The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov

EDITED BY PAM MORRIS

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Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov

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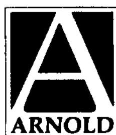

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Introduction

I

Perhaps what is most striking about the work of Mikhail Bakhtin is the diversity of areas and range of disciplines across which it is invoked. His ideas are being utilized not just in literary studies but also in philosophy, semiotics, cultural studies, anthropology, feminist and post-colonial studies, Marxism, ethics and, of course, Russian and Slavic studies. Apart from the accessibility of his ideas, there are two main reasons for this. At the centre of all his thinking is an innovative and dynamic perception of language. Due largely to the impact of structuralist linguistics and subsequent development of deconstructionist theory, a concern with language as production of meaning has been pushed to the centre of twentieth-century Western epistomology. In addition, because of the troubled history of Russia this century, Bakhtin's thought remained almost unknown there or in the West until relatively recently. He is thus, by accident, a relative late-comer to the field and his emphasis upon language as actual utterances, as discourse,[1] and his rejection of a structuralist view of language as a monolithic conceptual system seem to offer the potential of moving beyond the current theoretic impasse.[2]

So far I have referred only to the name of Bakhtin. It is an irony, much commented on, that the body of texts, represented in this *Reader*, articulating some of the most influential thinking about questions of authoring and meaning in language, are themselves the subject of scholarly and political dispute. This dispute involves two separate issues. Because of the social and political conditions in Russia, most of Bakhtin's work was only published many years after it was written, quite a bit of it posthumously, and some of his texts have been lost completely. The other issue is, perhaps, even more painful. In 1973 it was suddenly claimed that texts written during the 1920s and signed by men who were no longer alive had been written largely by Bakhtin. At the present time, most of these uncertainties and disputes appear unresolvable.

[1] The Russian '*slovo*' used by Bakhtin can also signify an individual word; it always implies a word or words as they are uttered, not language in the abstract. See Glossary.

[2] By this I mean the general recognition that structuralism, for all its achievements, has not fulfilled earlier hopes of providing a full account of linguistic structure and functioning. Similarly, deconstructionist dismantling of the fundamental assumptions of Western thought seems unable to provide any basis for a positive move beyond that critique.

What is beyond doubt is that all three men, Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975), Pavel Nikolaevich Medvedev (1891–1938) and Valentin Nikolaevich Voloshinov (1884/5–1936) lived actual historical lives, met and discussed ideas together as members of like-minded intellectual circles at Nevel,[3] then Vitebsk and finally Leningrad during the heady post-revolutionary years in Russia from around 1918 to 1928. These were years of intense intellectual and artistic creativity in the Soviet Union but with Stalin's consolidation of personal power in the 1920s they became increasingly dangerous ones. In 1929 Bakhtin was arrested and, eventually, on account of very poor health, received a commuted sentence of six years' exile in the town of Kustanai in Soviet Central Asia. Unlike Bakhtin, who never obtained a remunerative or established position within official cultural or academic circles (a factor which may well have contributed to his survival), Medvedev pursued a quite successful public career in literary and theatrical spheres until 1938 when, suddenly, he was arrested in one of the recurrent purges and shot. Voloshinov also pursued a fairly successful academic career as a senior research worker at the State Institute for Speech Culture. However, he had been ill since 1914 with tuberculosis from which he died in 1936.

None of Medvedev's or Voloshinov's publications on language, Freudianism and literature during the 1920s made much impact at the time they appeared, and were subsequently ignored. The only exception was Roman Jakobson's utilization of some of the ideas in Voloshinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Jakobson's enthusiasm brought about the first English translation of that text. On the other hand, Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky, published just at the time of his arrest in 1929, was well received when it appeared although his subsequent exile prevented any further recognition until he began to be 'rehabilitated' in the 1960s. A revised edition of the Dostoevsky text appeared in 1963 and his dissertation on Rabelais, written much earlier, was published in 1965. Then, in 1971, on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday, a public conference was held on his work and in the published papers of this meeting the claim was made by a distinguished Soviet linguist, V. V. Ivanov, that all the significant writings signed by Voloshinov and Medvedev had been written largely by Bakhtin. The putative authors had only been responsible for 'some minor interpolations'.[4]

This view of Bakhtin's authorship of the texts was largely accepted in the West and has received its strongest support in the detailed and scholarly biography of Bakhtin by Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist.[5] In Russia, Bakhtin has become a much revered figure, being perceived as a voice that kept faith with traditional values and freedom during the darkest years of Stalinist terror. Many of his Russian admirers link his thinking to early twentieth-century Russian religious mysticism, and Michael Holquist has

[3] Medvedev was not at Nevel; he became part of the circle at Vitebsk. For a full account, see M. Holquist and K. Clark, 1984: *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, pp. 35–62.

[4] The full statement, which only appeared as a footnote in the conference papers, is reprinted in T. Todorov, 1984: *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle* (trans. W. Godzich). Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, p. 6.

[5] Holquist and Clark, pp. 146–70.

also argued that his work should be read as coded religious affirmation resembling 'that of the early Christians who sought to spread their message by parable'.[6]

For Holquist the explicitly Marxist arguments of the texts originally imputed to Medvedev and Voloshinov are simply necessary window-dressing aimed at making the work acceptable to the Soviet publishing authorities but not affecting its underlying import. In any case, Holquist suggests, Bakhtin's unorthodox religious views would not have been unsympathetic to certain aspects of Marxism. In the debating circles at Nevel, Vitebsk and Leningrad, many of the participants displayed an equal openness to Christian and Marxist ideas.[7]

However, not all scholars in Russia or the West have felt ready to accept these assumptions without question.[8] Perhaps inevitably the most contentious area of debate is the issue of the Marxism of the disputed texts. Recently two eminent American Bakhtinian scholars, Gary Morson and Caryl Emerson, have disagreed with Holquist, arguing that there is insufficient evidence to persist with the view of Bakhtin's sole authorship. Voloshinov and Medvedev must be assumed the authors of the texts signed with their names and these texts articulate 'a particularly complex and rewarding form of Marxism'.[9] However, they argue that Bakhtin was hostile to Marxism all his life and, although the influence of the other two writers accounts for the more sociological orientation of his writing in the 1930s and 1940s, his work ultimately shows up the inadequacy of Marxism. This illustrates one unfortunate aspect of the political contention; it can lead to a denial or a diminishing of the value of the Voloshinov and Medvedev texts. Marxist scholars, of course, have no wish to deny the importance of those works, especially Voloshinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. However, there is disagreement among them as to whether Bakhtin's work too should be regarded as having a close affinity to Marxist thinking or whether it should be kept quite separate from that of Voloshinov and Medvedev.[10] What is generally agreed is that the evidence offered for Bakhtin's sole authorship is necessarily largely circumstantial and anecdotal. Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov all suffered in different ways, and Medvedev in the ultimate way, during the worst years of Stalinism. It would seem horrifying to repeat the terrible practices of those years by denying

[6] Holquist and Clark, p. 184.

[7] Voloshinov, for example, wrote religious-mystical poetry. For this and other details, see Holquist and Clark, p. 114, pp. 48–119.

[8] See, for example, I. R. Titunik, 'Translator's Introduction' in V. N. Vološinov, 1987: *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch* (trans. I. R. Titunik, ed. N. H. Bruss). Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana University Press, pp. xv–xxiii. There is a problem with Russian names in translation since American and British versions are slightly different. In my own writing I have conformed to the British spelling but where notes and references are to American translations I have kept to the form used.

[9] G. S. Morson and C. Emerson (eds) 1989: *Rethinking Bakhtin: Extensions and Challenges.* Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, pp. 47, 31–60.

[10] See, for example, F. Jameson, 1974: 'Review of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*', *Style*, iii, Fall, pp. 535–45; J. Frow, 1986: *Marxism and Literary History*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 98–99.

rightful authorship and identity to any of them.[11] For this reason, until any incontrovertible evidence is produced, it seems only right to acknowledge the uncertainty of authorship of the disputed texts. For this reason, despite its cumbersomeness, I shall follow the practice of referring to texts originally imputed to Voloshinov or Medvedev by their name followed by Bakhtin's.

The aim of this anthology is to make a wide range of the writing more widely available so that readers can judge for themselves and possibly extend its relevance to yet other areas of thinking. This has been my conscious criterion in the selection of passages and in writing contextual commentary on them. However, inevitably my choice is affected by my own sense of the texts. As Bakhtin insists, ideological evaluations are inherent in any act of understanding. To summarize my position briefly: the texts themselves are the only hard evidence we have and, more importantly, they are what really matters. On close reading they seem to offer two possible theses. The recurrence of the same concerns, the same key terms and their development from one text to the next could argue strongly for a single author, Bakhtin, as Michael Holquist maintains. But they could equally support the view of very close mutual influence between separate writers. A recurrent assertion in many of the texts is that the author is a constituent element of the work to be distinguished from any actual historical person. If one accepts this view of authorial presence, it seems to me equally unconvincing to argue that the writing articulates either a predominantly religious message or a 'lifelong dislike of Marxism'.[12] To sustain either of these interpretations it is necessary to claim a special 'truth' status for very selective passages out of an immensely creative body of writing in which strong hostility is always directed at those who claim to say the 'last word' about an author.

The unifying concern of all the texts written by Bakhtin and/or Voloshinov and Medvedev is the nature of discourse. However, most emphatically, this is not investigated as the self-contained conceptual system studied by linguistics; hence the critiques of formalism and structuralism. Any such abstract or 'monologic' perception of what are often termed 'living utterances' is seen as unable to account for the two most fundamental aspects of language: its active creative capacity and the always evaluative nature of meaning. This ever-present evaluative element in discourse makes concern with context absolutely essential. All the texts insist upon the necessity of considering language not as words in the dictionary which have only meaning potential but as the actualized meaning of those words used in a specific utterance. The grammatical sentence 'That's a fine view', for example, has many potential meanings, but only as uttered in a particular context can we know which meanings are realised.[13] Thus discourse – the production of actualized meaning – can be studied adequately only as a communication

[11] Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, expresses this reservation most forcibly: 'Vološinov may well have died of natural causes, but such was not the case of Medvedev . . . In such a context I would be most loath to deny him even partial authorship of works for which he died' (p. 10).

[12] Morson and Emerson, *Rethinking Bakhtin*, p. 2.

[13] For example, this sentence could be expressing nationalist meaning if the view referred to was a parade of uniformed young men. Alternatively, it could be spoken ironically in reference to a scene of post-industrial decay.

event, as responsive interaction between at least two social beings. Language exists on that creative borderzone or boundary between human consciousnesses, between a self and an other. It is this responsive interaction between speakers, between self and other, that constitutes the capacity of language to produce new meaning.

Every utterance generates a response in the other who receives it, even if that response is only within inner speech. However, the initial utterance already anticipates that active response in the receiving other and so shapes itself to take it into account. But neither, of course, was the 'initial utterance' actually the first word in any real sense; inevitably its form is moulded not just by the future response but also as 'answer' to all relevant previous utterances. This inherently interactive – dialogic – nature of discourse and consciousness (since, as we shall see, consciousness is constituted by language) accounts for the constant generation of new meaning. It also produces a complex understanding of time. Meaning is produced or realized only in the specific utterance of a communication event, that is in a precise historical actualization. However, every utterance is also a responsive link in the continuous chain of other utterances which, in effect, constitute the continuity of human consciousness. The utterance therefore participates equally in a synchronic and a diachronic dimension – it is of its own concrete contextual moment and part of the long evolution of social change. The common ground of all these texts, then, is a recurrent concern with an inter-related cluster of key concepts: self and other, event and open-ended continuity, borderzone and outsidedness, interactive creative process and social evaluation, dialogic and monologic.

This is not an exhaustive list and the actual words and terms used to signify these ideas vary from text to text as does the focus and emphasis brought to bear upon them. There is some critical disagreement as to how far Bakhtin's thought evolved over his lifetime and how far his final writing is foreshadowed in his earliest. Since one of the major concerns of all the texts is how new meaning can be generated, it seems strange to argue that Bakhtin's own writing does not produce its own process of development; that his thinking remains essentially static from first to last. My aim in what follows will be to trace what I see as a creative process of response from text to text, perceiving them as interactive dialogic utterances. I shall do this by focusing upon the development of the key concepts already noted, dealing first and in most detail with how these relate to the perception of language and consciousness and then, in rather less detail, with how they also inform the notions of literary history, the novel and carnival.

II

Bakhtin's early work is generally classified as philosophical in orientation as distinct from the more explicitly sociological and linguistic approach of his writing in the 1930s. The longest text yet published in English from the early 1920s, 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity', is ostensibly not concerned with language at all; it conducts a sustained investigation into the aesthetic and ethical relations of self and other, using the terms 'author' and 'hero' to signify this as a formal relationship. Nevertheless at the centre of this

investigation is a recognition that meaning must be actively produced in an 'aesthetic event' constituted by the meeting of two consciousnesses. Bakhtin writes, 'An aesthetic event can take place only when there are two participants present; it presupposes two noncoinciding consciousnesses'.[14] The meaning generated by this event is a 'self'. A single consciousness could not generate a sense of its self; only the awareness of another consciousness outside the self can produce that image. Behind this notion is Bakhtin's very strong sense of the physical and spatial materiality of bodily being. He writes:

> This other human being whom I am contemplating, I shall always see and know something that he, from his place outside and over against me, cannot see himself: parts of his body that are inaccessible to his own gaze (his head, his face and its expression), the world behind his back . . . are accessible to me but not to him. As we gaze at each other, two different worlds are reflected in the pupils of our eyes. . . . to annihilate this difference completely, it would be necessary to merge into one, to become one and the same person.
>
> This ever-present *excess* of my seeing, knowing and possessing in relation to any other human being, is founded in the uniqueness and irreplaceability of my place in the world (p. 23).

This is a key passage; the notion of a visualized image remains an important one in the thinking of subsequent texts. In this early essay it is the aesthetic distance, the outsidedness of the other's situation that enables him or her to perceive me as a bodily whole, as a completed image set off against the world behind my back in a way in which I can never see or experience myself. This excess of seeing allows the other to offer me that unified bodily image of myself as a 'gift'. Similarly, only another consciousness can offer me a unified sense of my personality. This aesthetic production of a unified perception of bodily and personal being is characterized by Bakhtin as a loving gift mutually exchanged between self and other across the borderzone of their two consciousness. 'The principles of giving a form to the soul are the principles of giving a form to inner life *from outside*, from *another* consciousness; the artist's work proceeds here, once again, on the *boundaries*' (p. 101). At times in the text Bakhtin characterizes this bountiful relationship of self and other as like that existing between mother and child or between lovers.[15] Regardless of how it is figured, the gift of self necessitates a passive receptivity; it is only the other who is active and creative.

This passivity enjoined on the receiving self points to an unacknowledged tension in the essay. While my excess of seeing is what produces an aesthetic image of the other as a unified being cut out against the surrounding world, I can never experience myself in this way. My subjective experience can never be so complete, finalized and consummated. Subjectively I never quite coincide with myself, I feel I am never completely contained in any

[14] 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity' [1920–4] in M. Holquist and V. Liapunov (eds) 1990: *Art and Answerability* (trans. V. Liapunov). Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, p. 22. Subsequent page numbers for this essay will be given in the text, and the title of the essay abbreviated to 'Author and Hero'

[15] See, for example, 'This love that shapes a human being from outside throughout his life – his mother's love and the love of others around him – this love gives body to his inner body . . .. (p. 51).

representation of my self. 'I always have a loophole' (p.40) in the sense that my meaning is always yet to be completed.[16] While the essay as a whole undoubtedly valorizes the totalizing aesthetic vision achieved only by an authorial excess of seeing, there is an undertow of attraction towards this sense of the unfinalizability of self. This is most evident in the linkage of the authority of authorial knowledge with death:

> Artistic vision presents us with the *whole* hero, measured in full and added up in every detail; there must be no secrets for us in the hero in respect to meaning ... From the very outset, we must experience all of him, deal with the whole of him: in respect to meaning, he must be dead for us, formally dead.
>
> In this sense, we could say that death is the form of aesthetic consumation of an individual. ... The deeper and more perfect the embodiment, the more distinctively do we hear in it the definitive completion of death and at the same time the aesthetic victory over death (p. 131).[17]

In his later book on Dostoevsky, Bakhtin criticizes Tolstoy for preserving, as exclusively authorial vision, just such a finalizing excess of knowledge that consummates his characters in accounts of their deaths. In contrast to Tolstoy's finalizing (monologic) word, Dostoevsky is praised for creating a new authorial relationship to characters which respects the open-endedness of subjective consciousnesses.[18] However, despite this subsequent shift in his thinking, the aesthetic construction of an image of the human being against an existing world is, for Bakhtin, and always remains for him, the 'organizing form-and-content center of artistic vision' ('Author and Hero', p. 187). Any attempt to separate form from content ignores the evaluative element necessarily involved in this seeing. Only 'the linguist has to do with language as language' ('Author and Hero', p. 192). It is not words or sentences that determine the work of verbal art, rather it is the artistic vision which determines words and sentences and this vision is constituted by the artist's ability to achieve an inner understanding of the human being and, at the same time, to retain an outsidedness to that life. A totally subjective empathy with another human being could not provide that objective form-giving perception; the author would in that case simply merge with the hero. Aesthetic activity always involves two consciousnesses – a consciousness of a consciousness.

This idea leads Bakhtin, at the end of 'Author and Hero', to a consideration of intonation (the emotional accentuation of words) as an important means by which evaluative consciousness is registered in verbal art. In narrative art the direct speech of characters registers their cognitive and emotional response to their world by means of expressive modulations of tone.

[16] It is typical that this term 'loophole' used just once and apparently casually here is returned to in M. M. Bakhtin, 1984: *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (trans. and ed. C. Emerson). Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press. Here it becomes a way of naming a specific form of dialogue. See pp. 232–36.

[17] It should be noted that passages such as this, of which there are a number in this essay, do offer themselves to a religious or spiritual interpretation. The final sentence of the quoted paragraph brings this out even more strongly; 'In art, however, this lived-out life is saved, justified, and consummated in eternal memory' (p. 131).

[18] Bakhtin, *Problems*, pp. 69–75. Subsequent page numbers for this work will be given in the text.

These responses can also be conveyed in their indirect speech as given by the author, but in either case the author will also transmit an authorial response or evaluation to those words of the characters as the encompassing authorial consciousness of their consciousness. Frequently this authorial response is expressed intonationally as irony or compassion or admiration. Bakhtin concludes, 'In this sense, we could say that every word in narrative literature expresses a reaction to another reaction, the author's reaction to the reaction of the hero, that is every concept, image, and object lives on two planes, is rendered meaningful in two value-contexts – in the context of the hero and in that of the author' (p. 218). The thinking here comes very close to a perception of language as double-voiced, that is, as dialogic. However, this concept of double-voiced discourse is only fully developed in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* and thereafter predominates in most texts.

In 'Author and Hero' the discussion constantly blurs the usual division made between art and life. The aesthetic relation of author and hero is considered largely as a means of investigating the ethical implications arising from the creative interdependence of self and other. The essay, 'Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art' (1926), signed by Voloshinov, moves in the opposite direction; a study of everyday utterances is used to provide greater understanding of verbal art. However, the two most obvious differences from 'Author and Hero' is that Voloshinov/Bakhtin pursues an overtly Marxist argument in which language is made the central concern: 'the closest approximation to genuine scientificness in the study of ideological creativity has become possible for the first time thanks to the sociological method in its Marxist conception'.[19]

Voloshinov/Bakhtin proceeds to criticize two current 'fallacious' approaches to the understanding of literature. The methods of formalist criticism fetishize the work of art by regarding it purely as a linguistic construct thus abstracting it from the dynamics of its social context. The alternative approach which attempts to understand the work in terms of the subjective psyche of the individual creator is equally mistaken. Both the formalist attempt at objectivity and the alternative approach of identifying creativity with subjective psychology fail to understand that verbal art, like every other ideological form is 'intrinsically, immanently sociological' (p. 95). This critique of formalism and psychologism and the insistence instead upon a Marxist sociological understanding continues to be the basic structure of all subsequent essays written in the 1920s signed either by Voloshinov or Medvedev.

The single most important conceptual shift from 'Author and Hero' to 'Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art' is that meaning is no longer constructed by the other (author) and offered as a gift to a passive recipient self (hero). Meaning is produced by the fully social interaction of all participants 'in the creative event, which does not for a single instant cease to be an event of living communication involving all' (p. 107). In this essay the relationship between author and hero is perceived as a more complexly social

[19] Vološinov, 'Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art' in *Freudianism*, p. 95. Subsequent page numbers will be given in the text.

and dynamic one than that of love. The play of power and hierarchy are taken into account:

> The basic stylistic tone of the utterance is ... determined above all by who is talked about and what his relation is to the speaker – whether he is higher or lower than or equal to him on the scale of the social hierarchy. King, father, brother, slave, comrade, and so on ... determine its formal structure' (p. 110).

Bakhtin has been criticized for presenting an over-benign account of 'dialogism' which fails to recognize that dialogue is not always free exchange but can be coercive and threatening. If all the texts are taken into consideration, it seems unfair to claim there is no awareness of the play of power in dialogic relations even though this is not always foregrounded.

In *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch* (1927) Voloshinov/Bakhtin conducts a sustained critique of psychologism, taking on its most formidable exponent, Sigmund Freud. It is recognized that the Freudian account has made two important innovative contributions to the understanding of the psysche: the existence of the unconscious and, arising from it, a dynamic and conflictual model of psychical life. However, Freud's only evidence for the unconscious comes from purely subjective sources: from his patients' utterances. Thus the notion of the unconscious is dismissed as untenable. Freud's conflictual emphasis is retained, though, but Voloshinov/Bakhtin transfers this conflict from what is seen as Freud's resort to elemental biological forces to the realm of social and ideological conflicts and power struggles. In the immediate psychoanalytic situation this is a struggle between doctor and patient as the former tries to impose his authority to wrest confessions from the patient, while the patient tries to resist the pressures of social and professional hierarchy. This interpretation of the conscious and unconscious is then generalized in terms of 'official' and 'unofficial' consciousness. Official consciousness constitutes all those aspects of our 'behavioural ideology' (i.e., inner and outer speech and actions) that accord with the stable, fully fledged values of our community and class – its laws, its morality, its world outlook.

The unofficial aspects of consciousness are also historically and socially determined by what any particular society sanctions or censors. However, what is unofficial cannot be so fully formulated and expressed even in inner speech (only in that sense is it the 'unconscious'). For this reason it may be more 'excitable' and 'livelier' than ideology that has become official and occasionally 'in the depths of behavioral ideology accumulate those contradictions which, once having reached a certain threshold, ultimately burst assunder the system of official ideology'.[20] In this essay such revolutionary conflict receives only cautious recognition at most. '*In a healthy community and in a socially healthy personality, behavioral ideology, founded on the socioeconomic basis, is strong and sound* – here, there is no discrepancy between the official and unofficial consciousness' (p. 89; p. **46**). In the context of the tightening grip of Stalinist uniformity this statement has a very chilling meaning potential. However, the opposition between an official and

[20] Vološinov, *Freudianism*, p. 88. Subsequent pages will be given in the text. This passage also appears in the *Reader*, p. 45. In the rest of the introduction where quoted passages are also in the *Reader* the page numbers will be given in bold type following the page numbers for the published edition.

unofficial consciousness is placed at the centre of Bakhtin's radical account of carnival.

The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship (1928), signed by Medvedev, turns to a critique of formalist poetics, whose advocates had established a predominant position within Russian literary and academic spheres during the 1920s. However, although Medvedev/Bakhtin proposes a Marxist sociological poetics as the proper alternative to this 'fallacious' objective approach, the text also rebukes those Marxist critics who only reverse the mistaken abstraction of formalism; some Marxist critics consider only the content of literature to be the object of study. The writer of *Formal Method* is just as insistent as the writer of 'Author and Hero' that form and content are indivisible. A properly Marxist poetics must be adequate to the unity of form and content.

Such a poetics can only be derived from a complex understanding of the relationship of ideological forms as superstructure to the determining economic base. In a subtle elucidation of this relationship, Medvedev/Bakhtin makes use of the terms 'reflection' and 'refraction', 'sign' and 'generating process', all of which recur with increased significance in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. What is special about literature as an ideological form is that as well as directly refracting the 'generating socioeconomic reality', it also by means of its content 'reflects and refracts the reflections and refractions of other ideological spheres (ethics, epistemology, political doctrines, religion, etc.). That is, in its "content" literature reflects the whole of the ideological horizon of which it is itself a part.'[21] Since this ideological horizon is constantly developing, the special literary form of refraction could account for the way verbal art so often seems to anticipate future changes. Thus the critic should never 'impose a thesis on the artist, a thesis in the sense of the "last word" ', for this monologizes the generative future orientation of the work (p. 20).

Medvedev/Bakhtin's most fundamental criticism of formalism is that it cannot account for this creative capacity and so *Formal Method* continually emphasizes discourse in life and art as 'generative'. Thus it is argued that a sociological poetics of the novel must be 'dynamic and dialectical' so as to understand the novel form as a 'system of changing varieties of the genre' (p. 31). To be 'adequate to this generating system' any definition of the novel genre would have to include within its terms all the previous forms of its historical development' (p. 31). This passage reads almost as a future programme for the essays on the novel written by Bakhtin in the 1930s and 1940s.

Formalists also underestimate the generative capacity of non-literary language. Practical intercourse, Medvedev/Bakhtin argues, is 'an event' in which the interrelationship between speakers is always changing and as it does so new meaning is produced (p. 95; p. **105**). The formalists correctly identified the crucial question for poetics as the nature of the relationship between the 'here and now' generation of meaning in the utterance event and the generality and continuity of meaning which belongs to

[21] P. N. Medvedev and M. M. Bakhtin, 1978: *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (trans. A. J. Wehrle). Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 17, *Reader*, p. 128. Subsequent page numbers from this edition and the *Reader* will be given in the text.

language as a system. They failed to recognize that it is social evaluation that joins a specific unique utterance to the 'endless perspective of its ideological meaning'. It is this which links 'the depth and generality of meaning to the uniqueness of the articulated sound' (p. 118). In Bakhtin's thinking at the end of his long career he introduces the terms 'great time' and 'small time' to refer to the complex relationship of verbal art to the process of historical development. Literature is largely determined by the here and now of the author – by his or her artistic event. However 'works break through the boundaries of their own time, they live in centuries, that is in *great time* and frequently (with great art, always) their lives there are more intense and fuller than are their lives within their own time'.[22] Some critics take these kinds of statements in Bakhtin's late essays as clear refutations of Marxist principles,[23] but Medvedev/Bakhtin expresses a similarly complex notion of the relation of a text to historical process (even if the 'here and now' generative event is more positively emphasized) within what is a fundamentally Marxist conception of art.

Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (1929), signed by Voloshinov, is the culminating work of the series of texts published in the second half of the 1920s. It continues the critique of what are seen as the two false trends in the study of language termed here 'individualistic subjectivism' and 'abstract objectivism'. In this text the critical analysis of 'abstract objectivism' focuses upon structuralist accounts of language, especially that of the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. As with formalist poetics the main objection to structuralism is its inability to account for either individual creativity or the large-scale historical processes of change in language forms. Individualistic subjectivism, by locating creativity entirely in the individual psyche, constructs a totally mistaken and disabling opposition between 'the individual' and 'the social'. Voloshinov/Bakhtin insists, 'The individual consciousness not only cannot be used to explain anything, but, on the contrary, is itself in need of explanation'.[24]

The text proceeds to put forward its own theory of language based upon a complex interrelation of the micro (individual) and macro (social) levels. An understanding of language as ideological signs offers an explanation of individual consciousness and creativity and links it to the processes of social history. The key terms are still generative process, borderzone, evaluation, event and continuity, but now for the first time 'dialogic' is used as a positive opposition to monologic. The structuralist perception of language is of an '*isolated, finished, monological utterance*, divorced from its verbal and actual context and standing open not to any possible sort of active response but to passive understanding' (p. 73; p. **35**). By contrast Voloshinov/Bakhtin asserts '*Any true understanding is dialogic in nature*' (p. 102).

[22] 'Response to a Question from the *Novy Mir* Editorial Staff', in M. M. Bakhtin, 1986: *Speech Genres and other Late Essays* (trans. V. W. McGee, eds C. Emerson and M. Holquist). Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, p. 4.

[23] Morson and Emerson, *Rethinking Bakhtin*, pp. 55–56.

[24] V. N. Volosinov, 1973: *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (trans. L. Matejka and I. R. Titunik). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, p. 12. Subsequent page numbers for this edition and the *Reader* will be given in the text.

This perception is central to the text's understanding of human consciousness as inherently active, creative and social. '*The individual consciousness is a socio-ideological fact*' (p. 12; p. **52**), because consciousness necessarily implies the possession of meaning and since all meaning has an evaluative element it is inevitably social and ideological. The text begins with a categorical distinction between objects of the physical world, instruments of production and articles of consumption on the one hand, and, on the other, the sphere of signs. Only a sign carries meaning in that it represents something other than itself. Any of the first three can become a sign as when bread comes to stand for 'life' or 'poverty', but bread in itself has no signifying function. Signs as carriers of meaning come into being on 'interindividual territory' (p. 12; p. **52**); their existence presupposes socially communicating beings.

Individual consciousness can only take shape in the material of signs. If consciousness is deprived of signs, that is of the sphere of meaning, then nothing is left to it. Subjectivity is thus produced on the '*borderline*' where inner experience and social world meet, and they meet in signs – in words. The act of individual understanding, Voloshinov/Bakhtin writes, 'is a response to a sign with signs' (p. 11; p. **52**). This borderzone of continuous interaction between individual consciousness, itself composed of signs, and an outer social world of signs is the location of all creative activity. The response of consciousness to a sign is a dialogic one; a word from outside the psyche always provokes an answering word even if only within the inner system of signs. Any subjective act of understanding will 'generate, sooner or later, a counter statement' (p. 41). Obviously this dialogic model of the production of meaning and consciousness is very far from that of a passively received gift of self from the other. Not only is dialogic understanding active, it is also oppositional; a word provokes its 'counter' word.

It is also a social and political account of change in language. The quotation above continues, 'Each word, as we know it, is a little arena for the clash and criss-crossing of differently oriented social accents. A word in the mouth of a particular individual person is a product of the living interaction of social forces' (p. 41). Because words are involved in every sphere of social intercourse and activity they offer the most sensitive index of social change. Relations of production, political and social structures determine the discursive forms of social interaction across a multitudinous range of daily and occasional, formal and informal verbal interactions referred to in the text as '*speech performances*' and '*speech genres*' (pp. 19, 20; p. **54**). These many forms of speech interchange, which have never been studied, offer an immensely sensitive register of 'barely noticeable shifts and changes' in the social and ideological formations (p. 20; p. **54**). In a late essay Bakhtin initiated the overdue study of speech genres.[25]

Words are also the dialogic site of class interaction. Since different classes within a nation use the same language, words become the arena of class struggle as different classes seek to reaccentuate a word with their meaning. Voloshinov/Bakhtin argues that it is this 'social *multiaccentuality*' of the sign – the word – which ensures its 'vitality and dynamism and ...

[25] 'The Problem of Speech Genres', in *Speech Genres*, pp. 60–102. See also *Reader*, pp. 80–7

capacity for further development' (p. 23; p. **55**). Any ruling class will attempt to monologize the word, imposing an eternal single meaning upon it, but a living ideological sign is always dialogic. Any word can be reaccentuated – a curse can be spoken as a word of praise – and any word can provoke its counter-word.

However, the dialogic quality of meaning whether at the micro level of individual consciousness or at the macro level of class and historical social consciousness is more complex than one-directional responsiveness. '*Word is a two-sided act*', Voloshinov/Bakhtin writes, '. . . it is precisely *the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee*. Each and every word expresses the "one" in relation to the "other" ' (p. 86; p. **58**). Not only does an utterance call forth or provoke a new word, it creates itself in anticipation of that response. Thus each word is doubly orientated; it looks back to the word it is answering and forwards to the anticipated word it will partly determine in advance. Words are thus borderzones between self and other and moments in the open-ended historical continuity of past and future. '*Any utterance*, no matter how weighty and complete in and of itself, *is only a moment in the continuous process of verbal communication*' (p. 95; p. **59**).

This recognition that discourse is inherently dialogic, that utterances are always in complex ways responses to other utterances, is the reason why the final part of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* turns to an analysis of various forms of reported speech. Since reported speech is regarded by the speaker as an utterance belonging to another person, a study of the methods used in literary texts for indicating reported speech can reveal the constant, basic tendencies in the '*active reception of another's speech*' and note changes in the form of that reception over time. What Voloshinov/Bakhtin's survey of reported speech patterns indicates is a historical process in which the boundaries between the speech that is reported and the speech which is doing the reporting (that is, between the two centres of consciousness) are increasingly eroded. This weakens the truth claims of either. Any assertion made in the reported speech is destabilized or relativized by the intrusion within it of the opposing tones of the reporting speaker, but similarly the reporting speaker's authorial or narrative authority is undermined by a spill-over of tone or words from the reported speech. The final paragraph of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* explicitly laments this historical development within social and literary discourse whereby verbal expression has become simply the realm of 'opinions' with the resultant loss of 'the word permeated with confident and categorical social value judgment, the word that really means and take responsibility for what it says' (p. 159; p. **73**).

Given the opposition set out in the earlier chapters between monologic (confident and categorical?) and dialogic understanding, it is tempting to read this final declaration as disguised irony. In the analyses of Dostoevsky's prose used to demonstrate the progressive dialogism (erosion of boundaries) between reported and reporting speech, it is often ironic and mocking intonation which reveals the presence of double-voiced discourse, the presence of two differently orientated speech acts inhabiting the same words. In Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky such double-voiced discourse is

celebrated as the true hero of the work and Dostoevsky's artistic exploitation of the dialogic double-voiced quality of words is affirmed as a transformative event in the long history of the novel genre. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* concludes with regret for the loss of the 'word that really means and takes responsibility for what it says', but a few pages earlier double-voiced discourse is associated with novelistic innovation in terms which read very like approbation: 'Only this silencing of prose [i.e. for silent reading] could have made possible the multileveledness and voice-defying complexity of intonational structures that are so characteristic for modern literature' (p. 156; p. **70**).

The texts written through the 1920s, therefore, can be seen to develop an increasingly dynamic and oppositional theory of language (and thus of consciousness) as a generative process stemming from discursive social interaction. This culminates, in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language,* in the concept of discourse and consciousness as dialogic. In subsequent texts this concept is applied to novelist form, although this is a shift of emphasis rather than a change of topic. The earlier texts move constantly between discourse in life and in literature and in the essays and books about narrative form which follow, everyday discourse remains firmly in focus.

Bakhtin's work on Dostoevsky has a complicated history. The English translation *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* is a much expanded second edition of the earlier *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* published in 1929. The main changes occur in the two final chapters. Most of my comments here refer to the earlier chapters. Bakhtin uses a new term, polyphony, to describe Dostoevsky's highly innovative narrative form. It is not a term subsequently used by him but here it draws attention to Dostoevsky's acute awareness of the multivoicedness of all discourse. In this text the main emphasis is upon the intensely dialogic nature of individual consciousness rather than upon the generative production of new meaning:

> Dostoevsky portrayed not the life of an idea in an isolated consciousness, and not the interrelationship of ideas, but the interaction of consciousnesses. . . . In Dostoevsky, consciousness never gravitates toward itself but is always found in intense relationship with another consciousness. Every experience, every thought of a character is internally dialogic, adorned with polemic, filled with struggle. . . . It could be said that Dostoevsky offers, in artistic form, something like a sociology of consciousness. . . .
>
> Every thought of Dostoevsky's heroes (the Underground Man, Raskolnikov, Ivan, and others) senses itself to be from the very beginning a *rejoinder* in an unfinished dialogue. Such thought is not impelled toward a well-rounded, finalized systematically monologic whole. It lives a tense life on the borders of someone else's thought, someone else's consciousness (p. 32).

Dostoevsky's achievement in the representation of character dialogue and in the relation of author to characters is to construct novelistic *images* of this ultimate unfinalizability of human consciousness. Again form and content are indivisible; Dostoevsky's artistic visualization has produced a new way of perceiving consciousness. New generic forms make possible new ways of understanding human existence: '*the thinking human cconsciousness and the dialogic sphere in which this consciousness exists,* . . . cannot be

reached through a monologic artistic approach' (p. 271).

The traumatic impact of capitalism upon Russian traditionalism in the early nineteenth century (a kind of historical borderzone of conflicting views) is recognized by Bakhtin as providing the 'optimal conditions for creating the polyphonic novel' (p. 35). However, there are no explicit references to Marxism anywhere in the text. What is more, Bakhtin rejects dialectical forms of thinking, which always move towards the higher unity of synthesis, in favour of dialogic open-endedness, the impossibility of closure.

Nevertheless, compared to *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, there is much further elaboration of the conflictual and ideological nature of consciousness. All of Dostoevsky's character's, Bakhtin insists, are ideologists; the loftiest principles of their world view are the same principles which order their most personal experiences. A character's social perception of the world is fused with their intensest intimate life. In this way ideological thinking is perceived by Dostoevsky as passionate and fundamentally personal. At the macro level of social history, Bakhtin claims that Dostoevsky hears his epoch as a passionate clash of ideological voices, a 'great dialogue' of

> not only individual voices, but precisely and predominantly the *dialogic relationship* among voices, their *dialogic interaction*. He heard both the loud, recognized reigning voices of the epoch, that is, the reigning dominant ideas (official and unofficial), as well as voices still weak, ideas not yet fully emerged, latent ideas heard as yet by no one but himself, and ideas which were just beginning to ripen, embryos of future world views (p. 90; p. 100).

Despite its title, Bakhtin's essay, 'Discourse in the Novel' (1935), ranks with *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* as one of the key texts on language and consciousness. In it the conflictual model of dialogic relations as productive of all new meaning receives its strongest emphasis. It is the interaction of contradictory and differing voices which is creative; 'understanding [that] remains purely passive, purely receptive, contributes nothing new to the word'.[26] 'Discourse in the Novel' focuses most strongly upon this oppositional struggle at the macro level of social order. It is conceived as a conflict between two forces inherent in discourse; this struggle constitutes the energizing principle of all linguistic life. New terms are introduced to describe this dialogic battle. Within language there is always at work a centripetal force which aims at centralizing and unifying meaning. Without this impulse the shared basis of understanding necessary for social life would disintegrate. This centripetal force in discourse is put to use by any dominant social group to impose its own monologic, unitary perceptions of truth. However, always working against that centralizing process is a centrifugal force – the force of heteroglossia – which stratifies and fragments ideological thought into multiple views of the world.

Heteroglossia, the most important new term in this essay, is a perception of language as ideologically saturated and stratified. The many social languages participating in heteroglossia at any specific moment of its historical

[26] 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 281. Subsequently quotations from this essay will be indicated in the text as DN followed by the page number.

existence are all 'specific points of view on the world, forms of conceptualizing the world in words' (DN, pp. 291–92; p. 115). Any social language is 'a concrete socio-linguistic belief system that defines a distinct identity for itself within the boundaries of a language that is unitary only in the abstract' (DN, p. 356). This statement encapsulates the most powerful and positive idea associated with the concept of discourse as dialogic; heteroglossia creates the conditions for the possibility of a free consciousness. This optimistic perception is most fully articulated in this essay[27] but it is possible to see its imaginative germ in 'Author and Hero'. In that essay it was the author's condition of outsidedness which allowed him to visualize the hero as a unified image framed against the surrounding world. The existence of heteroglossia constituted of multiple social discourses allows speakers to achieve a similar position of outsidedness to a language. It is possible to recognize the ideological contours of one social discourse by outlining it against other discourses. In this way any monologic truth claims made by one social language will be relativized by the existence of other views of the world. Thus the dialogic relations within heteroglossia bring about the 'destruction of any absolute bonding of ideological meaning to language' (DN, p. 369). Recognizing this is nothing less than 'a radical revolution in the destinies of human discourse: the fundamental liberation of cultural-semantic and emotional intentions from the hegemony of a single language . . . as an absolute form of thought' (DN, p. 367).

What is the case at the macro level of 'destinies of human discourse' is also the case at the micro level of individual consciousness. Self-consciousness is arrived at dialogically by an inner polemic with the social voices which inevitably first structure our inner being. 'An independent, responsible and active discourse is *the* fundamental indicator of an ethical, legal, and political human being' Bakhtin writes (DN, pp. 349–50). He suggests that this is achieved as imitative internalization of authoritative and persuasive social voices becomes imperceptibly ironic or parodic – that is double-voiced. In this doubling, consciousness begins to relativize the 'sacred word' against other voices within heteroglossia and the absolute bonding of authoritative ideology to inner speech is destroyed. Laughter and parody for Bakhtin are powerful forces for freedom.

Along with some passages in *Rabelais and His World*, this essay represents Bakhtin's most optimistic account of language. It is striking and impressive that both these texts were written during the worst years of Stalinist oppression. In the later essay 'The Problem of Speech Genres' (1953) Bakhtin takes up an issue first explicitly raised in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*.[28] This piece on speech genre returns to many of the concerns of the earlier work on discourse: the critique of formalism and structuralism in failing to account for evaluative meaning, the interconnections of literary discourse and everyday utterances, and the dialogic production of meaning. The most interesting new area in this essay is the

[27] As I pointed out, this relativizing of truth by double-voiced discourse is recognized in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* but there it is ostensibly deplored.

[28] In fact, the idea is first mentioned in *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*: 'The formative and organizing force of speech tact is very great. It gives form to every day utterances, determining the genre and style of speech performances' (p. 95).

suggestion that the form of utterances is not a matter of free choice on the part of any individual speaker. 'The single utterance, with all its individuality and creativity, can in no way be regarded as a *completely free combination* of forms of language, as is supposed, for example, by Saussure (and by many other linguists after him), who juxtaposed the utterance (*la parole*) ... to the system of language.'[29] Bakhtin argues that speech genres impose an order and form on everyday speech in ways we are largely unaware of, but which can have a considerable effect upon our speech flexibility and ease. In this context he again briefly takes into account structures of power and hierarchy as determining dialogic relations between speakers. 'The addressee's social position, rank, and importance are reflected in a special way in utterances of everyday and business speech communication' (p. 96).

Nevertheless the emphasis on discourse as an epic struggle between the forces of heteroglossia and monoglossia is completely absent from this essay. In another late essay, 'Problems of the Text', Bakhtin seems almost to criticize his own earlier writing:

> The narrow understanding of dialogism as argument, polemics, or parody. These are the externally most obvious, but crude, forms of dialogism. Confidence in another's word, reverential reception (the authoritative word) ... *agreement*, in its infinite gradations and shadings, ... the combination of many voices (a corridor of voices) that augments understanding, departure beyond the limits of the understood, and so forth.[30]

On the other hand, this piece seems to expand the notion of dialogic interaction to the limit: 'Two utterances, separated from one another both in time and space, knowing nothing of one another, when they are compared semantically, reveal dialogic relations if there is any kind of semantic convergence between them' (p. 124). Moreover, in Bakhtin's final writing, 'Notes Made in 1970–71', he returns to the positive creativity of dialogic 'borderzones [where] new trends and new disciplines usually originate'.[31] In contrast to the sacred and authoritarian word 'that retards and freezes thought' he still upholds the generative dynamics of opposition: 'In the act of understanding, a struggle occurs that results in mutual change and enrichment' (p. 142). Almost as if he were consciously offering us his own epitaph, Bakhtin writes, 'I hear *voices* in everything and dialogic relations among them'.[32]

III

Notwithstanding the philosophical and ethical orientation of the language of 'Author and Hero', it could be argued that even in this very early essay

[29] 'The Problem of Speech Genres', p. 81. Subsequent page numbers for this essay will be given in the text.

[30] 'The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis', in *Speech Genres*, p. 121. This essay and others in this collection are more in the form of thoughts and notes than of fully developed arguments. For this reason they offer the fascinating sense of a mind actively at work, but it is difficult to be sure how firmly any of the ideas are held or if they are simply being considered.

[31] 'From Notes Made in 1970–71', in *Speech Genres*, p. 137.

[32] 'Towards a Methodology for the Human Sciences' (1975), in *Speech Genres*, p. 169.

Bakhtin is working with a sociological poetics. 'At the beginning of our enquiry', he writes, 'we ascertained that *man* is the organizing form-and-content center of artistic vision. ... The world of artistic vision is a world which is organized, ordered, and consummated ... *around* a given human being as *his* axiological surroundings or environment' (p. 187). This insistence on the determining of form and content by aesthetic visualization of a human being situated in his or her historical world remains central in all of Bakhtin's subsequent writing on literary forms. His very concrete perception of a human being's spatial and temporal situatedness in the world informs his concept of the 'chronotope'. This term refers to the artistic imaging of human life as always concretely embodied within a specific temporal-geographical location; a human body as a material thing must occupy a physical and temporal space.[33] In the essay, 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel' (1937–8), he analyses the hero's relationship to the space and time dimensions of the story in a range of early narrative forms. What this reveals is the slow process within prenovelistic genres whereby human life begins to be conceived historically. This historicizing involves not just increasing realism with which the geographical and temporal world is specified but also, more importantly, the consciousness of the hero becomes open to process, and to the unfinalizable possibilities of multiple human capacities. However, none of the archaic chronotopes representing earlier artistic visualizing of human existence is seen by Bakhtin as dying out. He argues that they migrate into subsequent literary forms still preserving their ideological values and retaining the capacity to revitalize themselves in response to conducive historical conditions.

Given this aesthetic emphasis upon the form-determining role of the human being within a spatial and temporal world, it is perhaps not too surprising that Bakhtin's main field of investigation should be the novel genre. Moreover, the novel was generally held to represent the greatest achievement of Russian literature. Narrative as social realism was also the form favoured by Soviet literary authority. Bakhtin can be seen, therefore, as working within the mainstream of Russian literary criticism. However, Bakhtin's theory of the novel produced an entirely new understanding of its form and a radical and polemical account of literary history.

Dostoevsky is celebrated by Bakhtin as creator of a new kind of novelistic prose, but this formal innovation is perceived by Bakhtin as brought into being by a radical understanding of human consciousness – consciousness as dialogic. It was the special historical conditions of Dostoevsky's own time which provided him with the optimal conditions for this new perception. The impact of capitalism upon Russian ways of life maximized social and ideological contradictions so that the epoch itself became a creative borderzone between opposing historical consciousnesses. For Bakhtin such dialogic moments are always charged with the potential of creative change. However, integrated with that sense of 'momentous' time is his sense of time as epochal continuity. Dostoevsky's artistic innovation was made pos-

[33] The notion of the chronotope was to have been central to Bakhtin's study of Goethe, only a small part of which has survived. See 'The *Bildungsroman* and its Significance in the History of Realism (Towards a Historical Typology of the Novel)', in *Speech Genres*, pp. 27–35.

sible by the long prehistory of generic form and in turn his formal discoveries will outlive the historical moment of capitalism which produced them. In an interview given in 1970 Bakhtin reiterates this view: 'Yet the artwork extends its roots into the distant past. Great literary works are prepared for by centuries. . . . In the process of their posthumous life they are enriched with new meanings, new significance.'[34]

In the essays which follow the 1929 study of Dostoevsky, Bakhtin offers his account of the long history of generic form and in so doing he constructs the novel as hero of its own narrative. Its development is associated with the progressive history of human consciousness to free itself from thraldom to the 'absolute' word. 'The novel is the expression of a Galilean perception of language, one that denies the absolutism of a single and unitary language' (DN, p. 368). The novel is elevated to this position because, in contrast to all other generic forms, its very constitution is heteroglossic. While poetry is associated by Bakhtin with the centralizing and monologic tendency of high language and dominant value systems, the novel is identified with the decentralizing radicalizing principle of social heteroglossia. Bakhtin sees the principal task for a poetics of the novel as an understanding of the way novelistic images of languages are constructed and of the complex formal relationships of distancing and evaluation effected between narrative discourse and character discourse. This is what he calls the 'orchestration' of multiple social voices within an artistic unity. His sensitive analyses and insights into this hitherto almost undeveloped aspect of narrative prose constitutes a potentially enormous contribution to literary studies.

