

## Heteroglossia (Bakhtin)

Heteroglossia is a term coined by Bakhtin to describe discourse in the novel:

“The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and as a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases) – this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre. The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the social diversity of speech types [*raznorechie* = literally: “differing speech” = heteroglossia] and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions. Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional units with whose help heteroglossia [*raznorechie*] can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships. These distinctive links and interrelationships between utterances and languages, this movement of the theme through different languages and speech types, its dispersion into the rivulets and droplets of social heteroglossia, its dialogization. And this is the basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel.” (M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* [“Discourse in the Novel”, pp. 262-3).

Thus for Bakhtin, the novel is a model of society. What Bakhtin maps in the quoted segment above is how the novel manages to do this through its structure.

Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover