience and a relative perspective, while deconstructing stifling absolute concepts.

The critical project of Mohammed Berrada, as evident in his book *Questions of the Novel, Questions of Criticism*, is a dialogic project that seeks to activate an interactive relationship between the novel and criticism, thereby ensuring the production of a critical practice that listens to

---

<sup>35</sup> See, Ahmad Al-Jarati, *Representations of Modern Literary Theory in Contemporary Novel Criticism*, p. 268.

<sup>36</sup> The reference itself, pp. 268-270.

the emotional and artistic dimension of novelistic texts, without being bound to the Western critical model. This project is based on drawing inspiration from Bakhtinian concepts of dialogism, especially concerning polyphony and the deconstruction of centralism, which allows the Arab novelistic text to re-shape its referentiality from within its artistic and linguistic structure. Berrada also rejects traditional approaches that either exaggerate or marginalize the referential dimension and calls for the creation of new critical concepts that take into account the imaginative specificity of Arab texts and contribute to building a dialogic society in which hierarchy is absent and the multiplicity of discourses is celebrated.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, it can be said that Mohammed Berrada's critical project is based on a deep dialogic vision that seeks to establish a dialectical relationship between criticism and the novel. Through this project, the possibilities of dialogism in analyzing literary texts become evident.

## **5. The Limits and Possibilities of Dialogism in Narrative Text Analysis**

Dialogism is manifested in the novel through three patterns that contribute to its formation:

1. Hybridization (L'hybridation).
2. Dialogic linguistic interpenetration between languages.
3. Pure dialogues.

The importance of these patterns lies in their contribution to forming what Bakhtin called "the image of language," where the novel is based on a multiplicity of voices and languages, which gives it a pictorial character similar to fine

---

<sup>37</sup>. See, Ahmad Al-Jarati, p. 271.



art, as it expresses meaning through a multi-layered linguistic interaction, not through a single, unified language<sup>38</sup>.

**Hybridization:** This occurs on the level of language where there is "a mixing of two social languages within a single utterance, and the meeting of two separate linguistic consciousnesses within the arena of that utterance, and the hybridization must be intentional"<sup>39</sup>, Every linguistic consciousness represents a different style and a social group with a different background or ideology, and it occurs intentionally by the speaker, who seeks a specific effect from it. "Intentional hybridization directed toward literary art is one of the basic methods for building the image of language. We must specify that in the case of hybridization, the language that illuminates (usually a system of contemporary literary language) takes on a somewhat objective character, to become an image. The more widely and deeply the method of hybridization is applied in the novel (through several languages, not a single language), the more the personified and illuminating language takes on an objective character, ultimately transforming into one of the images of the novel's language"<sup>40</sup> The text makes a deep distinction between two types of hybridization: intentional literary and involuntary historical, which is an important distinction for understanding the dynamism of language in both creative and historical fields.

---

<sup>38</sup> See, Hamid Al-Lahmadani, *The Stylistics of the Novel: A Theoretical Introduction*, p. 84.

<sup>39</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Novelistic Discourse*, p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> The reference itself, p. 122.

Intentional hybridization, as the text explains, is used as an artistic tool within literary texts and activates the aesthetic consciousness of the class or temporal differences between language patterns, becoming part of the stylistic structure of the literary work, especially in novels that rely on polyphony and systems.

As for involuntary hybridization, it is a process that occurs naturally with the evolution of language over time. This hybridization represents one of the bases of linguistic change, as it results in new dialects or transformations in the national language itself as a result of its interaction with other languages and dialects, whether through conquest, colonization, or cultural and social friction.

In this approach, language is a mobile, vital entity whose image is formed by the continuous interaction between multiple patterns, whether by the will of the author or by the effect of history, and this vision highlights the importance of hybridization as a tool for creation and a means of renewal.

On the level of the text subject to intentional linguistic hybridization, "a meeting of two linguistic consciousnesses with a time period and a social difference, or both, occurs within the arena of that utterance... But involuntary, unconscious hybridization is one of the important forms of the historical existence and the becoming of languages, It can be clearly said that speech and languages, in general, change historically through hybridization, and the mixing of various (languages) coexisting within the same dialect, the same national language, and through the branching of the same linguistic group or several groups"<sup>41</sup>, Intentional hybridization plays an important role in shaping literary

---

<sup>41</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Novelistic Discourse*, p. 120.



language, and it is done in a conscious way directed toward illuminating the image of language and giving it an objective dimension. Hybridization leads to the personification of language and making it have distinct features, so that it becomes part of the aesthetic structure of the novel and contributes to creating "the image of language" in the novel – that is, the multiplicity of voices and linguistic styles within the narrative work.

### **Dialogic Interpenetration:**

This is what is known as stylization. Bakhtin gives it "another description when he makes it a mutual illumination between languages, and it is an illumination that does not require – as is the case with hybridization – the presence of two languages in one utterance. Rather, it appears in an utterance of a single language, but it is presented in a dynamic image, and it cannot, of course, obtain this dynamic image except if it is presented by means of a hidden dynamic language consciousness that works indirectly."<sup>42</sup> Stylization is not merely a stylistic imitation; it is an implicit critical act, as it is realized when a certain language is presented through an internal consciousness of another language, often that second language has authority or cultural reference, but it remains outside the utterance. From this, the first language seems to speak for itself, but in reality, it is revealed in the light of a hidden consciousness of a parallel language.

This is what makes stylization, for Bakhtin, a tool for creating internal linguistic tension, which results in an

---

<sup>42</sup> Hamid Al-Lahmadani, *The Stylistics of the Novel*, p. 87.

internal dialogue within the text, between the levels of language and cultural and social discourses.

"The mutual illumination formulated in an internal dialogue, which linguistic systems accomplish as a whole, is distinguished from hybridization in its specific sense. In mutual illumination, there is no direct unification of two languages within one utterance; rather, it is a single updated and uttered language, but it is presented in the light of the other language. And this second language remains outside the utterance and is never updated. The most distinct and clear form of this mutual illumination with an internal dialogic form is "stylization."<sup>43</sup> The concept of stylization for Bakhtin represents one of the deepest manifestations of polyphony, not only on the level of characters but on the level of language itself, as a vital, interactive entity that does not speak from a vacuum but from within a continuous tension between subjects and references, This is what makes the novel—according to Bakhtin—the literary form most capable of embracing this multiplicity and tension, as part of the fabric of contemporary reality.

"This second linguistic consciousness of the stylizer and his contemporaries begins its work by relying on the raw material of the stylized language, and the stylizer does not speak about his subject except through that language which he will stylize and which is 'foreign' to him. But this last language is itself presented in the light of the stylizer's contemporary linguistic consciousness, and the contemporary language casts a special light on the language subject to stylization: it extracts some elements from it and leaves others in the shade, and there are specific tones and

---

<sup>43</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Novelistic Discourse*, p. 122.



**Soumission : 10/01/2025    Acceptation : 01/06/2025    Publication : 20/09/2025**

harmonic positions between the language subject to stylization and the contemporary linguistic consciousness, and in short, it creates a free image of the language of others that not only translates the will of what is to be stylized but also the linguistic and literary will of the stylizer."<sup>44</sup>

There is a type of stylization based on the incompatibility of the intentions of the personifying language with the purposes of the personified language, which is called parody<sup>45</sup>. It is satire or mocking imitation of a specific linguistic or stylistic pattern, but in a deep and fundamental way, and it is not superficial or just sarcastic. "Parodic stylization cannot create an image of language and the world corresponding to it except on one condition, which is that the purpose is not a simple and superficial destruction of the language of others, as is the case in rhetorical parody. To be fundamental and productive, parody must, precisely, be parodic stylization: it must recreate a parodic language as a fundamental whole possessing its internal logic and revealing a unique world closely linked to the language on which it was initiated."<sup>46</sup> The effectiveness of the parodic style does not lie in its mockery and satire, but in its ability to recreate and internalize language and transform it into a tool for producing new meaning that reflects intellectual and aesthetic depth.

Thus, stylization becomes a creative act that transcends the linguistic dimension to reach deeper cultural and intellectual dimensions, expressing the stylizer's stance toward language, the other, and the self.

---

<sup>44</sup> The reference itself, the same page.

<sup>45</sup> See, The reference itself, p. 18.

<sup>46</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Novelistic Discourse*, p. 123.

The novel's transition between hybridization and stylization constitutes what Bakhtin calls diversification, which "freely introduces the material of 'foreign' language into contemporary themes, combines the stylized world with the world of contemporary consciousness, and puts the stylized language to the test by including it in new and impossible situations for it."<sup>47</sup> This makes the novel a multi-voiced world with its divergent ideologies and intellectual and cultural backgrounds, which contributes to expanding the reading entries into this paper world.

### **Pure Dialogues:**

By "pure dialogue," it is meant "what Plato long ago called direct mimesis, that is, the dialogue of the characters among themselves within the narrative. Bakhtin, as is his custom, uses multiple formulas to express the same thing, so we also find him talking about what is called 'pure dramatic dialogues,' and then about 'the dialogue of the novel,' and he always means the direct dialogue of the characters in the narrative. Pure dialogue... is not limited to the subjective utilitarian purposes of the characters, but it is nourished by the greater dialogism in the novel, that is, from hybridization and stylization."<sup>48</sup>

The dialogue of the novel is therefore "integrated into its general dialogism, and if it is distinguished by the form of writing and the absence of the narrator, it is nevertheless subject to the same standards as hybridization and stylization. It is also an expression of the conflict of modes of consciousness and vision of the world, just as there is,

---

<sup>47</sup> The reference itself, the same page.

<sup>48</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Novelistic Discourse*, p. 90.



between the languages that engage in dialogue through it, a language that is organized and stylizing."<sup>49</sup>

In summary, the characteristics of the novel's dialogue are as follows:

- It is distinguished by its form of writing with the absence of the narrator's voice, but it is subject to the standards of the multi-voiced novel.
- It reflects the conflict of different visions and modes of consciousness.
- It is located between multiple languages that engage in dialogue.

Thus, "pure dialogue" is not just a technical tool for narration; it is a space where worldviews clash and it shows the polyphony that distinguishes the novel for Bakhtin.

From what has been mentioned above, we conclude that the intended purpose of those patterns that constitute the dialogism of the novel is to create an image of language that moves away from directness and straightforwardness, so that the novel speaks in a form shaped by different styles, personifying divergent stances, and is written by the conceptions that a number of languages carry.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> The reference itself, p. 91.

<sup>50</sup> See, Hamid Al-Lahmadani, *The Stylistics of the Novel: A Theoretical Introduction*, p. 91.

## **Conclusion:**

This research paper concludes that dialogism is not merely an explanatory term or a stylistic technique, but a cognitive horizon that re-orders the relationship between the text, its discourses, and the speaking subjects within it. This allows for reading the novel as a structure open to a multiplicity of voices and a conflict of meanings. The study, by invoking Bakhtin's theory and Kristeva's expansions on intertextuality, has shown that meaning is generated from the interaction of signs within intertwined social and historical contexts, and that mechanisms such as hybridization, stylization, and pure dialogue give the text its critical energy and its ability to deconstruct the centralism of a single voice and reveal the latent ideological structures.

In light of the practical outcomes in Arab criticism, it becomes clear that the localization of dialogism is no longer limited to a theoretical threshold but has engaged in more fertile reading practices that enrich the analysis of narrative structure and test the representations of reality, identity, and power. Nevertheless, the need remains urgent to expand comparative work between Arab and Western texts and to employ quantitative and textual approaches supported by digital humanities tools to map the voices and their articulations. It also calls for connecting dialogism with the sociology of literature and the semiotics of discourse to strengthen the methodological foundation.

Thus, dialogism solidifies its position as a theoretical and practical framework for formulating multiple and open readings. It offers a path for renewing narrative studies and reconnecting the text with its cultural and social environment in a way that makes interpretation a cognitive



act with an impact that extends beyond the boundaries of the literary work into the realms of public debate.

### References:

1. Al-Arwi, A. (1993). The concept of ideology. Arab Cultural Center.
2. Al-Jarati, A. (2014). Representations of modern literary theory in contemporary novel criticism. Al-Naya for Studies, Publishing, and Distribution.
3. Al-Lahmadani, H. (1989). The stylistics of the novel: A theoretical introduction. Dirasat Publications.
4. Al-Lahmadani, H. (1990). Novel criticism and ideology. Arab Cultural Center
5. Al-Rowailey, M., & Al-Bazai, S. (2002). The literary critic's guide (3rd ed.). Arab Cultural Center.
6. Al-Wahabi, M. (2004). Intertextuality according to Julia Kristeva. *Alamat Journal*, 14(54).
7. Alloush, S. (1985). Dictionary of contemporary literary terms. Lebanese Book House / Sociopresse.
8. Bakhtin, M. (1988). The word in the novel (Y. Hallaq, Trans.). Ministry of Culture Publications.
9. Bakhtin, M. (n.d.). The novelistic discourse (M. Barrada, Trans.).
10. Barker, C. (2018). Dictionary of cultural studies (J. Belqassem, Trans.). Ru'yah for Publishing and Distribution.
11. Kristeva, J. (n.d.). Various works cited in Barker (2018).

12. Todorov, T. (1996). Mikhail Bakhtin: The dialogical principle (F. Saleh, Trans., 2nd ed.). Arab Institute for Studies and Publishing.
13. Zahrani, M. B. S. (2002). Towards a dialogical reception: An approach to the forms of reception of Mikhail Bakhtin's writings in the Arab context. King Saud University.
14. Zaytouni, L. (2002). Dictionary of novel criticism terms. Library of Lebanon Publishers / Dar Al-Nahar.
15. The dialogism of ideology in Bakhtin. (2009, September 12). Al-Rai Newspaper. <https://alrai.com/article/336210>