Because of its multivocality, novelistic discourse is able to produce awareness of language as language, Bakhtin claims. 'It is precisely thanks to the novel that languages are able to illuminate each other mutually; literary language becomes a dialogue of languages that know about and understand each other' (DN, p. 400). Because dialogue is always a process, interlinking past utterances to future response, the novel form is particularly sensitive to temporality. The development of novel form is for Bakhtin preeminently a chronotopic understanding of the human being as saturated in historical existence. In his essay 'Epic and Novel' (1941) he utilizes a stark contrast between the two genres to emphasize this point. The events of the epic are always represented as occurring in an 'absolute past' totally separated off from any contemporary reality. The heroes of epic have finalized characters, they represent apparently unchanging national or tribal values. The epic form encompasses narrator and listener in an unquestioning reverence for a past that is closed and inaccessible. 'The epic world is constructed in the zone of an absolute distanced image, beyond the sphere of possible contact with the developing, incomplete and therefore re-thinking and re-evaluating present.'[35] The novel form is born into this incomplete, re-evaluating present by means of laughter: 'It is precisely laughter that destroys the epic, and in general destroys any hierarchical (distancing and valorized) distance. As a distanced image a subject cannot be comical, to be made comical, it must be brought close.'[36]

[34] 'Response to a Question from the *Novy Mir* Editorial Staff', in *Speech Genres*, p. 4.
[35] 'Epic and Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 17.
[36] 'Epic and Novel', p. 23.

In this middle period of Bakhtin's writing laughter and parody become almost the most important terms. The essay 'From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse' (1940) traces the propensity of the novel towards parody and a mockingly critical scepticism of all respected forms of language back to its origin in a variety of ancient comic and popular forms. Some of the most productive of these are located in early Roman satyric and humorous literature and Bakhtin associates their vitality with the polyglossia (the interaction of national languages) of their epoch. It too was one of those productive borderzone moments of history; a dialogic meeting of Greek and Roman consciousnesses. 'From its very first steps, the Latin literary word viewed itself in the light of the Greek word, *through the eyes* of the Greek word; it was from the very beginning a word "with a sideways glance", a stylized word enclosing itself, as it were, in its own piously stylized quotation marks.'[37]

The comic and parodic forms growing out of this dialogic literary consciousness persisted and were extended in subsequent eras, particularly during the Middle Ages by the popular forms of carnival, feasts, the licenced figures of clown, fool and rogue. This tradition, which nurtured novelistic form, receives its fullest account in *Rabelais and His World* (1965). As with the novel, so too these popular forms possess a liberating force: 'they freed consciousness from the power of the direct word, destroyed the thick walls that had imprisoned consciousness within its own discourse.'[38] The centrality of popular laughter and parody to the development of the novel determine another of its distinctive generic features: it is inherently a self-critical form. It is in this sense dialogically generative; in the process of polemicizing and mocking its own discourse it continually remakes itself. 'The novel . . . has no canon of its own. It is, by its very nature, not canonic. It is plasticity itself. It is a genre that is ever questing, ever examining itself and subjecting its established forms to review.'[39] Hence, 'novelness' is the quality that defines the novel as a genre. This force for renewal also impinges upon other genres; once they come into contact with the novel a struggle ensues in which their traditional form is novelized and they are dragged 'into a zone of contact with reality'.[40]

IV

'Carnival' is one of Bakhtin's most influential concepts, second only to 'dialogic'. In one way it can be seen as yet another term for a social centrifugal force which opposes the centralizing imposition of the monologic word. The most commonly used terms in *Rabelais and His World* to express this opposition are the official and the unofficial. The unofficial draws upon the long traditions of folk culture to undermine official hegemony. Bakhtin states that his main interest in studying Rabelais 'lay in the basic struggle between this [folk] culture and the official Middle Ages'.[41] Thus what we have again is a

[37] 'From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 61.
[38] 'From the Prehistory', p. 60.
[39] 'Epic and the Novel', p. 39.
[40] 'Epic and the Novel', p. 39.
[41] *Rabelais and His World*, p. 437. Subsequent page references to this edition and the *Reader* will be given in the text.

dialogic conflict between two fields of consciousness. 'Official Medieval culture tried to inculcate the ... belief in a static unchanging world order' whereas 'carnival consciousness' was inherently concerned with generation and change (p. 275).

However, carnival is not invoked by Bakhtin as a unspecific progressive or anarchistic force in language. Bakhtin gives an impressively detailed and scholarly account of carnival as a complex system of meaning. As such it is derived from two bases. Carnival itself is not a literary phenomenon at all; 'it is a *syncretic pageantry* of a ritualistic sort' (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 22), a symbolic network of concretely sensuous forms accumulating over a centuries-long tradition of popular festivals, carnivals, celebratory and seasonal rituals, market-place spectacles. The other basis of carnivalesque meaning is associated with verbal form. Bakhtin links it with the tradition of comic vernacular literature which existed in the ancient world alongside high forms, frequently travestying and mocking them. In particular he picks out the important influence of three ancient forms: the Socratic dialogue, the Menippean satire and the symposium as banquet dialogue. These forms are themselves carnivalized and dialogic and are important mediating vehicles by means of which carnival meaning can be transposed into literature.[42]

The notion of carnival is properly chronotopic in that it offers a spatial and temporal envisioning of human existence in the world. It is, however, an understanding quite different from the modern perception of human life. Bakhtin stresses the sensuous, concrete forms of carnival gesture and ritual because its whole meaning derives from the physical materiality of the human body. Gargantuan size, huge protruberances, vast excretions and appetites are all represented in gross and exaggerated form to celebrate this physicality. Bakhtin uses the term 'grotesque realism' to describe this comically grandiose representation of the body. Such comical grandeur indicates the fundamental ambivalence of all carnivalesque meaning as Bakhtin sees it; it always simultaneously ridicules and celebrates, crowns and decrowns, elevates and debases. The grotesque exaggeration of the body in carnivalesque forms, and especially the persistent emphasis upon the belly and genitals, mocks Medieval religious repudiation of the flesh. The static vertical ordering of values in the Medieval world, rejecting material existence for all that is perceived as eternal and spiritual, is brought down to earth in the laughter of grotesque realism. However, even while the body is celebrated as the location of pleasure, fertility and generative new life, it too is the object of ridicule and debasing. This grotesque body at the heart of all carnival meaning is not to be equated, Bakhtin argues, with either the individual biological body which is born and dies or with private bourgeois individualistic life. Rather it is the body of all the people and as such it cannot die. This communal body of the people brings together in one sensuous image life and death as a continually renewing process of generation. As such it is an important means of liberating human consciousness

[42] As well as the accounts in *Rabelais and His World*, these traditions are described in the extended chapter on 'Characteristics of Genres and Plot Composition in Dostoevsky's Work', in *Problems*.

from a vertical hierarchical perception of the world and of opening up the possibility for a horizontal historical understanding of change.

Bakhtin argues that the vital elements of popular consciousness, materialized in carnival ritual and festive forms, migrated into high literary form during one of those threshold moments of history. During the Renaissance, Medieval consciousness came into conflict with emerging modern thought and in this dialogic meeting 'a millennium of folk humor broke into Renaissance literature. This thousand year old laughter not only fertilized literature but was itself fertilized by humanist knowledge and advanced literary techniques' (p. 72; p. **208**). The heroes in Bakhtin's rather orthodox canon of writers whose work was enriched by this dialogic interaction of popular and humanistic consciousness are Rabelais, Cervantes and Shakespeare. Although he traces a period of enfeeblement and privatizing of carnival tradition within high literary genres from the seventeenth century onwards, the great prose works of Rabelais and Cervantes ensured its survival in the 'low' heteroglossia of the comic novel form. This again is an example of Bakhtin's sense of the intersection of the generative 'event' with the open-ended continuity of historical process; the intersection of 'small time' with 'great time'.

Rabelais and His World is the text by Bakhtin which has probably aroused most enthusiasm and most criticism. The critical charge is that at times the writing becomes distinctly utopian in its claims. This is certainly true of Bakhtin's evocation of 'the people'. For a writer who insistently defines aesthetic vision as the ability to image a human being in a fully realized temporal and spatial world, Bakhtin's references to 'the folk' or 'the people' remain surprisingly unspecified and ahistorical. Any more detailed substantiation of popular culture might have caused difficulties for such a wholly positive account of its qualities. A related criticism has been levelled at Bakhtin's enthusiastic depiction of carnival. Carnival disorder, it has been argued, actually functions as a licensed safety valve which makes possible the perpetuation of authority. Moreover, the disorder itself does not necessarily have a purely benign character; the figures who become objects of carnival mockery and insult are not only those in authority. A history of actual carnival practices reveals that the marginalized – Jews, women, homosexuals – could become the victims of ritual punishment.[43] What Bakhtin's analysis of carnival as a continuous and repeated tradition of oppositional meaning does positively affirm is the possibility of sustaining consciousness of an alternative social order even in the midst of authoritarian control and repressive orthodoxy.[44] At a much more specific level the notion of carnival has offered productive new insights into many literary texts.

[43] The fullest account of Bakhtin's idea of carnival in relation to popular culture is P. Stallybrass and A. White, 1986: *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. London: Methuen. See also M. A. Bernstein; 1981: 'When the Carnival Turns Bitter: Preliminary Reflections Upon the Abject Hero', in G. S. Morson (ed.) *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, pp. 99–121; D. Carroll, 1983: 'The Alterity of Discourse: Form, History, and the Question of the Political in M. M. Bakhtin'. *Diacritics*, xiii, 2, pp. 65–83.

[44] Clark and Holquist read *Rabelais and His World* largely as a coded attack upon Stalinism, and in that sense a demonstration of just such a resistance (pp. 295–320).

The charge of over-optimism has also been made against the concept of dialogism.[45] This is a more complex issue since it involves the disputed texts as well as those known to have been written by Bakhtin. However, the criticism seems to me less well founded. As I have argued, the notion of discourse as dialogic, developed from text to text, derives from an oppositional, specifically social and ideological interaction. It takes into account the interplay of power, class relations and social hierarchy as determining the form of interaction between self and other. By contrast, the association of the novel form with the liberation of human consciousness does seem a rather optimistic claim. Bakhtin's immense contribution to prose study rests more surely in his innovative investigations of authorial image and position as constituent textual elements, his understanding of the multilevelled complexity of intonational prose relationships and intertextual continuity between novelistic and social discourses, and his conceptualizing of chronotopic history. In effect he has offered us completely new ways of relating the novel to the world – a sociological poetics. While his insistence upon the artistic complexity of narrative language is to be welcomed, the concomitant linking of poetry with hegemonic monologic discourse is an opposition few readers of Bakhtin would wish to support.[46] The concept of multivoicedness has proved equally useful as an approach to poetic form.

V

The texts selected for this book offer a range of writing from all the major works originally signed by Bakhtin, Medvedev and Voloshinov. Some of the shorter essays which are not included here appear to be earlier attempts to address issues which then receive fuller treatment in the longer works. The regrettable exception to this provision of ample representation from all the important texts are those whose copyright is held by the University of Texas Press. Their policy of allowing only 5 per cent of the text to be reproduced has severely restricted use of material from *Art and Answerability*, *The Dialogic Imagination*, and *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. In the case of the latter two I have been able to provide short passages from what are generally regarded the most significant essays. Bakhtin's stylistic tendency towards reiteration and the development of his ideas from previous texts make it possible to find brief extracts which still do justice to the main ideas of the whole. However, for the long essay, 'Author and Hero', in *Art and Answerability*, there are no substantial earlier texts yet available to draw upon and it deploys quite different terminology from the later texts. For this reason truncated extracts seemed inadequate and instead I have summarized the main points in relation to developments in later texts. It is yet another irony that Bakhtin's work, after suffering the vicissitudes of Russian

[45] See, for example, A. Fogel, 'Coerced Speech and the Oedipus Dialogue Complex' and M. A. Bernstein, 'The Poetics of *Ressentiment*' in Morson and Emerson, *Rethinking Bakhtin*, pp. 173–223.

[46] Early texts do not regard poetry in this way. 'Author and Hero' contains a sensitive and sympathetic reading of a lyrical poem by Pushkin (pp. 211–16); 'Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art' refers to the poet as much as to the author.

history and publishing, should still encounter difficulties of access to a wider readership.

With the exception of the necessarily short extracts mentioned above, I have attempted where possible to use continuous passages so that readers can get a sense of the way arguments are developed and a feel for the style of the writing. Against this I have had to balance the need to represent as many of the key ideas as possible. In the case of some texts this has necessitated selective cutting and rearrangement of passages, with minor alterations to paragraphing and punctuation. For the same reason the summaries and subheadings used in the Voloshinov and Medvedev texts are omitted and most of the frequent quotations from other writers and experts cited by all three putative writers. This last omission is particularly regrettable since it detracts from the essentially dialogic approach all the texts adopt. Throughout the *Reader* headings and notes are mine. The headnote to each extract is intended to contextualize the passage within the developing framework of thought and elucidate its main points and, as far as possible, I have avoided critical and interpretive commentary.

SECTION ONE

Dialogic Discourse

1 Critique of Saussurian Linguistics

The 'Author's Introduction' to *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929) begins by cautioning readers not to expect a 'systematic and conclusive' Marxist analysis of language. Its 'most modest of objectives' are to delineate 'the *basic directions* that genuine Marxist thinking about language must take and the *methodological guidelines* on which that thinking must rely in approaching the concrete problems of linguistics' (p. xiii). Notwithstanding that disclaimer, the text constitutes a rigorous and comprehensive attempt to construct a Marxist theory of language.

The major issues involved in a study of language – creativity, verbal interaction, understanding and meaning – converge, Voloshinov/Bakhtin claims, in the basic problem of specifying what is 'the *actual mode of existence of linguistic phenomena*' (p. xv). How is 'language' to be defined as an object of study? Voloshinov/Bakhtin states that two basic trends can be recognized as attempting to solve this problem. What is termed '*individual subjectivism*' takes as the defining quality of language its creativity, locating the source of this in the individual psyche. Individual creative and aesthetic activity resulting from individual psychology therefore become the focus of study for this trend. The second trend termed '*abstract objectivism*' perceives language as a stable, normative, closed system of linguistic signs which operates according to its own self-contained laws, irrespective of individual consciousness or creativity. Obviously these two trends are diametrically opposed to each other. The statement in 'Author's Introduction' that 'the fundamental idea of our entire work [is] – the *productive role* and *social nature of the utterance*' indicates the main criticism made of both trends: they both ignore the essentially social nature of language. On the whole, abstract objectivism is more forcefully rejected because it also fails to take into account the productive and creative quality of language. In this extract the ideas of Saussurian linguistics are critically analysed as one of the most powerful and influential expressions of the second trend.

The extract is organized in three parts. In Part I (taken from *Marxism* II.1), the basic principles of Saussure's thinking are set out. Part II (taken from II.2) offers the main points brought against them; in brief, that it is a perception of language as monologue divorced from any social context. For that reason, utterances can only be understood passively as completed meaning, unopen to any active response. Part III (taken from II.4) provides

Voloshinov/Bakhtin's alternative account of meaning as social, interactive (i.e., dialogic) and evaluative production. This dialogic sense of language as social and generative is expanded in subsequent extracts in this section.

From V. N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, 1929.

Trans. L. Matejka and I. R. Titunik, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1973.

I

What, in fact, is the subject matter of the philosophy of language? Where are we to find it? What is its concrete, material existence like? By what method or methods can we come to grips with its mode of existence? ... What is language, and what is word? ...

In the philosophy of language and in the related methodological sectors of general linguistics, we observe *two basic trends* in the solution of our problem, i.e., the *problem of the identification and the delimitation of language as a specific object of study*. Differences over this issue also imply, of course, fundamental differences between these two trends over all other issues concerning the study of language.

The first trend can be termed *individualistic subjectivism* in the study of language, and the second, *abstract objectivism*.[1]

The first trend considers the basis of language (language meaning all linguistic manifestations without exception) to be the individual creative act of speech. The source of language is the individual psyche. The laws of language creativity – and language is, it assumes, a continuous process, an unceasing creativity – are the laws of individual psychology, and these laws are just what the linguist and the philosopher of language are supposed to study....

Let us now go on to a characterization of the second trend of thought in philosophy of language.

The organizing center of all linguistic phenomena, that which makes them the specific object of a special science of language, shifts in the case of the second trend to an entirely different factor – *to the linguistic system as a system of the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical forms of language.*

If, for the first trend, language is an ever-flowing stream of speech acts in which nothing remains fixed and identical to itself, then, for the second trend, language is the stationary rainbow arched over that stream.

Each individual creative act, each utterance, is idiosyncratic and unique, but each utterance contains elements identical with elements in other utter-

[1] An authorial note here concedes that neither term fully covers the breadth and complexity of the trends – the designation of the first trend is particularly inadequate.

ances of the given speech group. And it is precisely these factors – the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical factors that are *identical* and therefore *normative* for all utterances – that insure the unity of a given language and its comprehension by all the members of a given community.

If we take any sound in a language, for instance the phoneme /b/ in 'rainbow', then this sound as produced by the physiological articulatory apparatus of individual organisms is idiosyncratic and unique for each speaker. The /b/ in 'rainbow' will have as many different pronunciations as there are people who pronounce the word (even though our ear may resist or be incapable of distinguishing these peculiarities). Physiological sound (i.e., sound produced by the individual physiological apparatus) is, after all, just as unique as are a person's fingerprints or as is the chemical composition of each individual person's blood (notwithstanding the fact that science has not yet been able to provide the formula for individual blood).

However, the question is: How important, from the standpoint of language, are all these idiosyncratic peculiarities in the pronunciation of /b/ – peculiarities for which, we may hypothesize, the shape of the individual person's lips and oral cavity are responsible (assuming that we were in a position to distinguish and pinpoint all these peculiarities)? The answer is, of course, that they are totally unimportant. What is important is precisely the *normative identity* of the sound in all instances in which the word 'rainbow' is pronounced. It is this normative identity (factual identity being, after all, nonexistent) that constitutes the unity of the sound system of a language (at some particular moment in its life) and that guarantees that the word in question will be understood by all members of the language community. This normatively identical phoneme /b/ may be said to be a linguistic fact, a specific object for study by the science of language.

The same is also true with respect to all other elements of language. Here, too, we find the same normative identity of linguistic form throughout (e.g., a syntactic pattern) and the individual-specific implementation and impletion of the particular form in the singular act of speech. The former belongs to the system of language, the latter is a fact belonging to individual processes of speaking conditioned by fortuitous (from the standpoint of language as system) physiological, subjective-psychological, and all other such factors as are not amenable to exact accountability.

It is clear that the system of language in the sense characterized above is completely independent of individual creative acts, intentions, or motives. From the point of view of the second trend, meaningful language creativity on the speaker's part is simply out of the question. Language stands before the individual as an invoilable, incontestable norm which the individual, for his part, can only accept. If the individual fails to perceive a linguistic form as an incontestable norm, then it does not exist for him as a form of language but simply as a natural possibility for his own individual, psychophysical apparatus. The individual acquires the system of language from his speech community completely ready-made. Any change within that system lies beyond the range of his individual consciousness. The individual act of articulating sounds becomes a linguistic act only by measure of its compliance with the fixed (at any given moment in time) and incontestable (for the individual) system of language.

What, then, is the nature of the set of laws in force within the language system?

This set of laws has a purely *immanent and specific* nature that is not reducible to any other set of laws – ideological, artistic, or otherwise. All forms of language at any given point in time, i.e., *synchronically*, are in a position of mutual indispensability and complementariness, whereby they transform language into an orderly system pervaded by laws of a specifically linguistic nature. *This specifically linguistic systematicity, in distinction from the systematicity of ideology* – of cognition, creative art, and ethics – *cannot become a motive for the individual consciousness.* The individual must accept and assimilate this system entirely as is; there is no place in it for evaluative, ideological discriminations – such as whether something is better, worse, beautiful, ugly, or the like. In fact, there is only one linguistic criterion: correct versus incorrect, wherein *linguistically correct* is understood to mean only the *correspondence of a given form to the normative system of language.* Consequently, no such thing as linguistic taste or linguistic truth comes up for discussion. From the individual's point of view, linguistic systematicity is arbitrary, i.e., utterly lacking any natural or ideological (for instance, artistic) comprehensibility or motivation. Thus between the phonetic design of a word and its meaning, there is neither a natural connection nor an artistic correspondence.

If language, as a system of forms, is completely independent of creative impulses or activities on the part of the individual, then it follows that language is the product of collective creativity – that it is a social entity and therefore, like all social institutions, is normative for each separate individual.

However, this system of language, which is an immutable unity at any given point in time, i.e., synchronically, does change, does evolve in the process of the historical evolution of the speech community. After all, the normative identity of the phoneme we established above will be different at different periods in the development of the language in question. In short, language does have its history. Now, how can this history be understood in the outlook of the second trend?

An overriding characteristic of the second trend of thought in the philosophy of language is its assuming a special kind of *discontinuity between the history of language and the system of language* (i.e., language in its a-historical, synchronic dimension). From the standpoint of the basic principles of the second trend, this dualistic discontinuity is absolutely insurmountable. There can be nothing in common between the logic governing the system of linguistic forms at any given moment in time and the logic (or rather 'a-logic') of the historical change of these forms. The logic is of two different kinds; or rather, if we recognize only one of them as logic, the other will be a-logic, i.e., sheer violation of the logic accepted....

The ideas behind the second trend received their first and very sharply delineated expression in Leibniz's conception of universal grammar.[2]

The idea of the *conventionality, the arbitrariness of language*, is a typical

[2] Wilhelm Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716), a German philosopher, who argued that the universe willed by God must be one of pre-established harmony. Thus it must be possible to infer certain of its features. Since Leibniz was a mathematician, these features corresponded to those of a rational deductive self-contained system of meaning.

one for rationalism as a whole, and no less typical is the *comparison of language to the system of mathematical signs.* What interests the mathematically minded rationalists is not the relationship of the sign to the actual reality it reflects nor to the individual who is its originator, but the *relationship of sign to sign within a closed system* already accepted and authorized. In other words, they are interested only in the *inner logic of the system of signs itself,* taken, as in algebra, completely independently of the ideological meanings that give the signs their content. Rationalists are not averse to taking the understander's viewpoint into account, but are least of all inclined to consider that of the speaker, as the subject expressing his own inner life. For the fact is that the mathematical sign is least amenable to interpretation as an expression of the individual psyche – and it is the mathematical sign, after all, that rationalists hold to be the ideal of any sign, including the verbal sign. This is exactly what found graphic expression in Leibniz's idea of universal grammar.

It should be noted at this point that the precedence of the understander's viewpoint over the speaker's has remained a constant feature of the second trend. This means that on the basis of this trend, there is no access to the problem of expression nor, consequently, to the problem of the verbal generation of thought and the subjective psyche (one of the fundamental problems for the first trend).

In somewhat simplified form, the idea of language as a system of conventional, arbitrary signs of a fundamentally rational nature was propounded by representatives of the Age of the Enlightenment in the 18th century.

Engendered on French soil, the ideas of abstract objectivism still hold sway predominantly in France. Let us pass over its intermediary stages of development and turn directly to a characterization of the modern state of the second trend.

Abstract objectivism finds its most striking expression at the present time in the so-called Geneva school of Ferdinand de Saussure. Its representatives, particularly Charles Bally, are among the most prominent linguists of modern times.[3] The ideas of this second trend all have been endowed with amazing clarity and precision by Ferdinand de Saussure. His formulations of the basic concepts of linguistics can well be accounted classics of their kind. Moreover, Saussure undauntedly carried his ideas out to their conclusions, providing all the basic lines of abstract objectivism with exceptionally clear-cut and rigorous definition.

In Russia, the Saussure school is as popular and influential as the Vossler school is not.[4] It can be claimed that the majority of Russian thinkers in linguistics are under the determinative influence of Saussure and his disciples, Bally and Sèchehaye.[5]

In view of the fundamental importance of Saussure's views for the whole second trend and for Russian linguistic thought in particular, we shall con-

[3] Charles Bally (1865–1947), colleague of Saussure and editor of *Cours de Linguistique Générale.*

[4] Karl Vossler (1872–1942), a German philosopher and linguist who held a subjectivist or 'personalist' view of language. Meaning is located in the individual.

[5] Albert Sèchehaye (1870–1946), another 'Geneva School' linguist and editor of *Cours de Linguistique Générale.*

sider those views in some detail. Here as elsewhere, to be sure, we shall confine ourselves to basic philosophical-linguistic positions only.

Saussure's point of departure is a distinction among three aspects of language: *language-speech* (langage), *language as a system of forms* (langue) and *the individual speech act – the utterance* (parole). Language (in the sense of *langue*: a system of forms) and utterance (*parole*) are constituents of language-speech (*langage*), and the latter is understood to mean the sum total of all the phenomena – physical, physiological, and psychological – involved in the realization of verbal activity.

Language-speech (*langage*), according to Saussure, cannot be the object of study for linguistics. In and of itself, it lacks inner unity and validity as an autonomous entity; it is a heterogeneous composite. Its contradictory composition makes it difficult to handle. Precise definition of linguistic fact would be an impossibility on its grounds. Language-speech cannot be the point of departure for linguistic analysis.

What, then, does Saussure propose should be chosen as the correct methodological procedure for the identification of the specific object of linguistics? We shall let him speak for himself:

> In our opinion, there can be but one solution to all these difficulties [i.e., difficulties entailed in taking *langage* as the point of departure for analysis – *V. V.*]: *we must first and foremost take our stand on the grounds of language* (langue) *and accept it as the norm for all other manifestations of speech* (langage). Indeed, amidst so many dualities, language alone appears susceptible to autonomous definition, and it alone can provide the mind a satisfactory base of operations.[6]

And in what does Saussure see the fundamental difference between speech (*langage*) and language (*langue*)?

> Taken in its totality, speech is manifold and anomalous. Astride several domains at once – the physical, the physiological, the psychological, it pertains, also, both to the domain of the individual and to the domain of society. It resists classification under any of the categories of human facts because there is no knowing how to elicit its unity.
>
> Language, on the contrary, is a self-contained whole and a principle of classification. Once we give it first place among the facts of speech, we introduce a natural order into an assemblage that is amenable to no other classification (pp. 25, 10).

Thus, Saussure's contention is that language as a system of normatively identical forms must be taken as the point of departure and that all manifestations of speech must be illuminated from the angle of these stable and autonomous forms.

After having distinguished language from speech (speech meaning the sum total of all manifestations of the verbal faculty, i.e., *langage*), Saussure proceeds to distinguish language from acts of individual speaking, i.e., from utterance (*parole*):

> In distinguishing language (*langue*) from utterance (*parole*), we by the same token distinguish (1) what is social from what is individual, and (2) what is essential from

[6] Ferdinand de Saussure, 1927: *Cours de Linguistique* (2nd ed.), p. 24. Voloshinov uses this edition for his quotations; subsequent page references to it are given in the text, followed by the equivalent page in F. de Saussure, 1983: *Course in General Linguistics* (trans. R. J. Harris, London: Duckworth, p. 9).

> what is accessory and more or less random.
>
> Language is not a function of the speaker; it is a product that the individual registers passively: it never relies upon premeditation and reflection plays no part in it, except in the matter of classification – which is a topic for later consideration.
>
> Utterance, on the contrary, is an individual act of will and intelligence in which we must distinguish between (1) the combinations through which a speaker utilizes a particular language code for expressing his own personal thoughts, and (2) the psychophysical mechanism that enables him to exteriorize those combinations (p. 30; pp. 13–14).

Linguistics, as Saussure conceives it, cannot have the utterance as its object of study. What constitutes the linguistic element in the utterance are the normatively identical forms of language present in it. Everything else is 'accessory and random'.

Let us underscore Saussure's main thesis: *language stands in opposition to utterance in the same way as does that which is social to that which is individual.* The utterance, therefore, is considered a thoroughly individual entity. This point as we shall see later, contains the *pseudos proton* of Saussure's views and of the whole abstract objectivist trend.

The individual act of speaking, the utterance (*parole*), so decisively cast aside from linguistics, does return, however, as an essential factor in the history of language. Saussure, in the spirit of the second trend, sharply opposes the history of language to language as a synchronic system. History is dominated by 'utterance' with its individuality and randomness, and therefore a completely different set of principles holds for the history of language than for the system of language. Saussure declares:

> Such being the case, the synchronic 'phenomenon' can have nothing in common with the diachronic.... *Synchronic linguistics* will be concerned with the logical and psychological relations that bind together coexistant terms and form a system, such as these relations are perceived by one and the same collective mind.
>
> *Diachronic linguistics*, on the contrary, must study relations binding successive terms together, which relations are not perceived by the collective mind and replace one another without forming a system (pp. 129, 140; p. 98).

Saussure's views on history are extremely characteristic for the spirit of rationalism that continues to hold sway in this second trend of thought in the philosophy of language and that regards history as an irrational force distorting the logical purity of the language system....

What, then, is the true center of linguistic reality: the individual speech act – the utterance – or the system of language? And what is the real mode of existence of language: unceasing creative generation or inert immutability of self-identical norms?

II

Representatives of abstract objectivism constantly stress – and it is one of their basic principles – that the system of language is an objective fact external to and independent of *any* individual consciousness. Actually, represented as a system of self-identical, immutable norms, it can be perceived in

this way only by the individual consciousness and from the point of view of that consciousness.

Indeed, if we were to disregard the subjective, individual consciousness vis-à-vis the language system, the system of norms incontestable for that consciousness, if we were to look at language in a truly objective way – from the side, so to speak, or more accurately, from above it, we would discover no inert system of self-identical norms. Instead, we would find ourselves witnessing the ceaseless generation of language norms.

From a truly objective viewpoint, one that attempts to see language in a way completely apart from how it appears to any given individual at any given moment in time, language presents the picture of a ceaseless flow of becoming. From the standpoint of observing a language objectively, from above, there is no real moment in time when a synchronic system of language could be constructed.

Thus *a synchronic system, from the objective point of view, does not correspond to any real moment in the historical process of becoming.* And indeed, to the historian of language, with his diachronic point of view, a synchronic system is not a real entity; it merely serves as a conventional scale on which to register the deviations occurring at every real instant in time.

So, then, a synchronic system may be said to exist only from the point of view of the subjective consciousness of an individual speaker belonging to some particular language group at some particular moment of historical time. From an objective point of view, no such system exists at any real instant of historical time. We may suppose, for instance, that while Caesar was engaged in writing his works, the Latin language was for him a fixed, incontestable system of self-identical norms; but, for the historian of Latin, a continuous process of linguistic change was going on at the very moment that Caesar was working (whether or not the historian of Latin would be able to pinpoint those changes)....

Now we must ask: Does language really exist for the speaker's subjective consciousness as an objective system of incontestable, normatively identical forms? Has abstract objectivism correctly understood the point of view of the speaker's subjective consciousness? Or, to put it another way: Is the mode of being of language in the subjective speech consciousness really what abstract objectivism says it is?

We must answer this question in the negative. The speaker's subjective consciousness does not in the least operate with language as a system of normatively identical forms. That system is merely an abstraction arrived with a good deal of trouble and with a definite cognitive and practical focus of attention. The system of language is the product of deliberation on language, and deliberation of a kind by no means carried out by the consciousness of the native speaker himself and by no means carried out for the immediate purposes of speaking.

In point of fact, the speaker's focus of attention is brought about in line with the particular, concrete utterance he is making. What matters to him is applying a normatively identical form (let us grant there is such a thing for the time being) in some particular, concrete context. For him, the center of gravity lies not in the identity of the form but in that new and concrete meaning it acquires in the particular context. What the speaker values is not that

aspect of the form which is invariably identical in all instances of its usage, despite the nature of those instances, but that aspect of the linguistic form because of which it can figure in the given, concrete context, because of which it becomes a sign adequate to the conditions of the given, concrete situation.

We can express it this way: *what is important for the speaker about a linguistic form is not that it is a stable and always self-equivalent signal, but that it is an always changeable and adaptable sign.* That is the speaker's point of view.

But doesn't the speaker also have to take into account the point of view of the listener and understander? Isn't it possible that here, exactly, is where the normative identity of a linguistic form comes into force?

This, too, is not quite so. The basic task of understanding does not at all amount to recognizing the linguistic form used by the speaker as the familiar, 'that very same', form, the way we distinctly recognize, for instance, a signal that we have not quite become used to or a form in a language that we do not know very well. No, the task of understanding does not basically amount to recognizing the form used, but rather to understanding it in a particular, concrete context, to understanding its meaning in a particular utterance, i.e., it amounts to understanding its novelty and not to recognizing its identity.

In other words, the understander, belonging to the same language community, also is attuned to the linguistic form not as a fixed, self-identical signal, but as a changeable and adaptable sign.

The process of understanding is on no account to be confused with the process of recognition. These are thoroughly different processes. Only a sign can be understood; what is recognized is a signal. A signal is an internally fixed, singular thing that does not in fact stand for anything else, or reflect or refract anything, but is simply a technical means for indicating this or that object (some definite, fixed object) or this or that action (likewise definite and fixed). Under no circumstances does the signal relate to the domain of the ideological; it relates to the world of technical devices, to instruments of production in the broad sense of the term. . . .

One other extremely pertinent consideration needs to be added here. The verbal consciousness of speakers has, by and large, nothing whatever to do with linguistic form as such or with language as such.

In point of fact, the linguistic form, which, as we have just shown, exists for the speaker only in the context of specific utterances, exists, consequently, only in a specific ideological context. In actuality, we never say or hear *words*, we say and hear what is true or false, good or bad, important or unimportant, pleasant or unpleasant, and so on. *Words are always filled with content and meaning drawn from behavior or ideology.* That is the way we understand words, and we can respond only to words that engage us behaviorally or ideologically.

Only in abnormal and special cases do we apply the criterion of correctness to an utterance (for instance, in language instruction). Normally, the criterion of linguistic correctness is submerged by a purely ideological criterion: an utterance's correctness is eclipsed by its truthfulness or falsity, its poeticalness or banality, etc.

Language, in the process of its practical implementation, is inseparable

from its ideological or behavioral impletion. Here, too, an orientation of an entirely special kind – one unaffected by the aims of the speaker's consciousness – is required if language is to be abstractly segregated from its ideological or behavioral impletion.

If we advance this abstract segregation to the status of a principle, if we reify linguistic form divorced from ideological impletion, as do certain representatives of the second trend, then we end up dealing with a signal and not with a sign of language-speech.

The divorce of language from its ideological impletion is one of abstract objectivism's most serious errors.

In sum, then, for the consciousness of a speaker of a language, the real mode of existence for that language is not as a system of normatively identical forms. From the viewpoint of the speaker's consciousness and his real-life practice in social intercourse, there is no direct access to the system of language envisioned by abstract objectivism.

What, then, in such a case, is this system?

It is clear from the start that that system is obtained by way of abstraction, that it is composed of elements extracted in an abstract way from the real units that make up the stream of speech – from utterances. Any abstraction, if it is to be legitimate, must be justified by some specific theoretical and practical goal. An abstraction may be productive or not productive, or may be productive for some goals and tasks and not productive for others.

What are the goals that underlie the kind of linguistic abstraction that leads to the synchronic system of language? And from what point of view may this system be regarded productive and necessary?

At the basis of the modes of linguistic thought that lead to the postulation of language as a system of normatively identical forms lies a *practical and theoretical focus of attention on the study of defunct, alien languages preserved in written monuments.*

This philological orientation has determined the whole course of linguistic thinking in the European world to a very considerable degree, and we must stress this point with all possible insistence. European linguistic thought formed and matured over concern with the cadavers of written languages; almost all its basic categories, its basic approaches and techniques were worked out in the process of reviving these cadavers.

Philologism is the inevitable distinguishing mark of the whole of European linguistics as determined by the historical vicissitudes of its birth and development. However far back we may go in tracing the history of linguistic categories and methods, we find philologists everywhere. Not just the Alexandrians, but the ancient Romans were philologists, as were the Greeks (Aristotle is a typical philologist). Also, the ancient Hindus were philologists.

We can state outright: *linguistics makes its appearance wherever and whenever philological need has appeared.* Philological need gave birth to linguistics, rocked its cradle, and left its philological flute wrapped in its swaddling clothes. That flute was supposed to be able to awaken the dead. But it lacked the range necessary for mastering living speech as actually and continuously generated....

Guided by philological need, linguistics has always taken as its point of departure the finished monologic utterance – the ancient written monument,

considering it the ultimate realium. All its methods and categories were elaborated in its work on this kind of defunct, monologic utterance or, rather, on a series of such utterances constituting a corpus for linguistics by virtue of common language alone.

But the monologic utterance is, after all, already an abstraction, though, to be sure, an abstraction of a 'natural' kind. Any monologic utterance, the written monument included, is an inseverable element of verbal communication. Any utterance – the finished, written utterance not excepted – makes response to something and is calculated to be responded to in turn. It is but one link in a continuous chain of speech performances. Each monument carries on the work of its predecessors, polemicizing with them, expecting active, responsive understanding, and anticipating such understanding in return. Each monument in actuality is an integral part of science, literature, or political life. The monument, as any other monologic utterance, is set toward being perceived in the context of current scientific life or current literary affairs, i.e., it is perceived in the generative process of that particular ideological domain of which it is an integral part. . . .

The *isolated, finished, monologic utterance*, divorced from its verbal and actual context and standing open not to any possible sort of active response but to passive understanding on the part of a philologist – that is the ultimate 'donnée' and the starting point of linguistic thought. . . .

III

The problem of meaning is one of the most difficult problems of linguistics. Efforts toward solving this problem have revealed the one-sided monologism of linguistic science in particularly strong relief. The theory of passive understanding precludes any possibility of engaging the most fundamental and crucial features of meaning in language. . . .

To understand another person's utterance means to orient oneself with respect to it, to find the proper place for it in the corresponding context. For each word of the utterance that we are in process of understanding, we, as it were, lay down a set of our own answering words. The greater their number and weight, the deeper and more substantial our understanding will be.

Thus each of the distinguishable significative elements of an utterance and the entire utterance as a whole entity are translated in our minds into another, active and responsive, context. *Any true understanding is dialogic in nature.* Understanding is to utterance as one line of a dialogue is to the next. Understanding strives to match the speaker's word with a *counter word.* Only in understanding a word in a foreign tongue is the attempt made to match it with the 'same' word in one's own language.

Therefore, there is no reason for saying that meaning belongs to a word as such. In essence, meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is, meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding. Meaning does not reside in the word or in the soul of the speaker or in the soul of the listener. Meaning is the *effect of interaction between speaker and listener produced via the material of a particular sound complex.* It is like an electric spark that occurs only when two different terminals are hooked together. Those who ignore theme (which is accessible only to active, respon-

sive understanding) and who, in attempting to define the meaning of a word, approach its lower, stable, self-identical limit, want, in effect, to turn on a light bulb after having switched off the current. Only the current of verbal intercourse endows a word with the light of meaning.

Let us now move on to one of the most important problems in the science of meanings, the problem of the *interrelationship between meaning and evaluation.*

Any word used in actual speech possesses not only theme and meaning in the referential, or content, sense of these words, but also value judgment: i.e., all referential contents produced in living speech are said or written in conjunction with a specific *evaluative accent.* There is no such thing as word without evaluative accent.

What is the nature of this accent, and how does it relate to the referential side of meaning?

The most obvious, but, at the same time, the most superficial aspect of social value judgment incorporated in the word is that which is conveyed with the help of *expressive intonation.* In most cases, intonation is determined by the immediate situation and often by its most ephemeral circumstances.[7] ...

In living speech, intonation often does have a meaning quite independent of the semantic composition of speech. Intonational material pent up inside us often does find outlet in linguistic constructions completely inappropriate to the particular kind of intonation involved. In such a case, intonation does not impinge upon the intellectual, concrete, referential significance of the construction. We have a habit of expressing our feelings by imparting expressive and meaningful intonation to some word that crops up in our mind by chance, often a vacuous interjection or adverb. Almost everybody has his favorite interjection or adverb or sometimes even a semantically full-fledged word that he customarily uses for purely intonational resolution of certain trivial (and sometimes not so trivial) situations and moods that occur in the ordinary business of life. There are certain expressions like 'so-so', 'yes-yes', 'now-now', 'well-well' and so on that commonly serve as 'safety valves' of that sort. The doubling usual in such expressions is symptomatic; i.e., it represents an artificial prolongation of the sound image for the purpose of allowing the pent up intonation to expire fully. Any one such favorite little expression may, of course, be pronounced in an enormous variety of intonations in keeping with the wide diversity of situations and moods that occur in life....

However, not all linguistic value judgments are like that. We may take any utterance whatsoever, say, an utterance that encompasses the broadest possible semantic spectrum and assumes the widest possible social audience, and we shall still see that, in it, an enormous importance belongs to evaluation. Naturally, value judgment in this case will not allow of even minimally adequate expression by intonation, but it will be the determinative factor in the choice and deployment of the basic elements that bear the meaning of the

[7] This point is illustrated in the text by Dostoevsky's tale of the six tipsy artisans who carry on an emotive verbal interaction by means of just one obscene noun which they utter in a variety of intonations. A similar point about the importance of intonation is made in 'Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art' (see *Reader*, p. 162).

utterance. No utterance can be put together without value judgment. Every utterance is above all an *evaluative orientation*. Therefore, each element in a living utterance not only has a meaning but also has a value. Only the abstract element, perceived within the system of language and not within the structure of an utterance, appears devoid of value judgment. Focusing their attention on the abstract system of language is what led most linguists to divorce evaluation from meaning and to consider evaluation an accessory factor of meaning, the expression of a speaker's individual attitude toward the subject matter of his discourse....

Referential meaning is molded by evaluation; it is evaluation, after all, which determines that a particular referential meaning may enter the purview of speakers – both the immediate purview and the broader social purview of the particular social group. Furthermore, with respect to changes of meaning, it is precisely evaluation that plays the creative role. A change in meaning is, essentially, always a *reevaluation*: the transposition of some particular word from one evaluative context to another. A word is either advanced to a higher rank or demoted to a lower one. The separation of word meaning from evaluation inevitably deprives meaning of its place in the living social process (where meaning is always permeated with value judgment), to its being ontologized and transformed into ideal Being divorced from the historical process of Becoming.

Precisely in order to understand the historical process of generation of theme and of the meanings implementing theme, it is essential to take social evaluation into account. The generative process of signification in language is always associated with the generation of the evaluative purview of a particular social group, and the generation of an evaluative purview – in the sense of the totality of all those things that have meaning and importance for the particular group – is entirely determined by expansion of the economic basis....

The outcome is a constant struggle of accents in each semantic sector of existence. There is nothing in the structure of signification that could be said to transcend the generative process, to be independent of the dialectical expansion of social purview. Society in process of generation expands its perception of the generative process of existence. There is nothing in this that could be said to be absolutely fixed. And that is how it happens that meaning – an abstract, self-identical element – is subsumed under theme and torn apart by theme's living contradictions so as to return in the shape of a new meaning with a fixity and self-identity only for the while, just as it had before.

2 Critique of Freudianism

This extract is taken from the two final chapters of Vološinov, *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch*, which was published in 1927, two years before *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Thus, it provides an earlier critique of 'subjective individualism' and shows the first movement towards a sociological account of consciousness.

Freudianism begins by identifying two opposing trends in the study of psychical life: objective and subjective psychology. In the latter, introspection is used as the fundamental means of gaining access to psychical life. It is argued that since any Marxist study must be founded upon an objective methodology, the inherent subjectivism of this introspective trend makes it totally unacceptable for dialectical materialism. However, objective psychology, as typified in American behaviouralism and Russian reflexologists like Pavlov, has a tendency to rely upon over-simplistic mechanistic materialism – a crude biologism. This cannot account adequately for the complex interaction of the psychical and the social as evinced in the phenomenon of inner speech, for example. Although Freud's psychoanalytic theories depend equally and damagingly upon subjective introspection, they have the merit of highlighting this inadequacy in the objective trend. A Marxist understanding of psychical life must be both objective and sociological:

> The abstract biological person ... does not exist at all.... What is needed, as it were, is a second birth, a *social* birth. A human being is not born as an abstract biological organism but as a landowner or a peasant, as a bourgeois or a proletariat.... Furthermore, he is born a Russian or a Frenchman, and he is born in 1800 or 1900, and so on. *Only this social and historical localization makes him a real human being* and determines the content of his life and cultural creativity (p. 15).

The passages given here provide a good sense of the direct and combative style, quite often humorously and ironically so, of the 'Voloshinov' texts. They undoubtedly evoke a simplistic sense of central Freudian ideas, but the insistence upon the social construction of terms like 'sexuality' as opposed to the essentialist way it is often used in psychoanalytic writing is shrewd. The final discussion of bourgeois sexualization of family life makes interesting connections with Michel Foucault's ideas in *The History of Sexuality*.

From V. N. Vološinov, *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch*, 1927.

Trans. I. R. Titunik and ed. in collab. with N. H. Bruss, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ill., 1987.

We have ... ascertained that Freudianism is merely one species of subjective psychology. We have also seen wherein consists the common ground

upon which Freudianism and all other subjectivist doctrines converge. But the issue is not exhausted thereby; we must also make a clear-cut delimitation and proper assessment of what it is precisely that *distinguishes Freudianism* from other subjectivist trends.

For, indeed, there is something paradoxically novel and original about Freudianism that strikes every newcomer to the doctrine. This impression of novelty most likely also formed in our reader's mind as he followed our exposition of psychoanalysis. This is something we must look into.

What immediately strikes one upon first acquaintance with Freud's doctrine and what remains the final and strongest impression of the entire construction is, of course, the *strife*, the *chaos*, the *adversity* of our psychical life running conspicuously throughout Freud's whole conception and which he himself referred to as the 'dynamics' of the psyche.

In this respect Freudianism is really quite different than all other psychological trends. Mental life for the old psychology was all 'peace and quiet': everything put right, everything in its place, no crises, no catastrophes; from birth to death a smooth, straight path of steady and purposive progress, of gradual mental growth, with the adult's consciousness of mind coming to replace the child's innocence. This naive *psychological optimism* is a characteristic feature of all pre-Freudian psychology....

To all appearances, Freudianism did produce a most radical change in these views on the psyche.

The human psyche belongs to the realm of nature, human psychical life is part of elemental life – that above all was the message the public at large seized upon out of the entire doctrine of Freud. Those people inclined toward Neitzscheanism (and there were quite a few of them among Freud's admirers) preferred to speak rather of the 'tragicness of psychical life'.

Apropos the last point, it should immediately be noted that while natural necessity is certainly a stranger to purposiveness and harmony, it is no less remote from tragedy. However, perhaps that expression ought not to be taken as characterizing Freudianism as a whole.

Now, did Freud really succeed in detecting Nature in our psyche? Are the conflicts of the 'ego', 'id', and 'superego', the 'death instinct' and 'Eros' really the conflicts of elemental forces? Or are they perhaps only conflicts of motives in the individual human consciousness? If that is the case, then we have something more like a 'storm in a teacup' than a conflict of elemental forces.

In order to answer this question, it behooves us to restate in a somewhat different connection a set of ideas that we began to develop in the preceding chapter.

Freud's whole psychological construct is based fundamentally on human verbal utterances; it is nothing but a special kind of interpretation of utterances. All these utterances are, of course, constructed in the *conscious sphere of the psyche*. To be sure, Freud distrusts the surface motives of consciousness; he tries instead to penetrate the deeper levels of the psychical realm. Nevertheless, Freud does not take utterances in their objective aspect, does not seek out their physiological or social roots; instead he attempts to find the true motives of behavior in the utterances themselves – the patient is himself supposed to provide him information about the depths of the 'unconscious'.

Thus, Freud's construct remains within the confines of what a person himself can say about himself and his behavior on the basis of his own internal apprehension. Freud, to be sure, directs introspection along new pathways, makes it penetrate other levels of the psyche, but *he does not relinquish introspection as the sole method of authenticating the reality of psychical events.* The 'unconscious', too, can and should be included in the sphere of introspection. After all, the patient is himself supposed to recognize the content of the 'unconscious' (some repressed complex, for instance), to recall it, to attest to its existence with the aid of introspection. It is only in this way that a repressed 'unconscious' experience acquires the value of a psychological fact.

For introspection, all the products of the unconscious take the forms of desires or impulses, find *verbal* expression and in *that* shape, that is, in the shape of a *motive*, enter into a person's awareness.

It is completely understandable that, in Freud's doctrine, the interrelations prevailing between the conscious and the unconscious should be so thoroughly unlike the relations between two *material* forces that allow of a precise objective account. Indeed, Freud's 'conscious' and 'unconscious' are ever at odds; between them prevail mutual hostility and incomprehension and the endeavor to deceive one another. Surely interrelations of this sort are only possible between two ideas, two ideological trends, two antagonistic persons, and not between two natural, material forces! Is it conceivable, for instance, that two natural forces engage in mutual deception or mutual nonrecognition?

Of course, only after entering into consciousness and donning the forms of consciousness (the forms of desires, thoughts, etc. with specific content) can products of the unconscious engage in a conflict with ethical precepts or be perceived as deception of the 'censorship'.

Thus, *the whole of Freud's psychical 'dynamics' is given in the ideological illumination of consciousness.* Consequently, *it is not a dynamics of psychical forces but only a dynamics of various motives of consciousness.*

In the whole Freudian construct of a psychical conflict, together with all the mechanisms through which it operates, we hear only the biased voice of the subjective consciousness interpreting human behavior. The unconscious is nothing but one of the motives of that consciousness, one of its devices for interpreting behavior ideologically....

That is not how Freud works. Freud lets himself be drawn into the conflict of subjective motivations of consciousness. The fact that he prefers a special set of motives – unconscious ones – and extracts such motives in a special way does not change matters in the least. A motive remains a motive – it does not acquire the weight of a material phenomenon. Freud's system provides us no access to the fertile grounds of objective apprehension.

But where do all those 'forces' with which Freud populates the psyche come from – the 'ego', 'the id', the 'superego' and so forth?

The conflict of motives supplies no evidential grounds for these forces. The conflict of motives is a real phenomenon accessible to objective apprehension – after all, it finds expression in verbal utterances. Psychical forces, on the contrary, are arbitrary constructs that Freud utilizes in the effort to explain that conflict. As is true of the majority of constructs in subjective psychology, Freud's theory is a 'projection' of certain objective relations of the external

world into the world of the psyche. What finds expression there is, in the very first instance, the extremely complex *social interrelationship between doctor and patient.*

In what does this interrelationship consist?

A patient wishes to hide from the doctor certain of his experiences and certain events of his life. He wants to foist on the doctor his own point of view on the reasons for his illness and the nature of his experiences. The doctor, for his part, aims at enforcing his authority as a doctor, endeavors to wrest confessions from the patient and to compel him to take the 'correct' point of view on his illness and its symptoms. Intertwining with all this are other factors: Between doctor and patient there may be differences in sex, in age, in social standing, and, moreover, there is the difference of their professions. All these factors complicate their relationship and the struggle between them.

And it is in the midst of this complex and very special social atmosphere that the verbal utterances are made – the patient's narratives and his statements in conversation with the doctor – utterances that Freud places squarely at the basis of his theory. Can we acknowledge these utterances as the expression of the patient's individual psyche?

Not a single instance of verbal utterance can be reckoned exclusively to its utterer's account. Every utterance is *the product of the interaction between speakers* and the product of the broader context of the whole complex *social situation* in which the utterance emerges. Elsewhere[1] we have attempted to show that any product of the activity of human discourse – from the simplest utterance in everyday life to elaborate works of literary art – derives shape and meaning in all its most essential aspects not from the subjective experiences of the speaker but from the social situation in which the utterance appears. Language and its forms are the products of prolonged social intercourse among members of a given speech community. An utterance finds language basically already prepared for use. It is the material for the utterance and it sets constraints on the utterance's possibilities. What is characteristic for a given utterance specifically – its selection of particular words, its particular kind of sentence structure, its particular kind of intonation – all this is the expression of the interrelationship between the speakers and of the whole complex set of social circumstances under which the exchange of words takes place. Those 'psychical experiences' of the speaker, the expression of which we are inclined to see in his utterance, are, however, only in fact a one-sided, simplified, and scientifically unverifiable interpretation of a more complex social phenomenon. What we have here is a special kind of 'projection', a means whereby we project into the 'individual soul' a complex set of social interrelationships. Discourse is like a 'scenario' of the immediate act of communication in the process of which it is engendered, and this act of communication is, in turn, a factor of the wider field of communication of the community to which the speaker belongs. In order to understand this 'scenario', it is essential to reconstruct all those complex social interrelations of which the given utterance is the ideological refraction.

[1] An authorial note here refers to 'our article, "Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art"'.

Nothing changes at all if, instead of outward speech, we are dealing with inner speech. Inner speech, too, assumes a listener and is oriented in its construction toward that listener. Inner speech is the same kind of product and expression of social intercourse as is outward speech.

All those verbal utterances of the patient (his verbal reactions), on which Freud's psychological system depends, are also just such *scenarios*, scenarios, first and foremost of the immediate, small social event in which they were engendered – the *psychoanalytical session*. Therein that complex struggle between doctor and patient, of which we spoke above, finds expression. What is reflected in these utterances is not the dynamics of the individual psyche but the *social dynamics* of the interrelations between doctor and patient. Here is the source for the dramatism that marks the Freudian construct. It is also the source for that personification of psychical forces which we have already mentioned. Here, indeed, people, not natural forces, are in conflict.

The psychical 'mechanisms' readily disclose their social derivation to us. The 'unconscious' stands in opposition not to the individual conscious of the patient but, primarily, to the doctor, his requirements, and his views. 'Resistance' is likewise primarily resistance to the doctor, to the listener, to the *other* person generally.

Freud's system *projects* the entire dynamics of the interrelationship between two people into the individual psyche. This sort of projection comes as no surprise; it is, as we have already said, a common phenomenon in subjective psychology....

We must turn attention to still another aspect of the Freudian system. The content of the unconscious, that is, various repressed complexes (including above all the Oedipus complex), is relegated by Freud to a person's past, to his early years of childhood. But the entire doctrine on these early, preconscious stages of human development is built on the basis of evidence supplied by adults. Those few attempts the Freudians did make to analyze the behavior of children *directly* did not have, and could not have had, any substantive importance for the working out of the Freudian construct. That construct took shape independently of such attempts and even before they were made, and the analyses themselves already presupposed and entirely depended on it. Thus, the whole construct of infantile complexes was obtained by *retrospective means*; it is based on the interpretation of the remembrances of adults and of those compromise formations with the aid of which those remembrances could be reached....

Can such a retrospective method of reconstructing experiences from early childhood (a complex, after all, is a set of experiences) – can such a method be considered scientifically sound?

We believe that nothing real, nothing objective can possibly be arrived at that way. What we are dealing with here is, in fact, a very widespread and typical phenomenon: *the interpretation of the past from the point of view of the present.* Anything like objective remembrance of our past inner experiences is, of course, entirely out of the question. We see in the past only what is important for the present, important for the instant in which we remember our past. We transfer from the present to the preconscious past of the child above all that ideological-evaluative complexion which is characteristic of the present only. All those evaluations, points of view, associations that have

coalesced in the conscious period of our life with such concepts as 'love', 'sexual attraction', 'mother', endowing these concepts with their own complexion and making them meaningful for us, are what we then transfer to the interpretation of the facts of childhood and thereby create out of those facts of childhood coherent and meaningful events like those of adult life.

'Sexual attraction to the mother', 'the father rival', 'hostility toward the father', 'wish for the father's death' – if we subtract from all these 'events' that ideational significance, that evaluative tone, that full measure of ideological weight which accrue to them only in the context of our conscious 'adult' present, what would they have left?

They would, in any case, retain nothing that would give us the serious right to speak about an Oedipus complex, that is, about a repetition of the scheme of the Oedipus tragedy in a child's life. Precisely that aspect which gives the tragedy its profound and harrowing meaning, which horrifies and astounds the audience – that aspect would certainly be missing.

What would remain, then? A number of piecemeal objective observations that can be made about the behavior of a child: the early excitability of the sexual organs (e.g., infant erection) and of other erogenous zones, the difficulty of weaning a child away from his constant closeness to his mother's body (particlarly, of course, the breast), and so on. There is obviously no need to contest a set of facts of this sort – they are commonly acceptable facts. But from a series of such facts to the grandiose and startling construct of the Oedipus complex there is a vast abyss. Once you give up projecting into the past the points of view, evaluations, and interpretations that belong to the present, then you have no cause to speak about any such thing as an Oedipus complex, no matter how great the quantity of objective facts cited in proof....

Exactly the same thing has to be said about the relation of the facts of infantile sexuality to the construct of the Oedipus complex. The facts cannot confirm the Oedipus complex because the facts belong to a different level, a different set of dimensions, than it does. The facts pertain to external, objective apprehension; the construct, to the sphere of inner experiences in a child's psyche. Moreover, in order to have any right at all to speak of infantile sexuality, the word 'sexuality' has to be understood to mean only a set of strictly defined physiological manifestations. If, on the contrary, we have in mind experiences pertaining to internal apprehension, experiences that are associated with those physiological manifestations but are permeated with value judgments and points of view, then we are making an arbitrary construct; instead of the physiological fact of sexuality, we take its ideological formulation. *The construct of the Oedipus complex is just such a purely ideological formulation projected into the psyche of a child.* The Oedipus complex is not at all the unadulterated expression of objective physiological facts.

The same must also be said about the other factors in the content of the unconscious. Everything involved here is a projection into the past of ideological interpretations of behavior that are characteristic for the present only. Freud nowhere steps beyond the confines of a subjective construct.

What, then, remains of the 'dynamics' of the psyche once we subtract the constructs that are untenable for us? – Conflicts within the verbalized behavior of human beings. A struggle of motives, but not a struggle of natural forces....

Wherever Freud criticizes the psychology of consciousness, we can join in full accord with him. A person's conscious motivation of his actions is certainly in no instance to be taken as a scientific explanation of his behavior. But we go further than that. Neither do the motives of the unconscious explain his behavior in the least, for, as we have seen, the Freudian unconscious does not fundamentally differ from consciousness; it is only another form of consciousness, only an ideologically different expression of it.

The motives of the unconscious that are disclosed at psychoanalytical sessions with the aid of 'free association' are just such *verbal reactions* on the patient's part as are all other, ordinary motives of consciousness. They differ from the latter not in kind of 'being', that is, not ontologically, but only in terms of content, that is, *ideologically*. In this sense Freud's unconscious can be called the 'unofficial conscious' in distinction from the ordinary 'official conscious'.[2]

From the objective point of view, both sets of motives, those of the unofficial as well as of the official conscious, are given completely alike in inner and in outward speech and both alike are not a cause of behavior but a component, an integral part of it. For objective psychology, every human motive belongs to human behavior as a part of it and not a cause of it. Human behavior may be said to break down into motor reactions ('acts' in the narrow sense of the word) and reactions of *inner and outward speech* (verbal reactions) that accompany motor reactions. Both these components of the whole of human behavior are objective and material in nature and require for their explanation factors that are likewise objective and material with respect both to the human organism itself and to the surrounding natural and social environment.

The verbal component of behavior is determined in all the fundamentals and essentials of its content by objective-social factors.

The social environment is what has given a person words and what has joined words with specific meanings and value judgments; the same environment continues ceaselessly to determine and control a person's verbal reactions throughout his entire life.

Therefore, nothing verbal in human behavior (inner and outward speech equally) can under any circumstances be reckoned to the account of the individual subject in isolation; the verbal is not his property but the property of his *social group* (his social milieu).

... We [have already] pointed out that every concrete utterance always reflects the *immediate* small social event – the event of communication, of exchange of words between persons – out of which it directly arose. We saw that Freud's 'dynamics' reflected the psychoanalytical session with its struggle and peripeteia – that social event out of which the patient's verbal utterances were engendered.... What interests us [here] is not the immediate context of utterance but the broader, more enduring and steadfast social connections out of whose dynamics are generated all elements of the form and content of our inner and outward speech, the whole repertoire of value judgments, points of view, approaches, and so on with the help of which we illuminate

[2] For a much elaborated sense of unofficial consciousness as carnivalesque, see *Reader*, pp. 194–226.

for ourselves and for others our actions, desires, feelings, and sensations.

This content of our consciousness and of our psyche in its entirety and, likewise, the separate and individual utterances with the help of which that content and that psyche manifest themselves outwardly are in every respect determined by socioeconomic factors.

We shall never reach the real, substantive roots of any given single utterance if we look for them within the confines of the single, individual organism, even when that utterance concerns what appears to be the most private and most intimate side of a person's life. Any motivation of one's behavior, any instance of self-awareness (for self-awareness is always verbal, always a matter of finding some specifically suitable verbal complex) is an act of gauging oneself against some social norm, social evaluation – is, so to speak, the socialization of oneself and one's behavior. In becoming aware of myself, I attempt to look at myself, as it were, through the eyes of another person, another representative of my social group, my class. Thus, *self-consciousness*, in the final analysis, always leads us to *class consciousness*, the reflection and specification of which it is in all its fundamental and essential respects. Here we have the *objective roots* of even the most personal and intimate reactions.

How do we reach those roots?

With the help of those objective-sociological methods that Marxism has worked out for the analysis of various ideological systems – law, morality, science, world outlook, art, religion. . . .

Any human verbal utterance is an ideological construct in the small. The motivation of one's behavior is juridical and moral creativity on a small scale; an exclamation of joy or grief is a primitive lyric composition; pragmatic considerations of the causes and consequences of happenings are germinal forms of scientific and philosophical cognition, and so on and so forth. The stable, formulated ideological systems of the sciences, the arts, jurisprudence, and the like have sprung and crystallized from that seething ideological element whose broad waves of inner and outward speech engulf our every act and our every perception. Of course, an ideology, once it has achieved formulation, exerts, in turn, a reverse on our verbal reactions.

Let us call that inner and outward speech that permeates our behavior in all its aspects 'behavioral ideology'. This behavioral ideology is in certain respects more sensitive, more responsive, more excitable and livelier than an ideology that has undergone formulation and become 'official'. In the depths of behavioral ideology accumulate those contradictions which, once having reached a certain threshold, ultimately burst asunder the system of the official ideology. But, on the whole, we may say that behavioral ideology relates just as much to the socioeconomic basis and is subject to the same laws of development as ideological superstructures in the proper sense of the term. Therefore, the methods for its study should be, as already stated, basically the same methods, only somewhat differentiated and modified in accordance with the special nature of the material.

Let us now return to those 'psychical' conflicts upon which psychoanalysis is based and which psychoanalysis attempts to explain in terms of a struggle between the conscious and the unconscious. From an objective point of view, all these conflicts are played out in the element of inner and outward speech (in addition, of course, to their purely physiological aspect), that is to say,

they are played out in the element of behavioral ideology. They are not 'psychical' but ideological conflicts and, therefore, they cannot be understood within the narrow confines of the individual organism and the individual psyche. They not only go beyond the conscious, as Freud believes, they also go beyond the individual as a whole.

Dream, myth, joke, witticism, and all the verbal components of the pathological formations reflect the struggle of various ideological tendencies and trends that take shape within *behavioral ideology.*

Those areas of behavioral ideology that correspond to Freud's official, 'censored' conscious express the most steadfast and the governing factors of class consciousness. They lie close to the formulated, fully fledged ideology of the class in question, its law, its morality, its world outlook. On these levels of behavioral ideology, inner speech comes easily to order and freely turns into outward speech or, in any case, has no fear of becoming outward speech.

Other levels, corresponding to Freud's unconscious, lie at a great distance from the stable system of the ruling ideology. They bespeak the disintegration of the unity and integrity of the system, the vulnerability of the usual ideological motivations. Of course, instances of the accumulation of such inner motives – ones that erode the unity of behavioral ideology – can bear an incidental character and testify merely to the *assumption of a social déclassé status* on the part of separate individuals, but more often they testify to the emergent disintegration if not of the class as a whole then of certain of its groups. *In a healthy community and in a socially healthy personality, behavioral ideology, founded on the socioeconomic basis, is strong and sound* – here, there is no discrepancy between the official and the unofficial conscious.

The content and composition of the unofficial levels of behavioral ideology (in Freudian terms, the content and composition of the unconscious) are conditioned by historical time and class to the same degree as are its levels 'under censorship' and its systems of formulated ideology (morality, law, world outlook). For example, the homosexual inclinations of an ancient Hellene of the ruling class produced absolutely no conflicts in his behavioral ideology; they freely emerged into outward speech and even found formulated ideological expression (e.g., Plato's *Symposium*).

All those conflicts with which psychoanalysis deals are characteristic in the highest degree for the European petite bourgeoisie of modern times. Freud's 'censorship' very distinctly reflects the behavioral-ideological point of view of a petit bourgeois, and for that reason a somewhat comical effect is produced when Freudians transfer that point of view to the psyche of an ancient Greek or a medieval peasant. The monstrous overestimation of Freudianism's part of the sexual factor is also exceedingly revealing against the background of the present disintegration of the bourgeois family.

The wider and deeper the breach between the official and the unofficial conscious, the more difficult it becomes for motives of inner speech to turn into outward speech (oral or written or printed, in a circumscribed or broad social milieu) wherein they might acquire formulation, clarity, and rigor. Motives under these conditions begin to fail, to lose their verbal countenance, and little by little really do turn into a 'foreign body' in the psyche. Whole sets of organic manifestations come, in this way, to be excluded from

the zone of verbalized behavior and may become *asocial*. Thereby the sphere of the 'animalian' in man enlarges.

Of course, not every area of human behavior is subject to so complete a divorce from verbal ideological formulation. After all, neither is it true that every motive in contradiction with the official ideology must degenerate into indistinct inner speech and then die out – it might well engage in a struggle with that official ideology. If such a motive *is founded on the economic being of the whole group*, if it is not merely the motive of a déclassé loner, then it has a chance for a future and perhaps even a victorious future. There is no reason why such a motive should become asocial and lose contact with communication. Only, at first a motive of this sort will develop within a small social milieu and will depart into the underground – not the psychological underground of repressed complexes, but the salutary political underground. That is exactly how a *revolutionary ideology* in all spheres of culture comes about.

There is one other extremely important area of human behavior in which verbal connections are put in order with great difficulty and which, therefore is especially liable to fall out of social context, lose its ideological formulatedness, and degenerate into an aboriginal, animalian state. This is the area of *the sexual*. The disintegration of an official ideology is reflected first and foremost in this area of human behavior. It becomes the center for the accumulation of asocial and antisocial forces.

This area of human private life is preeminently the one most easily made the base for social deviations. The sexual 'pair', as a sort of *social minimum*, is most easily isolated and transformed into a microcosm without the need for anything or anybody else.

All periods of social decline and disintegration are characterized by *overestimation of the sexual* in life and in ideology, and what is more, of the sexual in an extreme unidimensional conception; its *asocial* aspect, taken in isolation, is advanced to the forefront. The sexual aims at becoming a surrogate for the social. All human beings are divided above all into males and females. All the remaining subdivisions are held to be inessential. Only those social relations that can be sexualized are meaningful and valuable. Everything else becomes null and void.

The present day success of Freudianism throughout Europe bespeaks the complete disintegration of the *official ideological system*. A 'behavioral ideology' has supervened that is turned in upon itself, disjointed, unformulated. Each aspect of life, each happening and object, goes out of kilter with a smoothly operating and universally respected context of *class and social values*. Each thing, as it were, turns its sexual, not its social, side to the human gaze. Behind every word in a poetic or philosophical text glares some stark sexual symbol. All other aspects of words, and especially the social-historical values inherent in them, cease to be heard by a modern European bourgeois – they have become merely overtones to the basic note of sexuality.

An extremely indicative and immensely interesting feature of Freudianism is its *wholesale sexualization of the family* and all family relationships in toto (the Oedipus complex). The family, that castle and keep of capitalism, evidently has become a thing economically and socially little understood and little taken to heart; and that is what has brought on its wholesale sexualization,

as if thereby it were made newly meaningful or 'made strange' as our formalists would say.[3] The Oedipus complex is indeed a magnificent way of making the family unit 'strange'. The father is not the entrepreneur, and the son is not his heir – the father is only the mother's lover, and his son is his rival!

Precisely this novel and piquant 'meaningfulness', imparted to all those aspects of life that have lost their meaning, is what has attracted so broad a public to Freudianism. The obviousness and certitude of sexual drives contrast here with the ambiguity and uncertainty of all other social ideological values. Sexuality is declared the supreme criterion of *reality*, of essentiality. And the more déclassé a person is, the more keenly he senses his 'naked naturalness', his 'elementalness'.

Freudianism – 'the psychology of the déclassés – is becoming the acknowledged ideological persuasion of the widest strata of the European bourgeoisie. Here is a fact profoundly symptomatic and indicative for anybody who wishes to grasp the spirit of Europe today.

The basic aspiration of the philosophy of our time is *to create a world beyond the social and the historical.* The 'cosmism' of Steiner's anthroposophy, the 'biologism' of Bergson, and, finally, the 'psychobiologism' and 'sexualism' of Freud that we have examined here – all these three trends, sharing the entire bourgeois world among them, have, each in its own way, served the aspiration of the latest philosophy. They have endowed with their own features the physiognomy of the modern *Kulturmensch* – the Steinerian, the Bergsonian, the Freudian – and they have raised the *three altars* of his belief and veneration – *Magic*, *Instinct* and *Sex*.[4] Where the creative paths of history are closed, there remain only the blind alleys of the individual 'livings out' of a life bereft of meaning.

3 Language as Dialogic Interaction

In this extract from *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* the positive agenda for a Marxist account of language is set out. It would, Voloshinov/Bakhtin claims, inevitably provide concomitant enlightenment for the Marxist study of ideology since both centre upon the production of meaning. A properly Marxist understanding needs to account, at the micro level, for individual consciousness and, at the macro level, with the whole social arena of meaning production in the various ideological fields of politics, religion, literature, daily life and so on, and with the process of their historical change. Rejecting subjective psychologism's false division between the individual and the social, Voloshinov/Bakhtin brings these two levels

[3] 'Making it strange' is a central idea of the Russian formalist critics; art attempts to make what has become familiar and ordinary appear strange and defamiliar. For Medvedev/Bakhtin's discussion and critique of formalism, see *Reader*, pp. 135–160.

[4] Rudolph Steiner (1861–1925) inaugurated a movement to develop the cognition and realization of spiritual reality; Henri Bergson (1859–1941), French philosopher.

together in the 'sign'. The use of this term indicates that despite the critique of abstract objectivism, semiotic approaches to language are seen as useful and influential.

Part I of the extract (taken from *Marxism*, I.1) explains the material, objective nature of the sign as always concretely embodied in external reality. Moreover, the existence of signs is only possible between socially organized beings. Hence the concept of the sign provides the basis for an objective sociological understanding of individual consciousness and ideology (i.e., general social meaning) to replace idealist and psychologist location of all meaning in the individual psyche or soul.

Part II of the extract (taken from I.2) turns explicitly to the macro level: the relationship of the economic basis of society to its ideological superstructures like science, arts, religion, law, etc. The fundamental problem is set out as that of providing a flexible and dialectic way of understanding the complex and mutual interactions whereby changes in the base process through to 'refraction' in the various superstructures. It is the word as sign which Voloshinov/Bakhtin offers as the potential solution to this problem. 'The word is implicated in literally each and every act or contact between people', and for that reason the word or sign is the 'most sensitive *index of social change*'. Understanding the multiple social forms of verbal interaction (speech performances and genres) and the way they change through time offers an objective way of approaching the interaction of ideology with the ultimately determining base.

Part III (taken from I.3 and II.3) returns to the micro level of individual consciousness, especially as experienced subjectively as inner feelings and inner speech. It is argued that inner speech is best understood as dialogue; a continuous two-way interaction between the subjective and the social. This leads on to a consideration of the two-way interaction of all utterances: 'As word, it is precisely *the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee.*' The recognition that all utterances are inherently dialogic enables Voloshinov/Bakhtin to offer an answer to the initial question: what is the basic nature of the phenomenon termed language? '*The actual reality of language-speech is not the abstract system of linguistic forms, not the isolated monologic utterance, and not the psychophysiological act of its implementation, but the social event of verbal interaction implemented in an utterance or utterances.*

Thus, verbal interaction is the basic reality of language' (p. 94).

From V. N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, 1929.

Trans. L. Matejka and I. R. Titunik, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1973.

I

Problems of the philosophy of language have in recent times acquired exceptional pertinence and importance for Marxism. Over a wide range of the most vital sectors in its scientific advance, the Marxist method bears directly upon these problems and cannot continue to move ahead productively without special provision for their investigation and solution.

First and foremost, the very foundations of a Marxist theory of ideologies – the bases for the studies of scientific knowledge, literature, religion, ethics, and so forth – are closely bound up with problems of the philosophy of language.

Any ideological product is not only itself a part of a reality (natural or social), just as is any physical body, any instrument of production, or any product for consumption, it also, in contradistinction to these other phenomena, reflects and refracts another reality outside itself. Everything ideological possesses *meaning*: it represents, depicts, or stands for something lying outside itself. In other words, it is a *sign*. *Without signs there is no ideology*. A physical body equals itself, so to speak; it does not signify anything but wholly coincides with its particular, given nature. In this case there is no question of ideology.

However, any physical body may be perceived as an image; for instance, the image of natural inertia and necessity embodied in that particular thing. Any such artistic-symbolic image to which a particular physical object gives rise is already an ideological product. The physical object is converted into a sign. Without ceasing to be a part of the material reality, such an object, to some degree, reflects and refracts another reality.

The same is true of any instrument of production. A tool by itself is devoid of any special meaning; it commands only some designated function – to serve this or that purpose in production. The tool serves that purpose as the particular, given thing that it is, without reflecting or standing for anything else. However, a tool also may be converted into an ideological sign. Such, for instance, is the hammer and sickle insignia of the Soviet Union. In this case, hammer and sickle possess a purely ideological meaning. Additionally, any instrument of production may be ideologically decorated. Tools used by prehistoric man are covered with pictures or designs – that is, with signs. So treated, a tool still does not, of course, itself become a sign.

It is further possible to enhance a tool artistically, and in such a way that its artistic shapeliness harmonizes with the purpose it is meant to serve in production. In this case, something like maximal approximation, almost a coalescence, of sign and tool comes about. But even here we still detect a distinct conceptual dividing line: the tool, as such, does not become a sign; the sign, as

such, does not become an instrument of production.

Any consumer good can likewise be made an ideological sign. For instance, bread and wine become religious symbols in the Christian sacrament of communion. But the consumer good, as such, is not at all a sign. Consumer goods, just as tools, may be combined with ideological signs, but the distinct conceptual dividing line between them is not erased by the combination. Bread is made in some particular shape; this shape is not warranted solely by the bread's function as a consumer good; it also has a certain, if primitive, value as an ideological sign (e.g., bread in the shape of a figure eight (*krendel*) or a rosette).

Thus, side by side with the natural phenomena, with the equipment of technology, and with articles for consumption, there exists a special world – the *world of signs*.

Signs also are particular, material things; and, as we have seen, any item of nature, technology, or consumption can become a sign, acquiring in the process a meaning that goes beyond its given particularity. A sign does not simply exist as a part of a reality – it reflects and refracts another reality. Therefore, it may distort that reality or be true to it, or may perceive it from a special point of view, and so forth. Every sign is subject to the criteria of ideological evaluation (i.e., whether it is true, false, correct, fair, good, etc.). The domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs. They equate with one another. Wherever a sign is present, ideology is present, too. *Everything ideological possesses semiotic value.*

Within the domain of signs – i.e., within the ideological sphere – profound differences exist: it is, after all, the domain of the artistic image, the religious symbol, the scientific formula, and the judicial ruling, etc. Each field of ideological creativity has its own kind of orientation toward reality and each refracts reality in its own way. Each field commands its own special function within the unity of social life. *But it is their semiotic character that places all ideological phenomena under the same general definition.*

Every ideological sign is not only a reflection, a shadow, of reality, but is also itself a material segment of that very reality. Every phenomenon functioning as an ideological sign has some kind of material embodiment, whether in sound, physical mass, color, movements of the body, or the like. In this sense, the reality of the sign is fully objective and lends itself to a unitary, monistic, objective method of study. A sign is a phenomenon of the external world. Both the sign itself and all the effects it produces (all those actions, reactions and new signs it elicits in the surrounding social milieu) occur in outer experience.

This is a point of extreme importance. Yet, elementary and self-evident as it may seem, the study of ideologies has still not drawn all the conclusions that follow from it.

The idealistic philosophy of culture and psychologistic cultural studies locate ideology in the consciousness. Ideology, they assert, is a fact of consciousness; the external body of the sign is merely a coating, merely a technical means for the realization of the inner effect, which is understanding.

Idealism and psychologism alike overlook the fact that understanding itself can come about only within some kind of semiotic material (e.g., inner speech), that sign bears upon sign, that *consciousness itself can arise and*

become a viable fact only in the material embodiment of signs. The understanding of a sign is, after all, an act of reference between the sign apprehended and other, already known signs; in other words, understanding is a response to a sign with signs. And this chain of ideological creativity and understanding, moving from sign to sign and then to a new sign, is perfectly consistent and continuous: from one link of a semiotic nature (hence, also of a material nature) we proceed uninterruptedly to another link of exactly the same nature. And nowhere is there a break in the chain, nowhere does the chain plunge into inner being, nonmaterial in nature and unembodied in signs.

This ideological chain stretches from individual consciousness to individual consciousness, connecting them together. Signs emerge, after all, only in the process of interaction between one individual consciousness and another. And the individual consciousness itself is filled with signs. Consciousness becomes consciousness only once it has been filled with ideological (semiotic) content, consequently, only in the process of social interaction....

Signs can arise only on *interindividual territory*. It is territory that cannot be called 'natural' in the direct sense of the word:[1] signs do not arise between any two members of the species *Homo sapiens*. It is essential that the two individuals be *organized socially*, that they compose a group (a social unit); only then can the medium of signs take shape between them. The individual consciousness not only cannot be used to explain anything, but, on the contrary, is itself in need of explanation from the vantage point of the social, ideological medium.

The individual consciousness is a social-ideological fact. Not until this point is recognized with due provision for all the consequences that follow from it will it be possible to construct either an objective psychology or an objective study of ideologies....

No cultural sign, once taken in and given meaning, remains in isolation: it becomes part of the *unity of the verbally constituted consciousness*. It is in the capacity of the consciousness to find verbal access to it. Thus, as it were, spreading ripples of verbal responses and resonances form around each and every ideological sign. Every *ideological refraction of existence in process of generation*, no matter what the nature of its significant material, *is accompanied by ideological refraction in word* as an obligatory concomitant phenomenon. Word is present in each and every act of understanding and in each and every act of interpretation....

II

The problem of the *relationship of basis and superstructures* – one of the fundamental problems of Marxism – is closely linked with questions of philosophy of language at a number of crucial points and could benefit considerably from a solution to those questions or even just from treatment of them to some appreciable extent and depth.

When the question is posed as to how the basis determines ideology, the

[1] An authorial note here concedes that society is a part of nature, of course, but a qualitatively separate part with its own *specific* system of laws.

answer given is: *causally*; which is true enough, but also far too general and therefore ambiguous.

If what is meant by causality is mechanical causality (as causality has been and still is understood and defined by the positivistic representatives of natural scientific thought), then this answer would be essentially incorrect and contradictory to the very fundaments of dialectal materialism.

The range of application for the categories of mechanical causality is extremely narrow, and even within the natural sciences themselves it grows constantly narrower the further and more deeply dialectics takes hold in the basic principles of these sciences. As regards the fundamental problems of historical materialism and of the study of ideologies altogether, the applicability of so inert a category as that of mechanical causality is simply out of the question.

No cognitive value whatever adheres to the establishment of a connection between the basis and some isolated fact torn from the unity and integrity of its ideological context.[2] It is essential above all to determine the *meaning of any, given ideological change in the context of ideology appropriate to it*, seeing that every domain of ideology is a unified whole which reacts with its entire constitution to a change in the basis. Therefore, any explanation must preserve *all the qualitative differences* between interacting domains and must trace all the various stages through which a change travels. Only on this condition will analysis result, not in a mere outward conjunction of two adventitious facts belonging to different levels of things, but in the process of the actual dialectical generation of society, a process which emerges from the basis and comes to completion in the superstructure.[3] ...

The problem of the interrelationship of the basis and superstructures – a problem of exceptional complexity, requiring enormous amounts of preliminary data for its productive treatment – can be elucidated to a significant degree through the material of the word.

Looked at from the angle of our concerns, the essence of this problem comes down to *how* actual existence (the basis) determines sign and *how* sign reflects and refracts existence in its process of generation.

The properties of the word as an ideological sign ... are what make the word the most suitable material for viewing the whole of this problem in basic terms. What is important about the word in this regard is not so much its sign purity as its *social ubiquity*. The word is implicated in literally each and every act or contact between people – in collaboration on the job, in ideological exchanges, in the chance contacts of ordinary life, in political

[2] In 'From Notes Made in 1970–71', Bakhtin writes: 'Literature is an inseparable part of the totality of culture and cannot be studied outside the total cultural context. It cannot be severed from the rest of culture and related directly (bypassing culture) to socioeconomic or other factors' (p. 140).

[3] The kind of 'mechanical causality' which should *not* be applied to literature can be exemplified in the character-type termed 'superfluous man'. The appearance of this novelistic type could be mechanically correlated with actual economic change: the disintegration of the gentry class leads directly to the appearance of superfluous men in literature. Such simplistic causality is firmly dismissed. 'Surely it must be clear that between changes in the economic state of affairs and the appearance of the "superfluous man" in the novel stretches a long, long road that crosses a number of qualitatively different domains, each with its own set of laws and its own specific characteristics' (p. 18).

relationships, and so on. Countless ideological threads running through all areas of social intercourse register effect in the word. It stands to reason, then, that the word is the most sensitive *index of social changes*, and what is more, of changes still in the process of growth, still without definitive shape and not as yet accomodated into already regularized and fully defined ideological systems. The word is the medium in which occur the slow quantitative accretions of those changes which have not yet achieved the status of a new ideological quality, not yet produced a new and fully-fledged ideological form. The word has the capacity to register all the transitory, delicate, momentary phases of social change.

That which has been termed 'social psychology' and is considered, ... by the majority of Marxists, as the transitional link between the sociopolitical order and ideology, in the narrow sense (science, art, and the like), is, in its actual, material existence, *verbal interaction*....

Production relations and the sociopolitical order shaped by those relations determine the full range of verbal contacts between people, all the forms and means of their verbal communication – at work, in political life, in ideological creativity. In turn, from the conditions, forms, and types of verbal communication derive not only the forms but also the themes of speech performances.

Social psychology is first and foremost an atmosphere made up of multifarious *speech performances* that engulf and wash over all persistent forms and kinds of ideological creativity: unofficial discussions, exchanges of opinion at the theater or a concert or at various types of social gatherings, purely chance exchanges of words, one's manner of verbal reaction to happenings in one's life and daily existence, one's inner-word manner of identifying oneself and identifying one's position in society, and so on. Social psychology exists primarily in a wide variety of forms of the 'utterance', of little *speech genres* of internal and external kinds – things left completely unstudied to the present day.[4] All these speech performances, are, of course, joined with other types of semiotic manifestation and interchange – with miming, gesturing, acting out, and the like.

All these forms of speech interchange operate in extremely close connection with the conditions of the social situation in which they occur and exhibit an extraordinary sensitivity to all fluctuations in the social atmosphere. And it is here, in the inner workings of this verbally materialized social psychology, that the barely noticeable shifts and changes that will later find expression in fully fledged ideological products accumulate....

A typology of these forms is one of the urgent tasks of Marxism. Later on, in connection with the problem of the utterance and dialogue, we shall again touch upon the problem of speech genres....

Each period and each social group has had and has its own repertoire of speech forms for ideological communication in human behavior. Each set of cognate forms, i.e., each behavioral speech genre, has its own corresponding set of themes.

An interlocking organic unity joins the form of communication (for example, on-the-job communication of the strictly technical kind), the form of the utterance (the concise, businesslike statement) and its theme. Therefore, *classification of the forms of utterance must rely upon classification of the*

[4] The study of speech genres is the subject of a late essay by Bakhtin. See *Reader*, pp. 80–7.

forms of verbal communication. The latter are entirely determined by production relations and the sociopolitical order. Were we to apply a more detailed analysis, we would see what enormous significance belongs to *the hierarchical factor* in the processes of verbal interchange and what a powerful influence is exerted on forms of utterance by the hierarchical organization of communication. Language etiquette, speech tact, and other forms of adjusting an utterance to the hierarchical organization of society have tremendous importance in the process of devising the basic behavioral genres.

Every sign, as we know, is a construct between socially organized persons in the process of their interaction. Therefore, *the forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organization of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction*. When these forms change, so does sign. And it should be one of the tasks of the study of ideologies to trace this social life of the verbal sign....

Class does not coincide with the sign community, i.e., with the community which is the totality of users of the same set of signs for ideological communication. Thus various different classes will use one and the same language. As a result, differently oriented accents intersect in every ideological sign. Sign becomes an arena of the class struggle.

This social *multiaccentuality* of the ideological sign is a very crucial aspect. By and large, it is thanks to this intersecting of accents that a sign maintains its vitality and dynamism and the capacity for further development. A sign that has been withdrawn from the pressures of the social struggle – which, so to speak, crosses beyond the pale of the class struggle – inevitably loses force, degenerating into allegory and becoming the object not of live social intelligibility but of philological comprehension. The historical memory of mankind is full of such worn out ideological signs incapable of serving as arenas for the clash of live social accents. However, inasmuch as they are remembered by the philologist and the historian, they may be said to retain the last glimmers of life.

The very same thing that makes the ideological sign vital and mutable is also, however, that which makes it a refracting and distorting medium. The ruling class strives to impart a supraclass, eternal character to the ideological sign, to extinguish or drive inward the struggle between social value judgments which occurs in it, to make the sign uniaccentual.

In actual fact, each living ideological sign has two faces, like Janus. Any current curse word can become a word of praise, any current truth must inevitably sound to many other people as the greatest lie.[5] This *inner dialectic quality* of the sign comes out fully in the open only in times of social crises or revolutionary changes. In the ordinary conditions of life, the contradiction embedded in every ideological sign cannot emerge fully because the ideological sign in an established, dominant ideology is always somewhat reactionary and tries, as it were, to stabilize the preceding factor in the dialectical flux of the social generative process, so accentuating yesterday's truth as to make it appear today's. And that is what is responsible for the refracting and distorting peculiarity of the ideological sign within the dominant ideology....

[5] In *Rabelais and His World* the ambivalence of the curse as equally a word of praise is given an extended discussion as a form of carnival language. See *Reader*, pp. 203–4 and 212–17.

III

One of Marxism's fundamental and most urgent tasks is to construct a genuinely objective psychology, which means a psychology based on *sociological*, not physiological or biological, principles. As part and parcel of that task, Marxism faces the difficult problem of finding an objective–but also subtle and flexible–approach to the conscious, subjective human psyche over which, ordinarily, methods of introspection claim jurisdiction.

This is a task which neither biology or physiology is equipped to cope with: the conscious psyche is a socioideological fact and, as such, beyond the scope of physiological methods or the methods of any other of the natural sciences. The subjective psyche is not something that can be reduced to processes occurring within the confines of the natural, animalian organism. The processes that basically define the content of the psyche occur not inside but outside the individual organism, although they involve its participation.

The subjective psyche of the human being is not an object for natural-scientific analysis, as would be any item or process in the natural world; *the subjective psyche is an object for ideological understanding and socioideological interpretation via understanding*. Once understood and interpreted, a psychic phenomenon becomes explainable solely in terms of the social factors that shape the concrete life of the individual in the conditions of his social environment.

The first issue of fundamental importance that arises once we move in this direction is that of defining 'inner experience' objectively. Such a definition must include inner experience within the unity of objective, outer experience.

What sort of reality pertains to the subjective psyche? *The reality of the inner psyche is the same reality as that of the sign.* Outside the material of signs there is no psyche; there are physiological processes, processes in the nervous system, but no subjective psyche as a special existential quality fundamentally distinct from both the physiological processes occurring within the organism and the reality encompassing the organism from outside, to which the psyche reacts and which one way or another it reflects. By its very existential nature, the subjective psyche is to be localized somewhere between the organism and the outside world, on the *borderline* separating these two spheres of reality. It is here that an encounter between the organism and the outside world takes place, but the encounter is not a physical one: *the organism and the outside world meet here in the sign.* Psychic experience is the semiotic expression of the contact between the organism and the outside environment. That is why *the inner psyche is not analyzable as a thing but can only be understood and interpreted as a sign* . . . . The problem of inner speech is a philosophical problem . . . . It lies at the juncture between psychology and the concerns of the ideological sciences. A fundamental, methodological solution to this problem can be arrived at only on the grounds of the philosophy of language as the philosophy of sign. What is the nature of the word in its role as inner sign? In what form is inner speech implemented? How does it tie in with the social situation? What is its relation to the external utterance? What are the procedures for uncovering, for seizing hold, so to speak, of inner speech? The answers to all these questions can only be given by a fully elaborated philosophy of language.

Let us take a look at just the second of these questions – the question of the forms in which inner speech is implemented.

It is clear from the outset that, without exception, all categories worked out by linguistics for the analysis of the forms of external language (the lexicological, the grammatical, the phonetic) are inapplicable to the analysis of inner speech or, if applicable, are applicable only in thoroughly and radically revised versions.

Closer analysis would show that the units of which inner speech is constituted are certain *whole entities* somewhat resembling a passage of monologic speech or whole utterances. But most of all, they resemble the *alternating lines of a dialogue*. There was good reason why thinkers in ancient times should have conceived of inner speech as *inner dialogue*. These whole entities of inner speech are not resolvable into grammatical elements (or are resolvable only with considerable qualifications) and have in force between them, just as in the case of the alternating lines of dialogue, not grammatical connections but connections of a different kind. These units of inner speech, these *total impressions of utterances*, are joined with one another and alternate with one another not according to the laws of grammar or logic but according to the laws of *evaluative* (emotive) *correspondence, dialogical deployment*, etc., in close dependence on the historical conditions of the social situation and the whole pragmatic run of life.

Only by ascertaining the forms of whole utterances and, especially, the forms of dialogic speech, can light be shed on the forms of inner speech, as well, and on the peculiar logic of their concatenation in the stream of inner speech....

The ideological sign is made viable by its psychic implementation just as much as psychic implementation is made viable by its ideological impletion. Psychic experience is something inner that becomes outer and the ideological sign, something outer that becomes inner. The psyche enjoys extraterritorial status in the organism. It is a social entity that penetrates inside the organism of the individual person. Everything ideological is likewise extraterritorial in the socioeconomic sphere, since the ideological sign, whose locus is outside the organism, must enter the inner world in order to implement its meaning as sign.

Between the psyche and ideology there exists, then, a continuous dialectical interplay: *the psyche effaces itself, or is obliterated, in the process of becoming ideology, and ideology effaces itself in the process of becoming the psyche.* The inner sign must free itself from its absorption by the psychic context (the biological-biographical context), must cease being a subjective experience, in order to become an ideological sign. The ideological sign must immerse itself in the element of inner, subjective signs; it must ring with subjective tones in order to remain a living sign and not be relegated to the honorary status of an incomprehensible museum piece....

In the verbal medium, in each utterance, however trivial it may be, this living dialectical synthesis is constantly taking place again and again between the psyche and ideology, between the inner and the outer. In each speech act, subjective experience perishes in the objective fact of the enunciated word-utterance, and the enunciated word is subjectified in the act of responsive understanding in order to generate, sooner or later, a counter statement.

Each word, as we know, is a little arena for the clash and criss-crossing of differently oriented social accents. A word in the mouth of a particular individual person is a product of the living interaction of social forces.

Thus, the psyche and ideology dialectically interpenetrate in the unitary and objective process of social intercourse....

Utterance, as we know, is constructed between two socially organized persons, and in the absence of a real addressee, an addressee is presupposed in the person, so to speak, of a normal representative of the social group to which the speaker belongs. The *word is oriented towards an addressee*, toward *who* that addressee might be: a fellow-member or not of the same social group, of higher or lower standing (the addressee's hierarchical status), someone connected with the speaker by close social ties (father, brother, husband, and so on) or not. There can be no such thing as an abstract addressee, a man unto himself, so to speak. With such a person, we would indeed have no language in common, literally and figuratively. Even though we sometimes have pretentions to experiencing and saying things *urbi et orbi*, actually, of course, we envision this 'world at large' through the prism of the concrete social milieu surrounding us. In the majority of cases, we presuppose a certain typical and stabilized *social purview* toward which the ideological creativity of our own social group and time is oriented, i.e., we assume as our addressee a contemporary of our literature, our science, our moral and legal codes.

Each person's inner world and thought has its stabilized *social audience* that comprises the environment in which reasons, motives, values, and so on are fashioned. The more cultured a person, the more closely his inner audience will approximate the normal audience of ideological creativity; but, in any case, specific class and specific era are limits that the ideal of addressee cannot go beyond.

Orientation of the word toward the addressee has an extremely high significance. In point of fact, *word is a two-sided act*. It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and for whom it is meant. As word, it is precisely *the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee*. Each and every word expresses the 'one' in relation to the 'other'. I give myself verbal shape from another's point of view, ultimately, from the point of view of the community to which I belong. A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another. If one end of the bridge depends on me, then the other depends on my addressee. A word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor....

Dialogue, in the narrow sense of the word, is, of course, only one of the forms – a very important form, to be sure – of verbal interaction. But dialogue can also be understood in a broader sense, meaning not only direct, face-to-face, vocalized verbal communication between persons, but also verbal communication of any type whatsoever. A book, i.e., a *verbal performance in print*, is also an element of verbal communication. It is something discussable in actual, real-life dialogue, but aside from that, it is calculated for active perception, involving attentive reading and inner responsiveness, and for organized, *printed* reaction in the various forms devised by the particular sphere of verbal communication in question (book reviews, critical surveys, defining influence on subsequent works, and so on). Moreover, a verbal per-

formance of this kind also inevitably orients itself with respect to previous performances in the same sphere, both those by the same author and those by other authors. It inevitably takes its point of departure from some particular state of affairs involving a scientific problem or a literary style. Thus the printed verbal performance engages, as it were, in ideological colloquy of large scale: it responds to something, objects to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks support, and so on.

Any utterance, no matter how weighty and complete in and of itself, *is only a moment in the continuous process of verbal communication*. But that continuous verbal communication is, in turn, itself only a moment in the continuous, all-inclusive, generative process of a given social collective. An important problem arises in this regard: the study of the connection between concrete verbal interaction and the extraverbal situation – both the immediate situation and, through it, the broader situation. The forms this connection takes are different, and different factors in a situation may, in association with this or that form, take on different meanings (for instance, these connections differ with the different factors of situation in literary or in scientific communication). *Verbal communication can never be understood and explained outside of this connection with a concrete situation*. Verbal intercourse is inextricably interwoven with communication of other types, all stemming from the common ground of production communication. It goes without saying that word cannot be divorced from this eternally generative, unified process of communication. In its concrete connection with a situation, verbal communication is always accompanied by social acts of a nonverbal character (the performance of labor, the symbolic acts of a ritual, a ceremony, etc.), and is often only an accessory to these acts, merely carrying out an auxiliary role. *Language acquires life and historically evolves precisely here, in concrete verbal communication, and not in the abstract linguistic system of language forms, nor in the individual psyche of speakers*.

From what has been established, it follows that the methodologically based order of study of language ought to be: (1) the forms and types of verbal interaction in connection with their concrete conditions; (2) forms of particular utterances, of particular speech performances, as elements of a closely linked interaction – i.e., the genres of speech performance in human behavior and ideological creativity as determined by verbal interaction; (3) a reexamination, on this new basis, of language forms in their usual linguistic presentation.

This is the order that the actual generative process of language follows: *social intercourse is generated* (stemming from the basis); *in it verbal communication and interaction are generated; and in the latter, forms of speech performances are generated; finally, this generative process is reflected in the change of language forms*.

One thing that emerges from all that has been said is the extreme importance of the problem of the forms of an utterance *as a whole*. We have already pointed out that contemporary linguistics lacks any approach to the utterance itself. Its analysis goes no further than the elements that constitute an utterance. Meanwhile, utterances are the real units that make up the stream of language-speech. What is necessary in order to study the forms of this real unit is precisely that it not be isolated from the historical stream of

utterances. As a whole entity, the utterance is implemented only in the stream of verbal intercourse. The whole is, after all, defined by its boundaries, and these boundaries run along the line of contact between a given utterance and the extraverbal and verbal (i.e., made up of other utterances) milieu.

The first and last words, the beginning and end points of real-life utterance – that is what already constitutes the problem of the whole. The process of speech, broadly understood as the process of inner and outer verbal life, goes on continuously. It knows neither beginning nor end. The outwardly actualized utterance is an island rising from the boundless sea of inner speech; the dimensions and forms of this island are determined by the particular *situation* of the utterance and its *audience*. Situation and audience make inner speech undergo actualization into some kind of specific outer expression that is directly included into an unverbalized behavioral context and in that context is amplified by actions, behavior, or verbal responses of other participants of the utterance. The full-fledged question, exclamation, command, request – these are the most typical forms of wholes in behavioral utterances. All of them (especially the command and request) require an extraverbal complement and, indeed, an extraverbal commencement. The very type of structure these little behavioral *genres* will achieve is determined by the effect of its coming up against the extraverbal milieu and against another word (i.e., the words of other people). Thus, the form a command will take is determined by the obstacles it may encounter, the degree of submissiveness expected, and so on. The structure of the genre in these instances will be in accord with the accidental and unique features of behavioral situations. Only when social custom and circumstances have fixed and stabilized certain forms in behavioral interchange to some appreciable degree, can one speak of specific types of structure in genres of behavioral speech. So, for instance, an entirely special type of structure has been worked out for the genre of the light and casual causerie of the drawing room where everyone 'feels at home' and where the basic differentiation within the gathering (the audience) is that between men and women. Here we find devised special forms of insinuation, half-sayings, allusions to little tales of an intentionally nonserious character, and so on. A different type of structure is worked out in the case of conversation between husband and wife, brother and sister, etc. In the case where a random assortment of people gathers – while waiting in a line or conducting some business – statements and exchanges of words will start and finish and be constructed in another, completely different way. Village sewing circles, urban carouses, workers' lunchtime chats, etc., will all have their own types. Each situation, fixed and sustained by social custom, commands a particular kind of organization of audience and, hence, a particular repertoire of little behavioral genres. The behavioral genre fits everywhere into the channel of social intercourse assigned to it and functions as an ideological reflection of its type, structure, goal, and social composition. The behavioral genre is a fact of the social milieu: of holiday, leisure time, and of social contact in the parlor, the workshop, etc. It meshes with that milieu and is delimited and defined by it in all its internal aspects.

The production processes of labor and the processes of commerce know different forms for constructing utterances.

As for the forms of ideological intercourse in the strict sense of the term – forms for political speeches, political acts, laws, regulations, manifestos, and so forth; and forms for poetic utterances, scientific treatises, etc. – these have been the object for special investigation in rhetoric and poetics, but, as we have seen, these investigations have been completely divorced from the problem of language on the one hand, and from the problem of social intercourse on the other. Productive analysis of the forms of the whole of utterances as the real units in the stream of speech is possible only on a basis that regards the individual utterance as a purely sociological phenomenon. Marxist philosophy of language should and must stand squarely on the utterance as the real phenomenon of language-speech and as a socioideological structure.

4 Reported Speech as Index of Social Change

Two fundamental points are established in Parts I and II of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language.* First, language is inherently dialogic: every utterance actively responds to other utterances and equally shapes itself in anticipation of an addressee's response. In effect, every utterance is about other utterances. Secondly, the word as sign is the most sensitive index of change in the socioeconomic base: forms of verbal interaction (speech performances) are determined by prevailing social relations. Thus slow changes in verbal forms indicate large-scale shifts in social relations. In Part III of *Marxism* (from which this extract is taken), Voloshinov/Bakhtin illustrates just such an historical change in a verbal structure. Logically, given the sense of discourse as dialogic, he takes the case of reported speech – the formal means of registering in speech a response to the speech of another.

An adequate analysis of the forms of reported speech begins with awareness of the dynamic interactive relationship existing between the reporting authorial utterance and the utterance which is being reported. Voloshinov/Bakhtin identifies two directions this relationship between authorial speech and the speech reported can take. He terms the first *linear style*; this focuses upon the content of the reported speech and maintains a strict boundary between authorial reporting speech and the speech reported. The second direction is towards the *pictorial style* which focuses upon the individualized qualities and style of the reported speech. Instead of maintaining strict boundaries, this form finds ways of infiltrating the reported speech with authorial retort and response to it, or, alternatively, the reported speech may begin to infiltrate the authorial context. The forms of reported speech which develop this latter tendency of eroding boundaries, of allowing the maximum interactive interference between the zones of reporting and reported speech, are the main focus of Voloshinov/Bakhtin's interest. These are analysed in the forms of indirect discourse, direct discourse (omitted in this extract) and quasi-direct discourse.

Indirect discourse necessitates changing the form of the reported utterance. ' "Oh dear", she said', has to become something like 'She said that it was a pity'. Voloshinov/Bakhtin sees this transposition as an 'analysing tendency' which can take one of two directions corresponding respectively to the *linear* and the *pictorial* styles. Transposition into indirect discourse can either highlight the content (*referent-analysing*) or the style (*texture-analysing*) of the reported speech. In the latter, the stylistic emphasis on the reported speech crystallizes it into an image of individualized speech contained within the authorial speech which simultaneously intones a response or attitude to it (irony, approval, etc.).

This dialogic intersecting of two speech acts, two voices intoning within the single utterance, can proceed further in direct discourse. The maximum possibility for reciprocal intonational interference of speech boundaries is found in quasi-direct discourse. The movement towards this highly relativized form of discourse in which no voice is allowed *authority* and away from authoritative linear style is seen by Voloshinov/Bakhtin as indicative of a fundamental change in social relations.

From V. N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, 1929.

Trans. L. Matejka and I. R. Titunik, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1973.

Reported speech is speech within speech, utterance within utterance, and at the same time also *speech about speech, utterance about utterance.*

Whatever we talk about is only the content of speech, the themes of our words. Such a theme – and it is only a theme – might be, for instance, 'nature', 'man', or 'subordinate clause' (one of the themes of syntax). A reported utterance, however, is not just a theme of speech: it has the capacity of entering on its own, so to speak, into speech, into its syntactic makeup, as an integral unit of the construction. In so doing, it retains its own constructional and semantic autonomy while leaving the speech texture of the context incorporating it perfectly intact.

What is more, a reported utterance treated solely as a theme of speech may be characterized only superficially at best. If its content is to be had to the full, it must be made part of a speech construction. When limited to the treatment of reported speech in thematic terms, one can answer questions as to 'how' and 'about what' so-and-so spoke, but 'what' he said could be disclosed only by way of reporting his words, if only in the form of indirect discourse.

However, once it becomes a constructional unit in the author's speech, into

which it has entered on its own, the reported utterance concurrently becomes a theme of that speech. It enters into the latter's thematic design precisely as reported, an utterance with its own autonomous theme: the autonomous theme thus becomes a theme of a theme.

Reported speech is regarded by the speaker as an utterance belonging to *someone else*, an utterance that was originally totally independent, complete in its construction, and lying outside the given context. Now, it is from this independent existence that reported speech is transposed into an authorial context while retaining its own referential content and at least the rudiments of its own linguistic integrity, its original constructional independence. The author's utterance, in incorporating the other utterance, brings into play syntactic, stylistic, and compositional norms for its partial assimilation – that is, its adaptation to the syntactic, compositional, and stylistic design of the author's utterance, while preserving (if only in rudimentary form) the initial autonomy (in syntactic, compositional, and stylistic terms) of the reported utterance, which otherwise could not be grasped in full. . . .

Thus, what is expressed in the forms employed for reporting speech is an *active relation* of one message to another, and it is expressed, moreover, not on the level of the theme but in the stabilized constructional patterns of the language itself.

We are dealing here with words reacting on words. However, this phenomenon is distinctly and fundamentally different from dialogue, In dialogue, the lines of the individual participants are grammatically disconnected; they are not integrated into one unified context. Indeed, how could they be? *There are no syntactic forms with which to build a unity of dialogue.* If, on the other hand, a dialogue is presented as embedded in an authorial context, then we have a case of direct discourse, one of the variants of the phenomenon with which we are dealing in this inquiry. . . .

The productive study of dialogue presupposes, . . . a more profound investigation of the forms used in reported speech, since these forms reflect basic and constant tendencies in the *active reception of other speaker's speech*, and it is this reception, after all, that is fundamental also for dialogue.

How, in fact, is another speaker's speech received? What is the mode of existence of another's utterance in the actual, inner-speech consciousness of the recipient? How is it manipulated there, and what process of orientation will the subsequent speech of the recipient himself have undergone in regard to it?

What we have in the forms of reported speech is precisely an objective document of this reception. Once we have learned to decipher it, this document provides us with information, not about accidental and mercurial subjective psychological processes in the 'soul' of the recipient, but about steadfast social tendencies in an active reception of other speakers' speech, tendencies that have crystallized into language forms. The mechanism of this process is located, not in the individual soul, but in society. It is the function of society to select and to make grammatical (adapt to the grammatical structure of its language) just those factors in the active and evaluative reception of utterances that are socially vital and constant and, hence, that are grounded in the economic existence of the particular community of speakers. . . .

Language reflects, not subjective, psychological vacillations, but stable social interrelationships among speakers. Various linguistic forms of these interrelationships, and various modifications of these forms, prevail in different languages at different periods of time within different social groups and under the effect of different contextual aims. What this attests to is the relative strength or weakness of those tendencies in the social interorientation of a community of speakers, of which the given linguistic forms themselves are stabilized and age-old crystallizations. Should it happen that circumstances conspire to disparage some particular form (for example, certain modifications of indirect discourse, such as the 'dogmatic-rationalistic' type in the modern Russian novel), then this may be taken as evidence that the dominant tendencies in understanding and evaluating the messages to be reported are not properly manifested by that particular form – that it is too unaccommodating, too hampering.

Everything vital in the evaluative reception of another's utterance, everything of any ideological value, is expressed in the material of inner speech. After all, it is not a mute, wordless creature that receives such an utterance, but a human being full of inner words. All his experiences – his so-called apperceptive background – exist encoded in his inner speech, and only to that extent do they come into contact with speech received from outside. Word comes into contact with word. The context of this inner speech is the locale in which another's utterance is received, comprehended, and evaluated; it is where the speaker's active orientation takes place. This active inner-speech reception proceeds in two directions: first, the received utterance is framed within a context of factual commentary (coinciding in part with what is called the apperceptive background of the words), the visual signs of expression, and so on; second, a reply (*Gegenrede*) is prepared. Both the preparation of the reply (*internal retort*) and the *factual commentary* are organically fused in the unity of active reception, and these can be isolated only in abstract terms. Both lines of reception find their expression, are objectified, in the 'authorial' context surrounding the reported speech. Regardless of the functional orientation of the given context – whether it is a work of fiction, a polemical article, a defense attorney's summation, or the like – we clearly discern these two tendencies in it: that of commenting and that of retorting. Usually one of them is dominant. Between the reported speech and the reporting context, dynamic relations of high complexity and tension are in force. A failure to take these into account makes it impossible to understand any form of reported speech....

In what direction may the dynamism of the interrelationship between the authorial and the reported speech move?

We see it moving in two basic directions.

In the first place, the basic tendency in reacting to reported speech may be to maintain its integrity and authenticity; a language may strive to forge hard and fast boundaries for reported speech. In such a case, the patterns and their modifications serve to demarcate the reported speech as clearly as possible, to screen it from penetration by the author's intonations, and to condense and enhance its individual linguistic characteristics....

Within the scope covered by the first direction, we must ... define the degree of authoritarian reception of an utterance and the degree of its ideo-

logical assurance – its dogmatism. The more dogmatic an utterance, the less leeway permitted between truth and falsehood or good and bad in its reception by those who comprehend and evaluate, the greater will be the depersonalization that the forms of reported speech will undergo. In point of fact, given the situation in which all social value judgments are divided into wholesale, clearcut alternatives, we have simply no room for a positive and observant attitude toward all those factors which give another speaker's utterance its individual character. Authoritarian dogmatism of that type characterizes Middle French and Old Russian writings. The 17th century in France and the 18th century in Russia were characterized by a rationalistic type of dogmatism that likewise tended to curb the individualization of reported speech, though in different ways. In the sphere of rationalistic dogmatism, the dominant forms were the content-analyzing modifications of indirect discourse and the rhetorical modifications of direct discourse. Here the explicitness and inviolability of the boundaries between authorial and reported speech reach the utmost limits.

We may call this first direction in which the dynamism of the interorientation between reporting and reported speech moves the *linear style* (*der lineare stil*) of speech reporting (borrowing the term from Wölfflin's study of art).[1] The basic tendency of the linear style is to construct clear-cut, external contours for reported speech, whose own internal individuality is minimized. Wherever the entire context displays a complete stylistic homogeneity (in which the author and his characters all speak exactly the same language), the grammatical and compositional manipulation of reported speech achieves a maximal compactness and plastic relief.

The processes we observe in the second direction in which the dynamism of the interorientation between reporting and reported speech moves are exactly opposite in nature. Language devises means for infiltrating reported speech with authorial retort and commentary in deft and subtle ways. The reporting context strives to break down the self-contained compactness of the reported speech, to resolve it, to obliterate its boundaries. We may call this style of speech reporting *pictorial*. Its tendency is to obliterate the precise, external contours of reported speech; at the same time, the reported speech is individualized to a much greater degree – the tangibility of the various facets of an utterance may be subtly differentiated. This time the reception includes not only the referential meaning of the utterance, the statement it makes, but also all the linguistic peculiarities of its verbal implementation.

A number of diverse types may be placed within the scope of this second direction. The impetus for weakening the peripheries of the utterance may originate in the author's context, in which case that context permeates the reported speech with its own intonation – humor, irony, love or hate, enthusiasm or scorn. This type characterizes the Renaissance (especially in the French language), the end of the 18th century, and virtually the entire 19th century. It involves a severe debilitation of both the authoritarian and the rationalistic dogmatism of utterance. Social value judgments were then ruled by a relativism supplying extremely favorable grounds for a positive and sensitive reception of all individualized verbal nuances of thought, belief,

[1] Heinrich Wölfflin (1864–1945). *Basic Concepts in the History of the Arts* (1928).

feeling. These grounds even encouraged the growth of a 'decorative' trend in treating reported speech, leading sometimes to a neglect of the meaning of an utterance in favor of its 'color' – for example, in the Russian 'natural school'. Indeed, in Gogol's case, characters' speech sometimes loses almost all its referential meaning and becomes decor instead, on a par with clothing, appearance, furnishings, etc.

A rather different type is also possible: the verbal dominant may shift to the reported speech, which in that case becomes more forceful and more active than the authorial context framing it. This time the reported speech begins to resolve, as it were, the reporting context, instead of the other way around. The authorial context loses the greater objectivity it normally commands in comparison with reported speech. It begins to perceive itself – and even recognizes itself – as subjective, 'other person's' speech. In works of fiction, this is often expressed compositionally by the appearance of a narrator who replaces the author (in the usual sense of the word). The narrator's speech is just as individualized, colorful, and nonauthoritative as is the speech of the characters. The narrator's position is fluid, and in the majority of cases he uses the language of the personages depicted in the work. He cannot bring to bear against their subjective position a more authoritative and objective world. Such is the nature of narration in Dostoevskij, Andrej Belyj, Remizov, Sologub, and more recent Russian writers of prose.[2]

While the incursion of an authorial context into reported speech is typical of speech reception in the moderate variety of both idealism and collectivism, the dissolution of the authorial context testifies to a relativistic individualism in speech reception. In the latter, the subjective reported utterance stands in opposition to a commenting and retorting authorial context that recognizes itself to be equally subjective.

The entire second direction is characterized by an exceptional development of mixed forms of speech reporting, including quasi indirect discourse and, in particular, quasi direct discourse, in which the boundaries of the message reported are maximally weakened. . . .

In summarizing all we have said of the various possible tendencies in the dynamic interrelationship of reported and reporting speech, we may mark out the following chronological sequence:

1. *Authoritarian dogmatism*, characterized by the linear, impersonal, monumental style of reported speech transmission in the Middle Ages;
2. *Rationalistic dogmatism*, with its even more pronounced linear style in the 17th and 18th centuries;
3. *Realistic and criticial individualism*, with its pictorial style and its tendency to permeate reported speech with authorial retort and commentary (end of the 18th century and early 19th century); and finally
4. *Relativistic individualism*, with its decomposition of the authorial context (the present period).

[2] Andrei Bely, the pseudonym of Boris Nikolaevich Bugaev (1880–1934), Russian novelist, poet and a leading theorist of Russian symbolism; A. M. Remizov (1877–1957), Russian poet; Fedor Sologub (1863–1927), Russian poet.

Language exists not in and of itself but only in conjunction with the individual structure of a concrete utterance. It is solely through the utterance that language makes contact with communication, is imbued with its vital power, and becomes a reality. The conditions of verbal communication, its forms, and its methods of differentiation are dictated by the social and economic prerequisites of a given period. These changing sociolingual conditions are what in fact determines those changes in the forms of reported speech brought out in our analysis. We would even venture to say that in the forms by which language registers the impressions of received speech and of the speaker the history of the changing types of socioideological communication stands out in particularly bold relief.

We have now outlined the basic directions of the dynamism characterizing the interorientation of the author's and another person's speech. This dynamism finds its concrete linguistic expression in the patterns of reported speech and in the modifications of those patterns – which may be said to be in the indices of the balance between reporting and reported messages achieved at any given time in the development of a language.

Let us now turn to a brief characterization of these patterns and their principal modifications from the standpoint of the tendencies already pointed out....

Here we come up against the necessity of distinguishing between the two directions which the analyzing tendency of indirect discourse can take, and, accordingly, the necessity of distinguishing its two basic modifications.

The analysis involved in a construction of indirect discourse may indeed go in two directions or, more precisely, it may focus attention on two fundamentally different objects. An utterance may be received as a certain particular ideational position of the speaker. In that case, its exact referential makeup (what the speaker said) is transmitted analytically by the agency of the indirect discourse construction.... On the other hand, an utterance may be received and analytically transmitted as an expression characterizing not only the referent but also, or even more so, the speaker himself – his manner of speech (individual, or typological, or both); his state of mind as expressed not in the content but in the forms of his speech (disconnectedness, pauses between words, expressive intonation, and the like); his ability or lack of ability to express himself, and so on.

These two objects of analysis by the transmission of indirect discourse are profoundly and fundamentally different. In the one case, meaning is dissected into its constituent, ideational, referential units, while in the other the utterance per se is broken down into the various stylistic strands that compose its verbal texture. The second tendency, carried to its logical extreme, would amount to a technical linguistic analysis of style. However, simultaneously with what would appear to be stylistic analysis, a referential analysis of the speech to be reported also takes place in this type of indirect discourse, with a resulting dissection of the referential meaning and of its implementation by the verbal envelope.

Let us term the first modification of the pattern of indirect discourse as the *referent-analyzing* modification, and the second, the *texture-analyzing* modification. The referent-analyzing modification receives an utterance on the

purely thematic level and simply does not 'hear' or take in whatever there is in that utterance that is without thematic significance. Those aspects of the formal verbal design which do have thematic significance – which are essential to an understanding of the speaker's ideational position – may be transmitted thematically by this variant or may be incorporated into the authorial context as characterization on the author's part.

The referent-analyzing modification provides a wide opportunity for the retorting and commenting tendencies of authorial speech, while at the same time maintaining a strict and clear-cut separation between reporting and reported utterance. For that reason, it makes an excellent means for the linear style of speech reporting. It unquestionably has a built-in tendency to thematicize another speaker's utterance, and thus it preserves the cohesiveness and autonomy of the utterance, not so much in constructional terms as in terms of meaning ... These results are achieved, however, only at the price of a certain depersonalization of the reported speech.

The development of the referent-analyzing modification to any appreciable extent occurs only within an authorial context that is somewhat rationalistic and dogmatic in nature – one at any rate in which the focus of attention is strongly ideational and in which the author shows through his words that he himself, in his own right, occupies a particular ideational position....

Let us now turn to the texture-analyzing modification. It incorporates into indirect discourse words and locutions that characterize the subjective and stylistic physiognomy of the message viewed as expression. These words and locutions are incorporated in such a way that their specificity, their subjectivity, their typicality are distinctly felt; more often than not they are enclosed in quotation marks. Here are four examples:

> About the deceased, Grigorij remarked, making the sign of the cross, that he was a good hand at a thing or two, but was thick-headed and *scourged by his sickness*, and a *disbeliever to boot*, and that it was Fedor Pavlovič and the eldest son who had taught him his *disbelief* [Dostoevskij, *The Brothers Karamazov*; italics added].

> The same thing happened with the Poles: they appeared with a show of pride and independence. They loudly testified that, in the first place, they were both '*in the service of the Crown*' and that '*Pan Mitja*' had offered to buy their honor for 3000, and that they themselves had seen large sums of money in his hands (*ibid.*).

> Krasotkin proudly parried the accusation, giving to understand that it would indeed have been shameful '*in our day and age*' to play make-believe with his contemporaries, other 13 year-olds, but that he did it for the 'chubbies' because he was fond of them, and no one had any business calling him to account for his feelings (*ibid.*).

> He found Nastas'ja Filippovna in a state similar to utter derangement: she continually cried out, trembled, shouted that Rogožin was hidden in the garden, in their very house, that she had just seen him, that he would *murder her ... cut her throat!* [Dostoevskij, *The Idiot*. Here the indirect-discourse construction retains the expressive intonation of the original message. Italics added].

The words and expressions, incorporated into indirect discourse with their own specificity detectable (especially when they are enclosed in quotation

marks), are being 'made strange', to use the language of the Formalists,[3] and made strange precisely in the direction that suits the author's needs: they are particularized, their coloration is heightened, but at the same time they are made to accommodate shadings of the author's attitude – his irony, humor, and so on.

We see, therefore, that our two modifications, despite their liaison through the common analytical tendency of the pattern, express profoundly different linguistic conceptions of the reported addresser's words and the speaker's individuality. For the first modification, the speaker's individuality is a factor only as it occupies some specific ideational position (epistemological, ethical, existential, or behavioral), and beyond that position (which is transmitted in strictly referential terms) it has no existence for the reporter. There is no wherewithal here for the speaker's individuality to congeal into an image.[4]

The opposite is true of the second modification, in which the speaker's individuality is presented as subjective manner (individual or typological), as manner of thinking and speaking, involving the author's evaluation of that manner as well. Here the speaker's individuality congeals to the point of forming an image....

Let us now turn to examples of quasi-direct discourse from Russian literature.[5]

Here is a sample of an extremely characteristic type in this regard, again from Puškin's *Poltava*:

> Pretending grief, Mazeppa raises loud his humble voice unto the Tsar. '*God knows and all the world can see, he, hapless hetman, twenty years has served the Tsar with loyal heart; bestrewn with boundless favours and most wondrously advanced.... What blindness, what folly animosity would be! Is it thinkable that he, who stands upon the threshold to the tomb, would now commence to school himself in treason and becloud his honest name? And did not he indignantly refuse his aid to Stanislaw; appalled, reject the Ukrainian crown and send the Tsar the pact and letters of the plot, as was his duty? Did not he turn a deaf ear unto the blandishments of Khan and Tsargrad Sultan? Aflame with zeal, he gladly plied his mind and sword in contests with the White Tsar's foes, he spared no pains nor life itself, and now a vicious enemy his old grey hairs has covered all in shame. And who? Iskra and Kočubej! Who were so long his friends!...*' And with bloodthirsty tears, in icy insolence, the villain demands their punishment.... Whose punishment? Implacable old man! Whose daughter is in his embrace? But the murmurings of his heart he coldly stills.... [italics added].

Syntax and style in this passage, on the one hand, are determined by the evaluative tones of Mazeppa's humility and tearful plea and, on the other hand, this 'tearful plea' is subjected to the evaluative orientation of the author's context, his narrative accents which, in the given instance, are colored in tones of indignation that eventually erupts in the rhetorical question: 'Whose punishment? Implacable old man! Whose daughter is in his embrace?'

[3] For an explanation of 'made strange', see *Reader*, p. 48, n. 3.

[4] The idea of language constructing an image of another language is an important one in 'Discourse in the Novel'. See *Reader*, pp. 117–118.

[5] Quasi-direct discourse operates on the boundary between direct and indirect speech, where discourse that is formally authorial is saturated with the emotional tones of character discourse. It is thus an intentional hybrid structure. See *Reader*, p. 117.

It would be entirely possible to recite this passage aloud and convey the double intonation of each of its words, i.e., indignantly reveal the hypocrisy of Mazeppa's plea through the very reading of it. What we have here is a fairly simple case with its rhetorical, somewhat primitive and sharply etched intonations. In most cases, however, and especially in that area where quasi-direct discourse has become a massively used device – the area of modern prose fiction – transmission by voice of evaluative interference would be impossible. Furthermore, the very kind of development quasi-direct discourse has undergone is bound up with the transposition of the larger prose genres into a silent register, i.e., for silent reading. Only this 'silencing' of prose could have made possible the multileveledness and voice-defying complexity of intonational structures that are so characteristic for modern literature.

An example of this kind of interference of two speech acts which cannot be conveyed adequately by voice is the following passage from Dostoevskij's *The Idiot*:

> And why did he [Prince Myškin] avoid going straight up to him and turn away as if he didn't notice anything, although their eyes had met. (Yes, their eyes had met! And they had looked at one another.) Didn't he himself, after all, want not long ago to take him by the arm and go with him *there*? Didn't he himself, after all, want to go to him tomorrow and say that he had been to see her? Didn't he himself, after all, renounce his demon on his way there, in mid-course, when suddenly joy flooded his soul? Or was there indeed something or other in Rogožin, that is, in *today's* whole image of the man, in the sum total of his words, gestures, behavior, looks, that might justify the prince's terrible forebodings and the infuriating insinuations of his demon? Something or other of the sort that makes itself felt but is difficult to analyze and relate, something impossible to pin down with sufficient reasons. But something nevertheless that produces, despite all the difficulty and the impossibility, a perfectly cogent and irresistible impression that unwittingly turns into the most absolute conviction. Conviction that what? (Oh, how the prince was tormented by the monstrosity, the 'baseness' of that conviction, of 'that vile foreboding', and how he reproached himself!).

Let us now devote a few words to a consideration of the very important and interesting problem of the *phonetic embodiment of reported speech displayed by the author's context.*

The difficulty of evaluative, expressive intonation consists here in the constant shifting from the evaluative purview of the author to that of the character and back again.

In what cases and to what limits can an author act out his character? The absolute of acting out we understand to be not only a change of expressive intonation – a change equally possible within the confines of a single voice, a single consciousness – but also a change of voice in terms of the whole set of features individualizing that voice, a change of persona ('mask') in terms of a whole set of individualizing traits of facial expression and gesticulation, and, finally, the complete self-consistency of this voice and persona throughout the entire acting out of the role. After all, into that self-enclosed, individual world there can no longer be any infusion or spillover of the author's intonations. As a result of the self-consistency of the other voice and persona, there is no possibility for gradation in shifting from the author's context to reported speech and from reported speech to author's context. The reported

speech will begin to sound as if it were in a play where there is no embracing context and where the character's lines confront other lines by other characters without any grammatical concatenation. Thus relations between reported speech and authorial context, via absolute acting out, take a shape analogous to the relations between alternating lines in dialogue. Thereby the author is put on a level with his character, and their relationship is dialogized. From all this, it necessarily follows that the absolute acting out of reported speech, where a work of fiction is read aloud, is admissible only in the rarest cases. Otherwise an inevitable conflict arises with the basic aesthetic design of the context. It goes without saying that these exceedingly rare cases can involve only linear and moderately picturesque modifications of the direct discourse construction. If the author's retorting remarks intersect the direct discourse or if too dense a shadow from the author's evaluative context falls upon it, absolute acting out is impossible.

However, another possibility is partial acting out (without transformation), which permits making gradual intonational transitions between authorial context and reported speech and, in some cases, given double-faced modifications, permits accommodating all intonations within one voice. To be sure, such a possibility is viable only in cases analogous to the ones we have cited. Rhetorical questions and exclamations often carry out the function of switching from one tone to another.

It remains only for us to sum up our analysis of quasi-direct discourse and, at the same time, to sum up the whole ... of our study. We shall be brief: the substance of the matter is in the argument itself, and we shall refrain from rehashing it.

We have conducted an inquiry into the chief forms of reported speech. We were not concerned with providing abstract grammatical descriptions; we endeavored instead to find in those forms a document of how language at this or that period of its development has perceived the words and personality of another addresser. The point we had in mind throughout was that the vicissitudes of utterance and speaking personality in language reflect the social vicissitudes of verbal interaction, of verbal-ideological communication, in their most vital tendencies.

The word as the ideological phenomenon par excellence exists in continuous generation and change; it sensitively reflects all social shifts and alterations. In the vicissitudes of the word are the vicissitudes of the society of word-users. But the dialectical generation of the word is susceptible of investigation by various routes. One can study the *generation of ideas*, that is, the history of ideology in the exact sense – the *history of knowledge*, as the history of the generation of truth (since truth is eternal only as eternally generated truth); the *history of literature*, as the generation of artistic veracity. That is one route. Another, intimately connected and in close collaboration with the first, is the study of the *generation of language itself*, as *ideological material*, as the *medium for ideological reflection of existence*, since the reflection of the refraction of existence in the human consciousness comes about only in and through the word. The generation of language cannot be studied, of course, in complete disregard of the social existence refracted in it and of the refracting powers of the socioeconomic conditions. The generation of the word cannot be studied in disregard of the generation of truth and artistic

veracity in the word and of the human society for whom that truth and veracity exist. Thus these two routes, in their constant interaction with one another, study the *reflection and refraction of the generation of nature and history in the generation of the word.*

But there is still another route: the *reflection of the social generation of word in word itself,* with its two branches: the *history of the philosophy of the word* and *the history of word in word.* It is precisely in this latter direction that our own study lies. We are perfectly well aware of the shortcomings of our study and can only hope that the very posing of the problem of the word in word has crucial importance. The history of truth, the history of artistic veracity, and the history of language can benefit considerably from a study of the refractions of their basic phenomenon – the *concrete utterance* – in constructions of language itself.

And now a few additional words in conclusion about quasi-direct discourse and the social tendency it expresses.

The emergence and development of quasi-direct discourse must be studied in close association with the development of other picturesque modifications of direct discourse and indirect discourse. We shall then be in a position to see that quasi-direct discourse lies on the main road of development of the modern European languages, that it signalizes some crucial turning point in the social vicissitudes of the utterance. The victory of extreme forms of the picturesque style in reported speech is not, of course, to be explained in terms either of psychological factors or the artist's own individual stylistic purposes, but is explainable in terms of the *general, far-reaching subjectivization of the ideological word-utterance.* No longer is it a monument, nor even a document, of a substantive ideational position; it makes itself felt only as expression of an adventitious, subjective state. Typifying and individualizing coatings of the utterance have reached such an intense degree of differentiation in the linguistic conciousness that they have completely overshadowed and relativized an utterance's ideational core, the responsible social position implemented in it. The utterance has virtually ceased to be an object for serious ideational consideration. The categorical word, the word 'from one's own mouth', the *declaratory* word remains alive only in scientific writings. In all other fields of verbal-ideological creativity, what predominates is not the 'outright' but the 'contrived' word. All verbal activity in these cases amounts to piecing together 'other persons' words' and 'words seemingly from other persons'. Even the humanities have developed a tendency to supplant responsible statements about an issue with a depiction of the issue's contemporary state of affairs, including computation and inductive adducing of 'the prevailing point of view at the present time', which is sometimes even taken as the most solid kind of 'solution' to the issue. All this bespeaks an alarming instability and uncertainty of ideological word. Verbal expression in literature, rhetoric, philosophy, and humanistic studies has become the realm of 'opinions', of out and out opinions, and even the paramount feature of these opinions is not *what* actually is 'opined' in them but *how* – in what individual or typical way – the 'opining' is done. This stage in the vicissitudes of the word in present-day bourgeois Europe and here in the Soviet Union (in our case, up to very recent times) can be characterized as the stage of *transformation of the word into a thing,* the stage of *depression in the thematic value of*

the word. The ideologues of this process, both here and in Western Europe, are the formalistic movements in poetics, linguistics, and philosophy of language. One hardly need mention here what the underlying social factors explaining this process are, and one hardly need repeat Lorck's[6] well-founded assertion as to the only ways whereby a revival of the ideological word can come about – the word with its theme intact, the word permeated with confident and categorical social value judgment, the word that really means and takes responsibility for what it says.

5 Social Heteroglossia

This extract is taken from Bakhtin's important essay 'Discourse in the Novel' (1935) rpt. in *The Dialogic Imagination*; there is a further section of this essay on pp. 112–120. Bakhtin's main purpose in the essay is to discover an adequate poetics of the novel. But, since a stylistics of the novel must deal primarily with the representation of speech, the essay necessarily is much concerned with the 'philosophy of discourse' in a 'contradictory and multi-language world' (p. 275).

Contradiction and multiplicity are key concepts in this essay in which verbs of struggle and conflict predominate. Rather than abstract linguistic relations, Bakhtin takes the specific concrete historical utterance as locus for understanding the dynamic and creative forces of the 'life of language'. In *Marxism* the sign was seen as the point of convergence of individual consciousness with the social, in 'Discourse and the Novel' this is termed the utterance. I have tried, in selecting passages for this extract, to keep these two levels and their constant interaction in focus. At both individual and social levels, productive vitality and creativity derive from a continuous dialogic struggle within and between discourses. Language, in this essay, is perceived as stratified through and through into multiple social discourses each representing a specific ideological-belief system, a way of seeing the world: heteroglossia. However, despite the emphasis upon struggle among the different social languages of heteroglossia – different generations, professions, epochs, etc. – what is strikingly absent is any focus, as such upon class. Different 'socio-ideological groups' are referred to but only as one among other of the 'socio-ideological contradictions' constituting language at any given moment' (p. 291).

The extract indicates that it would be a misunderstanding to perceive 'dialogism' or 'heteroglossia' as opening the way to total linguistic freedom. Heteroglossia is certainly perceived as the constituting condition for the possibility of independent consciousness in that any attempt to impose one unitary monologic discourse as the 'Truth' is relativized by its dialogic contact with another social discourse, another view of the world. However,

[6] E. Lorck, a German linguist who published a short study of quasi indirect discourse, *Die "Erlebte Rede"* (1921).

Bakhtin stresses that the force of centralization is indispensable to the life of language in 'guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding'; without that core of stability verbal discourse as a system of signs could not exist. Neither does the opposing decentralizing force of heteroglossia liberate the individual speaker into a linguistic free-for-all. On the contrary, 'only the mythical Adam, who approached a virginal and as yet verbally unqualified world with the first word, could really have escaped from start to finish this dialogic inter-orientation with the alien word' (p. 279). However, it is in this struggle with another's word that a new word is generated. The dialogic relations of heteroglossia do ensure that meaning remains in process, unfinalizable.

From M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination.*

Trans. M. Holquist and C. Emerson, ed. M. Holquist, University of Texas Press, Austin, Tex., 1981

Unitary language constitutes the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization, an expression of the centripetal forces of language. A unitary language is not something given [*dan*] but is always in essence posited [*zadan*] – and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia.[1] But at the same time it makes its real presence felt as a force for overcoming this heterglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystalizing into a real, although still relative, unity – the unity of the reigning conversational (everyday) and literary language, 'correct language'.

A common unitary language is a system of linguistic norms. But these norms do not constitute an abstract imperative; they are rather the generative forces of linguistic life, forces that struggle to overcome the heteroglossia of language, forces that unite and centralize verbal-ideological thought, creating within a heteroglot national language the firm, stable linguistic nucleus of an officially recognized literary language, or else defending an already formed language from the pressure of growing heteroglossia.

What we have in mind here is not an abstract linguistic minimum of a common language, in the sense of a system of elementary forms (linguistic symbols) guaranteeing a *minimum* level of comprehension in practical communication. We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, 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 toward concrete verbal and ideological unifica-

[1] For *dan* and *zadan*, see Glossary.

tion and centralization, which develop in vital connection with the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization.[2] . . .

But the centripetal forces of the life of language, embodied in a 'unitary language', operate in the midst of heteroglossia. At any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word (according to formal linguistic markers, especially phonetic), but also – and for us this is the essential point – into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, 'professional' and 'generic' languages, languages of generations and so forth. From this point of view, literary language itself is only one of these heteroglot languages – and in its turn is also stratified into languages (generic, period-bound and others). And this stratification and heteroglossia, once realized, is not only a static invariant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics: stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing. Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work, alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward.

Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The process of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance; the utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualized embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well; it is in fact an active participant in such speech diversity. And this active participation of every utterance in living heteroglossia determines the linguistic profile and style of the utterance to no less a degree than its inclusion in any normative-centralizing system of a unitary language.

Every utterance participates in the 'unitary language' (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces).

Such is the fleeting language of a day, of an epoch, a social group, a genre, a school and so forth. It is possible to give a concrete and detailed analysis of any utterance, once having exposed it as a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies in the life of language. . . .

Indeed, any concrete discourse (utterance) finds the object at which it was directed already as it were overlain with qualifications, open to dispute, charged with value, already enveloped in an obscuring mist – or, on the contrary, by the 'light' of alien words that have already been spoken about it.[3] It is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments and accents. The word, directed toward its object, enters a dialogi-

[2] Among the kinds of forces working for centralization within European languages, Bakhtin lists Aristotelian poetics, the poetics of the Medieval church and Cartesian neo-classicism. In effect it is any hegemonic process involving the 'victory of one reigning language (dialect) over the others, the supplanting of languages, their enslavement, the process of illuminating them with the "True Word", the incorporation of barbarians and lower social strata into a unitary language of culture and truth, the canonization of ideological systems' (p. 271).

[3] 'Object' here means simply that which is being spoken about; the theme, etc., to which the utterance refers.

cally agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all this may crucially shape discourse, may leave a trace in all its semantic layers, may complicate its expression and influence its entire stylistic profile.

The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance, it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it – it does not approach the object from the sidelines....

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.

But this does not exhaust the internal dialogism of the word. It encounters an alien word not only in the object itself: every word is directed toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates.

The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word. Such is the situation in any living dialogue....

In the actual life of speech, every concrete act of understanding is active: it assimilates the word to be understood into its own conceptual system filled with specific objects and emotional expressions, and is indissolubly merged with the response, with a motivated agreement or disagreement. To some extent, primacy belongs to the response, as the activating principle: it creates the ground for understanding, it prepares the ground for an active and engaged understanding. Understanding comes to fruition only in the response. Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other.[4]

Thus an active understanding, one that assimilates the word under consideration into a new conceptual system, that of the one striving to understand, establishes a series of complex interrelationships, consonances and dissonances with the word and enriches it with new elements. It is precisely such an understanding that the speaker counts on. Therefore his orientation toward the listener is an orientation toward a specific conceptual horizon, toward the specific world of the listener; it introduces totally new elements into his discourse; it is in this way, after all, that various different points of view, conceptual horizons, systems for providing expressive accents, various social 'languages' come to interact with one another. The speaker strives to get a reading on his own word, and on his own conceptual system that determines this word, within the alien conceptual system of the understanding

[4] Although dialectical thinking is rejected as a way of understanding Dostoevsky's artistic vision, the term is used without qualification here.

receiver; he enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system. The speaker breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener's, apperceptive background.[5] ...

As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, 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 intention, 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 impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them; they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it; it is as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker. Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process....

The topic of a speaking person has enormous importance in everyday life. In real life we hear speech about speakers and their discourse at every step. We can go so far as to say that in real life people talk most of all about what others talk about – they transmit, recall, weight and pass judgment on other people's words, opinions, assertions, information; people are upset by others' words, or agree with them, contest them, refer to them and so forth. Were we to eavesdrop on snatches of raw dialogue in the street, in a crowd, in lines, in a foyer and so forth, we would hear how often the words 'he says', 'people say', 'he said ...' are repeated....

The importance of this motif is in no way diminished in the higher and better-organized areas of everyday communication. Every conversation is full of transmissions and interpretations of other people's words. At every step one meets a 'quotation' or a 'reference' to something that a particular person said, a reference to 'people say' or 'everyone says', to the words of the person one is talking with, or to one's own previous words, to a newspaper, an official decree, a document, a book and so forth. The majority of our information and opinions is usually not communicated in direct form as our own, but with reference to some indefinite and general source: 'I heard', 'It's generally held that ', 'It is thought that ...' and so forth....

It goes without saying that not all transmitted words belonging to someone else lend themselves, when fixed in writing, to enclosure in quotation marks. That degree of otherness and purity in another's word that in written speech

[5] This sense of coming to understand one language by being able to *image* it against the background of a different language is an important and recurrent one. See *Reader*, p. 117.

would require quotation marks (as per the intention of the speaker himself, how he himself determines this degree of otherness) is required much less frequently in everyday speech.

Furthermore, syntactic means for formulating the transmitted speech of another are far from exhausted by the grammatical paradigms of direct and indirect discourse: the means for its incorporation, for its formulation and for indicating different degrees of shading are highly varied....

The following must be kept in mind: that the speech of another, once enclosed in a context, is – no matter how accurately transmitted – always subject to certain semantic changes. The context embracing another's word is responsible for its dialogizing background, whose influence can be very great. Given the appropriate methods for framing, one may bring about fundamental changes even in another's utterance accurately quoted. Any sly and ill-disposed polemicist knows very well which dialogizing backdrop he should bring to bear on the accurately quoted words of his opponent, in order to distort their sense....

The tendency to assimilate others' discourse takes on an even deeper and more basic significance in an individual's ideological becoming, in the most fundamental sense. Another's discourse performs here no longer as information, directions, rules, models and so forth – but strives rather to determine the very bases of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior; it performs here as *authoritative discourse*, and an *internally persuasive discourse*.[6] ...

The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused to it. The authoritative word is located in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher. It is, so to speak, the word of the fathers. Its authority was already *acknowledged* in the past. It is a *prior* discourse. It is therefore not a question of choosing it from among other possible discourses that are its equal. It is given (it sounds) in lofty spheres, not those of familiar contact. Its language is a special (as it were, hieratic) language. It can be profaned. It is akin to taboo, i.e., a name that must not be taken in vain....

It is not a free appropriation and assimilation of the word itself that authoritative discourse seeks to elicit from us; rather, it demands our unconditional allegiance. Therefore authoritative discourse permits no play with the context framing it, no play with its borders, no gradual and flexible transitions, no spontaneously creative stylizing variants on it. It enters our verbal

[6] As examples of the authoritative word, Bakhtin cites religious, political, moral discourse, the word of a father, of acknowledged scientific truth, or even of a currently fashionable book. The last seems a rather weak candidate in so far as the authoritative word remains always sharply demarcated within discourse, disallowing any dialogic interaction. It has all the closed characteristics of the epic (see *Reader*, pp. 182–3) or the *linear style* (see *Reader*, pp. 65–6). Although Bakhtin allows that it is possible for the internally persuasive word to unite with the authoritative word, this is very rare. In contrast to the rigid boundaries maintained by the authoritative word, internally persuasive discourse is characterized by permutable borders: 'In the everyday rounds of our consciousness, the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else's' (p. 345). Thus it functions as one of those creative borderzones upon which new meaning is produced; in this case, the self.

consciousness as a compact and indivisible mass; one must either totally affirm it, or totally reject it. It is indissolubly fused with its authority – with political power, an institution, a person – and it stands and falls together with that authority. . . .

When someone else's ideological discourse is internally persuasive for us and acknowledged by us, entirely different possibilities open up. Such discourse is of decisive significance in the evolution of an individual consciousness: consciousness awakens to independent ideological life precisely in a world of alien discourses surrounding it, and from which it cannot initially separate itself; the process of distinguishing between one's own and another's discourse, between one's own and another's thought, is activated rather late in development. When thought begins to work in an independent, experimenting and discriminating way, what first occurs is a separation between internally persuasive discourse and authoritarian enforced discourse, along with a rejection of those congeries of discourses that do not matter to us, that do not touch us. . . .

Our ideological development is just such an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values. The semantic structure of an internally persuasive discourse is *not finite*, it is *open*; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it, this discourse is able to reveal ever newer *ways to mean*. . . .

Certain kinds of internally persuasive discourse can be fundamentally and organically fused with the image of a speaking person: ethical (discourse fused with the image of, let us say, a preacher), philosophical (discourse fused with the image of a wise man), sociopolitical (discourse fused with an image of a Leader). While creatively stylizing upon and experimenting with another's discourse, we attempt to guess, to imagine, how a person with authority might conduct himself in the given circumstances, the light he would cast on them with his discourse. In such experimental guesswork the image of the speaking person and his discourse become the object of creative, artistic imagination.[7]

This process – experimenting by turning persuasive discourse into speaking persons – becomes especially important in those cases where a struggle against such images has already begun, where someone is striving to liberate himself from the influence of such an image and its discourse by means of objectification, or is striving to expose the limitations of both image and discourse. The importance of struggling with another's discourse, its influence in the history of an individual's coming to ideological consciousness, is enormous. One's own discourse and one's own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse. This process is made more complex by the fact that a variety of alien voices enter into the struggle for influence within an individual's consciousness (just as they struggle with one another in surrounding social reality). All this creates fertile soil for experimentally objectifying another's discourse. A conversation with an internally persuasive word that one has begun to resist may continue, but it

[7] In an authorial note here Bakhtin adds that in Plato, Socrates serves as just such an artistic image of the wise man and teacher for the purpose of experiment.

takes on another character: it is questioned, it is put in a new situation in order to expose its weak sides, to get a feel for its boundaries, to experience it physically as an object. For this reason stylizing discourse by attributing it to a person often becomes parodic, although not crudely parodic – since another's word, having been at an earlier stage internally persuasive, mounts a resistance to this process and frequently begins to sound with no parodic overtones at all. Novelistic images, profoundly double-voiced and double-languaged, are born in such a soil, seek to objectivize the struggle with all types of internally persuasive alien discourse that had at one time held sway over the author....

6 Speech Genres

This is a short extract from Bakhtin's essay 'The Problem of Speech Genres' (1952–3), rpt. in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Speech genres are defined as the typical forms of utterance associated with a particular sphere of communication (e.g., the workplace, the sewing circle, the military), which have therefore developed into *'relatively stable types'* in terms of thematic content, style and compositional structure. This concern with the great variety of speech genres returns to a recurrent theme in the 'Bakhtin/Medvedev/Voloshinov' texts: the need to work across the usual division between literary discourse and the discourse of everyday life.

It also challenges the distinction Saussure draws between the utterance (*parole*), as a completely free combining of form and words in individual speech acts, and language (*langue*) as a mandatory system of linguistic laws. Speech genres impose their own restrictions of style, content and structure upon all individual speakers although some genres, like oral anecdotes, allow much greater flexibility than others, such as military commands. 'A speech genre is not a form of language, but a typical form of utterance: as such the genre also includes a certain typical kind of expression that inhers in it' (p. 87).

The only adequate locus for study of speech genres is the utterance: 'utterances and their types, that is, speech genres, are the drive belts from the history of society to the history of language' (p. 65). General linguistics – 'even serious ones like Saussure's' (p. 68) – have failed to understand the nature of utterances because they adopt a passive model of meaning and understanding. They perceive language as a speech flow from the speaker to a passive recipient, instead of recognizing the 'active role of the *other* in the process of speech communication' (p. 70). This passive model of speech reception leads to 'terminological imprecision and confusion' in linguistic thinking: the utterance as a speech form has not been clearly distinguished from the sentence as a grammatical unit. A considerable part of the essay is at pains to make this distinction. Whereas a sentence has only grammatical boundaries and completeness, the boundaries of the utterance as a unit of speech communication are quite concrete: they are determined

by a change of speaking subjects. This form of finalization of an utterance is a defining criterion since it opens up the possibility of responding to it. Utterances, unlike sentences, are inherently interactive; for this reason 'finalization' does not imply closure. Every 'bounded' utterance is part of the whole chain of utterances. Every utterance is directed at an addressee. This indicates the other defining quality of utterances: they are always expressive and evaluative. Unlike words in a dictionary, words in a speech event are always chosen and accented (given intonation) not just with reference to the theme of the utterance but also with reference to the anticipated response of the addressee and with a backward look at previous utterances. This interactive relationship between speaker and addressee is a crucially determining factor in the stylistic formation of speech genres (especially of intimate and familiar genres) and has had an important and largely unrecognized effect upon the history of literary forms.

From M. M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays.*

Trans. V. W. McGee, ed. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, University of Texas Press, Austin, Tex., 1986.

All the diverse areas of human activity involve the use of language. Quite understandably, the nature and forms of this use are just as diverse as are the areas of human activity. This, of course, in no way disaffirms the national unity of language. Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity. These utterances reflect the specific conditions and goals of each such area not only through their content (thematic) and linguistic style, that is, the selection of the lexical, phraseological, and grammatical resources of the language, but above all through their compositional structure. All three of these aspects – thematic content, style, and compositional structure – are inseparably linked to the *whole* of the utterance and are equally determined by the specific nature of the particular sphere of communication. Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances. These we may call *speech genres.*

The wealth and diversity of speech genres are boundless because the various possibilities of human activity are inexhaustible, and because each sphere of activity contains an entire repertoire of speech genres that differentiate and grow as the particular sphere develops and becomes more complex. Special emphasis should be placed on the extreme *heterogeneity* of speech genres (oral and written). In fact, the category of speech genres should include short rejoinders of daily dialogue (and these are extremely varied

depending on the subject matter, situation, and participants), everyday narration, writing (in all its various forms), the brief standard military command, the elaborate and detailed order, the fairly variegated repertoire of business documents (for the most part standard), and the diverse world of commentary (in the broad sense of the word: social, political). And we must also include here the diverse forms of scientific statements and all literary genres (from the proverb to the multivolume novel)....

The extreme heterogeneity of speech genres and the attendant difficulty of determining the general nature of the utterance should in no way be underestimated. It is especially important here to draw attention to the very significant difference between primary (simple) and secondary (complex) speech genres (understood not as a functional difference). Secondary (complex) speech genres – novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary, and so forth – arise in more complex and comparatively highly developed and organized cultural communication (primarily written) that is artistic, scientific, sociopolitical, and so on. During the process of their formation, they absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communion. These primary genres are altered and assume a special character when they enter into complex ones. They lose their immediate relation to actual reality and to the real utterances of others. For example, rejoinders of everyday dialogue or letters found in a novel retain their form and their everyday significance only on the plane of the novel's content. They enter into actual reality only via the novel as a whole, that is, as a literary-artistic event and not as everyday life. The novel as a whole is an utterance just as rejoinders in everyday dialogue or private letters are (they do have a common nature), but unlike these, the novel is a secondary (complex) utterance....

The boundaries of each concrete utterance as a unit of speech communication are determined by a *change of speaking subjects*, that is, a change of speakers. Any utterance – from a short (single-word) rejoinder in everyday dialogue to the large novel or scientific treatise – has, so to speak, an absolute beginning and an absolute end: its beginning is preceded by the utterances of others, and its end is followed by the responsive utterances of others (or, although it may be silent, others' active responsive understanding, or, finally, a responsive action based on this understanding). The speaker ends his utterance in order to relinquish the floor to the other or to make room for the other's active responsive understanding. The utterance is not a conventional unit, but a real unit, clearly delimited by the change of speaking subjects, which ends by relinquishing the floor to the other, as if with a silent *dixi*,[1] perceived by the listeners (as a sign) that the speaker has finished.

This change of speaking subjects, which creates clear-cut boundaries of the utterance, varies in nature and acquires different forms in the heterogeneous spheres of human activity and life, depending on the functions of language and on the conditions and situations of communication. One observes this change of speaking subjects most simply and clearly in actual dialogue where the utterances of the interlocutors or partners in dialogue (which we shall call rejoinders) alternate. Because of its simplicity and clarity, dialogue is a classic form of speech communication. Each rejoinder, regardless of how brief and

[1] The word '*dixi*' is Latin for 'I have spoken'.

abrupt, has a specific quality of completion that expresses a particular position of the speaker, to which one may respond or may assume, with respect to it, a responsive position. We shall discuss further this specific quality of completion of the utterance, one of its main markers. But at the same time rejoinders are all linked to one another. And the sort of relations between question and answer, assertion and objection, assertion and agreement, suggestion and acceptance, order and execution, and so forth – are impossible among units of language (words and sentences), either in the system of language (in the vertical cross section) or within the utterance (on the horizontal plane). These specific relations among rejoinders in a dialogue are only subcategories of specific relations among whole utterances in the process of speech communication. These relations are possible only among utterances of different speech subjects; they presuppose *other* (with respect to the speaker) participants in speech communication. The relations among whole utterances cannot be treated grammatically since, we repeat, such relations are impossible among units of language, and not only in the system of language, but within the utterance as well....

Let us turn to the ... most important aspect: the stable *generic* forms of the utterance. The speaker's speech will[2] is manifested primarily in the *choice of a particular speech genre*. This choice is determined by the specific nature of the given sphere of speech communication, semantic (thematic) considerations, the concrete situation of the speech communication, the personal composition of its participants, and so on. And when the speaker's speech plan with all its individuality and subjectivity is applied and adapted to a chosen genre, it is shaped and developed within a certain generic form. Such genres exist above all in the great and multifarious sphere of everyday oral communication, including the most familiar and the most intimate.

We speak only in definite speech genres, that is, all our utterances have definite and relatively stable typical *forms of construction of the whole*. Our repertoire of oral (and written) speech genres is rich. We use them confidently and skillfully *in practice*, and it is quite possible for us not even to suspect their existence *in theory*. Like Molière's Monsieur Jourdain who, when speaking in prose, had no idea that was what he was doing, we speak in diverse genres without suspecting that they exist. Even in the most free, the most unconstrained conversation, we cast our speech in definite generic forms, sometimes rigid and trite ones, sometimes more flexible, plastic, and creative ones (everyday communication also has creative genres at its disposal). We are given these speech genres in almost the same way that we are given our native language, which we master fluently long before we begin to study grammar. We know our native language – its lexical composition and grammatical structure – not from dictionaries and grammars but from concrete utterances that we hear and that we ourselves reproduce in live speech communication with people around us. We assimilate forms of language only in forms of utterances and in conjunction with these forms. The forms of language and the typical forms of utterances, that is, speech genres, enter our

[2] The speaker's *speech will* or *speech plan* is what determines choice of subject, the boundaries of his or her utterance, its semantic exhaustiveness and the choice of its generic form. Participants in any speech communication orientate themselves actively for response by imagining or grasping the speaker's speech plan.

experience and our consciousness together, and in close connection with one another. To learn to speak means to learn to construct utterances (because we speak in utterances and not in individual sentences, and, of course, not in individual words). Speech genres organize our speech in almost the same way as grammatical (syntactical) forms do. We learn to cast our speech in generic forms and, when hearing others' speech, we guess its genre from the very first words; we predict a certain length (that is, the approximate length of the speech whole) and a certain compositional structure; we foresee the end; that is, from the very beginning we have a sense of the speech whole, which is only later differentiated during the speech process. If speech genres did not exist and we had not mastered them, if we had to originate them during the speech process and construct each utterance at will for the first time, speech communication would be almost impossible....

Many people who have an excellent command of a language often feel quite helpless in certain spheres of communication precisely because they do not have a practical command of the generic forms used in the given spheres. Frequently a person who has an excellent command of speech in some areas of cultural communication, who is able to read a scholarly paper or engage in a scholarly discussion, who speaks very well on social questions, is silent or very awkward in social conversation. Here it is not a matter of an impoverished vocabulary or of style, taken abstractly: this is entirely a matter of the inability to command a repertoire of genres of social conversation, the lack of a sufficient supply of those ideas about the whole of the utterance that help to cast one's speech quickly and naturally in certain compositional and stylistic forms, the inability to grasp a word promptly, to begin and end correctly (composition is very uncomplicated in these genres)....

The sentence, like the word, is a signifying unit of language. Therefore, each individual sentence, for example, 'The sun has risen', is completely comprehensible, that is, we understand its language *meaning*, its *possible* role in an utterance. But in no way can we assume a responsive position with respect to this individual sentence unless we know that with this sentence the speaker has said *everything* he wishes to say, that this sentence is neither preceded nor followed by other sentences of the same speaker. But then this is no longer a sentence, but a full-fledged utterance consisting of one sentence. It is framed and delimited by a change of speech subjects and it directly reflects an extraverbal reality (situation). It is possible to respond to such an utterance....

The sentence, like the word, has a finality of meaning and a finality of *grammatical* form, but this finality of meaning is abstract by nature and this is precisely why it is so clear-cut: this is the finality of an element, but not of the whole. The sentence as a unit of language, like the word, has no author. Like the word, it belongs to *nobody*, and only by functioning as a whole utterance does it become an expression of the position of someone speaking individually in a concrete situation of speech communication. This leads us to a new ... feature of the utterance – the relation of the utterance to the *speaker himself* (the author of the utterance) and to the *other* participants in speech communication.

Any utterance is a link in the chain of speech communion. It is the active position of the speaker in one referentially semantic sphere or another. Therefore, each utterance is characterized primarily by a particular referentially semantic content. The choice of linguistic means and speech genre is

determined primarily by the referentially semantic assignments (plan) of the speech subject (or author). This is the first aspect of the utterance that determines its compositional and stylistic features.

The second aspect of the utterance that determines its composition and style is the *expressive* aspect, that is, the speaker's subjective emotional evaluation of the referentially semantic content of his utterance. The expressive aspect has varying significance and varying degrees of force in various spheres of speech communication, but it exists everywhere. There can be no such thing as an absolutely neutral utterance. The speaker's evaluative attitude toward the subject of his speech (regardless of what his subject may be) also determines the choice of lexical, grammatical, and compositional means of the utterance. The individual style of the utterance is determined primarily by its expressive aspect. This is generally recognized in the area of stylistics. Certain investigators even reduce style directly to the emotionally evaluative aspect of speech.

Can the expressive aspect of speech be regarded as a phenomenon of *language* as a system? Can one speak of the expressive aspect of language units, that is, words and sentences? The answer to these questions must be a categorical 'no'....

The sentence as a unit of language is ... neutral and in itself has no expressive aspect. It acquires this expressive aspect (more precisely, joins itself to it) only in a concrete utterance.... A sentence like 'He died' obviously embodies a certain expressiveness, and a sentence like 'What joy!' does so to an even greater degree. But in fact we perceive sentences of this kind as entire utterances, and in a typical situation, that is, as kinds of speech genres that embody typical expression. As sentences they lack this expressiveness and are neutral. Depending on the context of the utterance, the sentence 'He died' can also reflect a positive, joyful, even a rejoicing expression. And the sentence 'What joy!' in the context of the particular utterance can assume an ironic or bitterly sarcastic tone....

Thus, the expressiveness of individual words is not inherent in the words themselves as units of language, nor does it issue directly from the meaning of these words: it is either typical generic expression or it is an echo of another's individual expression, which makes the word, as it were, representative of another's whole utterance from a particular evaluative position....

But in reality the situation is considerably more complicated. Any concrete utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication of a particular sphere. The very boundaries of the utterance are determined by a change of speech subjects. Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another. These mutual reflections determine their character. Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication. Every utterance must be regarded primarily as a *response* to preceding utterances of the given sphere (we understand the word 'response' here in the broadest sense). Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account. After all, as regards a given question, in a given matter, and so forth, the utterance occupies a particular *definite* position in a given sphere of communication. It is impossible to determine its position without correlating it with other positions. Therefore, each utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other

utterances of the given sphere of speech communication. These reactions take various forms: others' utterances can be introduced directly into the context of the utterance, or one may introduce only individual words or sentences, which then act as representatives of the whole utterance. Both whole utterances and individual words can retain their alien expression, but they can also be re-accentuated (ironically, indignantly, reverently, and so forth). Others' utterances can be repeated with varying degrees of reinterpretation. They can be referred to as though the interlocutor were already well aware of them; they can be silently presupposed; or one's responsive reaction to them can be reflected only in the expression of one's own speech – in the selection of language means and intonations that are determined not by the topic of one's own speech but by the other's utterances concerning the same topic. Here is an important and typical case: very frequently the expression of our utterance is determined not only – and sometimes not so much – by the referentially semantic content of this utterance, but also by others' utterances on the same topic to which we are responding or with which we are polemicizing. They also determine our emphasis on certain elements, repetition, our selection of harsher (or, conversely, milder) expressions, a contentious (or, conversely, conciliatory) tone, and so forth. The expression of an utterance can never be fully understood or explained if its thematic content is all that is taken into account. The expression of an utterance always *responds* to a greater or lesser degree, that is, it expresses the speaker's attitude toward others' utterances and not just his attitude toward the object of his utterance.[3] The forms of responsive reactions that supplement the utterance are extremely varied and have not yet undergone a special study at all. These forms are sharply differentiated, of course, depending on the differences among those spheres of human activity and everyday life in which speech communication takes place. However monological the utterance may be (for example, a scientific or philosophical treatise), however much it may concentrate on its own object, it cannot but be, in some measure, a response to what has already been said about the given topic, on the given issue, even though this responsiveness may not have assumed a clear-cut external expression. It will be manifested in the overtones of the style, in the finest nuances of the composition. The utterance is filled with *dialogic overtones*, and they must be taken into account in order to understand fully the style of the utterance. After all, our thought itself – philosophical, scientific, and artistic – is born and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others' thought, and this cannot but be reflected in the forms that verbally express our thought as well. . . .

But any utterance, when it is studied in greater depth under the concrete conditions of speech communication, reveals to us many half-concealed or completely concealed words of others with varying degrees of foreignness. Therefore, the utterance appears to be furrowed with distant and barely audible echoes of changes of speech subjects and dialogic overtones, greatly weakened utterance boundaries that are completely permeable to the author's expression. The utterance proves to be a very complex and multiplanar phenomenon if considered not in isolation and with respect to its author (the speaker) only, but as

[3] An authorial note here adds that 'intonation is especially sensitive and always points beyond the context'.

a link in the chain of speech communication and with respect to other, related utterances (these relations are usually disclosed not on the verbal – compositional and stylistic – plane, but only on the referentially semantic plane)....

But the utterance is related not only to preceding, but also to subsequent links in the chain of speech communion. When a speaker is creating an utterance, of course, these links do not exist. But from the very beginning, the utterance is constructed while taking into account possible responsive reactions, for whose sake, in essence, it is actually created. As we know, the role of the *others* for whom the utterance is constructed is extremely great. We have already said that the role of these others, for whom my thought becomes actual thought for the first time (and thus also for my own self as well) is not that of passive listeners, but of active participants in speech communication. From the very beginning, the speaker expects a response from them, an active responsive understanding. The entire utterance is constructed, as it were, in anticipation of encountering this response.

An essential (constitutive) marker of the utterance is its quality of being directed to someone, its *addressivity*. As distinct from the signifying units of a language – words and sentences – that are impersonal, belonging to nobody and addressed to nobody, the utterance has both an author (and, consequently, expression, which we have already discussed) and an addressee. This addressee can be an immediate participant-interlocutor in an everyday dialogue, a differentiated collective of specialists in some particular area of cultural communication, a more or less differentiated public, ethnic group, contemporaries, like-minded people, opponents and enemies, a subordinate, a superior, someone who is lower, higher, familiar, foreign, and so forth. And it can also be an indefinite, unconcretized *other* (with various kinds of monological utterances of an emotional type). All these varieties and conceptions of the addressee are determined by that area of human activity and everyday life to which the given utterance is related. Both the composition and, particularly, the style of the utterance depend on those to whom the utterance is addressed, how the speaker (or writer) senses and imagines his addresses, and the force of their effect on the utterance. Each speech genre in each area of speech communication has its own typical conception of the addressee, and this defines it as a genre.[4]

[4] The speaker's perception of the addressee is seen by Bakhtin as having an active influence upon the utterance ('I parry objections I foresee, I make all kinds of provisos, and so forth' – p. 95). In particular it determines the form of the speech genre and Bakhtin gives as example 'genres of popular scientific literature [that] are addressed to a particular group of readers with a particular aperceptive background of responsive understanding' (p. 96). However, in many cases the determining effect of the anticipated addressee is far more complicated and multifaceted than in this example, introducing 'unique internal dramatism into the utterance' (p. 96).

SECTION TWO

The Heteroglot Novel

7 Dostoevsky's Polyphonic Novel: A Plurality of Consciousnesses

From Bakhtin's personal correspondence it is clear that he was working on a study of Dostoevsky at least as early as 1921. In 1929 he published *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*; shortly after this he was arrested and sent into exile. In 1963, having been rediscovered by a younger generation of Russian literary scholars, Bakhtin published a second revised and extended edition entitled *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. It is the translation of this edition which is used in the *Reader*. Bakhtin's main changes to the text come in Chapters 4 and 5.

In this extract (taken from Chapters 1 and 2), Dostoevsky's creation of a fundamentally new novelistic genre is proclaimed and explained. He has rejected the monologic form of the traditional novel in which characters' voices, viewpoints, philosophies and the diversity of their social worlds are all objects of an encompassing authorial knowledge, and thus subordinated to that unified, monologic artistic design. In such a novel the authorial word is always the final word. Dostoevsky rejects this authorial position above his characters: 'in his works a hero appears whose voice is constructed exactly like the voice of the author himself . . . it sounds, as it were, *alongside* the author's word.'

It is helpful to recognize a figurative terminology of seeing, hearing and spatiality underlying Bakhtin's sense of aesthetic activity. This is first used in 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity' where aesthetic activity is presented as a form of seeing. Only a perspective from outside the hero's own subjective consciousness can provide such objective totalizing knowledge. 'The hero's consciousness, his feeling, and his desire . . . are enclosed on all sides, as if within a band, by the author's *consumating* consciousness of the hero and his world' (p. 13). This position of outsidedness provides an aesthetic surplus of seeing which enables the author to create a plastic and pictorial image of a life as that of a human being among other human beings. It is impossible to have the same kind of objectified image about oneself. From within consciousness, identity is always experienced as a dispersed, unfinished process, *self* consciousness is always unboundaried.

It is Dostoevsky's achievement to have envisaged human life in this unfinalizable way and to have found the artistic means of representing it. To do so he rejects any authorial excess of seeing and in a Copernican revolution

of novelistic form he centres the whole novel upon the interactive consciousnesses of the characters. Authorial consciousness is brought on to the same plane as that of the heroes and interacts with them dialogically as autonomous subjects not as objectified images held within the author's vision. Significantly this shift of authorial position goes along with a shift of focus from seeing to hearing. Dostoevsky's new novelistic form is a design for discourse; a great dialogue of interacting voices, a polyphony.

From M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 1963.

Trans. C. Emerson, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minn., 1984.

Dostoevsky is the creator of the polyphonic novel. He created a fundamentally new novelistic genre. Therefore his work does not fit any of the preconceived frameworks or historico-literary schemes that we usually apply to various species of the European novel. In his works a hero appears whose voice is constructed exactly like the voice of the author himself in a novel of the usual type. A character's word about himself and his world is just as fully weighted as the author's word usually is; it is not subordinated to the character's objectified image as merely one of his characteristics, nor does it serve as a mouthpiece for the author's voice. It possesses extraordinary independence in the structure of the work; it sounds, as it were, *alongside* the author's word and in a special way combines both with it and with the full and equally valid voices of other characters.

It follows that ordinary pragmatic links at the level of the plot (whether of an objective of psychological order) are insufficient in Dostoevsky's world: such links presuppose, after all, that characters have become objects, fixed elements in the author's design; such links bind and combine finalized images of people in the unity of a monologically perceived and understood world; there is no presumption of a plurality of equally-valid consciousnesses, each with its own world. In Dostoevsky's novels, the ordinary pragmatics of the plot play a secondary role and perform special and unusual functions. The ultimate clamps that hold his novelistic world together are a different sort entirely; the fundamental event revealed through his novel does not lend itself to an ordinary pragmatic interpretation at the level of the plot.

Furthermore, the very orientation of the narrative – and this is equally true of narration by the author, by a narrator, or by one of the characters – must necessarily be quite different than in novels of the monologic type. The position from which a story is told, a portrayal built, or information provided must be oriented in a new way to this new world – a world of autonomous

subjects, not objects. *Skaz*,[1] representational, and informational discourses must develop some new attitude toward their object.

Thus, all the elements of novelistic structure in Dostoevsky are profoundly original; all are determined by that new artistic task that only he could pose and solve with the requisite scope and depth: the task of constructing a polyphonic world and destroying the established forms of the fundamentally *monologic* (homophonic) European novel.[2] ...

The most favourable soil for it was moreover precisely in Russia, where capitalism set in almost catastrophically, and where it came upon an untouched multitude of diverse worlds and social groups which had not been weakened in their individual isolation, as in the West, by the gradual encroachment of capitalism. Here in Russia the contradictory nature of evolving social life, not fitting within the framework of a confident and calmly meditative monologic consciousness, was bound to appear particularly abrupt, and at the same time the individuality of those worlds, worlds thrown off their ideological balance and colliding with one another, was bound to be particularly full and vivid. In this way the objective preconditions were created for the multi-leveledness and multi-voicedness of the polyphonic novel....

The epoch itself made the polyphonic novel possible. *Subjectively* Dostoevsky participated in the contradictory multi-leveledness of his own time: he changed camps, moved from one to another, and in this respect the planes existing in objective social life were for him stages along the path of his own life, stages of his own spiritual evolution. This personal experience was profound, but Dostoevsky did not give it a direct monologic expression in his work. This experience only helped him to understand more deeply the extensive and well-developed contradictions which coexisted among people – among people, not among ideas in a single consciousness. Thus the objective contraditions of the epoch did determine Dostoevsky's creative work – although not at the level of some personal surmounting of contradictions in the history of his own spirit, but rather at the level of an objective visualization of contradictions as forces coexisting simultaneously (to be sure, this vision was deepened by personal experience).

We approach here one very important characteristic of Dostoevsky's creative vision, one which has either not been understood at all or underestimated in the literature on him.... The fundamental category in Dostoevsky's mode of artistic visualizing was not evolution, but *coexistence* and *interaction*. He saw and conceived his world primarily in terms of space, not time....

This stubborn urge to see everything as coexisting, to perceive and show all things side by side and simultaneous, as if they existed in space and not in time, leads Dostoevsky to dramatize, in space, even internal contradictions and internal stages in the development of a single person – forcing a character to converse with his own double, with the devil, with his alter ego, with his

[1] *Skaz* refers to a narration that imitates the form of an individual oral narrator. It has no equivalent in English.

[2] Bakhtin provides a note in the text here to say that he is not suggesting Dostoevsky is an isolated instance without any predecessors in creating the polyphonic novel. In order to 'localize' him in history, it is first necessary to recognize what is unique about him, even if this will be qualified later.

own caricature (Ivan and the Devil, Ivan and Smerdyakov, Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov, and so forth). This characteristic explains the frequent occurrence of paired characters in Dostoevsky's work. One could say, in fact, that out of every contradiction within a single person Dostoevsky tries to create two persons, in order to dramatize the contradiction and develop it extensively. This trait finds its external expression in Dostoevsky's passion for mass scenes, his impulse to concentrate, often at the expense of credibility, as many persons and themes as possible in one place at one time, that is, his impulse to concentrate in a single moment the greatest possible qualitative diversity. Hence also Dostoevsky's urge to observe in a novel the dramatic principle of unity of time. And hence the catastrophic swiftness of action, the 'whirlwind motion', the dynamics of Dostoevsky. Dynamics and speed here (as, incidentally, everywhere) represent not only the triumph of time, but also the triumph over time, for speed is the single means for overcoming time in time....

The characteristic of Dostoevsky we offer here is not, of course, a trait of his worldview in the ordinary sense of the word. It is a trait of his artistic perception of the world: only in the category of coexistence could he see and represent the world. But of course this trait was necessarily reflected in his abstract worldview as well. And we can observe in this worldview analogous phenomena: in Dostoevsky's thinking as a whole, there are no genetic or causal categories. He constantly polemicizes, and with a sort of organic hostility, against the theory of environmental causality, in whatever form it appears (as in, for example, lawyers' appeals to the environment to justify a crime); he almost never appeals to history as such, and treats every social and political question on the plane of the present-day – and this is explained not only by his position as a journalist, which required that everything be treated in the context of the present. We would suggest, on the contrary, that Dostoevsky's passion for journalism and his love of the newspaper, his deep and subtle understanding of the newspaper page as a living reflection of the contradictions of contemporary society in the cross-section of a single day, where the most diverse and contradictory material is laid out, extensively, side by side and one side against the other – all this is explained precisely by the above characteristic of Dostoevsky's artistic vision. And finally, on the level of abstract worldview, this trait expressed itself in Dostoevsky's eschatology, both political and religious, and in his tendency to bring the 'ends' closer, to feel them out while still in the present, to guess at the future as if it were already at hand in the struggle of coexisting forces.

Dostoevsky's extraordinary artistic capacity for seeing everything in coexistence and interaction is his greatest strength, but his greatest weakness as well. It made him deaf and dumb to a great many essential things; many aspects of reality could not enter his artistic field of vision. But on the other hand this capacity sharpened, and to an extreme degree, his perception in the cross-section of a given moment, and permitted him to see many and varied things where others saw one and the same thing. Where others saw a single thought, he was able to find and feel out two thoughts, a bifurcation; where others saw a single quality, he discovered in it the presence of a second and contradictory quality. Everything that seemed simple became, in his world, complex and multi-structured. In every voice he could hear two contending voices, in every

expression a crack, and the readiness to go over immediately to another contradictory expression; in every gesture he detected confidence and lack of confidence simultaneously; he perceived the profound ambiguity, even multiple ambiguity, of every phenomenon. But none of these contradictions and bifurcations ever became dialectical, they were never set in motion along a temporal path or in an evolving sequence: they were, rather, spread out in one plane, as standing alongside or opposite one another, as consonant but not merging or as hopelessly contradictory, as an eternal harmony of unmerged voices or as their unceasing and irreconcilable quarrel. Dostoevsky's visualizing power was locked in place at the moment diversity revealed itself – and remained there, organizing and shaping this diversity in the cross-section of a given moment.

Dostoevsky's particular gift for hearing and understanding all voices immediately and simultaneously, a gift whose equal we find only in Dante, also permitted him to create the polyphonic novel. The objective complexity, contradictoriness and multi-voicedness of Dostoevsky's epoch, the position of the déclassé intellectual and the social wanderer, his deep biographical and inner participation in the objective multi-leveledness of life and finally his gift for seeing the world in terms of interaction and coexistence – all this prepared the soil in which Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel was to grow....

All the stable and objective qualities of a hero – his social position, the degree to which he is sociologically or characterologically typical, his habitus, his spiritual profile and even his very physical appearance – that is, everything that usually serves an author in creating a fixed and stable image of the hero, 'who he is', becomes in Dostoevsky the object of the hero's own introspection, the subject of his self-consciousness; and the subject of the author's visualization and representation turns out to be in fact a *function* of this self-consciousness. At a time when the self-consciousness of a character was usually seen merely as an element of his reality, as merely one of the features of his integrated image, here, on the contrary, all of reality becomes an element of the character's self-consciousness. The author retains for himself, that is, for his exclusive field of vision, not a single essential definition, not a single trait, not the smallest feature of the hero: he enters it all into the field of vision of the hero himself, he casts it all into the crucible of the hero's own self-consciousness. In the author's field of vision, as an object of his visualization and representation, there remains only pure self-consciousness in its totality....

Dostoevsky carried out, as it were, a small-scale Copernican revolution when he took what had been a firm and finalizing authorial definition and turned it into an aspect of the hero's self-definition....

Not only the reality of the hero himself, but even the external world and the everyday life surrounding him are drawn into the process of self-awareness, are transferred from the author's to the hero's field of vision. They no longer lie in a single plane with the hero, alongside him and external to him in the unified world of the author – and for this reason they cannot serve as causal or genetic factors determining the hero, they cannot fulfill in the work any explanatory function. Alongside and on the same plane with the self-consciousness of the hero, which has absorbed into itself the entire world of objects, there can be only another consciousness; alongside its field of vision, another field of vision; alongside its point of view on the world, another point of view of the world. *To the all-devouring consciousness of the hero the author*

can juxtapose only a single objective world – a world of other consciousnesses with rights equal to those of the hero....

Self-consciousness, as the artistic dominant[3] in the construction of the hero's image, is by itself sufficient to break down the monologic unity of an artistic world – but only on condition that the hero, as self-consciousness, is really represented and not merely expressed, that is, does not fuse with the author, does not become the mouthpiece for his voice; only on condition, consequently, that accents of the hero's self-consciousness are really objectified and that the work itself observes a distance between the hero and the author. If the umbilical cord uniting the hero to his creator is not cut, then what we have is not a work of art but a personal document.

Dostoevsky's works are in this sense profoundly objective – because the hero's self-consciousness, once it becomes the dominant, breaks down the monologic unity of the work (without, of course, violating artistic unity of a new and nonmonologic type). The hero becomes relatively free and independent, because everything in the author's design that had defined him and, as it were, sentenced him, everything that had qualified him to be once and for all a completed image of reality, now no longer functions as a form for finalizing him, but as the material of his self-consciousness....

Thus the new artistic position of the author with regard to the hero in Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel is a *fully realized and thoroughly consistent dialogic position*, one that affirms the independence, internal freedom, unfinalizability, and indeterminacy of the hero. For the author the hero is not 'he' and not 'I' but a fully valid 'thou', that is, another and other autonomous 'I' ('thou art'). The hero is the subject of a deeply serious, *real* dialogic mode of address, not the subject of a rhetorically *performed* or *conventionally* literary one. And this dialogue – the 'great dialogue' of the novel as a whole – takes place not in the past, but right now, that is, in the *real present* of the creative process.[4] This is no stenographer's report of a *finished* dialogue, from which the author has already withdrawn and *over* which he is now located as if in some higher decision-making position: that would have turned an authentic and unfinished dialogue into an objectivized and finalized *image of a dialogue*, of the sort usual for every monologic novel. The great dialogue in Dostoevsky is organized as an *unclosed whole* of the life itself, life poised *on the threshold*.

Dostoevsky realizes a dialogic relationship toward his characters at every moment of the creative process and at the moment of its completion; this is part of his general design, and thus remains in even the most finished novel as an indispensable element for shaping form.

In Dostoevsky's novels, the author's discourse about a character is organized as discourse about *someone actually present*, someone who hears him (the author) and is *capable of answering him*. Such organization of authorial discourse in Dostoevsky's works is no conventional device, but rather the unconditional *ultimate* position of the author....

In Dostoevsky's larger design, the character is a carrier of a fully valid word and not the mute, voiceless object of the author's words. The author's

[3] An 'artistic dominant' is a term used by Russian formalist critics to refer to the most important determining component of any work of art.

[4] In an authorial note here Bakhtin emphasizes his sense that *meaning* lives in a continuous time, and is not subject to the chronological time which orders biographical life.

design for a character is a *design for discourse*. Thus the author's discourse about a character is discourse about discourse. It is oriented toward the hero as if toward a discourse, and is therefore dialogically *addressed* to him. By the very construction of the novel the author speaks not *about* a character, but *with* him. And it cannot be otherwise: only a dialogic and participatory orientation takes another person's discourse seriously, and is capable of approaching it both as a semantic position and as another point of view. Only through such an inner dialogic orientation can my discourse find itself in intimate contact with someone else's discourse, and yet at the same time not fuse with it, not swallow it up, not dissolve in itself the other's power to mean; that is, only thus can it retain fully its independence as a discourse. To preserve distance in the presence of an intense semantic bond is no simple matter. But distance is an integral part of the author's design, for it alone guarantees genuine objectivity in the representation of a character....

Such is the relative independence of characters within the limits of Dostoevsky's creative design. Here we must warn against one possible misunderstanding. It might seem that the independence of a character contradicts the fact that he exists, entirely and solely, as an aspect of a work of art, and consequently is wholly created from beginning to end by the author. In fact there is no such contradiction. The character's freedom we speak of here exists within the limits of the artistic design, and in that sense is just as much a created thing as is the unfreedom of the objectivized hero. But to create does not mean to invent. Every creative act is bound by its own special laws, as well as by the laws of the material with which it works. Every creative act is determined by its object and by the structure of its object, and therefore permits no arbitrariness; in essence it invents nothing, but only reveals what is already present in the object itself. It is possible to arrive at a correct thought, but this thought has its own logic and therefore cannot be invented, that is, it cannot be fabricated from beginning to end. Likewise an artistic image, of whatever sort, cannot be invented, since it has its own artistic logic, its own norm-generating order. Having set a specific task for himself, the creator must subordinate himself to this order....

The new position of the author in the polyphonic novel can be made clearer if we juxtapose it concretely with a distinctly expressed monologic position in a specific work.

We shall therefore analyze briefly, from the vantage point most relevant to us, Leo Tolstoy's short story 'Three Deaths' [1858]. This work, not large in size but nevertheless tri-leveled, is very characteristic of Tolstoy's monologic manner.

Three deaths are portrayed in the story – the deaths of a rich noblewoman, a coachman, and a tree. But in this work Tolstoy presents death as a stage of life, as a stage illuminating that life, as the optimal point for understanding and evaluating that life in its entirety. Thus one could say that this story in fact portrays three lives totally finalized in their meaning and in their value. And in Tolstoy's story all three lives, and the levels defined by them, are *internally self-enclosed and do not know one another*. There is no more than a purely external pragmatic connection between them, necessary for the compositional and thematic unity of the story: the coachman Seryoga, transporting the ailing noble-

woman, removes the boots from a coachman who is dying in a roadside station (the dying man no longer has any need for boots) and then, after the death of the coachman, cuts down a tree in the forest to make a cross for the man's grave. In this way three lives and three deaths come to be externally connected.

But an internal connection, *a connection between consciousnesses*, is not present here. The dying noblewoman knows nothing of the life and death of the coachman or the tree, they do not enter into her field of vision or her consciousness. And neither the noblewoman nor the tree enter the consciousness of the dying coachman. The lives and deaths of all three characters, together with their worlds, lie side by side in a unified objective world and are even *externally* contiguous, but they know nothing of one another and are not reflected in one another. They are self-enclosed and deaf; they do not hear and do not answer one another. There are not and cannot be any dialogic relationships among them. They neither argue nor agree.

But all three personages, with their self-enclosed worlds, are united, juxtaposed and made meaningful to one another in the *author's* unified field of vision and consciousness that encompasses them. He, the author, knows everything about them, he juxtaposes, contrasts, and evaluates all three lives and all three deaths. All three lives and deaths illuminate one another, but only for the author, who is located *outside* them and takes advantage of his *external position* to give them a definitive meaning, to finalize them. The all-encompassing field of vision of the author enjoys an enormous and fundamental 'surplus' in comparison with the fields of vision of the characters. The noblewoman sees and understands only her own little world, her own life and her own death; she does not even suspect the possibility of the sort of life and death experienced by the coachman or the tree. Therefore she cannot herself understand and evaluate the *lie* of her own life and death; she does not have the dialogizing background for it. And the coachman is not able to understand and evaluate the wisdom and truth of his life and death. All this is revealed only in the author's field of vision, with its 'surplus'. The tree, of course, is by its very nature incapable of understanding the wisdom and beauty of its death – the author does that for it.

Thus the total finalizing meaning of the life and death of each character is revealed only in the author's field of vision, and thanks solely to the advantageous 'surplus' which that field enjoys over every character, that is, thanks to that which the character cannot himself see or understand. This is the finalizing, monologic function of the author's 'surplus' field of vision.[5] . . .

Let us return to Dostoevsky. How would 'Three Deaths' look if (and let us permit ourselves for a moment this strange assumption) Dostoevsky had written them, that is, if they had been structured in a polyphonic manner?

First of all, Dostoevsky would have forced these three planes to be reflected in one another, he would have bound them together with dialogic

[5] Contrast this earlier statement from 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity' affirming authorial 'surplus': 'The author not only sees and knows everything seen and known by each hero individually and by all the heroes collectively, but he also sees and knows *more* than they do; moreover, he sees and knows something that is in principle inaccessible to them. And it is precisely in this invariably determinate and stable *excess* of the author's seeing and knowing in relation to each hero that we find all those moments that bring about the consummation of the whole – the whole of each hero as well as . . . the whole of a work' (p. 12).

relationships. He would have introduced the life and death of the coachman and the tree into the field of vision and consciousness of the noblewoman, and the noblewoman's life into the field of vision and consciousness of the coachman. He would have forced his characters to see and know all those essential things that he himself – the author – sees and knows. He would not have retained for himself any *essential* authorial 'surplus' (essential, that is, from the point of view of the desired truth). He would have arranged a face-to-face confrontation between the truth of the noblewoman and the truth of the coachman, and he would have forced them to come into dialogic contact (although not necessarily in direct compositionally expressed dialogues, of course), and he would himself have assumed, in relation to them, a dialogic position with equal rights. The entire work would have been constructed by him as a great dialogue, but one where the author acts as organizer and participant in the dialogue without retaining for himself the final word; that is, he would have reflected in his work in the dialogic nature of human life and human thought itself. And in the words of the story not only the pure *intonations of the author* would be heard, but also the intonations of the noblewoman and the coachman; that is, words would be double-voiced, in each word an argument (a microdialogue) would ring out, and there could be heard echoes of the great dialogue.

Of course Dostoevsky would never have depicted three *deaths*: in his world, where self-consciousness is the dominant of a person's image and where the interaction of full and autonomous consciousnesses is the fundamental event, death cannot function as something that finalizes and elucidates life. Death in the Tolstoyan interpretation of it is totally absent from Dostoevsky's world.[6] Dostoevsky would have not depicted the deaths of his heroes, but the *crises* and *turning points* in their lives; that is, he would have depicted their lives *on the threshold*. And his heroes would have remained internally *unfinalized* (for self-consciousness cannot be finalized *from within*). Such would have been a polyphonic treatment of the story.

[6] Bakhtin points out that normal deaths are rare in Dostoevsky's work; more usual are murders, suicide and insanity. Bakhtin's approach to Tolstoy is felt by some to lack the imaginative insights he brings to Dostoevsky. His Tolstoy *Prefaces* (1929) contain the most overtly Marxist criticism within his writing.

8 The Dialogic Idea as Novelistic Image

This extract, taken from Chapter 3 of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, sets out Dostoevsky's artistic construction of an idea or a thought as a novelistic image. The term 'image' is a crucial one in Bakhtin's writing, but it is difficult to define in a precise way since it is ultimately figurative. To construct an image is, for Bakhtin, the fundamental act of artistic visualization. The term implies a position of outsidedness to that which is perceived; what is self-identical can never become an image. However, to construct another (human being) into an image implies a sense of mastery over or, at least, an encompassing and enclosing knowledge of the other. Bakhtin avoids this by shifting from a visual, plastic image of the human being to an image of voice. The other is heard as a discourse, and a discourse always represents a view of the world; the perception from which the consciousness speaks. The idea can be constructed into an artistic image by Dostoevsky because for him it is always inseparable from the image of a consciousness, a voice. For this reason the idea in Dostoevsky is dialogic and unfinalizable.

In this it contrasts utterly to the way an idea is represented in a monologic artistic work. There, ideas are either those of the authorial consciousness in which case they are affirmed or, if they do not accord with the authorial world view, they are repudiated. Ideas expressed by characters, if they are not part of this authorial value system, simply become psychological aspects of characterization and cease signifying as ideas. In such an artistic scheme dialogic interaction between ideas is impossible.

In a part of the chapter not included here Bakhtin associates this artistic monologism with a much more generalized philosophical and ideological monologizing principle. It is, he says, 'something characteristic of ideology in general ... this idealistic transformation of the monism of existence into the monologism of consciousness' (p. 80). What he is referring to is the tendency to transform the empirical unity of human existence into the metaphysical unity of a higher consciousness. This takes many forms in various philosophical and political systems of thought: 'the absolute spirit', 'the absolute I', 'the spirit of the nation', 'the spirit of the people'. What all such thinking entails is that 'everything capable of meaning is gathered together in one consciousness and subordinated to one accent; whatever does not submit to such a reduction is [deemed] accidental and unessential' (p. 82). Bakhtin associates the permeation of all spheres of life with monologic thinking with European rationalism initiated particularly during the Enlightenment, with 'its cult of a unified and exclusive reasoning' (p. 82). This has become 'a profound structural characteristic of the creative ideological activity of modern times, determining all its external and internal forms' (p. 82).

Bakhtin argues that a concept of unified truth does not necessitate the idea of a single transcendent consciousness. It is possible to imagine a truth that requires 'a plurality of consciousnesses, ... one that is, so to speak, by its very nature *full of event potential* and is born at a point of contact among various consciousness' (p. 81). This, of course, expresses precisely the dialogic form of Dostoevsky's artistic truth.

From M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 1963.

Trans. C. Emerson, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minn., 1984.

Dostoevsky's hero is not only a discourse about himself and his immediate environment, but also a discourse about the world; he is not only cognizant, but an ideologist as well.

The 'Underground Man' is already an ideologist. But the ideological creativity of Dostoevsky's characters reaches full significance only in the novels; there, the idea really does become almost the hero of the work. Even there, however, the dominant of the hero's representation remains what it had been earlier: self-consciousness.

Thus discourse about the world merges with confessional discourse about oneself. The truth about the world, according to Dostoevsky, is inseparable from the truth of the personality. The categories of self-consciousness that were already determining the life of Devushkin and even more so of Golyadkin – acceptance or nonacceptance, rebellion or reconciliation – now become the basic categories for thinking about the world. Thus the loftiest principles of a worldview are the same principles that govern the most concrete personal experiences. And the result is an artistic fusion, so characteristic for Dostoevsky, of personal life with worldview, of the most intimate experiences with the idea....

Dostoevsky was capable of *representing someone else's idea*, preserving its full capacity to signify as an idea, while at the same time also preserving a distance, neither confirming the idea nor merging it with his own expressed ideology. The idea, in his work, becomes the *subject of artistic representation*, and Dostoevsky himself became a great *artist of the idea*....

Dostoevsky knew how to reveal, to see, to show the true realm of the life of an idea. The idea *lives* not in one person's *isolated* individual consciousness – if it remains there only, it degenerates and dies. The idea begins to live, that is, to take shape, to develop, to find and renew its verbal expression, to give birth to new ideas, only when it enters into genuine dialogic relationships with other ideas, with the ideas of *others*. Human thought becomes genuine thought, that is, an idea, only under conditions of living contact with another and alien thought, a thought embodied in someone else's voice, that is, in someone else's consciousness expressed in discourse. At that point of contact between voice-consciousnesses the idea is born and lives.

The idea – as it was *seen* by Dostoevsky the artist – is not a subjective individual-psychological formation with 'permanent resident rights' in a person's head; no, the idea is inter-individual and inter-subjective – the realm of its existence is not individual consciousness but dialogic communion *between* consciousnesses. The idea is a *live event*, played out at the point of dialogic meeting between two or several consciousnesses: In this sense the idea is similar to the *word*, with which it is dialogically united. Like the word, the idea wants to be heard, understood, and 'answered' by other voices from other positions. Like the word, the idea is by nature dialogic, and monologue is

merely the conventional compositional form of its expression, a form that emerged out of the ideological monologism of modern times characterized by us above.

It is precisely as such a live event, playing itself out between consciousness-voices, that Dostoevsky saw and artistically represented the *idea*. It is this artistic discovery of the dialogic nature of the idea of consciousness, of every human life illuminated by consciousness (and therefore to some minimal degree concerned with ideas) that made Dostoevsky a great artist of the idea.

Dostoevsky never expounds prepared ideas in monologic form, but neither does he show their *psychological* evolution within a *single* individual consciousness. In either case, ideas would cease to be living images.

We remember, for example, [in *Crime and Punishment*] Raskolnikov's first interior monologue.... That was not a psychological evolution of an idea within a single self-enclosed consciousness. On the contrary, the consciousness of the solitary Raskolnikov becomes a field of battle for others' voices; the events of recent days (his mother's letter, the meeting with Marmeladov), reflected in his consciousness, take on the form of a most intense dialogue with absentee participants (his sister, his mother, Sonya, and others), and in this dialogue he tries to 'get his thoughts straight'.

Before the action of the novel begins, Raskolnikov has published a newspaper article expounding the theoretical bases of his idea. Nowhere does Dostoevsky give us this article in its monologic form. We first become acquainted with its content and consequently with Raskolnikov's basic idea in the intense and, for Raskolnikov, terrible dialogue with Porfiry (Razumikhin and Zametov participate in this dialogue as well). Porfiry is the first to give an account of the article, and he does so in a deliberately exaggerated and provocative form. This internally dialogized account is constantly interrupted by questions addressed to Raskolnikov, and by the latter's replies. Then Raskolnikov himself gives an account of the article, and he is constantly interrupted by Porfiry's provocative questions and comments. And Raskolnikov's account is itself shot through with interior polemic, from the point of view of Porfiry and his like. Razumikhin too puts in his replies. As a result, Raskolnikov's idea appears before us in an inter-individual zone of intense struggle among several individual consciousnesses, while the theoretical side of the idea is inseparably linked with the ultimate positions on life taken by the participants in the dialogue.

In the course of this dialogue Raskolnikov's idea reveals its various facets, nuances, possibilities, it enters into various relationships with other life positions. As it loses its monologic, abstractly theoretical finalized quality, a quality sufficient to a *single* consciousness, it acquires the contradictory complexity and living multi-facedness of an idea-force, being born, living and acting in the great dialogue of the epoch and calling back and forth to kindred ideas of other epochs. Before us rises up an *image of the idea*.

Raskolnikov's very same idea appears before us again in his dialogues with Sonya, no less intense; here it already sounds in a different tonality, it enters into dialogic contact with another very strong and integral life-position, Sonya's, and thus reveals new facets and possibilities inherent in it. Next we hear this idea in Svidrigailov's dialogized exposition of it in his dialogue with Dounia. But here, in the voice of Svidrigailov, who is one of Raskolnikov's

parodic doubles, the idea has a completely different sound and turns toward us another of its sides. And finally, Raskolnikov's idea comes into contact with various manifestations of life throughout the entire novel; it is tested, verified, confirmed or repudiated by them....

As an artist, Dostoevsky did not create his ideas in the same way philosophers or scholars create theirs – he created images of ideas found, heard, sometimes divined by him *in reality itself*, that is, ideas already living or entering life as idea-forces. Dostoevsky possessed an extraordinary gift for hearing the dialogue of his epoch, or, more precisely, for hearing his epoch as a great dialogue, for detecting in it not only individual voices, but precisely and predominantly the *dialogic relationship* among voices, their dialogic *interaction*. He heard both the loud, recognized, reigning voices of the epoch, that is, the reigning dominant ideas (official and unofficial), as well as voices still weak, ideas not yet fully emerged, latent ideas heard as yet by no one but himself, and ideas that were just beginning to ripen, embryos of future worldviews. 'Reality in its entirety,' Dostoevsky himself wrote, 'is not to be exhausted by what is immediately at hand, for an overwhelming part of this reality is contained in the form of a still *latent, unuttered future Word*.'[1]

In the dialogue of his time Dostoevsky also heard resonances of the voice-ideas of the past – both the most recent past (the '30s and '40s) and the more remote. Also, as we have just said, he attempted to hear the voice-ideas of the future, trying to divine them, so to speak, from the place prepared for them in the dialogue of the present, just as it is possible to divine a future, as yet unuttered response in an already unfolded dialogue. Thus on the plane of the present there came together and quarreled past, present, and future....

As an artist Dostoevsky often divined how a given idea would develop and function under certain changed conditions, what unexpected directions it would take in its further development and transformation. To this end, Dostoevsky placed the idea on the borderline of dialogically intersecting consciousnesses. He brought together ideas and worldviews, which in real life were absolutely estranged and deaf to one another, and forced them to quarrel. He extended, as it were, these distantly separated ideas by means of a dotted line to the point of their dialogic intersection. In so doing he anticipated future dialogic encounters between ideas which in his time were still dissociated. He foresaw new linkages of ideas, the emergence of new voice-ideas and changes in the arrangement of all the voice-ideas in the worldwide dialogue. And thus the Russian, and worldwide, dialogue that resounds in Dostoevsky's novels with voice-ideas already living and just being born, voice-ideas open-ended and fraught with new possibilities, continues to draw into its lofty and tragic game the minds and voices of Dostoevsky's readers, up to the present day....

The ideas of Dostoevsky the thinker, upon entering his polyphonic novel, change the very form of their existence, they are transformed into artistic images of ideas: they are combined in an indisoluble unity with images of people (Sonya, Myshkin, Zosima), they are liberated from their monologic

[1] *The Notebooks of F. M. Dostoevsky*, Moscow–Leningrad, Academia, 1935, p. 179 (trans. note).

isolation and finalization, they become thoroughly dialogized and enter the great dialogue of the novel on *completely equal terms* with other idea-images (the ideas of Raskolnikov, Ivan Karamazov, and others). It is absolutely impermissible to ascribe to these ideas the finalizing function of authorial ideas in a monologic novel. Here they fulfill no such function, for they are all equally privileged participants in the great dialogue. If a certain partiality on the part of Dostoevsky the journalist for specific ideas and images is sometimes sensed in his novels, then it is evident only in superficial aspects (for example, in the conventionally monologic epilogue to *Crime and Punishment*) and is not capable of destroying the powerful artistic logic of the polyphonic novel. Dostoevsky the artist always triumphs over Dostoevsky the journalist.

Thus the ideas of Dostoevsky himself, uttered by him in monologic form outside the artistic context of his work (in articles, letters, oral conversations) are merely the prototypes for several of the idea-images in his novels. For this reason it is absolutely impermissible to substitute a critique of these monologic idea-prototypes for genuine analysis of Dostoevsky's polyphonic artistic thought. It is important to investigate the *function* of ideas in Dostoevsky's polyphonic world, and not only their *monologic substance.*

For a correct understanding of the way an idea is represented in Dostoevsky, one must take into consideration one more trait of its form-shaping ideology. We have in mind primarily the ideology that served Dostoevsky as his principle for seeing and representing the world, precisely a form-shaping ideology, for upon it ultimately depend the functions of abstract ideas and thoughts in the work.

Dostoevsky's form-shaping ideology lacks those two basic elements upon which any ideology is built: *the separate thought*, and a unified world of objects giving rise to a *system* of thoughts. In the usual ideological approach, there exist separate thoughts, assertions, propositions that can by themselves be true or untrue, depending on their relationship to the subject and independent of the carrier to whom they belong. These 'no-man's' thoughts, faithful to the referential world, are united in a systemic unity of a referential order. In this systemic unity, thought comes into contact with thought and one thought is bound up with another on referential grounds. A thought gravitates toward system as toward an ultimate whole; the system is put together out of separate thoughts, as out of elements.

Dostoevsky's ideology knows neither the separate thought nor systemic unity in this sense. For him the ultimate indivisible unit is not the separate referentially bounded thought, not the proposition, not the assertion, but rather the integral point of view, the integral position of a personality. For him, referential meaning is indissolubly fused with the position of a personality. In every thought the personality is given, as it were, in its totality. And thus the linking-up of thoughts is the linking-up of integral positions, the linking-up of personalities.

Dostoevsky – to speak paradoxically – thought not in thoughts but in points of view, consciousnesses, voices. He tried to perceive and formulate each thought in such a way that a whole person was expressed and began to sound in it; this, in condensed form, is his entire worldview, from alpha to

omega. Only that idea which compressed in itself an entire spiritual orientation could Dostoevsky accept as an element of his artistic worldview; for him it was an indivisible unit; out of such units emerged not a system, united through a world of objects, but a concrete event made up of organized human orientations and voices. In Dostoevsky, two thoughts are already two people, for there are no thoughts belonging to no one and every thought represents an entire person.

9 Double-Voiced Discourse in Dostoevsky

This extract comes from the rewritten Chapter 5 of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* and, therefore, represents a later moment in Bakhtin's thinking. It begins by asserting the need for a metalinguistic analysis of novelistic prose. While a linguistic approach can account adequately for logical and semantic relationships within language, it cannot recognize dialogic relations within discourse. It cannot recognize relations of agreement, disagreement, affirmation and so on which only arise between two utterances as two individual voices. For this reason only metalinguists can investigate the phenomenon of double-voiced discourse, the predominant form in Dostoevsky's artistic prose.

Bakhtin begins his metalinguistic analysis by categorizing three types of discourse. The first is direct discourse which is orientated entirely towards the object or topic it refers to; it is referentially orientated. Its function is to name, inform, express and, in novelistic prose, this will normally be the authorial discourse. The second type of discourse Bakhtin terms objectified or represented discourse, the most common form of this being the direct speech of characters. Character speech is also referentially orientated but stylistically it is subordinated to authorial discourse. It is treated as the object of authorial understanding (i.e., objectified); it is perceived by the author as someone else's discourse. Both these types of discourse are single voiced; they represent a single consciousness and intention.

However, an author can also take someone else's direct discourse and infuse it with authorial intentions and consciousness while still retaining the original speaker's intention. It then becomes double-voiced; in the one utterance two consciousnesses coexist. This is the third type of discourse and Bakhtin further categorizes this double-voiced discourse into three varieties. The first variety is exemplified in stylization and non-authorial forms of narration in which the authorial purpose simply coexists with the purpose of the discourse which is inhabited: 'the author's thought once having penetrated someone else's discourse . . . does not collide with the other's thought, but rather follows after it in the same direction.' In the second variety of double-voiced discourse, typified by parody and irony, the invading voice or consciousness interacts in a hostile manner with the penetrated discourse,

forcing it to serve aims which completely oppose the original intention. In both the first and second varieties, then, the author makes use of other people's words for authorial purposes. In the third variety the other's discourse remains outside the authorial discourse but is the object of a hidden polemic inflecting the authorial voice. In this case the other's discourse has moved from a passive to an active relationship with the authorial speech; instead of allowing itself to be infiltrated and used for authorial purposes it exerts a shaping force upon the author's speech. Forms of hidden polemic can also be located in dialogue, both in everyday speech situations and in novelistic dialogue. Dostoevsky's prose is almost wholly constituted of double-voiced discourse in all its varieties, especially the hidden polemic.

From M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 1963.

Trans. C. Emerson, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minn., 1984.

We have in mind *discourse*, that is, language in its concrete living totality, and not language as the specific object of linguistics, something arrived at through a completely legitimate and necessary abstraction from various aspects of the concrete life of the word. But precisely those aspects in the life of the word that linguistics makes abstract are, for our purposes, of primary importance. Therefore the analyses that follow are not linguistic in the strict sense of the term. They belong rather to metalinguistics,[1] if we understand by that term the study of those aspects in the life of the word, not yet shaped into separate and specific disciplines, that exceed – and completely legitimately – the boundaries of linguistics. Of course, metalinguistic research cannot ignore linguistics and must make use of its results. Linguistics and metalinguistics study one and the same concrete, highly complex, and multi-faceted phenomenon, namely, the word – but they study it from various sides and various points of view. They must complement one another, but they must not be confused. In practice, the boundaries between them are very often violated.

From the vantage points provided by *pure* linguistics, it is impossible to detect in belletristic literature any really essential differences between a monologic and a polyphonic use of discourse. In Dostoevsky's multi-voiced novels, for example, there is significantly less language differentiation, that is, fewer language styles, territorial and social dialects, professional jargons and so forth, than in the work of many writer-monologists – Leo Tolstoy,

[1] There are further references to 'metalinguistics' in Bakhtin's later writing collected in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, pp. 133, 152.

Pisemsky, Leskov and others.[2] It might even seem that the heroes of Dostoevsky's novels all speak one and the same language, namely the language of their author. For this monotony of language many reproached Dostoevsky, including Leo Tolstoy.

But the fact is that language differentiation and the clear-cut 'speech characterizations' of characters have the greatest artistic significance precisely in the creation of objectified and finalized images of people. The more objectified a character, the more sharply his speech physiognomy stands out. To be sure, language diversity and speech characterizations remain important in a polyphonic novel, but this importance is diminished, and most important, the artistic functions of these phenomena change. For what matters here is not the mere presence of specific language styles, social dialects, and so forth, a presence established by purely linguistic criteria; what matters is the *dialogic angle* at which these styles and dialects are juxtaposed or counterposed in the work. Yet this dialogic angle is precisely what cannot be measured by purely linguistic criteria, because dialogic relationships, although belonging to the realm of the *word*, do not belong to the realm of its purely linguistic study.

Dialogic relationships (including the dialogic relationships of a speaker to his own discourse) are the subject of metalinguistics. And it is precisely these relationships, determining the characteristic features of verbal structure in Dostoevsky's work, that interest us here. . . .

Dialogic relationships are possible not only among whole (relatively whole) utterances; a dialogic approach is possible toward any signifying part of an utterance, even toward an individual word, if that word is perceived not as the impersonal word of language but as a sign of someone else's semantic position, as the representative of another person's utterance; that is, if we hear in it someone else's voice. Thus dialogic relationships can permeate inside the utterance, even inside the individual word, as long as two voices collide within it dialogically (microdialogue, of which we spoke earlier).

On the other hand, dialogic relationships are also possible between language styles, social dialects, and so forth, insofar as they are perceived as semantic positions, as language worldviews of a sort, that is, as something no longer strictly within the realm of linguistic investigation.

Finally, dialogic relationships are also possible toward one's own utterance as a whole, toward its separate parts and toward an individual word within it, if we somehow detach ourselves from them, speak with an inner reservation, if we observe a certain distance from them, as if limiting our own authorship or dividing it in two.

In conclusion, we remind the reader that dialogic relationships in the broad sense are also possible among different intelligent phenomena, provided that these phenomena are expressed in some *semiotic* material. Dialogic relationships are possible, for example, among images belonging to different art forms. But such relationships already exceed the limits of metalinguistics.

The chief subject of our investigation, one could even say its chief hero, will be *double-voiced discourse*, which inevitably arises under conditions of dialogic interaction, that is, under conditions making possible an authentic

[2] Aleksei Pisemsky (1820–81), Russian novelist, dramatist and short-story writer: Nikolai Semenovich Leskov (1831–94), Russian prose writer with sensitive ear for ordinary speech.

life for the word. Linguistics does not recognize double-voiced discourse. But precisely it, in our opinion, must become one of the chief objects of study for metalinguistics.

This concludes our preliminary remarks on methodology. What we have in mind will become clear from our further concrete analyses.

There exists a group of artistic-speech phenomena that has long attracted the attention of both literary scholars and linguists. By their very nature these phenomena exceed the limits of linguistics; that is, they are metalinguistic. These phenomena are: stylization, parody, *skaz*, and dialogue (compositionally expressed dialogue, broken down into rejoinders).

All these phenomena, despite very real differences among them, share one common trait: discourse in them has a twofold direction – it is directed both toward the referential object of speech, as in ordinary discourse, and toward *another's discourse*, toward *someone else's speech*. If we do not recognize the existence of this second context of someone else's speech and begin to perceive stylization or parody in the same way ordinary speech is perceived, that is, as speech directed only at its referential object, then we will not grasp these phenomena in their essence: stylization will be taken for style, parody simply for a poor work of art....

Alongside direct and unmediated object-oriented discourse – naming, informing, expressing, representing – intended for equally unmediated, object-oriented understanding (the first type of discourse), we can also observe represented or objectified discourse (the second type). By far the most typical and widespread form of represented objectified discourse is the *direct speech of characters*. Such speech has direct referential meaning, but it does not lie in the same plane with the author's speech; it observes, as it were, a certain distance and perspective. Such speech is meant to be understood not only from the point of view of its own referential object, but is itself, as characteristic, typical, colorful discourse, a referential object toward which something is directed.

Whenever we have within the author's context the direct speech of, say, a certain character, we have within the limits of a single context two speech centers and two speech unities: the unity of the author's utterance and the unity of the character's utterance. But the second unity is not self-sufficient; it is subordinated to the first and incorporated into it as one of its components. The stylistic treatment of the two utterances differs. The hero's discourse is treated precisely as someone else's discourse, as discourse belonging to some specific characterological profile or type; that is, it is treated as an object of authorial understanding, and not from the point of view of its own referential intention. The author's discourse, on the contrary, is treated stylistically as discourse directed toward its own straightforward referential meaning....

But the author may also make use of someone else's discourse for his own purposes, by inserting a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has, and which retains, an intention of its own. Such a discourse, in keeping with its task, must be perceived as belonging to someone else. In one discourse, two semantic intentions appear, two voices. Parodying discourse is of this type, as are stylization and stylized *skaz*. Here we move on to the characteristics of the third type of discourse....

All instances of the third type of discourse ... – stylization, narrated story, *Ich-Erzählung* – share one common feature, by virtue of which they constitute a special (the first) variety of the third type. That common feature is an intention on the part of the author to make use of someone else's discourse in the direction of its own particular aspirations. Stylization stylizes another's style in the direction of that style's own particular tasks. It merely renders those tasks conventional. Likewise a narrator's narration, refracting in itself the author's intention, does not swerve from its own straight path and is sustained in tones and intonations truly characteristic of it. The author's thought, once having penetrated someone else's discourse and made its home in it, does not collide with the other's thought, but rather follows after it in the same direction, merely making that direction conventional.

The situation is different with parody. Here, as in stylization, the author again speaks in someone else's discourse, but in contrast to stylization parody introduces into that discourse a semantic intention that is directly opposed to the original one. The second voice, once having made its home in the other's discourse, clashes hostilely with its primordial host and forces him to serve directly opposing aims. Discourse becomes an arena of battle between two voices. In parody, therefore, there cannot be that fusion of voices possible in stylization or in the narration of a narrator (as in Turgenev, for example); the voices are not only isolated from one another, separated by a distance, but are also hostilely opposed. Thus in parody the deliberate palpability of the other's discourse must be particularly sharp and clearly marked. Likewise, the author's intentions must be more individualized and filled with specific content. The other's style can be parodied in various directions and may have new accents introduced into it, but it can be stylized essentially only in one direction – in the direction of its own particular task.

Parodistic discourse can be extremely diverse. One can parody another person's style as a style; one can parody another's socially typical or individually characterological manner of seeing, thinking, and speaking. The depth of the parody may also vary: one can parody merely superficial verbal forms, but one can also parody the very deepest principles governing another's discourse....

Analogous to parodistic discourse is ironic, or any other double-voiced, use of someone else's words; in those instances too another's discourse is used for conveying aspirations that are hostile to it. In the ordinary speech of our everyday life such a use of another's words is extremely widespread, especially in dialogue, where one speaker very often literally repeats the statement of the other speaker, investing it with new value and accenting it in his own way – with expressions of doubt, indignation, irony, mockery, ridicule, and the like....

Someone else's words introduced into our own speech inevitably assume a new (our own) interpretation and become subject to our evaluation of them; that is, they become double-voiced. All that can vary is the interrelationship between these two voices. The transmission of someone else's statement in the form of a question already leads to a clash of two intentions within a single discourse: for in so doing we not only ask a question, but make someone else's statement problematical. Our practical everyday speech is full of other people's words: with some of them we completely merge our own voice, for-

getting whose they are; others, which we take as authoritative, we use to reinforce our own words; still others, finally, we populate with our own aspirations, alien or hostile to them.

Let us proceed to the first variety of the third type. In both stylization and parody, that is, in both of the preceding varieties of the third type, the author makes use precisely of other people's words for the expression of his own particular intentions. In the third variety, the other person's discourse remains outside the limits of the author's speech, but the author's speech takes into account and refers to it. Another's discourse in this case is not reproduced with a new intention, but it acts upon, influences, and in one way or another determines the author's discourse, while itself remaining outside it. Such is the nature of discourse in the hidden polemic, and in most cases in the rejoinder of a dialogue as well.

In a hidden polemic the author's discourse is directed toward its own referential object, as is any other discourse, but at the same time every statement about the object is constructed in such a way that, apart from its referential meaning, a polemical blow is struck at the other's discourse on the same theme, at the other's statement about the same object. A word, directed toward its referential object, clashes with another's word within the very object itself. The other's discourse is not itself reproduced, it is merely implied, but the entire structure of speech would be completely different if there were not this reaction to another person's implied words. In stylization the actual reproduced model – someone else's style – also remains outside the author's context and is only implied. Likewise in parody the specific actual parodied discourse is only implied. But in these instances authorial discourse itself either poses as someone else's, or claims someone else's discourse as its own. In any case it works directly with the other's words, while the implied model (the other person's actual discourse) merely provides the material; it functions as a document confirming the fact that the author is indeed reproducing another person's specific discourse. In a hidden polemic, on the other hand, the other's words are treated antagonistically, and this antagonism, no less than the very topic being discussed, is what determines the author's discourse. This radically changes the semantics of the discourse involved: alongside its referential meaning there appears a second meaning – an intentional orientation toward someone else's words. Such discourse cannot be fundamentally or fully understood if one takes into consideration only its direct referential meaning. The polemical coloration of the discourse appears in other purely language features as well: in intonation and syntactic construction.

To draw a clear-cut boundary between hidden and obvious open polemic in any concrete instance sometimes proves quite difficult. But the semantic distinctions here are very fundamental. Overt polemic is quite simply directed at another's discourse, which it refutes, as if at its own referential object. In the hidden polemic, however, discourse is directed toward an ordinary referential object, naming it, portraying, expressing, and only indirectly striking a blow at the other's discourse, clashing with it, as it were, within the object itself. As a result, the other person's discourse begins to influence authorial discourse from within. For this reason, hidden polemical discourse is double-voiced, although the interrelationship of the two voices here is a

special one. The other's thought does not personally make its way inside the discourse, but is only reflected in it, determining its tone and its meaning. One word acutely senses alongside it someone else's word speaking about the same object, and this awareness determines its structure.

Internally polemical discourse – the word with a sideward glance at someone else's hostile word – is extremely widespread in practical everyday speech as well as in literary speech, and has enormous style-shaping significance. Here belong, in everyday speech, all words that 'make digs at others' and all 'barbed' words. But here also belongs all self-deprecating overblown speech that repudiates itself in advance, speech with a thousand reservations, concessions, loopholes and the like. Such speech literally cringes in the presence or the anticipation of someone else's word, reply, objection. The individual manner in which a person structures his own speech is determined to a significant degree by his peculiar awareness of another's words, and by his means for reacting to them.

In literary speech the significance of the hidden polemic is enormous. In every style, strictly speaking, there is an element of internal polemic, the difference being merely one of degree and character. Every literary discourse more or less sharply senses its own listener, reader, critic, and reflects in itself their anticipated objections, evaluations, points of view. In addition, literary discourse senses alongside itself another literary discourse, another style. An element of so-called reaction to the preceding literary style, present in every new style, is an example of that same internal polemic; it is, so to speak, a hidden anti-stylization of someone else's style, often combining with a clear parodying of that style. The style-shaping significance of internal polemic is extremely great in autobiographies and in *Ich-Erzählung* forms of the confessional type. It is enough to mention Rousseau's *Confessions*.

Analogous to the hidden polemic is a rejoinder from any real and profound dialogue. Every word of that rejoinder, directed toward its referential object, is at the same time reacting intensely to someone else's word, answering it and anticipating it. An element of response and anticipation penetrates deeply inside intensely dialogic discourse. Such a discourse draws in, as it were, sucks in to itself the other's replies, intensely reworking them. The semantics of dialogic discourse are of an utterly special sort. (The extremely subtle changes in meaning that occur in the presence of intense dialogicality have unfortunately not yet been studied.) Taking the counterstatement (*Gegenrede*) into account produces specific changes in the structure of dialogic discourse, making it the inner scene for an event and illuminating the very object of discourse in a new way, uncovering it in new sides inaccessible to monologic discourse.

Especially significant and important for our further purposes is the phenomenon of hidden dialogicality, a phenomenon quite different from hidden polemic. Imagine a dialogue of two persons in which the statements of the second speaker are omitted, but in such a way that the general sense is not at all violated. The second speaker is present invisibly, his words are not there, but deep traces left by these words have a determining influence on all the present and visible words of the first speaker. We sense that this is a conversation, although only one person is speaking, and it is a conversation of the most intense kind, for each present, uttered word responds and reacts with its

every fiber to the invisible speaker, points to something outside itself, beyond its own limits, to the unspoken words of another person. We shall see below that in Dostoevsky this hidden dialogue occupies a very important place and is very profoundly and subtly developed.

This third variety, as we see, differs sharply from the preceding two varieties of the third type. This final variety might be called *active*, in contrast to the preceding *passive* varieties. And so it is: in stylization, in the narrated story and in parody the other person's discourse is a completely passive tool in the hands of the author wielding it. He takes, so to speak, someone else's meek and defenseless discourse and installs his own interpretation in it, forcing it to serve his own new purposes. In hidden polemic and in dialogue, on the contrary, the other's words actively influence the author's speech, forcing it to alter itself accordingly under their influence and initiative.

In all manifestations of the second variety of the third type, however, a heightening of activity on the part of the other person's discourse is also possible. When parody senses a fundamental resistance, a certain strength and depth to the parodied words of the other, the parody becomes complicated by tones of hidden polemic. Such parody already has a different sound to it. The parodied discourse rings out more actively, exerts a counterforce against the author's intentions. There takes place an internal dialogization of the parodistic discourse. Similar processes occur whenever the hidden polemic is coupled with a narrated story, and in general in all examples of the third type when there is a divergence in direction between the author's and the other person's aspirations.

To the extent that the objectification of another's discourse is decreased – objectification being, as we know, inherent to a certain extent in all discourses of the third type, and in unidirectional discourses (stylizations and unidirectional narration) – there tends to occur a merging of the author's and the other person's voice. The distance between the two is lost; stylization becomes style; the narrator is transformed into a mere compositional convention. In vari-directional discourse, on the other hand, a decrease in objectification and a corresponding heightening of activity on the part of the aspirations of the other discourse lead inevitably to an internal dialogization of discourse. In such discourse, the author's thought no longer oppressively dominates the other's thought, discourse loses its composure and confidence, becomes agitated, internally undecided and two-faced. Such discourse is not only double-voiced but also double-accented; it is difficult to speak it aloud, for loud and living intonation excessively monologizes discourse and cannot do justice to the other person's voice present in it.[3]

This internal dialogization – connected with a decrease in objectification in vari-directional discourses of the third type – does not, of course, constitute a new variety of that type. It is only a tendency, inherent in every example of the type (given the condition of vari-directionality). At its outer limit this tendency leads to a disintegration of double-voiced discourse into two discourses, into two fully isolated independent voices. The other tendency, which is inherent in unidirectional discourses provided there is a decrease in

[3] A similar point about the necessity for 'mute' reading of double-voiced discourse is made in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. See *Reader*, p. 70.

the objectification of the other's discourse, leads at its outer limit to a complete fusion of voices, and consequently to single-voiced discourse of the first type. Between these two limits fluctuate all manifestations of the third type.

Of course we have far from exhausted all the possible examples of double-voiced discourse, or all the possible means of orienting toward another's discourse, processes that complicate the ordinary referential orientation of speech. It would be possible to create a more far-reaching and subtle classification with a greater number of varieties, perhaps even of types. But for our purposes the classification we have offered is sufficient.

We represent it schematically below.

The classification offered below is of course somewhat abstract in character. A concrete discourse may belong simultaneously to different varieties and even types. Moreover, interrelationships with another person's discourse in a concrete living context are of a dynamic and not a static character: the interrelationship of voices in discourse may change drastically, unidirectional words may turn into vari-directional ones, internal dialogization may become stronger or weaker, a passive type may be activized, and so forth.

I. Direct, unmediated discourse directed exclusively toward its referential object, is an expression of the speaker's ultimate semantic authority.

II. Objectified discourse (discourse of a represented person)

1. With a predominance of sociotypical determining factors 2. With a predominance of individually characteristic determining factors	Various degrees of objectification.

III. Discourse with an orientation toward someone else's discourse (double-voiced discourse)

1. Unidirectional double-voiced discourse: a. Stylization; b. Narrator's narration; c. Unobjectified discourse of a character who carries out (in part) the author's intentions; d. *Ich-Erzählung*	When objectification is reduced, these tend toward a fusion of voices, i.e., toward discourse of the first type.

2. Vari-directional double-voiced discourse: a. Parody with all its nuances; b. Parodistic narration; c. Parodistic *Ich-Erzählung*; d. Discourse of a character who is parodically represented; e. Any transmission of someone else's words with a shift in accent	When objectification is reduced and the other's idea activated, these become internally dialogized and tend to disintegrate into two discourses (two voices) of the first type.
3. The active type (reflected discourse of another) a. Hidden internal polemic; b. Polemically colored autobiography and confession; c. Any discourse with a sideward glance at someone else's word; d. A rejoinder of a dialogue; e. Hidden dialogue	The other discourse exerts influence from without; diverse forms of interrelationship with another's discourse are possible here, as well as various degrees of deforming influence exerted by one discourse on the other.

The plane of investigation proposed by us here, an investigation of discourse from the point of view of its relationship to someone else's discourse, has, we believe, exceptionally great significance for an understanding of artistic prose....

Let us return to Dostoevsky.

Dostoevsky's works astound us first of all by their extraordinary diversity of types and varieties of discourse, types and varieties, moreover, that are present in their most extreme expression. Clearly predominant is vari-directional double-voiced discourse, in particular internally dialogized discourse and the reflected discourse of another: hidden polemic, polemically colored confession, hidden dialogue. In Dostoevsky almost no word is without its intense sideward glance at someone else's word. At the same time there are almost no objectified words in Dostoevsky, since the speech of his characters is constructed in a way that deprives it of all objectification. What also astounds us is the continual and abrupt alternation of the most varied types of discourse. Sharp and unexpected transitions from parody to internal polemic, from polemic to hidden dialogue, from hidden dialogue to stylization in serene hagiographic tones, then back again to parodistic narration and finally to an extremely intense open dialogue – such is the agitated verbal surface of his works. All this is interwoven with the deliberately dull thread of informative documentary discourse, the ends and beginnings of which are difficult to catch; but even this dry documentary discourse registers the bright reflections or dense shadows of nearby utterances, and this gives it as well a peculiar and ambiguous tone.

What is important here, of course, is not only the diversity and abrupt shift

of discursive types, nor the predominance among them of double-voiced, internally dialogized discourses. The uniqueness of Dostoevsky lies in his special distribution of these discursive types and varieties among the basic compositional elements of a given work.

How and in what aspects of the verbal whole is the author's ultimate semantic authority implemented? For the monologic novel, this question is very easily answered. Whatever discourse types are introduced by the author-monologist, whatever their compositional distribution, the author's intentions and evaluations must dominate over all the others and must form a compact and unambiguous whole. Any intensification of others' intonations in a certain discourse or a certain section of the work is only a game, which the author permits so that his own direct or refracted word might ring out all the more energetically. Every struggle between two voices within a single discourse for possession or dominance in that discourse is decided in advance, it only appears to be a struggle; all fully signifying authorial interpretations are sooner or later gathered together in a single speech center and a single consciousness; all accents are gathered together in a single voice.

The artistic task Dostoevsky takes on is completely different. He does not fear the most extreme activization of vari-directional accents in double-voiced discourse; on the contrary, such activization is precisely what he needs to achieve his purpose. A plurality of voices, after all, is not meant to be eliminated in his works but in fact is meant to triumph.

10 The Heteroglot Novel

In 'Discourse in the Novel' (1935), from which this extract is taken, Bakhtin's focus moves to the novel form in general. Novelistic form itself is perceived as many-voiced or, more precisely, is defined as the artistic orchestration of a diversity of social discourses: the novel form is fundamentally heteroglot, many-language. However, this defining stylistic feature is understood by Bakhtin to be the result of a centuries-long process of generic evolution. This is one reason why, at the beginning of 'Discourse in the Novel', Bakhtin calls for a new stylistics of novelistic form. Traditional studies focusing upon the language of individual authors and structuralist linguistic approaches are both unable to relate novel form to the 'great historical destinies of genres' (p. 259). Equally, both work with a monologic understanding of language which ignores the dialogic reality of discourse and of novelistic language in particular. What is needed is a '*sociological stylistics*' which can recognize the languaged diversity of novelistic prose and understand the historical processes whereby that became the 'distinguishing feature of the novel as a genre' (p. 300). The passage included here focuses upon the fully materialized heteroglossic novel, outlining the new 'sociological' stylistics this form requires. (For an account of its historical develop-

ment, see 'Note on the Two Stylistic Lines of the Novel' at the end of this section.)

The shift of terminology from 'polyphony' to 'heteroglossia' indicates a shift of emphasis towards social languages rather than individual voices which were more the focus of analysis in the study of Dostoevsky's prose. However, it is only a change of emphasis; for the various social discourses of heteroglossia to enter the novel they must be embodied in a speaking human being. 'Every language in the novel is a point of view, a socio-ideological conceptual system of real social groups', otherwise it cannot enter the novel, but equally it 'must be a concrete, socially embodied point of view, not an abstract, purely semantic position' (p. 411–12).

However, the diverse and divergent embodied languages of heteroglossia do not enter the novel as an unmediated cacophony. Once they enter the novel they become part of the authorial orchestration; their voices are infiltrated by the intentions of the author. Here, as usual, 'the author' does not refer to any specific historical person but to the 'authoring consciousness', identified only with the total artistic form and substantiated only in that totality.

If the defining feature of the novel as a genre is its artistic organization of the languages of heteroglossia, then clearly a novelistic poetics must concern itself with the artistic representation of speech. For Bakhtin, speech representation entails constructing images of language. An image always necessitates a distance between the perceiver and what is imaged. A person enclosed in a totally unitary language cannot perceive an image of that language since they cannot get outside it. Their consciousness, their ideological perception will be bonded to their words. Only a relativizing of one language against the outlines of another allows one to construct the image of a language and so break the bonds of any language's absolute authority. Bakhtin associates the development of the novel with that freeing of consciousness: 'The novel is the expression of a Galiean perception of language, one that denies the absolutism of a single and unitary language' (p. 366). The novel constructs images of languages in three main ways: by hybridization, by dialogized interaction of different languages and by dialogues. Hybridization has proved another influential Bakhtinian term. It is an utterance in which two social languages come together. What distinguishes it from just any form of double-voiced discourse is that the two embodied voices must represent (must image) two socio-linguistic consciousnesses. The novel form itself is thus an intentional hybrid in which the artistic organization of multiple language images 'demands a broadening and deepening of the language horizon, a sharpening of our perception of socio-linguistic differentiations' (p. 366).

From M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*,.

Trans. M. Holquist and C. Emerson, ed. M. Holquist, University of Texas Press, Austin, Tex., 1981.

The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and 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 [*raznorečie*] 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 unities with whose help heteroglossia [*raznorečie*] can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (always more or less dialogized). 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 – this is the basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel. Such a combining of languages and styles into a higher unity is unknown to traditional stylistics; it has no method for approaching the distinctive social dialogue among languages that is present in the novel....

At the time when major divisions of the poetic genres were developing under the influence of the unifying, centralizing, centripetal forces of verbal-ideological life, the novel – and those artistic-prose genres that gravitate toward it – was being historically shaped by the current of decentralizing, centrifugal forces. At the time when poetry was accomplishing the task of cultural, national and political centralization of the verbal-ideological world in the higher official socio-ideological levels, on the lower levels, on the stages of local fairs and at buffoon spectacles, the heteroglossia of the clown sounded forth, ridiculing all 'languages' and dialects; there developed the literature of the *fabliaux* and *Schwänke* of street songs, folksayings, anecdotes, where there was no language-center at all, where there was to be found 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.[1]

Heteroglossia, as organized in these low genres, was not merely het-

[1] For an extended consideration of these carnivalesque aspects, see *Reader*, p. 194–245.

eroglossia vis-à-vis the accepted literary language (in all its various generic expressions), that is, vis-à-vis the linguistic center of the verbal-ideological life of the nation and the epoch, but was a heteroglossia consciously opposed to this literary language. It was parodic, and aimed sharply and polemically against the official languages of its given time. It was heteroglossia that had been dialogized....

All languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically. As such they encounter one another and co-exist in the consciousness of real people – first and foremost, in the creative consciousness of people who write novels. As such, these languages live a real life, they struggle and evolve in an environment of social heteroglossia. Therefore they are all able to enter into the unitary plane of the novel, which can unite in itself parodic stylizations of generic languages, various forms of stylizations and illustrations of professional and period-bound languages, the languages of particular generations, of social dialects and others (as occurs, for example, in the English comic novel). They may all be drawn in by the novelist for the orchestration of his themes and for the refracted (indirect) expression of his intentions and values....

The prose writer does not purge words of intentions and tones that are alien to him, he does not destroy the seeds of social heteroglossia embedded in words, he does not eliminate those language characterizations and speech mannerisms (potential narrator-personalities) glimmering behind the words and forms, each at a different distance from the ultimate semantic nucleus of his work, that is, the center of his own personal intentions.

The language of the prose writer deploys itself according to degrees of greater or lesser proximity to the author and to his ultimate semantic instantiation: certain aspects of language directly and umediatedly express (as in poetry) the semantic and expressive intentions of the author, others refract these intentions; the writer of prose does not meld completely with any of these words, but rather accents each of them in a particular way – humorously, ironically, parodically and so forth;[2] yet another group may stand even further from the author's ultimate semantic instantiation, still more thoroughly refracting his intentions; and there are, finally, those words that are completely denied any authorial intentions: the author does not express *himself* in them (as the author of the word) – rather, he *exhibits* them as a unique speech-thing, they function for him as something completely reified. Therefore the stratification of language – generic, professional, social in the narrow sense, that of particular world views, particular tendencies, particular individuals, the social speech diversity and language-diversity (dialects) of language – upon entering the novel establishes its own special order within it, and becomes a unique artistic system, which orchestrates the intentional theme of the author.

[2] Bakhtin elaborates this idea in a footnote: the words are not to be understood as the author's direct speech, but as words the author 'exhibits' as it were from 'the distances appropriate to humor, irony, parody, etc.'

Thus a prose writer can distance himself from the language of his own work, while at the same time distancing himself, in varying degrees, from the different layers and aspects of the work. He can make use of language without wholly giving himself up to it, he may treat it as semi-alien or completely alien to himself, while compelling language ultimately to serve all his own intentions. The author does not speak in a given language (from which he distances himself to a greater or lesser degree), but he speaks, as it were, *through* language, a language that has somehow more or less materialized, become objectivized, that he merely ventriloquates.[3] . . .

The novelist does not acknowledge any unitary, singular, naively (or conditionally) indisputable or sacrosanct language. Language is present to the novelist only as something stratified and heteroglot. Therefore, even when heteroglossia remains outside the novel, when the novelist comes forward with his own unitary and fully affirming language (without any distancing, refraction or qualifications) he knows that such language is not self-evident and is not in itself incontestable, that it is uttered in a heteroglot environment, that such a language must be championed, purified, defended, motivated. In a novel even such unitary and direct language is polemical and apologetic, that is, it interrelates dialogically with heteroglossia.[4] It is precisely this that defines the utterly distinctive orientation of discourse in the novel – an orientation that is contested, contestable and contesting – for this discourse cannot forget or ignore, either through naiveté or by design, the heteroglossia that surrounds it.

Thus heteroglossia either enters the novel in person (so to speak) and assumes material form within it in the images of speaking persons, or it determines, as a dialogizing background, the special resonance of novelistic discourse.

From this follows the decisive and distinctive importance of the novel as a genre: the human being in the novel is first, foremost and always a speaking human being; the novel requires speaking persons bringing with them their own unique ideological discourse, their own language. . . .

If the subject making the novel specifically a novel is defined as a speaking person and his discourse, striving for social significance and a wider general application as one distinctive language in a heteroglot world – then the cen-

[3] This 'artistic reworking' of heteroglossia as it enters the novel takes a variety of forms established in the course of the genre's historical development. Bakhtin picks out particularly the English comic novel as written by Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Dickens, Thackeray for its comic-parodic reprocessing of an encyclopedic range of contemporary conversational and literary languages. It especially makes use of 'the common language' of given social groups, spoken and written, and authorial speech moves flexibly in and out of these various languages, completely identifying with none, but keeping the boundaries shifting and ambiguous. Other forms for incorporating heteroglossia into the novel are the posited author as carrier of a particular verbal-ideological linguistic belief system and the speech of characters. Finally, 'incorporated genres' (inserted short stories, poems, songs, dramatic scenes and non-artistic everyday forms) frequently bring heteroglossia into the novel. All these forms serve two speakers, two intentions: the direct speaker and the author of the work. Thus they are all dialogized double-voiced discourses.

[4] For a summary of Bakhtin's account of this polemicizing in the novel's historical development, see 'Note on the Two Stylistic Lines of the Novel' at the end of this section.

tral problem for a stylistics of the novel may be formulated as the problem of *artistically representing language, the problem of representing the image of a language....*

All devices in the novel for creating the image of a language may be reduced to three basic categories: (1) hybridizations, (2) the dialogized interrelation of languages and (3) pure dialogues.

These three categories of devices can only theoretically be separated in this fashion since in reality they are always inextricably woven together into the unitary artistic fabric of the image.

What is a hybridization? It is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor.

Such mixing of two languages within the boundaries of a single utterance is, in the novel, an artistic device (or more accurately, a system of devices) that is deliberate. But unintentional, unconscious hybridization is one of the most important modes in the historical life and evolution of all languages. We may even say that language and languages change historically primarily by means of hybridization, by means of a mixing of various 'languages' co-existing within the boundaries of a single dialect, a single national language, a single branch, a single group of different branches or different groups of such branches, in the historical as well as paleontological past of languages – but the crucible for this mixing always remains the utterance.

The artistic image of a language must by its very nature be a linguistic hybrid (an intentional hybrid): it is obligatory for two linguistic consciousnesses to be present, the one being represented and the other doing the representing, with each belonging to a different system of language. Indeed, if there is not a second representing consciousness, if there is no second representing language-intention, then what results is not an *image* [*obraz*] of language but merely a *sample* [*obrazec*] of some other person's language, whether authentic or fabricated.

The image of a language conceived as an intentional hybrid is first of all a *conscious* hybrid (as distinct from a historical, organic, obscure language hybrid); an intentional hybrid is precisely the perception of one language by another language, its illumination by another linguistic consciousness. An image of language may be structured only from the point of view of another language, which is taken as the norm....

While noting the individual element in intentional hybrids, we must once again strongly emphasize the fact that in novelistic artistic hybrids that structure the *image of a language*, the individual element, indispensable as it is for the actualization of language and for its subordination to the artistic whole of the novel (here the destinies of languages are interwoven with the individual destinies of speaking persons), is nevertheless inexorably merged with the socio-linguistic element. In other words, the novelistic hybrid is not only double-voiced and double-accented (as in rhetoric) but is also double-languaged; for in it there are not only (and not even so much) two individual consciousnesses, two voices, two accents, as there are two socio-linguistic consciousnesses, two epochs, that, true, are not here unconsciously mixed (as in an

organic hybrid), but that come together and consciously fight it out on the territory of the utterance....

The intentional double-voiced and internally dialogized hybrid possesses a syntactic structure utterly specific to it: in it, within the boundaries of a single utterance, two potential utterances are fused, two responses are, as it were, harnessed in a potential dialogue. It is true that these potential responses can never be fully actualized, can never be fused into finished utterances, but their insufficiently developed forms are nevertheless acutely felt in the syntactic construction of the double-voiced hybrid. What is involved here, of course, is not the kind of mixture of heterogeneous syntactic forms characteristic of language systems (forms that might take place in *organic* hybrids), but rather precisely the fusion of *two* utterances into one. Such a fusion is also possible in single-languaged rhetorical hybrids (in which case it is even more fully articulated syntactically). It is typical for a novelistic hybrid to fuse into a single utterance two utterances that are socially distinct. The syntactic construction of intentional hybrids is fractured into two individualized language-intentions.

Summing up the characteristics of a novelistic hybrid, we can say: as distinct from the opaque mixing of languages in living utterances that are spoken in a historically evolving language (in essence, any *living* utterance in a *living* language is to one or another extent a hybrid), the novelistic hybrid is *an artistically organized system for bringing different languages in contact with one another*, a system having as its goal the illumination of one language by means of another, the carving-out of a living image of another language....

Hybridization, in the strict sense, differs from internally dialogized inter-illumination of language systems taken as a whole. In the former case there is no direct mixing of two languages within the boundaries of a single utterance – rather, only one language is actually present in the utterance, but it is rendered *in the light of another language*. This second language is not, however, actualized and remains outside the utterance.

The clearest and most characteristic form of an internally dialogized mutual illumination of languages is *stylization*.

Every authentic stylization, ... is an artistic representation of another's linguistic style, an artistic image of another's language. Two individualized linguistic consciousnesses must be present in it: the one that *represents* (that is, the linguistic consciousness of the stylizer) and the one that is *represented*, which is stylized. Stylization differs from style proper precisely by virtue of its requiring a specific linguistic consciousness (the contemporaneity of the stylizer and his audience), under whose influence a style becomes a stylization, against whose background it acquires new meaning and significance.

This second linguistic consciousness, that of the stylizer and those contemporary with him, uses stylized language as raw material; it is only in a stylized language, one not his own, that the stylizer can speak about the subject directly. But this stylized language is itself exhibited in the light of the language consciousness of a stylizer contemporary with it. Contemporaneous language casts a special light over the stylized language: it highlights some elements, leaves others in the shade, creates a special pattern of accents that has the effect of making its various aspects all aspects of language, creating specific resonances between the stylized language and the linguistic con-

sciousness contemporaneous with it – in short, it creates a free image of another's language, which expresses not only a stylized but also a stylizing language- and art-intention. . . .

In the history of the novel the significance of direct stylization, as well as of variation, is enormous, and is surpassed only by the importance of parody. It was in stylizations that prose first learned how to represent languages artistically – although, in the beginning, it is true, these were languages already fully formed and stylistically shaped (or they were already styles in their own right), they were not the raw and often as yet only potential languages of a living heteroglossia (where languages are still evolving, and do not yet possess a style of their own). . . .

Between stylization and parody, as between two extremes, are distributed the most varied forms for languages to mutually illuminate each other and for direct hybrids, forms that are themselves determined by the most varied interactions among languages, the most varied wills to language and to speech, that encounter one another within the limits of a single utterance. The struggle going on within discourse, the degree of resistance that the parodied language offers to the parodying language, the degree to which the represented social languages are fully formed entities and the degree to which they are individualized representation and finally the surrounding heteroglossia (which always serves as a dialogizing background and resonator) – all these create a multitude of devices for representing another's language.

The dialogic opposition of pure languages in a novel, when taken together with hybridization, is a powerful means for creating images of languages. The dialogic contrast of *languages* (but not of meanings within the limits of a single language) delineates the boundaries of languages, creates a feeling for these boundaries, compels one to sense physically the plastic forms of different languages.

Dialogue itself, as a compositional form, is in novels inextricably bound up with a dialogue of languages, a dialogue that can be heard in its hybrids and in the dialogizing background of the novel. Therefore dialogue in the novel is dialogue of a special sort. First and foremost (as we have already said) it can never be exhausted in pragmatically motivated dialogues of characters. Novelistic dialogue is pregnant with an endless multitude of dialogic confrontations, which do not and cannot resolve it, and which, as it were, only locally (as one out of many possible dialogues) illustrate this endless, deep-lying dialogue of languages; novel dialogue is determined by the very socio-ideological evolution of languages and society. A dialogue of languages is a dialogue of social forces perceived not only in their static co-existence, but also as a dialogue of different times, epochs and days, a dialogue that is forever dying, living, being born: co-existence and becoming are here fused into an indissoluble concrete unity that is contradictory, multi-speeched and heterogeneous. It is freighted down with novelistic images; from this dialogue of languages these images take their openendedness, their inability to say anything once and for all or to think anything through to its end, they take from it their lifelike concreteness, their 'naturalistic quality' – everything that so sharply distinguishes them from dramatic dialogues.

Pure languages in the novel, in the dialogues and monologues of novelistic

characters, are subordinated to the same task of creating images of language....

What is realized in the novel is the process of coming to know one's own language as it is perceived in someone else's language, coming to know one's own belief system in someone else's system. There takes place within the novel an ideological translation of another's language, and an overcoming of its otherness – an otherness that is only contingent, external, illusory. Characteristic for the historical novel is a positively weighted modernizing, an erasing of temporal boundaries, the recognition of an eternal present in the past. The primary stylistic project of the novel as a genre is to create images of languages.

Every novel, taken as the totality of all the languages and consciousnesses of language embodied in it, is a *hybrid*. But we emphasize once again: it is an intentional and conscious hybrid, one artistically organized, and not an opaque mechanistic mixture of languages (more precisely, a mixture of the brute elements of language). *The artistic image of language* – such is the aim that novelistic hybridization sets for itself.

Note on the Two Stylistic Lines of the Novel

In the final part of his essay, 'Discourse in the Novel', Bakhtin traces out two stylistic lines observable in the development of the novel as a genre. The first line has its origins in the 'Sophistic novels' of ancient Greece; it is characterized by a strongly stylized, monologic language which aims to exclude heteroglossia beyond its boundaries. However, the very intensity of the stylization implies a polemical awareness of heteroglossia as a dialogizing background. Bakhtin identifies chivalric romances with this stylistic line of development in the European novel. These romances were freely translated across many languages so that, despite the extreme conventionality of their style, they rested upon no stable, centralized language consciousness. In their later stages they also wandered between social classes and this decentring and relativizing of their language is the main reason for the intense stylization. Discourse which is ruptured from any social reality and ideology can only move in the direction of stylistic conventionality: surface elegance, smooth finish, rhetorical ornamentation.

It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that this first line should become closely associated with a normative linguistic category which Bakhtin terms 'literary language' or 'respectable language'. Literary language – the language of the respectable, educated classes – attempts to unify and order heteroglossia into a single canonical style. It is a major element within the forces attempting to centralize socio-political and cultural life.

As part of this impulse to ennoble language, chivalric romance aspired to provide norms for real-life language, to set the standards for all forms of refined speech. The romance structure incorporated many other genres from everyday life like letters, speeches, conversations but over all this 'multi-imaged diversity of inserted genres there is stretched one

"respectable" language, and this effectively turns everything into one single image' (p. 385).

A major phase in the first line Bakhtin picks out for attention is the development of the Baroque novel in the seventeenth century. The historical significance of this, he claims, is enormous: 'Almost all categories of the modern novel have their origin in one or another of its aspects' (p. 385). Especially important is its idea of testing the hero, of putting him on trial. This tradition moves through Christian legends, confessional autobiographies and Romantic 'chosenness'. In the eighteenth century the Baroque novel divides into the adventure-heroic novel and the psychological novel. In all its various forms the language of a Baroque novel is characterized by Bakhtin as that of pathos. Novelistic pathos, he claims, is associated with justification and accusation; it involves a total obliteration of any distance between speaker and discourse. It also 'borrows' its sense of seriousness and potentiousness from other discourses like religious and judicial power: 'In pathos-charged speech one cannot take the first step without first conferring on oneself some power, rank, position, etc.' (p. 395). In the Sentimental novel as it develops from the earlier Baroque novel, pathetic discourse sets itself against the false elevation of high literary language. However, it simply replaces this form of conventionality by its own highly conventional respectable 'conversational' language. Again heteroglossia is rigorously excluded but, as with all the forms of the novel within the first stylistic line, there is a profound awareness of the force of language stratification. What makes the novel distinct as a genre from other genres like rhetoric and poetry, Bakhtin argues, is that the 'novel is structured in uninterupted dialogic interaction with the languages that surround it' (p. 399).

The second line of stylistic development does not originate in such recognizable novelistic form. It derives from a multitude of semi-literary, usually low genres drawn from everyday life. Instead of smoothing out their differences by 'literarizing' them within a single respectable language, the second line purposefully preserves their extraliterariness as a means of diversifying the languages represented. Indeed, it is from the minor low genres associated with the itinerant stage, market-day fairs, street songs, that the novel acquires its devices for constructing images of a language. These forms, Bakhtin says, are 'shot through with a profound distrust of human discourse as such' (p. 401). He singles out the discourse of three figures central to this popular tradition – the rogue, the fool and the clown – as exerting an enormous influence upon the subsequent shape of the novel. 'Thus the rogue's gay deception parodies high languages, the clown's malicious distortion of them, his turning them inside out and finally the fool's naive incomprehension of them – these three dialogic categories that had organized heteroglossia in the novel at the dawn of its history emerge in modern times with extraordinary clarity' (p. 405). The rogue is the hero of the first novel-form of the second line: the picaresque adventure novel. This is of tremendous significance for the rogue introduces the notion of the human being as unfinalizable. The rogue is deliberately deceptive, he is inconsistent, alternatively brave and cowardly, criminal and honest. Moreover, the masquerading of the rogue mocks the solemnity of heroes in other genres and opposes the finalized image of the human being they con-

struct. Such developments in the picaresque novel prepare the way for 'the great exemplars of the novel of the Second Line – such as, for example, *Don Quixote* with its hero as fool. In these great and seminal works the novelistic genre becomes what it really is, it unfolds in its fullest potential' (p. 409). Part of that potential, developed in the second line, is the novel's ability for autorcriticism; especially in the dialogic interaction between the two lines, the development of novelistic form can be seen as a continuous process of renewal by means of self-parody. The essence of the novel form for Bakhtin is its continually remade novelness.

SECTION THREE

Literature as Ideological Form

11 Literature as Ideological Form

This extract, taken from Chapters 1 and 2 of P.N. Medvedev/M.M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship (1928)*, defines what is specific to literature as a part of general ideological creative activity and outlines the sociological method required for its study. The argument is developed in three parts. The first part sets out the general need for a Marxist understanding of what is specific to the different branches of ideology, such as literature, science, ethics and religion. While these are all ultimately determined by the socio-economic base, they all have their own specific creativity, language and forms for refracting common reality. Marxism cannot make use of other systems of knowledge – European idealist philosophy, scientific positivism, individual psychologism – to produce this understanding. Only a Marxist sociological approach can recognize the material, objective and fundamentally social nature of ideological creation. Meaning does not exist or arise in an individual consciousness or 'soul' but in concrete social communication. Only in that dialogic social interaction can the process of generation bring about ideological change.

In the second part the focus narrows down to the specificity of literature; what makes it unique is its double refraction and reflection of reality. Literature, like all branches of ideology, refracts, in its own way, the determining reality of the socio-economic base, but in its 'content' it also refracts the reflections and refractions of those other branches of ideology. For this reason, any literary criticism which approaches a literary work as simply a refraction of reality hopelessly reduces the complex and creative relationship of literature to social meaning – to the ideological horizon. Any item of social meaning when it enters a literary work (for instance, the novel) is transformed in becoming part of an artistic whole. But while this distances it from its original connection to reality, it re-enters social reality as a different category: as a literary work which is equally a material element in social life.

In the final part the focus widens again to consider the inter-relationship of the individual work to the determining ideological horizon. In the most immediate sense any particular literary work will be directly dependent upon the literary environment of a given epoch and social group. But in turn that literary environment will be determined by the larger ideological environment of which it is a part, and the totality of the ideological environment is

equally determined by the socio-economic environment. Literary history will be adequate only if it proceeds from an understanding of that complex system of reversable interconnections and mutual influences. Such a dialectical understanding would be the basis of a sociological methodology.

From M. M. Bakhtin and P. N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, 1928.

Trans. A. J. Wehrle, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Md., 1978.

I

Literary scholarship is one branch of the study of ideologies. On the basis of the single principle it uses to understand its object, and the single method it uses to study it, the study of ideologies embraces all areas of man's ideological creativity.

The bases of the study of ideologies (in the form of a general definition of ideological superstructures, their function in the whole of social life, their relationship to the economic base, and some of their interrelationships as well) have been profoundly and firmly established by Marxism. However, the detailed study of the distinctive features and qualitative individuality of each of the branches of ideological creation – science, art, ethics, religion, etc. – is still in the embryonic stage.

Between the general theory of superstructures and their relationship to the base and the concrete study of each specific ideological phenomenon there seems to be a certain gap, a shifting and hazy area through which the scholar picks his way at his own risk, or often simply skips over, shutting his eyes to all difficulties and ambiguities. The result is that either the specificity of the phenomenon suffers, for instance, the specificity of the work of art, or an 'immanent' analysis[1] which takes account of specificity but has nothing to do with sociology is artificially fitted to the economic base. And it is precisely a developed sociological doctrine of the distinctive features of the material, forms, and purposes of each area of ideological creation which is lacking.

Of course, each area has its own language, its own forms and devices for that language, and its own specific laws for the ideological refraction of a common reality. It is absolutely not the way of Marxism to level these differences or to ignore the essential plurality of the languages of ideology.

The specificity of art, science, ethics, or religion naturally should not obscure their ideological unit as superstructures of a common base, or the fact that they follow the same sociological laws of development. But this

[1] An 'immanent' analysis restricts itself entirely to what is self-contained and inherent in the work itself; this is the practice of all formalist poetics.

specificity should not be effaced by the general formulas of these laws.

On the basis of Marxism itself a specific sociological method should be developed which could be adapted to the characteristics of the different ideological areas in order to provide access to all the details and subtleties of ideological structures.

But if this is to be accomplished, the characteristics and qualitative peculiarities of ideological systems must first be understood and defined.

Marxism can hardly borrow these definitions from the idealist 'philosophy of culture' [*Kulturphilosophie*] or from the various branches [*-wissenschaften*] of positivist research,[2] for this would be to adjust the base to fit the definitions when, in fact, the definitions must be deduced from the base.

The definitions formulated by West European scholarship do not pretend to be sociological. They are either understood naturalistically, mainly on the basis of biology, or they are atomized into insipid and positivistic empirical data which are lost in a wilderness of senseless detail. Or, finally, these definitions are estranged from all empiricism and locked into a self-contained idealist kingdom of 'pure ideas', 'pure values', and 'transcendental forms', and therefore rendered completely helpless before the concrete ideological phenomenon, which is always material and historical.

West European scholarship does, of course, include extensive factual material which Marxism can and should use (critically, to be sure), but Marxism cannot accept the principles, methods, and sometimes even the concrete methodology by which that material was obtained. (Exceptions to the latter include manuscript methodology, paleography, methods in the philological preparation and analysis of texts, etc.). . . .

All the products of ideological creation – works of art, scientific works, religious symbols and rites, etc. – are material things, part of the practical reality that surrounds man. It is true that these are things of a special nature, having significance, meaning, inner value. But these meanings and values are embodied in material things and actions. They cannot be realized outside of some developed material.

Nor do philosophical views, beliefs, or even shifting ideological moods exist within man, in his head or in his 'soul'. They become ideological reality only by being realized in words, actions, clothing, manners, and organizations of people and things – in a word: in some definite semiotic material. Through this material they become a practical part of the reality surrounding man.

The connection of all ideological meaning, no matter how 'ideal' or 'pure', with concrete material and its organization is much more organic, essential, and deep than it previously seemed. Philosophy and the humanities were too fond of purely conceptual analyses of ideological phenomena and the interpretation of their abstract meanings to properly evaluate problems connected with their direct reality in things and their genuine realization in the processes of social intercourse.

[2] A 'philosophy of culture' is probably a general reference to the influence of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), a German philosopher who criticized purely metaphysical or empiricist approaches and advocated a philosophy of life, based upon examining human and social studies. Positivism is the philosophical system, elaborated by Auguste Comte, which recognizes only positive facts and observable phenomena and rejects metaphysical and religious explanations.

Scholarship to the present has been interested only in the individual physiological and, in particular, psychological processes of the creation and comprehension of ideological values, overlooking the fact that the individual, isolated person does not create ideologies, that ideological creation and its comprehension only take place in the process of social intercourse. Each individual act in the creation of ideology is an inseparable part of social intercourse, one of its dependent components, and therefore cannot be studied apart from the whole social process that gives it its meaning.

Bourgeois scholarship sets ideological meaning which has been abstracted from concrete material against the individual consciousness of the creator or perceiver. The complex social connections of the material environment are replaced by an invented connection between the individual consciousness and the opposing meaning.

'Meaning' and 'consciousness' are the two basic terms of all bourgeois theories and philosophies of culture. Idealist philosophy, in addition, posits a 'transcendental consciousness' or 'general consciousness' (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*) between the individual consciousness and meaning, the role of which is to preserve the integrity and purity of abstract ideas from disturbance and dissolution in the living generation of material reality.

On the basis of this approach to ideological creation certain habits of thought and research have formed that are not easy to overcome. A persistent deafness and blindness to concrete ideological reality has become established, involving both the reality of things and social actions and the complex material relations which interpenetrate this reality. We are most inclined to imagine ideological creation as some inner process of understanding, comprehension, and perception, and do not notice that it in fact unfolds externally, for the eye, the ear, the hand. It is not within us, but between us.

The first principle from which Marxist study of ideology must proceed is the principle of the material and completely objective nature of ideological creation as a whole. Ideology exists completely in the external, objective world and is completely accessible to a unified and essentially objective method of cognition and study.

Every ideological product and all its 'ideal meaning' is not in the soul, not in the inner world, and not in the detached world of ideas and pure thoughts, but in the objectively accessible ideological material – in the word, in sound, in gesture, in the combination of masses, lines, colors, living bodies, and so on. Every ideological product (ideologeme) is a part of the material social reality surrounding man, an aspect of the materialized ideological horizon. Whatever a word might mean, it is first of all materially present, as a thing uttered, written, printed, whispered, or thought. That is, it is always an objectively present part of man's social environment.

But the material presence of the ideological phenomenon is not a physical or completely natural presence, and the physiological or biological individual should not be set against it.

Whatever a word's meaning, it establishes a relationship between individuals of a more or less wide social environment, a relationship which is objectively expressed in the combined reactions of people: reactions in words, gestures, acts, organizations, and so on.

There is no meaning outside the social communication of understanding, i.e., outside the united and mutually coordinated reactions of people to a given sign. Social intercourse is the medium in which the ideological phenomenon first acquires its specific existence, its ideological meaning, its semiotic nature. All ideological things are objects of social intercourse, not objects of individual use, contemplation, emotional experience, or hedonistic pleasure. For this reason subjective psychology cannot approach the meaning of the ideological object. Nor can physiology or biology....

Social man is surrounded by ideological phenomena, by objects-signs [*veshch'-znak*] of various types and categories: by words in the multifarious forms of their realization (sounds, writing, and the others), by scientific statements, religious symbols and beliefs, works of art, and so on. All of these things in their totality comprise the ideological environment, which forms a solid ring around man. And man's consciousness lives and develops in this environment. Human consciousness does not come into contact with existence directly, but through the medium of the surrounding ideological world.

The ideological environment is the realized, materialized, externally expressed social consciousness of a given collective. It is determined by the collective's economic existence and, in turn, determines the individual consciousness of each member of the collective. In fact, the individual consciousness can only become a consciousness by being realized in the forms of the ideological environment proper to it: in language, in conventionalized gesture, in artistic image, in myth, and so on.

The ideological environment is the environment of consciousness. Only through this environment and with its help does the human consciousness attain the perception and mastery of socioeconomic and natural existence.

The ideological environment is constantly in the active dialectical process of generation. Contradictions are always present, constantly being overcome and reborn. But for each given collective in each given epoch of its historical development this environment is a unique and complete concrete whole, uniting science, art, ethics, and other ideologies in a living and immediate synthesis.

Man the producer is directly oriented in the socioeconomic and natural environment of production. But every act of his consciousness and all the concrete forms of his conduct outside work (manners, ceremonies, conventional signs of communication, etc.) are immediately oriented in the ideological environment, are determined by it, and in turn determine it, while only obliquely reflecting and refracting socioeconomic and natural existence.

It seems to us that the concept of the concrete ideological environment has an enormous significance for Marxism. Aside from a general theoretical and methodological significance, the concept has great practical importance. For, in addition to purely ideological creation, a whole series of very important social acts are directly aimed at the development of this environment in its concrete totality. The politics of social upbringing and education, cultural propaganda, and educational work are all forms of organized influence on the ideological environment which presuppose a knowledge of its laws and concrete forms....

Marxists often do not fully appreciate the concrete unity, variety, and importance of the ideological environment, and move too quickly and too

directly from the separate ideological phenomenon to conditions of the socioeconomic environment. This is to lose sight of the fact that the separate phenomenon is only a dependent part of the concrete ideological environment and that it is directly determined by this environment in the most immediate way. It is just as naive to think that separate works, which have been snatched out of the unity of the ideological world, are in their isolation directly determined by economic factors as it is to think that a poem's rhymes and stanzas are fitted together according to economic causality.

Those are the sets of immediate problems confronting Marxist ideological study. We have cited only the main lines of their formulation and solution. It is our purpose to approach the concrete tasks of just one branch of this study: the tasks of literary scholarship.

Only an exhaustive and deep elaboration of all the problems we have cursorily mentioned will lead to the required differentiation within the unity of the Marxist sociological method and will allow scholarship, with the help of this method, to master all the details of the specific structures of ideological phenomena.

II

On the one hand, the unity of all the branches of literary scholarship (theoretical poetics, historical poetics, literary history) is based on the unity of Marxist principles for the understanding of ideological superstructures and their relationship to the base. On the other hand, this unity is based on the specific (also social) characteristics of literature itself.

Literary scholarship is one of the branches of the study of ideologies. All the major tasks of this study surveyed in the preceding chapter pertain to literary scholarship as well and are likewise its immediate tasks. But the proper formulation and elaboration of these tasks is complicated by one particular circumstance.

The characteristics of literature include one that is very important, one which has played and continues to play a fateful role in the history of the scholarly study of literary phenomena. It has led historians and theoreticians away from literature and its direct study and has interfered with the proper formulation of literary problems.

This characteristic concerns the relationship of literature to other ideologies, its unique position in the totality of the ideological environment.

Literature is one of the independent parts of the surrounding ideological reality, occupying a special place in it in the form of definite, organized philological works which have their own specific structures. The literary structure, like every ideological structure, refracts the generating socioeconomic reality, and does so in its own way. But, at the same time, in its 'content', literature reflects and refracts the reflections and refractions of other ideological spheres (ethics, epistemology, political doctrines, religion, etc.). That is, in its 'content' literature reflects the whole of the ideological horizon of which it is itself a part.

Literature does not ordinarily take its ethical and epistemological content from ethical and epistemological systems, or from outmoded ideological sys-

tems (as classicism did), but immediately from the very process of the generation of ethics, epistemology, and other ideologies. This is the reason that literature so often anticipates developments in philosophy and ethics (ideologemes), admittedly in an undeveloped, unsupported, intuitive form. Literature is capable of penetrating into the social laboratory where these ideologemes are shaped and formed. The artist has a keen sense for ideological problems in the process of birth and generation.

He senses them in *statu nascendi*, sometimes better than the more cautious 'man of science', the philosopher, or the technician. The generation of ideas, the generation of esthetic desires and feelings, their wandering, their as yet unformed groping for reality, their restless seething in the depths of the so-called 'social psyche' – the whole as yet undifferentiated flood of generating ideology – is reflected and refracted in the content of the literary work.

Literature always represents man, his life and fate, his 'inner world', in the ideological purview. Everything takes place in a world of ideological quantities and values. The ideological environment is the only atmosphere in which life can be the subject of literary representation.

Life, the aggregate of defined actions, events, or experiences, only become plot [*siuzhet*], story [*fabula*], theme, or motif once it has been refracted through the prism of the ideological environment, only once it has taken on concrete ideological flesh. Reality that is unrefracted and, as it were, raw is not able to enter into the content of literature.

Whatever plot or motif we choose, we always reveal the purely ideological values which shape its structure. If we disregard these values, if we place man immediately into the material environment of his productive existence – that is, if we imagine him in a pure, absolute, ideologically unrefracted reality – nothing of the plot or motif will remain. No concrete plot (for instance the plot of *Oedipus the King* or *Antigone*), but every plot as such is the formula of ideologically refracted life. This formula is composed of ideological conflicts, material forces which have been ideologically refracted. Good, evil, truth, crime, duty, death, love, victory, etc. – all are ideological values without which there can be no plot or motif.

All these values are quite different, of course, depending on whether they belong to the ideological purview of a feudal lord, a member of the big bourgeoisie, a peasant, or a proletarian. Differences in plot follow from differences in values. But if the world is to be represented in literature, ideological refraction, cognitive, esthetic, political, or religious refraction, is an obligatory and irrevokable preliminary condition for the world's entrance into the structure and content of literature.

Not only plot, but the lyric motif, various problems, and in fact every meaningful element of content is subordinate to this basic law: in them reality that has already been ideologically refracted is shaped artistically.

The content of literature reflects the ideological purview, i.e., other nonartistic, ideological formations (ethical, epistemological, etc.). But, in reflecting these other signs, literature creates new forms, new signs of ideological intercourse. And these signs are works of art, which become a real part of the social reality surrounding man. Reflecting something external to themselves, literary works are at the same time in themselves valuable and unique

phenomena of the ideological environment. Their role cannot be reduced to the merely auxiliary one of reflecting other ideologemes. Literary works have their own independent ideological role and their own type of refraction of socioeconomic existence.

Therefore, when speaking of the refraction of reality in literature, these two types of reflection should be strictly separated: (1) the reflection of the ideological environment in the content of literature; (2) the reflection of the economic base that is common to all ideologies. Literature, like the other independent superstructures, reflects the base.

This double reflection, this double orientation of literature in reality, makes the methodology and concrete methods of literary study extremely complex and difficult.

Russian literary criticism and literary history ... in studying the reflections of the ideological environment in literary content, committed three fatal methodological errors:

1. It limited literature to reflection alone; that is, it lowered it to the status of a simple servant and transmitter of other ideologies, almost completely ignoring the independently meaningful reality of the literary work, its ideological independence and originality.

2. It took the reflection of the ideological purview to be the direct reflection of existence itself, of life itself. It did not take into account the fact that the literary reflects only the ideological horizon, which itself is only the refracted reflection of real existence. To reveal the world depicted by the artist is not to penetrate into the actual reality of life.

3. It finalized and dogmatized basic ideological points reflected by the artist in his work, thus turning active and generating problems into ready theses, statements, and philosophical, ethical, political, religious, etc. conclusions. It did not understand or consider the vital fact that the essential content of literature only reflects generating ideologies, only reflects the living process of the generation of the ideological horizon.

The artist has nothing to do with prepared or confirmed theses. These inevitably show up as alien bodies in the work, as tendentious prosisms. Their proper place is in scientific systems, ethical systems, political programs, and the like. Such ready and dogmatic theses have at best only a secondary role in the literary work; they never form the nucleus of its content.

Almost all critics and historians of literature committed these same mistakes with varying degrees of crudeness. The result was that literature, an independent and unique ideology, was equated with other ideologies and vanished in them without a trace. Analysis squeezed the literary work for poor philosophy, superficial sociopolitical declarations, ambiguous ethics, and short-lived religious doctrines. What remained after this squeezing, i.e., the most essential thing, the artistic structure of the literary work, was simply ignored as mere technical support for other ideologies.

And the ideological squeezings themselves were profoundly inadequate in terms of the real content of the works. What had been presented in the living generation and concrete unity of the ideological horizon was put in order,

isolated, and developed into a finished and always disreputable dogmatic structure....

Let us look a bit closer at the interrelationship between the reflected ideological horizon and the artistic structure within the unity of the literary work.

The hero of a novel, for instance, Bazarov of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*,[3] if taken out of the novelistic structure, is not at all a social type in the strict sense, but is only the ideological refraction of a given social type. Socioeconomic historical scholarship defines Bazarov as a *raznochinets*.[4] But he is not a *raznochinets* in his actual being. He is the ideological refraction of a *raznochinets* in the social consciousness of a definite social group, the liberal nobility to which Turgenov belonged. The ideologeme of a *raznochinets* is basically ethical and psychological, and partly philosophical.

The ideologeme of a *raznochinets* is an inseparable element of the unified ideological horizon of the social group to which Turgenev belonged. The image of Bazarov is an oblique document of this ideological horizon. But this image is already a detached and practically worthless document for the socioeconomic history of the fifties and sixties, i.e., worthless as material for the actual study of the historical *raznochinets*.

That is the situation if Bazarov is removed from the artistic structure of the novel. Of course, as a matter of fact, Bazarov is presented to us as a structural element of a literary work and not as an ethical and philosophical ideologeme. And in this is his essential reality for the sociologist.

Bazarov is first of all the 'hero' of a Turgenev novel, i.e., an element of a definite genre type in its concrete realization. The nobleman's ideologeme of a *raznochinets* has a definite artistic function in this realization, first in the plot, then in the theme (in the wide sense of the word), in the thematic problem, and, finally, in the construction of the work in its totality. Here this image is constructed completely differently and has a different function than, say, the image of the hero in classical tragedy.

It is true that this ideologeme of a *raznochinets*, upon entering the novel and becoming a dependent structural element of the artistic whole, in no wise ceases to be an ethical, philosophical ideologeme. On the contrary, it brings to the structure of the novel all its extraartistic ideological meaning, all its seriousness, and the fullness of its ideological responsibility. An ideologeme deprived of its direct meaning, of its ideological bite, cannot enter the artistic structure, for it does not provide precisely what is necessary and constituent to the poetic structure – its full ideological acuity.

But, without losing its direct meaning, the ideologeme, in entering the artistic work, enters into a chemical, not mechanical, relationship with the features of artistic ideology. Its ethical, philosophical spirit becomes an ingredient of poetic spirit, and its ethical-philosophical responsibility is absorbed by the totality of the author's artistic responsibility for the whole of his artistic statement. The latter, of course, is as much a social statement as an

[3] Ivan Turgenev (1818–83), *Fathers and Sons* (1861).

[4] *Raznochinets* is a name given to a member of a new social class which began to appear around the end of the eighteenth century in Russia in response to the development of capitalism. Their education divided them from their class origins: they were upwardly *déclassé*.

ethical, philosophical, political, or any other ideological statement is....

But while distanced from reality and isolated from its pragmatic connections, the social meaning of the artistic content, from another standpoint and in a different social category, rejoins reality and its connections. It does so precisely as an element of the artistic work, the latter being a specific social reality no less real and active than other social phenomena.

Returning to our example, we see that Turgenev's novel is no less real and no less tightly and inseparably woven into the social life of the 1860s as a real factor than a real live *raznochinets* could be, not to mention the nobleman's ideologeme of a *raznochinets*. Its reality as a novel is merely different than the reality of a real *raznochinets.*

So, social meaning which enters the content of a novel or other work, while distanced from reality in one way, compensates by becoming part of social reality in another way, in a different social category. And one must not lose sight of the social reality of the novel due to the reflected and distanced reality of the elements it contains.

The reality of a novel, its contact with actuality, and its role in social life cannot be reduced to the mere reflection of reality in its content. It is part of social life and active in it precisely as a novel and, as such, sometimes has an extremely important place in social reality, a place sometimes no less important than that of the social phenomena it reflects.

The fear of losing touch with the immanent reality of literature for the sake of another reality which is merely reflected in it need not lead to the denial of the latter's presence in the artistic work, as in Russian formalism, or to an underestimation of its structural role in the work, as was the case in European formalism. This is destructive not only from the standpoint of general methodological and sociological interests (relatively) extrinsic to art but also from the standpoint of art itself, for one of its most important and essential structural elements is not fully appreciated, which results in the distortion of its whole structure.

Only Marxism can bring the correct philosophical direction and necessary methodological precision to the problems we have raised. Only Marxism can completely coordinate the specific reality of literature with the ideological horizon reflected in its content, i.e., with other ideologemes. And only Marxism can do so in the unity of social life on the basis of the socioeconomic laws which totally permeate all ideological creation.

Marxism, given the totally sociological nature of all ideological phenomena, including poetic structures, with their purely artistic details and nuances, removes the danger of the fetishization of the work, the danger that the work might be transformed into a meaningless object and artistic perception into the hedonistic 'sensation' of the object,[5] as in our formalism, and also avoids the opposite danger that literature might be made a servant of the other ideologies, the danger of losing touch with the work of art in its artistic specificity.

[5] Medvedev/Bakhtin argues that because formalism denies social meaning to an art work, it can only treat the work hedonistically, as producing a sensory experience in the beholder, or fetishize it as an object of consumption.

III

In addition to being reflected in the content of the artistic work, the ideological horizon exerts a shaping influence on the work as a whole.

The literary work is an immediate part of the literary environment, the aggregate of all the socially active literary works of a given epoch and social group. From a strictly historical point of view the individual literary work is a dependent and therefore actually inseparable element of the literary environment. It occupies a definite place in this environment and is directly determined by its influences. It would be absurd to think that a work which occupies a place in the literary environment could avoid its direct influences or be an exception to its unity and regularity.

But the literary environment itself in its turn is only a dependent and therefore actually inseparable element of the general ideological environment of a given epoch and a given sociological unity. Both in its totality and in each of its elements literature occupies a definite place in the ideological environment, is oriented in it, and defined by its direct influence. In its turn the ideological environment in its totality and in each of its elements is likewise a dependent element of the socioeconomic environment, is determined by it, and is permeated from top to bottom with socioeconomic laws of development.

We thus have a complex system of interconnections and mutual influences. Each element of the system is defined within several unique but interrelated unities.

The work cannot be understood outside the unity of literature. But this whole unity and the individual works which are its elements cannot be understood outside the unity of ideological life. And this last unity, whether it is taken as a whole or as separate elements, cannot be studied outside the unified socioeconomic laws of development.

Thus, in order to reveal and define the literary physiognomy of a given work, one must at the same time reveal its general ideological physiognomy; one does not exist without the other. And, in revealing the latter, we cannot help revealing its socioeconomic nature as well.

The genuine concrete historical study of the artistic work is only possible when all these conditions are observed. Not one of the links of this complete chain in the conception of the ideological phenomenon can be omitted, and there can be no stopping at one link without going on to the next. It is completely inadmissible to study the literary work directly and exclusively as an element of the ideological environment, as if it were the only example of literature instead of an immediate element of the literary world in all its variety. Without understanding the place of the work in literature and its direct dependence on literature, it is impossible to understand its place in the ideological environment.

It is still more inadmissible to omit two links and attempt to understand the work immediately in the socioeconomic environment, as if it were the only example of ideological creation, instead of being primarily oriented in the socioeconomic environment as an inseparable element of the whole of literature and the whole ideological purview.

The extremely complex aims and methods of literary history are defined by all of the above.

Literary history is concerned with the concrete life of the literary work in the unity of the generating literary environment, the literary environment in the generating ideological environment, and the latter, finally, in the generating socioeconomic environment which permeates it. The work of the literary historian should therefore proceed in unbroken interaction with the history of other ideologies and with socioeconomic history....

It cannot, and, of course, should not disturb the Marxist literary historian that the literary work is primarily and most directly determined by literature itself. Marxism fully grants the determining influence of other ideologies on literature. What is more, it assumes the return influence of ideologies on the base itself. Consequently, there is all the more reason why it can and should grant the effect of literature on literature....

To repeat: every literary phenomenon, like every other ideological phenomenon, is simultaneously determined from without (extrinsically) and from within (intrinsically). From within it is determined by literature itself, and from without by other spheres of social life. But, in being determined from within, the literary work is thereby determined externally also, for the literature which determines it is itself determined from without. And being determined from without, it thereby is determined from within, for internal factors determine it precisely as a literary work in its specificity and in connection with the whole literary situation, and not outside that situation. Thus intrinsic turns out to be extrinsic, and the reverse.

This is a simple dialectic. Only crude mechanistic vestiges can account for the truly clumsy, inert, motionless, and irreversible division between 'intrinsic and extrinsic factors' in the development of ideological phenomena which is rather often encountered in Marxist works on literature and other ideologies. And it is the 'intrinsic factor' which is usually suspected of being insufficiently loyal from the sociological point of view!

Any external factor which acts on literature evokes a purely literary effect, and this effect becomes a determining intrinsic factor for the subsequent literary development. And this internal factor itself becomes an external factor for other ideological domains, which will bring their own internal languages to bear on it; this reaction, in turn, will become an extrinsic factor for literature.

But, of course, this whole dialectical opposition of factors takes place within the bounds of the unified sociological laws of development. Nothing in ideological creation goes beyond these laws; they are active in every nook and cranny of the ideological construction. Everything in this process of constant dialectical interaction preserves its individuality. Art does not stop being art, science is always science. And, at the same time, the sociological laws of development do not lose their unity and comprehensive determining force.

The truly scholarly study of literary history can only be built on the basis of this dialectical conception of the individuality and interaction of the various ideological phenomena.

12 Critique of Formalism

In this extract, taken from Parts II and III of *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, Medvedev/Bakhtin sets out the main concepts and methodology of Russian formalist critics in order to demonstrate the fundamental misconceptions and inadequacy of their poetics. *The Formal Method* is written in the more sharply polemical style associated with 'Medvedev' texts. While the positive rigour of a formalist approach to language is acknowledged, their work is more frequently judged 'vague', 'vacillating' and 'naive'. Neither is the critique quite fair in its method; formalist comments tend to be treated as fixed statements of principle and aspects of their work which might counter the objections being brought against it are ignored. However, while all the major problems involved in the formalist poetics are ruthlessly identified, the vigour of the style implies respect for opponents who are taken seriously.

Medvedev/Bakhtin's argument, as presented here, falls into five parts. Part I describes the development of formalism as a response to new ideas about language expressed by contemporary poets. Symbolist poetry rejected the everyday referential and communicative meaning of words, attempting instead to reach a more mystical, symbolic expression. Words should not be used by poets to inform or argue but to construct an artistic object – a poem – which conveys its own unique self-sufficient meaning. Futurist poets, with whom the formalists were most closely associated, went beyond this, rejecting meaning altogether in favour of the material presence of the word as sound and visual image. The influence of these ideas upon formalist critics had the positive effect of directing their attention to poetic craftsmanship, but also resulted in a damagingly negative emphasis at the centre of their approach: the poetic word was the old word with meaning subtracted.

Part II identifies the basic flaw in formalism as its unmethodological adoption of 'poetic language' in general as the object of their study; only later were the concepts derived from this notion applied to specific literary constructions like poems, novels, etc. But what the formalists failed to recognize was that 'poetic language' is not a language system like, for example, Russian language; poetic elements are not the same as linguistic components. What is poetic in any verbal construction cannot be recognized by linguistic analysis. What is more, any expression can be perceived as poetic in certain circumstances. By defining poetic language in terms of its difference from practical everyday language, formalism could only perceive poetic language negatively as 'different from'; thus they could not account for artistic creativity. Poetic language can only 'make strange' an already-existing practical language.

Part III subjects practical language to a similar critique. Not only is it a misleadingly oversimplified view of language but, as defined by formalism, the concept of practical language is also deprived of any capacity to generate new meanings. Part IV deals with the application of formalist ideas to the novel, identifying the problems which arise from their attempt to reformulate 'form' and 'content' in the new terms of 'device' and 'material'. Part V acknowledges that the formalists were correct in identifying the relationship

of form and meaning as the central issue for a poetics. However, they failed to recognize that what links the material form (sound, visual image, etc.) of a specific verbal construction to the general system of meaning is its social realization in a particular situation. Only this can endow the words with the accent or intonation of social evaluation and it is this which transforms phonetic, grammatical and linguistic structures into actualized meaning as opposed to an abstract system with signifying potential.

From M. M. Bakhtin and P. N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, 1928.

Trans. A. J. Wehrle, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Md., 1978.

I

The environment which actually nourished formalism in its first period was contemporary poetry, the changes which took place within it, and the theoretical battle of opinions which accompanied these changes. These theoretical opinions, expressed in artistic programs, declarations, and declarative articles, were not a part of scholarship, but of literature itself, directly serving the artistic interests of the various struggling schools and movements.

The most radical currents of literary art and the most radical aspirations associated with this art determined formalism. Here the major role belonged to futurism and then to Velimir Khlebnikov first of all.[1]

The influence of futurism on formalism was so great that had the latter ended with the OPOIAZ collections the formal method would only have become a subject of literary scholarship as a theoretical program of one of the branches of futurism.[2]

This is the most important difference between our formalism and West European formalism. In order to comprehend the importance of this difference it is enough to imagine what would have resulted if the Western formalists, Hildebrand, Wölfflin, and others, had been directly oriented toward constructivism and suprematism![3]

[1] Velimir Khlebnikov (1885–1922), whose poem 'Incantation to Laughter' (1910), composed of forms of the word '*smekh*' (laughter), has been seen as the beginning of futurist poetry in Russia.

[2] The title formed from the words of the formalist 'Society for the Study of Poetic Language': 'Obshchestvo izucheniia poeticheskogo iazyka'.

[3] Heinrich Wölfflin (1864–1945), *Basic Concepts of the History of Art* (1928); Adolf von Hildebrand (1847–1921), *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture* (1983). These two books were influential in formulating the basic ideas of European formalism. Hildebrand argued that the meaning of a work of art resided wholly within its own structure and that the task of critics was to reveal the constructive unity of the work. Suprematism was an art movement founded by artist Casimir Malevich; it was non-representational, using geometric shapes and stark colour.

Victor Shklovskii's expression 'the resurrection of the word' best defines the spirit of early formalism.[4] The formalists led the captive word out of prison.

However they were not the first to resurrect it. We know that the symbolists already spoke of a cult of the word. And the direct predecessors of the formalists, the acmeists or Adamists, also were resurrectors of the word.[5]

It was symbolism that propounded the self-valuableness [*samotsennost'*] and constructive nature of the poetic word. The symbolists strove to combine the constructive nature of the word with a most intense ideological nature. This is the reason that in symbolism the self-valuable word figures in the context of such elevated concepts as myth and the ideoglyph (V. Ivanov), magic (K. Balmont), mystery (the early Briusov), magianism (F. Sologub), the language of the gods, and so on.[6]

The word for them is a symbol. The concept of the symbol was to satisfy the aim of combining the constructive self-value of the word with the full weight of its semantic ideological significance.

The symbolist word neither represents nor expresses. It signifies. Unlike representation and expression, which turn the word into a conventional signal for something external to itself, this 'signification' [*znamenovanie*] preserves the concrete material fullness of the word, at the same time raising its semantic meaning to the highest degree.

Although this aim was correctly formulated, symbolism lacked the grounds necessary to methodologically substantiate and attain it. The aim was too tightly interwoven with the narrowly ideological passing interests of a definite literary movement. Nevertheless, the statement of the aim and its generally correct formulation (the synthesis of constructive significance and semantic fullness) could not help but have a beneficial influence on poetics.

To the formalists the resurrection of the word did not merely mean freeing it from all elevated accents and hierarchical significance. Particularly in their early period it specifically meant the elimination of the ideological meaning of the word.

To the formalists a word is just a word and, first and foremost, its phonetic empirical material and concrete nature. They wanted to save this sensual minimum of the word from being overburdened and completely absorbed by lofty meaning, as it was under symbolism.

For the formalists the resurrection of the word amounted to the full materialization of the word, and in this it is difficult to miss the deep, organic connection with futurism.

It was quite natural that formalism's first task was to battle with symbolism.

Eikhenbaum writes: 'The basic slogan uniting the initial group of formalists

[4] Viktor Shklovsky (1893–1985), one of the most active founders of the Russian formalists.

[5] Symbolism is associated with French poetry at the end of the nineteenth century, especially that of Stéphane Mallarmé, Jules Laforgue and Paul Verlaine; the Russian acmeists like Osip Mandelstam and Anna Akhmatova moved away from symbolism in a search for a 'beautiful clarity' by means of sharply specific images.

[6] Viacheslav Ivanov (1866–1949), Konstantin Balmont (1867–1942), Valery Briusov (1873–1924), Fedor Sologub (1863–1927) are Russian symbolist poets and writers, influenced by religious and philosophical thinking.

was the emancipation of the word from the shackles of the philosophical and religious tendencies with which the symbolists were possessed to an ever increasing degree.'[7]

In addition to this negative aspect of 'the resurrection of the word', which was polemically directed against symbolist poetics and also partly against the 'thematics' and 'moralizing' of journalistic and philosophical criticism, there was another, positive aspect, which formalism also shared with futurism.

This was the tendency to find new artistic effects in those elements of the word which seemed vulgar, second-class, and almost artistically indifferent to the symbolists, namely, its phonetic, morphological, and syntactic structures taken independently of meaning. It was discovered that one could play an aloof esthetic game with words taken as grammatical units and transrational sound images and create new artistic combinations from them.

The futurists, particularly Velimir Khlebnikov, provided practical examples of such grammatical games, and the formalists were their theoreticians.

The Nihilistic Slant of Formalism

The first, negative aspect of the formalists' 'resurrection of the word', which had brought the word down from its symbolist heights, had great significance. It was particularly important during the first period of Russian formalism. It was precisely here that the nihilistic tone of all formalist statements finds its origin.

The formalists do not so much find something new in the word as expose and do away with the old.

The basic formalist concepts of this period – transrational language [*zaum*], 'making its strange' [*ostranenie*], device, material – are completely infused with this tendency.

Indeed, transrational language was not proposed by those possessed with the 'spirit of music', or those intoxicated with the rhythms and sounds of poetry, as were Balmont, Blok, and the early Briusov.[8] The formalists learned to value the sound in the phonetic laboratories of Jan Baudovin de Courtenay and L. V. Shcherba.[9] They made the sober sound of experimental phonetics the transrational language of poetry and contrasted it to the meaningful word....

The negative aspect of 'making it strange' [*ostranenie*] is just as strong as that of transrational language. Its original definition, far from emphasizing the enrichment of the word with new and positive constructive meaning, sim-

[7] Boris M. Eikhenbaum (1886–1959), a leading Russian formalist. (Eikhenbaum, 'Teoriia', *Literatura*, p. 120; *Théorie de la littérature*, p. 39 – author's note.)

[8] Aleksandr Blok (1880–1921) is one of the most highly considered of the Russian symbolists. A notion of 'the spirit of music' derived from Nietzche is important to his work (trans. note).

[9] Jan Baudovin de Courtenay (1845–1929) was a professor at Petersburg University who shifted attention from diachronic to synchronic aspects of language. Lev Vladimirovich Shcherba (1880–1944) was his student who continued his work on the functional aspects of speech (trans. note).

ply emphasizes the negation of the old meaning. The novelty and strangeness of the word and the object it designates originates here, in the loss of its previous meaning. . . .

In early formalism the concept of 'deautomatization of the word' was closely connected with 'making it strange'.

The negative tone is also dominant in this concept: deautomatization is primarily understood as abstraction from semantic context.

The same is true of the formalist definition of the device.

Shklovskii's 'Art as Device' is probably the most typical article of early formalism.

It is a truism that art is a device or system of devices. But the idea of Shklovskii's article is that art is *only* a device.

The device is constantly contrasted to meaning, thought, artistic truth, social content, etc. All of these do not exist for Shklovskii; there is only the naked device. A polemical and even mocking tone penetrates the very nucleus of this basic formalist concept.

Thus the formalists attained their 'discoveries' in a rather unique way: by subtracting various essential aspects from the word and other elements of the artistic work. The new constructive meaning appears as the result of these purely negative acts of subtraction and elimination.

It goes without saying that the word without meaning looks new, looks different than the meaningful word. Certainly the idea with no pretensions to truth looks different than the normal idea which strives toward cognition.

But, of course, such subtraction cannot gain anything positive, new, or profitable.

This negative, nihilistic slant of formalism shows the tendency common to all nihilism to add nothing to reality, but, on the contrary, to diminish, impoverish, and emasculate it, and by doing so attain a new and original impression of reality.

The exclusively polemical emphasis of all these positions and definitions played a sorry and fatal role in the history of formalism.

It is inevitable that every new scholarly movement engage in polemics with preceding trends in order to defend its positive program. This is natural and proper.

But it is bad if polemic changes from a secondary concern to what is practically the main and only concern, if polemic penetrates every term, definition, and formulation of the new movement. In such a case the new doctrine is too tightly and inseparably tied to that which it negates and rejects, with the result that it finally turns into the simple opposite of the doctrine it has negated, into a purely reactive formation.

This was the case with formalism.

The polemical negation that penetrated their definitions caused the artistic construction itself to become, in their theory, a thoroughly polemical construction, every element of which only realizes its constructive purpose by being polemically directed at and negating something.

The basic aim of poetics – to reveal the constructive significance of the literary work and each of its elements – was therefore radically distorted. Constructive unity was purchased at the high price of the distortion of the whole intrinsic meaning of the poetic fact.

The essence of poetics directly depends upon mastering the concrete and material unity of the poetic construction without losing its full semantic meaning and ideological significance. All of this meaning should be included in the concrete construction, materialized in it, so that the whole construction in all its concreteness can be understood as meaningful. In this is the essence and the difficulty of the task before poetics.

By way of the subtraction of meaning the formalists attained, not the poetic structure, but rather some chimerical production, something midway between a physical phenomenon and a consumer good. Subsequently, their theory had to strike a balance between pure naturalism and hedonism. . . .

The positive side of the formalists' 'resurrection of the word' was mainly their sharpened interest in the poet as craftsman and in craftsmanship in poetry.

It is true that the nihilistic tone gets in the way here too. In their first period, the formalists would never have said 'A poet is a craftsman', but rather 'A poet is *only* a craftsman'.

Nevertheless, the research into the phonetic (mainly qualitative) structure of poetry, which had begun with the symbolists (A. Belyi,[10] V. Briusov), was carried to a higher scholarly level by the formalists.

The external design of the artistic work (composition, plot formation) had hardly been studied in Russian literary scholarship. The formalists were almost the first to make it the subject of serious research. But it is significant that in this research too the accent was on negation and depreciation.

The artistic work is not only created, but also made. But for the formalists it is only made.

It is necessary to note, however, that in the first period of its development formalism was primarily concerned with the qualitative analysis of the phonetic composition of the artistic work. . . .

II

The Russian formal method is a consistent and sustained method for the conception of literature and the methods by which it is studied, a system permeated by one spirit which inculcates definite and persistent ways of thinking in its adherents. It is possible to recognize a formalist in the first words of a paper or the first pages of an article.

The formalists are not eclectics and in their basic modes of thought are not at all empiricists or positivists, whom one can neither see nor recognize behind a mass of facts and observations that are both too narrow and too random.

Russian formalism is not only a unified system of views but also a special way of thinking, even a particular style of scholarly exposition.

It is true that formalism as an organic study, a single way of thinking and writing, is to a certain extent a fact of the past.

However, formalism is not a fact of the past in the sense that it simply ceased to exist. In fact, the opposite is true. The number of its adherents has

[10] Andrei Bely (1880–1934), Russian poet, novelist and mystic.

perhaps even increased, and in the hands of epigones it has become even more systematic, undeviating, and precise.

Formalism has ceased to exist in the sense that it no longer leads to the further development of the system, and the system no longer pushes its creators forward. On the contrary, it is necessary to react against it in order to move forward again. And this reaction must be against formalism as a whole and consistent system, the form in which it continues to exist as a breaking factor in the personal development of the formalists themselves.

The creators of this system, their talents and their temperaments, remain. And to a significant degree their modes of thought are still with us. But the majority of them already feel this system to be a burden and are striving to overcome it; each, however, in his own way, as we have seen.

In vain do the formalists say that their method is evolving. That is not so. Each of the individual formalists is evolving, but their system is not. In fact, the evolution of the formalists themselves is taking place at the expense of the system, at the expense of its dissolution, and is only productive to that extent.

The actual, complete evolution of the formalists will be the death of formalism.

It is at the formal method as a unified and consistent system that criticism must be directed....

The very name 'formal method', it must be admitted, is completely unsuccessful, and falsely characterizes the very essence of the formalist system.... In actual fact, the formalists are not methodologists like the neo-Kantians, for whom the method of cognition is something sufficient in itself and independent of the object.... Here the formalist position is generally correct. For them method is a dependent and secondary value. Method must be adapted to the distinctive features of the object being studied. Method is not good in itself, but only in so far as it is adequate to those features and able to master them. The main thing is the object of study and its specific organization.

However, one must not go too far to the other extreme and neglect method.

This is the formalists' mistake. In the majority of cases their methodology is very naive.

Method must of course be adapted to the object. On the other hand, without a definite method there can certainly be no approach to the object. It is necessary to be able to isolate the object of study and correctly make note of its important features. These distinctive features are not labeled. Other movements see other aspects of the object as distinctive features....

The formalists did not isolate the construction of the poetic work as the primary object of study. They made 'poetic language' the specific object of their research. It was no accident that the formalists formed the 'Society for the Study of Poetic Language' ['Obshchestvo izucheniia poeticheskogo iazyka,' OPOIAZ].

In place of the study of poetic constructions and the constructive functions of their various elements, the formalists studied poetic language and its elements. Poetic language is here an object of research *sui generis*; it cannot be likened to the work or its construction.

Such was the primary object of formalist study.

They then developed and applied special devices to the definition of the specific characteristics of this object (poetic language). Here the methods of specification that subsequently became typical of formalism were assembled and defined for the first time. Here the formalists constructed the basic concepts of their system and required their characteristic modes of thought.

When the formalists made the transition to the study of the closed poetic construction, they brought along the features of poetic language and the devices they had used to study it. Their conception of the constructive functions of the elements of the poetic work was predetermined by their characterization of the elements of poetic language. The poetic construction had to illustrate the theory of poetic language they had already developed.

The basic elements of the artistic construction and their constructive meanings were thus defined as elements of a unique system of poetic language.

Thus, the poetic phoneme and its functions were first defined, and then motif and plot were defined as elements of poetic language.

It was with the problem of plot [*suizhet*] that the formalists completed the transition from poetic language to the poetic construction of the work. This transition was gradual and extremely vague methodologically.[11]

The basic definitions of the two components of the poetic construction – 'material' and 'device' – were developed in the process of this vacillating transition from the language system to the study of the construction of the work. These concepts were to replace 'content' and 'form'. The hidden logic behind the further development and detailing of 'material' and 'device' was completely determined by their polemical juxtaposition to 'content' and 'form', to such an extent, in fact, that they became the converse of the concepts they had banished from poetics.

Under the aegis of this hidden polemic and juxtaposition the constructive significance of the material and device was differentiated into the theories of theme, plot, and composition.

These concluded the system of the basic concepts and devices of formalist poetics....

The foundation of the whole formalist method is its theory of poetic language.

What is this theory and what devices are used to define its distinctive features?

The first question that arises concerns the possibility and permissibility of the task itself – the definition of poetic language and its laws.

The very concept of a special system of poetic language is methodologically extremely complex, confused, and controversial.

It is certainly immediately obvious that the term 'language' is being used in a special way here, that we do not speak of poetic language in the same way that we speak of French, German, dialects of the Russian language, etc.

This is not a dialectological concept of language, one which might be

[11] In an authorial note, this transition is traced from Shklovsky's article 'Art as a Device' (1917) to Eikhenbaum's 'How Gogol's *The Overcoat* is Made'.

obtained by the methods of dialectology. For instance, if we determined the dialectological features of the Russian literary language (the Moscow dialect, Church Slavonicisms, etc.), the linguistic reality we would obtain, the Russian literary language, would have nothing to do with the system of poetic language and would not bring us one step closer to the concept.

This becomes particularly clear when the literary language of a people is a foreign tongue, Latin in medieval Europe, for example. Latin was the special language of poetry, but was not poetic language. The difference between these two concepts, their absolute methodological divergence, is obvious. Another language of poetry, for example, the Latin of medieval Germany, is not different in the sense of poetic language, but different as Latin. But in formulating the problem of poetic language the formalists played extremely naively with the ambiguity of the concept of 'another language'. We will take an example from Shklovskii. He says:

> According to Aristotle, poetic language must have an alien, surprising nature; in practice this means it is often foreign: Sumerian among the Assyrians, Latin in medieval Europe, Arabic among the Persians, Old Bulgarian as the basis for the Russian literary language; or it is heightened language, such as that of folk songs, which is close to literary language. The widespread archaisms of poetic language are relevant here, and the 'made-difficult' language of the *dolce stil nuovo* (XII), the language of Arnaut Daniel,[12] with its obscure style and made-difficult [*harte*] forms which cause difficulties in pronunciation (Diez, *Leben und Werke der Troubadour*, p. 213). In his article L. Iakubinskii proved the rule according to which the phonetics of pure language are made difficult by the repetition of identical sounds....
>
> At present an even more characteristic phenomenon is taking place. The Russian literary language, which is of non-Russian origin, has so penetrated the people that it has brought to its level much in the way of popular speech, and literature, in return, has begun to exhibit a liking for dialects..., and barbarisms.... Thus popular speech and literary language have changed places (Viacheslav Ivanov and many others). Finally, there appeared a strong tendency toward the creation of a new, special poetic language; this school, as we know, was led by Velimir Khlebnikov.

Here we find a continual naive confusion of the linguistic definition of language (Sumerian, Latin) with its poetic significance ('heightened language'), confusion of dialectological characteristics (Church Slavonicisms, popular dialects) with the poetic functions of language. The author consistently tightropes from one concept to the other, led on by vague and naive confidence that linguistic definitions and poetic qualities can coincide, that poetic properties can be posited in language itself as well as in the linguistic datum.

In the final analysis, the author is led by the futurist belief in the possibility of the creation of a new, special poetic language, which would be another language linguistically and, thereby, according to the same indices [*priznaki*], also a poetic language. That is, in it the linguistic indices of a particular language (phonetic, morphological, lexical, etc. indices) would coincide with the poetic indices. This is no less naive than the idea that the artistic characteristics of a painting could be determined by chemical analysis.

If the futurists had succeeded in creating a linguistically new language, it

[12] Arnaut Daniel (fl. 1180–1200), Provençal poet.

would only have become poetic to the extent that it became a basis for the creation of poetic constructions. Only the constructive function would make it poetic language. Outside the artistic structure, as a special language, it would be as external to poetry as French, German, and other languages.

What is more, Shklovskii raises considerations which overturn his own views. If popular speech and literary language have changed places, it directly follows that the matter does not concern the dialectological characteristics of popular speech and literary language. In themselves, these characteristics are completely indifferent and only acquire significance depending on a definite artistic assignment or the definite demands of the poetic construction. These demands have changed, and other linguistic characteristics have become preferable. One can *a priori* admit that the artistic demands of some literary movement might prefer a language other than its own. The very 'foreignness' of this language acquires its functional significance in the artistic construction. Nevertheless, this foreign language will not be poetic language, and no analysis of its linguistic characteristics as language will bring us one step closer to an understanding of the characteristics of the poetic structure.

Shklovskii's methodological confusion over the concept of poetic language is typical of all the members of OPOIAZ. They did not see the methodological difficulty and profound ambiguity of this concept....

It is necessary to see language as a closed poetic construction in order to speak of it as a single system of poetic language. According to this understanding, the conditions and elements of language turn out to be poetic elements having definite constructive functions.

Of course, the notion that language is a closed artistic construction is absolutely inadmissible. However, it is this very notion that is tacitly and unconsciously proposed in the formalist theory of poetic language....

Language acquires poetic characteristics only in the concrete poetic construction. These characteristics do not belong to language in its linguistic capacity, but to the construction, whatever its form may be. The most elementary everyday utterance or apt expression may be perceived artistically in certain circumstances. Even an individual word may be perceived as a poetic utterance – only, of course, under certain circumstances in which it is related to a definite background and supplied with a theme or other elements.

But one cannot disengage oneself from the forms and the concrete organization of the utterance without losing the indices of poetry. These indices belong to the organizational forms of language within the bounds of the concrete utterance or the poetic work. Only the utterance can be beautiful, just as only the utterance can be true or false, bold or timid, etc. All of these definitions only pertain to the organization of the utterance and work in connection with the functions they fulfill in the unity of social life and, in particular, in the concrete unity of the ideological horizon.

Linguistics, while building the concepts of language and its syntactic, morphological, lexical, etc. elements, digresses from the organizational forms of concrete utterances and their socioideological functions. Therefore, the language of linguistics and linguistic elements are indifferent to cognitive truth, poetic beauty, political correctness, and so on.

Such an abstraction is completely permissible and necessary, and is dictated by the cognitive and practical goals of linguistics itself. Without it the

concept of language as a system could not be developed. Therefore, it is possible and necessary to study the functions of language and its elements within the poetic construction, as well as its functions in the various types of everyday utterances, oratorical addresses, scholarly formulations, and so on. It is true that this study must be guided by linguistics, but it will not be linguistic.[13] Only the forms and goals of corresponding ideological formations are able to provide guiding principles for the selection and evaluation of linguistic elements. But such a study of the functions of language in poetry is radically different from the study of 'poetic language' as a special language system.

The formalists uncritically projected the constructive features of the poetic work into the system of language and transferred the linguistic elements of language directly into the poetic construction. This led to the incorrect orientation of poetics toward linguistics – in a veiled or overt form, to a greater or lesser degree.

Iakubinskii's article 'On the Poetic Combination of Glossemes' is quite typical in this respect.[14] Iakubinskii begins from the breakdown of speech into phonemes, morphemes, syntagmas, and sememes, and proposes that this breakdown is essential to the poetic construction as well. He supposes that the poetic work is purposely oriented toward phonemes, morphemes, and so on. Therefore, he ascribes an independent poetic meaning to the creative combinations of these elements, i.e., to combinations of pure grammatical forms.

The breakdown of language into phonetic, morphological, etc. elements is important and essential from the point of view of linguistics. As a system, language is really made of these elements. But it does not follow from this that morphemes, phonemes, and other linguistic categories are independent constructive elements of the poetic work, that poetic works are also made of grammatical forms.

Of course, Iakubinskii is wrong. It is necessary to disengage oneself from the actual constructive forms of the poetic work and from its ideological significance and to look at it with the eyes of a linguist to detect glosseme combinations in it. The linguistic analysis of a poetic work has no criteria for separating what is poetically significant from what is not. Within the bounds of such an analysis there is absolutely no way to judge the extent to which the linguistic elements isolated are elements of the poetic construction itself....

The formalists began with the juxtaposition of two language systems – poetic and practical (communicative) language. Their major task was to prove this juxtaposition. This naked juxtaposition determined once and for all not only the basis of their method but also their habits of thought and observation, by inculcating in them the ineradicable tendency to seek and to find everywhere only dissimilarity, only unlikeness.

'The creation of scholarly poetics must begin with the recognition, supported by massive factual material, of the fact that there exist "prosaic" and "poetic" languages, the laws of which are different, and with the analysis of

[13] Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), a leading formalist, developed an idea of the poetic function in language very similar to this.

[14] Iakubinskii, 'O poeticheskom glossemosochetanii', *Poetika* (1919), (trans. note).

these differences,' writes Shklovskii.[15] This definition of the distinctive features of poetic language was developed in such a way that each of the basic indices of communicative language would have an opposite sign in poetic language.

The basic concepts of formalism – 'transrational language', 'deautomatization', 'deformation', 'deliberately difficult form' [*zatrudnennaia forma*], and others – are merely negations corresponding to various indices of practical, communicative language.

In practical, communicative language the meaning of the communication (content) is the most essential element. Everything else is a means to this end.

According to formalism, on the contrary, in poetic language the expression itself, i.e., the verbal shell of meaning, becomes the end, and meaning is either eliminated altogether (transrational language), or becomes only a means, the indifferent material of a philological game.

'Poetry,' says Roman Jakobson, 'is nothing other than utterance oriented toward expression.... Poetry is indifferent to the object of the utterance'.[16]

Whatever the formalist term we choose, we will become convinced that it was obtained by the same way of thinking. All that it will provide is the negation of some positive aspect of practical language. Thus, the formalists did not define poetic language by what it is, but by what it is not.

This method of studying poetic language by 'making it strange' is absolutely unjustified methodologically.

This 'method' does not help us find out what poetic language is in itself, but rather what it differs from, how it is unlike practical language. All that results from the formalist analysis is a thorough selection of the differences between the two language systems. This analysis excludes likenesses between the two systems, as well as those aspects of poetic language neutral or indifferent to the juxtaposition.

This listing of chance differences between poetic and practical language is based on the tacit premise that it is precisely these differences that are important. But such a premise can hardly be deemed obvious. There is just as much justification to assert the opposite, that only the similarities are important, and the differences are completely unimportant....

The application of this methodologically impermissible method inevitably transforms the phenomenon being described into the actual converse of the basis of the difference. Difference is, so to speak, ontologized, and the whole content of the phenomenon being described is reduced to the striving to be unlike the basis and negate it at any cost.

And this is what happened. Poetic language became the converse and parasite of practical language.

Indeed, let us look closely at the distinctive features of poetic language as defined by the formalists.

If one scrutinizes the series of negative descriptions developed by the formalists, a certain system becomes apparent. All descriptions are reducible to one center, are subordinate to one person, which is best defined in the words

[15] Shklovskii, *Poetika* (1919), p. 6 (author's note).
[16] Jakobson, *The Latest Russian Poetry* (Prague, 1921) p. 10, (trans. note).

of Shklovskii: 'to make the construction of lanaguage perceptible' [*sdelat' oshchutimym postroenie iazyka*]. This theory is still the cornerstone of formalism, although it subsequently grew more complicated and acquired new terminological aspects.

Here is Shklovskii's definition of poetic speech:

> In our studies of the lexical and phonetic composition of poetic speech, of word order, and of the semantic structures of poetic speech, we everywhere came upon the same index of the artistic: that it is purposely created to deautomatize the perception, that the goal of its creation is that it be seen, that the artistic is artificially created so that perception is arrested in it and attains the greatest possible force and duration, so that the thing is perceived, not spatially, but, so to speak, in its continuity. These conditions are met by 'poetic language'.... Thus we arrive at the definition of poetry as speech that is braked [*zatormozhennyt*], distorted. Poetic speech is a speech construction. And prose is usual speech: economical, easy, correct (*dea prosae* is the goddess of normal, easy births, of the nondistorted position of the infant).[17]

An important stage in the development of this position was Tynianov's theory of the dynamic construction of poetic language,[18] which he conceived of as the continuous disruption of automatization by means of the domination of one factor of the language construction and the associated deformation of the other factors. For example, the domination of the matrical factor deforms the syntactic and semantic factors.

According to Tynianov, poetic language is the constant struggle of its various factors – sound, rhythm, syntax, semantics. Each factor puts obstacles and hindrances in the way of others, thereby creating the perceptibility of the speech structure.

This is the basic definition of poetic language. All the other negative characteristics serve this supreme aim, the perceptibility of the construction, its deautomatization. They do so, of course, in a purely negative way, by subtracting meaning, by 'making it difficult', by piling up obstacles, by intrusive repetitions.

All of the preceding led the formalists to an important and fatal conclusion: if the only difference between poetic and practical language is that the construction of the former is perceptible owing to the negative devices enumerated above, then poetic language is absolutely unproductive and uncreative.

Indeed, according to the formalists, poetic language is only able to 'make strange' and deautomatize that which has been created in other language systems. It does not create new constructions itself. Poetic language only forces the perception of the already created, but imperceptible and automatized, construction. Poetic language must wait while practical language, governed by its own goals and intentions, deigns to create some new speech construction and then wait until it becomes ordinary, automatized. Only then is it allowed to appear on the scene and triumphantly lead the construction out of automatization. This is the parasitic existence to which formalist theory condemns poetic language....

In this regard, Shklovskii's statement about rhythm is quite characteristic.

[17] Shklovskii, 'Iskusstvo kak priem', *O teorii prozo*, pp. 21–22; *Théorie de la littérature*, p. 94–96 (author's note).

[18] Iury Tynianov (1894–1943), a formalist critic.

Rhythm, it turns out, is not created by poetry. He supposes the existence of two rhythms, prosaic and poetic:

> The rhythm of prose is, on the one hand, the rhythm of the work song, the 'dubinushka', and replaces the order to 'heave-ho'; but, on the other hand, it makes work easier, automatizes it. And it actually is easier to walk to music than without it, but it is also easier to walk during animated conversation, when the act of walking becomes unconscious. Thus, prosaic rhythm is important as an automatizing factor. But the rhythm of poetry is different. There is 'order' in art, but no column of a Greek temple precisely fits the requirements of a particular order; artistic rhythm is prosaic rhythm disrupted. Attempts have already been made to systematize these disruptions. This is the present purpose of rhythmic theory. One may assume that this systematization will not be successful. Indeed, what is involved is not the complication of rhythm, but its disruption, and, moreover, disruption that cannot be predicted. If the disruption is canonized, the device loses its power to 'make it difficult'.[19]

Everything in this quotation is typical to the highest degree.

The basic tendency of formalism is vividly exposed here. It turns out that artistic rhythm is prosaic rhythm disrupted. The only plus of art is disruption. The aim of poetics is to systematize disruption. This includes a profound indifference to all meaningfulness, not only of the content, but of the form itself: it is all the same, what is disrupted, and how, because the disruption cannot even be predicted. Art is reduced to empty combinations of forms whose purpose is purely psychotechnical: to make something perceptible, no matter what it is or how.

This basic tendency of formalism continues to live even now, although it no longer appears in such a vivid, naked form. . . .

III

But what is this practical language, the negation and deformation of which account for the parasitical existence of poetic language? How did the formalists arrive at it?

The formalists saw none of the difficulties of the concept of practical language. They immediately took it as self-evident.

Meanwhile, the problem with practical language is the same as with poetic language; the same difficulties and equivocations appear here.

There is no need to consider practical language a special language system. What is more, while one can and should speak of the functions of language in the poetic construction, the analogous aim with respect to the practical construction is exceptionally complicated.

We know that no practical construction exists, and that the utterances of life, the reality that underlies the nature of language's communicative functions, are formed in various ways, depending on the different spheres and goals of social intercourse. The formal differences between individual practical communicative constructions can be even more profound and important than those between a scientific and a poetic work.

The painstaking and arduous analysis of the various types of speech perfor-

[19] Shklovskii, 'Iskusstvo kak priem', *O teorii prozo*, pp. 22–23; *Théorie de la littérature*, p. 97 (author's note).

mance and the corresponding forms of utterance from all spheres of practical interchange and practice is absolutely necessary if one is to be able to speak of the functions of language in any of the types of communicative construction.[20] Moreover, it is constantly necessary to keep in mind all the social characteristics of the communicating groups and all the concrete complexity of the ideological horizon – concepts, beliefs, customs, etc. – within which each practical utterance is formed. Contemporary linguistics is only beginning to approach this most difficult problem of speech communication in the schools of Vossler and the philosopher Benedetto Croce.[21]

Linguistics formed its concept of language and its elements for its own theoretical and practical purposes, in complete abstraction from the characteristics of diverse practical constructions and from the characteristics of the poetic construction as well.

Such features of language as precision, economy, deceit, tact, caution, etc. cannot, of course, be attributed to language itself, just as poetic indices cannot be attributed to it. All these definitions do not pertain to language, but to definite constructions and are completely determined by the conditions and goals of intercourse.

If we take the word 'communicative' in its widest and most general sense, then every language and utterance is communicative. Every utterance is oriented on intercourse, on the hearer, on the reader, in a word, on another person, on social intercourse of any kind whatever. Every word, as such, is involved in intercourse and cannot be torn away from it without ceasing to be a word of language. The formalists' 'orientation toward expression' (Jakobson), 'transrational language', and the 'self-valuable word' are all communicative in this general sense, because all these forms presuppose a hearer and are all elements of social intercourse (granted, of a special type) to the same extent as telling someone what time it is. The various differences between these two types of intercourse, constructive and otherwise, are completely within the sphere of general linguistic communication.

Understood, in this wide sense, communication is a constitutive element of language as such. . . .

The whole problem, as we said, did not arise for the formalists. So what is their conception of practical language and its features: 'automatization of the means of speech', 'speech economy', 'disregard for sound', etc.?

Practical language and its features were a completely arbitrary construction of the formalists themselves.

It is true that there is some sort of language reality at the bottom of this construction. Certain types of the practical utterances of business and everyday speech interchange of the contemporary city bourgeoisie correspond to the formalists' descriptions to a certain, admittedly small, degree. But, even in this milieu, as soon as intercourse becomes more substantial and the philological performance becomes more responsible (even if only within the bounds of family life and salon communication), the formalists' descriptions

[20] For more extensive commentary on speech performance, see *Reader*, p. 80–7.

[21] Karl Vossler (1872–1942), German linguist and philosopher; Benedetto Croce (1866–1952), Italian philosopher of aesthetics and cultural history.

seem extremely simplified, one-sided, and schematic.

In addition, the formalists' descriptions in part correspond to another type of speech intercourse which is, however, not practical, everyday language in the true sense of the word. We have in mind interchange in the narrowly technical, industrial, and business sense. Here, under certain definite conditions, forms of expression are worked out that to a certain extent correspond to the formalists' descriptions: a word is a command, a symbol, information. Here the word is a completely inseparable element of the productive process or of some other business, and its functions cannot be understood without an understanding of the characteristics of the given process. Here the word may be immediately replaced by a signal or symbol of another type.

In general, it is possible to state that where speech communication is completely formed and has a fixed, frozen character, and where the content being communicated is also ready so that all that is involved is its transmission from one person to another within the bounds of set, generated intercourse, then the utterance to a certain extent corresponds to the formalist description. But such cases are far from typical for practical speech interchange.

In reality, practical intercourse is constantly generating, although slowly and in a narrow sphere. The interrelationships between speakers are always changing, even if the degree of change is hardly noticeable. In the process of this generation, the content being generated also generates. Practical interchange carries the nature of an event, and the most insignificant philological exchange participates in this incessant generation of the event. The word lives its most intense life in this generation, although one different from its life in artistic creation.

Speech tact has a practical importance for practical language communication. The formative and organizing force of speech tact is very great. It gives form to everyday utterances, determining the genre and style of speech performances. Here tact [*taktichnost'*] should be understood in a broad sense, with politeness as only one of its aspects. Tact may have various directions, moving between the two poles of compliment and curse. Speech tact is determined by the aggregate of all the social relationships of the speakers, their ideological horizons, and, finally, the concrete situation of the conversation. Tact, whatever its form under the given conditions, determines all of our utterances. No word lacks tact.

Under certain circumstances, in certain social groups, speech tact creates grounds favoring the formation of utterances having characteristics the formalists consider typical of poetic language: brakings, evasions, ambiguities, crooked speech paths. It is from this source that these phenomena sometimes penetrate the poetic structure, granted, only to its periphery. . . .

Therefore, the formalists' practical language is an arbitrary construction with no definite language reality behind it, except the phenomena we have indicated, which are the least characteristic phenomena which could still be included in the practical language construction by stretching the point.

It is now necessary to take note of yet another aspect of the matter. As we have seen, poetic language, as the formalists understand it, is just a parasite of practical language and merely forces the perception of constructions already created by the latter. But it turns out that the formalists' conception of practical language also deprives that language of all creative potential.

A language that transmits prepared communications within the bounds of fixed, generated intercourse cannot, of course, be creative. The vocabulary, grammar, and even the basic themes are already prepared. All that remains is to combine them, adapting them to circumstances, and to economize the means of expression. Given such presuppositions, there can be no impulses or bases for the creation of anything new. Thus the formalists' poetic language is the parasite of a parasite.

The question arises: where, in this scheme, does the creative enrichment of language take place? Where are its new forms and new content created?

The formalists provide no answers to these questions. The creation of the really new is at a dead end here. There is no place for it in any of the formalists' conceptions. . . .

The basic premises of formalist thinking are such that they only provide the basis for an explanation of regroupings, transferences, and recombinations of material that is already present and completely finished. Not one qualitatively new feature is added to the world of language and literature as given. All that changes are the systems by which the material at hand is combined, and these periodically return, since the number of combinations is limited.

'Deautomatization', 'making-it-strange', 'deformation', etc. – whatever basic concept of formalism one selects – it is obvious that all it has to do with is external arrangement and localized transference, and everything substantial with respect to content, everything qualitative, is assumed to be already at hand. As a result of this, its basic characteristic, formalist thinking is profoundly nonhistorical. The qualitative development of existence and the ideological world that is history is completely inaccessible to formalism. . . .

IV

The 'transrational word' was the most complete expression of both the artistic (futuristic) and theoretical aspirations of the formalists. And it remained for them the expression of that ideal limit to which every artistic construction aspires. . . .

How can the all-determining importance of transrational language in formalist theory be explained?

The ordinary meaningful word does not gravitate toward or completely converge with its material, physical presence. It has significance and is consequently directed at an object, at meaning, which is located extrinsic to the word. But the transrational word completely coincides with itself. It leads nowhere beyond its boundaries; it is simply present here and now, as an organized material body.

The fear of meaning, which, with its 'not here' and 'not now' is able to destroy the material nature of the work and the fullness of its presence in here and now, is the fear which determines the poetic phonetics of the formalists. This fear motivated the formalists' attempts to establish a reverse proportionality between meaning, with its general, extratemporal 'othertimeness', and the material presence of the integral 'work-object' [*proizvedenie-veshch*']. The notion of the 'transrational word' satisfies this formula.

This reverse proportionality became the guiding idea in the study of plot as well. As we know, the formalists made their vague transition from the study of problems of poetic language to the study of the artistic construction with this problem. The problem of plot also led to the first, ground-breaking division of the poetic construction into material and device. . . .

Let us first examine the unfolding of plot. It is necessary to distinguish plot [*siuzhet*] from story [*fabula*]. This distinction is essential in formalist theory and reveals its basic tendencies particularly clearly.

Story is the event which underlies plot, an event from life, ethics, politics, history and so on. This event took place in real time, had a duration of days or years, and had a definite ideological and practical significance. All of this becomes material for the unfolding of plot. Plot unfolds in the real time of performance or perception: listening or reading. The line of plot is a crooked path of digressions, brakings, retardations, evasions, and so on. As Shklovskii puts it:

> The concept of *siuzhet* is too often confused with the description of events, with what I tentatively suggest be called 'story'. Story is really only the material for the filling-out of plot. Thus, the plot of *Eugene Onegin* is not the love story of the hero and Tat'iana, but the elaboration of this story in plot, which is accomplished by the introduction of interrupting digressions. One clever artist (Vladimir Miklashevskii) suggests that most of the illustrations for the novel should be taken from the digressions (the digression on 'little feet', for instance), and from the compositional point of view this would be quite correct.[22]

Thus plot is completely contained within the framework of the work-object. It is completely present here and now, in no way going beyond the boundaries of the work. The brakings, deliberately difficult places, and repetitions are not brakings and repetitions of the event being conveyed by the narrative, but are the brakings and repetitions of the narrative itself, are not of the event being shaped by the word, but of the shaping word itself. Therefore, the repetitions of the plot are completely analogous to sound repetitions such as rhyme.

What, then, is the event being depicted, i.e., the story? For the formalists story is merely material for the motivation of the devices of plot. Thus, if the event being narrated includes various difficulties and obstacles which the hero must overcome, these obstacles from life merely serve to motivate the brakings of plot, i.e., the retardations of the actual process of narration. If the narrative is about the travels of a hero, as in *Don Quixote*, these travels only serve to motivate the device of 'stringing together' [*nanizyvanie*]. Thus every element of the story, i.e., of the event being related, is only significant to the extent that it motivates some constructive device, some object of the tale itself, which is taken as a self-valuable whole independent of the event being narrated.

From here we arrive at an important basic principle of formalism: the material is the motivation of the constructive device. And this device is an end in itself.

[22] Shklovskii, 'Parodiinyi roman', *O teorii prozy*, p. 204; *Texte der Formalisten*, i, p. 245 (author's note).

If we look closely at this position, we see that this is the converse of the assertion which the formalists began by criticizing. According to the usual, naive point of view, which was formed on a realistic basis, the content of the work, i.e., the object of the narration, was an end in itself and the narrative devices were only technical, auxiliary means to that end. The formalists turned this position upside down by reversing its elements.

But they retained *in toto* the completely inadmissible division of the work into technical, auxiliary elements and self-directed elements.

Inside out is always worse than right side out. In the view of the previous criticism, the means of representation had at least played a substantial role. They had to be adequate to the represented and in this respect were indispensable and irreplaceable. Not just any means of representation, but only definite means satisfied the given end of representation.

But, as the motivation of the device, material becomes something totally unimportant and replaceable. One and the same device can be motivated by the most varied material.

Essentially, every motivation is equally good. In order to motivate a digression, it is possible to put the hero in prison or lay him down to sleep, to make him eat breakfast or simply blow his nose. The formalists insistently emphasize the equal value of all motivations. What is more, it is possible to do without motivation altogether, to 'lay bare the device' [*obnazhit' priem*]. This makes it more pure, more artistically finished, as a symphony is musically more pure and finished than an opera. This, for example, is what Sterne does in *Tristram Shandy*.[23] According to Shklovskii:

> The forms of art are explained by their artistic laws of development, and not by real life [*bytovoi*] motivation. When he brakes the action of a love affair by a simple arrangement of its parts rather than by the introduction of a third character to separate the lovers, the artist thereby shows us the esthetic laws which lie behind both compositional devices.
>
> It is commonly stated that *Tristram Shandy* is not a novel. For those who make this statement only an opera is music and a symphony is disorder. *Tristram Shandy* is the most typical novel of world literature.[24]

Thus, from a formalist point of view, motivation in art tends toward zero. Every element of material is replaceable and, within limits, quite dispensable. Death may be replaced by a character who separates lovers, and this character may be replaced by simply rearranging chapters.

The meaning of a word is only motivation for its sound. If we do without this motivation, we obtain the self-valuable transrational word, the ideal limit of poetry. Similarly, in prose the transrational device, the device without motivation, is the highest goal.

Such an understanding of material inevitably follows from the formalist concept that material must be absolutely indifferent. If death were to enter the construction of the work precisely as death, and not as an essentially indifferent motivation for a digression, the whole construction would have to be completely different. Death could not be replaced by the rearrangement

[23] Laurence Sterne (1713–68), *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1760–67).

[24] Shklovskii, 'Paridiinyi roman', *O teorri prozy*, p. 204; *Texte der Formalisten*, i, p. 299 (author's note).

of chapters. Story would have to change from an indifferent support for the development of plot to an independent and irreplaceable element of the artistic construction....

Therefore, according to formalist theory, the poetic construction turns out to be the aggregate of its artistic devices. In Shklovskii's words: 'The content (the very soul) of the literary work is equal to the sum of its artistic devices.'[25] The purpose of all devices is the same: to make the construction perceptible. Every device accomplishes this same task in its own way. The formalists know no other purposes.

The question now arises: just what in the work is perceptible? For the formalists it is, of course, not the material. We know that this is a quantity tending toward zero. The construction itself must be what is perceptible. But, we know that it is the purpose of the construction to create its perceptibility. Thus we arrive at a paradoxical conclusion: we arrive at a perceptible device, the sole meaning of which is to create perceptibility!

This absurd conclusion is completely unavoidable.

If ideologically significant material were made perceptible, it would cease to be indifferent motivation and would bring all of its meaning into the construction. For example, if the devices of the plot were to make the story perceptible, i.e., the event of life being narrated, then the event would cease being replaceable motivation and would be turned right side out. Consequently, a braking device can only make the braking itself perceptible, and not the event to which the braking is applied. Repetition can only make the repetition perceptible, and not the objective content being repeated. And so on. In fact, it turns out that there is nothing perceptible to perceive.

There is no way out of this dead end for the formalists. They are not able to admit the perceptibility of the material, i.e., of the ethical, cognitive, and other values in it. This would mean admitting what their whole system denies. Therefore, they stop at a system of formally empty devices.

By being applied to neutral material the device itself is neutralized and deprived of all positive meaning. The only quality possessed by the formalist device is its innovation. And this innovation is only relative in that it is theoretically based and 'perceptible' only against the background of either practical language or another literary work, school, or style.

Thus the device is deprived of all positive content and reduced to a bare 'difference from ...'.

The formalist conception of the construction as the sum total or a 'system' of devices is in fact only a 'system' of the differences of a given poetic utterance from practical language or from other poetic utterances. And this system of differences is made perceptible. Perceptibility can have no other meaning for formalists. The reduction of the material to mere motivation condemns the device to complete emptiness.

But this is not the last of the contradictions between the theory and its object. A new question arises: how can one draw a line between device and material? Where does one stop and the other begin? ...

[25] Shklovskii, *Rozanov* (Petrograd, 1921), p. 8 (author's note).

No boundary can be drawn between material and device. The formalists do so without any substantial principle.

As a matter of fact, if one looks deeper into the concept of 'motivation', one becomes convinced that it is incapable of clarifying any aspect or element of the artistic construction. Here we are not finding fault with the word, but with the very concept of motivation, with its meaning in formalist theory.

Two kinds of objections to the concept of motivation in art may be advanced.

First, motivation is conditional and reversible.

There are no grounds which obligate us to consider a given aspect of the work to be motivation. For instance, why should a character introduced to break up a romance be considered the motivation for a braking device instead of the opposite? That is, what is to stop us from considering the braking device to be the motivation for the introduction of the character? In general, why should the device not be considered the motivation for the introduction of ever newer and more diverse material? This is exactly how every work appears to the naive artistic perception.

In the work itself, there are no indications as to what exactly is brought in as an end in itself and what serves as motivation for this introduction. Only poor works include parts which clearly have no constructive significance and only serve as the motivation for the introduction of other elements which do have constructive significance. Parts lacking constructive significance hardly owe their existence to the artist's plan; rather, they result from his inability to carry out his plan. . . .

And so the first objection amounts to this: in the artistic work itself there are no criteria to differentiate between what is an end in itself and what is just motivation for the introduction of a given element.

It is possible to consider any element an end in itself. Then any other elements connected with it will turn out to be its motivation. We have just as much right to consider the formalist device to be motivation and the ideological material to be an end in itself. One has just as much right to assert that some word in a poem is selected 'for the rhyme' as to assert the opposite – that the rhyme was selected to introduce a given word.

We are only provided with a real criterion for a decision when there is an obvious contradiction between the artistic plan and its fulfillment, i.e., when the work is immanently unsuccessful. Only such a work contains elements which are superfluous to the construction and only function to introduce others. Other than this, only caprice and crude subjectivism are able to make a differentiation between motivation and device a part of the interpretation of the poetic structure.

But there is still more fundamental objection to the concept of motivation in the work of art: all motivation needs is a fact which lacks intrinsic significance.

If the device, in the formalist conception, were really and end in itself, then the notion of motivation would not even arise. To understand material as the motivation of the device would be irrelevant. The device would not need motivation. . . .

V

The problem of formalists raised and incorrectly solved has lost none of its force.

How, within the unity of the artistic construction, is the direct material presence of the work, its here and now, to be joined with the endless perspectives of its ideological meaning? ...

What, in fact, is the element which unites the material presence of the word with its meaning?

We submit that social evaluation is this element.

It is true that social evaluation is not the exclusive property of poetry. It is present in every active word to the extent that the word enters the concrete and individual utterance. The linguist does not engage in social evaluation, since he is not concerned with concrete forms of the utterance. Therefore, we do not find social evaluation in language taken as an abstract linguistic system.

What is social evaluation? What is its role in language or, more precisely, in the utterance, and what is its significane for the poetic construction?

The connection between meaning and sign [*smysl i znak*] in the word taken concretely and independently of the concrete utterance, as in a dictionary, is completely random and only of technical significance. Here the word is simply a conventional sign. There is a gap between the individuality of the word and its meaning, a gap which can only be overcome by a mechanistic linkage, by association.

But the individual concrete utterance, even if it consists of only one word, is a different case. Every concrete utterance is a social act. At the same time it is an individual material complex, a phonetic, articulatory, visual complex, the utterance is also a part of social reality. It organizes communication oriented toward reciprocal action, and itself reacts; it is also inseparably enmeshed in the communication event. Its individual reality is already not that of a physical body, but the reality of a historical phenomenon. Not only the meaning of the utterance but also the very fact of its performance is of historical and social significance, as, in general, is the fact of its realization in the here and now, in given circumstances, at a certain historical moment, under the conditions of the given social situation....

If we tear the utterance out of social intercourse and materialize it, we lose the organic unity of all its elements. The word, grammatical form, sentence, and all linguistic definiteness in general taken in abstraction from the concrete historical utterance turn into technical signs of a meaning that is as yet only possible and still not individualized historically. The organic connection of meaning and sign cannot become lexical, grammatically stable, and fixed in identical and reproducible forms, i.e., cannot in itself become a sign or a constant element of a sign, cannot become grammaticalized. This connection is created only to be destroyed, to be reformed again, but in new forms under the conditions of a new utterance....

It is impossible to understand the concrete utterance without accustoming oneself to its values, without understanding the orientation of its evaluations in the ideological environment.

For to comprehend an utterance does not mean to grasp its general mean-

ing, as we grasp the meaning of a 'dictionary word'. To understand an utterance means to understand it in its contemporary context and our own, if they do not coincide. It is necessary to understand the meaning of the utterance, the content of the act, and its historical reality, and to do so, moreover, in their concrete inner unity. Without such an understanding, meaning is dead, having become some dictionary meaning of no necessity.

Social evaluation defines all aspects of the utterance, totally permeates it, but finds its most pure and typical expression in expressive intonation.

As distinct from the more stable syntactic intonation, expressive intonation, which colors every word of the utterance, reflects its historical uniqueness. Expression is not determined by the logical scheme of meaning, but by its individual fullness and integrity and the whole concrete historical situation. Expressive intonation colors meaning and sound equally, bringing them intimately near one another in the unique unity of the utterance. Of course, expressive intonation is not obligatory, but it is the most distinct expression of social evaluation when it does occur.

In the utterance, every element of the language-material implements the demands of social evaluation. A language element is only able to enter the utterance if it is capable of satisfying these demands. It is only to express the social evaluation that a word becomes the material of an utterance. Therefore, the word does not enter the utterance from a dictionary, but from life, from utterance to utterance. The word passes from one unity to another without losing its way. It enters the utterance as a word of intercourse, permeated with the concrete immediate and historical aims of this communication.

Every utterance is subject to this condition, including the literary utterance, i.e., the poetic construction.

The material of poetry is not language understood as the aggregate or system of linguistic possibilities (phonetic, grammatical, lexical). The poet does not select linguistic forms, but rather the evaluations posited in them. All the linguistic characteristics of the word that remain after the abstraction of these evaluations are not only unable to be the material of poetry, but cannot even be examples of grammar.

For instance, a linguistic example is a conditional utterance; a pure linguistic form only lends itself to symbolic designation. A linguistic form is only real in the concrete speech performance, in the social utterance.

Even the transrational word is spoken with some kind of intonation. Consequently, some value orientation can be observed in it, some evaluating gesture.

When the poet selects words, their combination, and their compositional arrangement, he selects, combines, and arranges the evaluations lodges in them as well. And the resistance of the material we feel in every poetic work is in fact the resistance of the social evaluations it contains. These existed before the poet took them, reevaluated them, renewed them, and gave them new nuances. Only a schoolboy toiling over his Latin exercise experiences linguistic resistance from material. . . .

For the poet, as for any speaker, language is a system of social evaluations; and the richer, more differentiated and complex it is, the more significant the work will be.

But, in any case, only that word or form in which the social evaluation is still living and perceptible is able to enter the artistic work.

Only through evaluation do the possibilities of language become real.

Why are two particular words next to each other? Linguistics only explains how this is possible. The real reason cannot be explained within the limitations of linguistic possibilities. Social evaluation is needed to turn a grammatical possibility into a concrete fact of speech reality....

What is more, in studying the life of the concrete speech performance, the study of poetry has much to teach contemporary formalist linguistics.

In general, the ideological studies concerned with the life of the concrete utterance and, consequently, the actualization of language as an abstract system of possibilities, must constantly take account of linguistics. Linguistics will, of course, reach a point at which it will depart from the concrete social evaluation, as dictated by its practical and theoretical aims. But it must take the role of social evaluation into account.

Thus, the poetic work, like every concrete utterance, is an inseparable unity of meaning and reality based on the unity of the social evaluation which totally permeates it.

All the elements which an abstract analysis of a work (quite proper within its limits) can isolate – phonetic composition, grammatical structure, thematic elements, and so on – all these elements are united by and serve social evaluation.

It is social evaluation which inseparably weaves the artistic work into the general canvass of the social life of a given historical epoch and a given social group.

For the formalists, who ignore social evaluation, the work of art breaks down into abstract elements which they study in isolation, only looking at the connection between elements from a narrowly technical standpoint.

If we may conditionally use the term 'device', we may say that it in fact does not operate in a neutral linguistic medium, but cuts into the system of social evaluations and thus becomes social activity.

It is precisely this positive aspect of the device, the rearrangements, renewals, and nuances it creates for values, that is important. In this is the meaning and role of the artistic device.

In disregarding this the formalists emasculate the living meaning of the device and trace its secondary and purely negative features, following, as it were, the dead trace left by the device in an abstract linguistic construct of a language deprived of meaning.

Social evaluation therefore mediates between language as an abstract system of possibilities and the concrete reality of language. Social evaluation determines the living historical phenomenon of the utterance, both from the standpoint of linguistic forms and the standpoint of meaning....

The theory of social evaluation and its role that has been developed above applies to every utterance as a historical speech performance, not just to the poetic work.

But our aim is to clarify the specificity of the artistic construction.... The poetic work is a different matter.

Here the utterance is detached both from its object and from action. Here

social evaluation is complete within the utterance itself. One might say its song is sung to the end. The reality of the utterance serves no other reality. Social evaluation pours out and concludes in pure expression. Therefore, all aspects of the material, meaning, and concrete act of realization without exception become equally important and necessary.

What is more, since the utterance is detached from both the real object and from action, its material presence in the here and now becomes the organizing principle of the whole construction. No matter how deep and wide the semantic perspective of the work might be, this perspective should not destroy or remove the plane of the utterance, just as the ideal space of a painting does not destroy the surface of the picture.[26]

For this reason the formation of the utterance, its development in the real time of performance and perception, is the initial and concluding point in the whole organization. Everything is compactly situated on this real plane of expression. But it does not at all follow that this plane becomes 'transrational'. It can accommodate any semantic perspective without losing its concreteness and nearness.

Therefore, story is not dispensable (in nonmotivated art) or mere motivation for the development of plot (brakings, digressions, etc.). The story develops together with the plot: the event being narrated and the event of narration itself merge in the single event of the artistic work. Social evaluation organizes how we see and conceptualize the event being communicated, for we only see and conceptualize what interests or affects us in one way or another. Social evaluation also organizes the forms by which the event is communicated: the arrangement of the material into digressions, returns, repetitions, etc., is permeated with the single logic of social evaluation....

Thus, the reality of the artistic representation, its development in the real time of social intercourse, and the ideological significance of the event being represented interpenetrate each other in the unity of the poetic construction.

But this construction cannot be completely understood at a remove from the conditions of its social realization. For the actual development of the work, of the plot or *skaz*, for example, is constantly oriented toward an audience and cannot be understood outside of the interrelationship between speaker and listener or author and reader.

Even the superficial phenomena of plot development that Shklovskii analyzes – digressions, brakings, hints, riddles, etc. – express the unique interaction between author and reader, the play of two consciousnesses, one of which knows while the other does not, one of which waits while the other destroys the expectation, and so on....

Such is the role of social evaluation in the poetic construction....

Conclusion

Here, at the conclusion ..., it is appropriate to ask: what is the historical significance of the formal method?

[26] An authorial note here warns that this is only a figurative analogy; 'the ideal space of the painting should not be equated with meaning in a literary work'.

The present historical task with regard to formalism is clear. It involves merciless criticism by nonformalists and unflinching revision of their basic principles by the formalists themselves.

But what was the meaning of their theories in the past?

Here our answer will be different. In general, formalism played a productive role. It was able to formulate the most important problems of literary scholarship, and to do so with such sharpness that they can no longer be avoided or ignored. Granted, formalism did not solve these problems. But its very mistakes, in their boldness and consistency, did even more to focus attention on the problems that were formulated.

Therefore, it would be most incorrect to ignore formalism or to criticize it on grounds other than its own. Both paths only lead to compromise. This path was followed by academic scholarship, which at first ignored formalism and now seeks to do the same by half-heartedly acknowledging it. Some Marxists arrive at the same compromise by preferring to hit formalism in the back instead of meeting it face to face.

We believe that Marxist scholarship should even be grateful to the formalists, grateful that their theory can be the object of serious criticism, in the process of which the bases of Marxist scholarship will be clarified and strengthened.

Every young science – and Marxist literary scholarship is very young – should value a good opponent much higher than a poor ally.

13 Constructing a Sociological Poetics

Voloshinov/Bakhtin's essay 'Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art' appeared in 1926, two years before *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*. However, it seems to take the first practical steps towards formulating the sociological poetics called for at the conclusion of *The Formal Method*. The essay begins by regretting the separation of form from content in literary studies. Voloshinov/Bakhtin argues that too often a sociological approach is deemed appropriate only to content and to an understanding of the determining effects of external social forces upon that content. Aesthetic form by contrast is seen as intrinsic to the work itself, needing a non-sociological method of analysis. Two 'fallacious' approaches are taken to the intrinsic aesthetic quality of art: the formal method which perceives the verbal object as an artefact, as an abstract linguistic construction, or the subjective which imputes everything in the work to the individual psyche of the creator or the contemplator.

The extract included here begins by dismissing both these views to insist that verbal art is a communication event, involving the active social interrelationship of all the participants. These relationships have a form-determining influence upon the intrinsic structure of the work, not just upon its

content. Although an artistic communication has its own unique character, it is part of social life and so Voloshinov/Bakhtin's consideration of the dynamics of aesthetic communication begins with analysis of a simple everyday verbal event or 'social scenario', as it is termed.

What this example demonstrates is the effect of the extraverbal situation upon the intrinsic form of the communicated utterance. It cannot be understood in any self-contained way; it has to be related to the shared social assumptions and values of the participants, which remain unspoken. These values are most strongly communicated by means of intonation, and Voloshinov/Bakhtin's analysis of this reveals that it is two-directional. It links author and listener in their share values, but also expresses an evaluative attitude towards what is spoken of. This opens up the potential space for a third participant in the event, nominally or actually the 'hero' of the utterance. Only a sociological approach can recognize the determining effect of these social relationships upon the immanent form.

A sociological approach is then used to consider a specifically aesthetic 'verbal scenario' to demonstrate the equally determining influence of the inter-relationship of author, reader and hero upon the intrinsic form and style of the work. All three of these participants should be perceived as immanent constructs of the verbal event itself not as real-life people outside it. The relationship between them constructs a boundary location where the social forces of extraverbal reality makes contact with verbal form.

From V. N. Vološinov, *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch,* 1927.

Trans. I. R. Titurin (Indianapolis, Indiana, U.P., 1987).

'The artistic' in its total integrity is not located in the artifact and not located in the separately considered psyches of creator and contemplator; it encompasses all three of these factors. It is a *special form of interrelationship between creator and contemplator fixed in a work of art.*

This *artistic communication* stems from the basis common to it and other social forms, but, at the same time, it retains, as do all other forms, its own uniqueness; it is a special type of communication, possessing a form of its own peculiar to itself. *To understand this special form of social communication realized and fixed in the material of a work of art – that precisely is the task of sociological poetics.*

A work of art, viewed outside this communication and independently of it, is simply a physical artifact or an exercise in linguistics. It becomes art only in the process of the interaction between creator and contemplator, as the essential factor in this interaction. Everything in the material of a work of art that cannot be drawn into the communication between creator and contemplator, that cannot become the 'medium', the means of their communication, cannot be the recipient of artistic value, either....

Aesthetic communication, fixed in a work of art, is, as we have already said, entirely unique and irreducible to other types of ideological communication such as the political, the juridical, the moral, and so on. If political communication establishes corresponding institutions and, at the same time, juridical forms, aesthetic communication organizes only a work of art. If the latter rejects this task and begins to aim at creating even the most transitory of political organizations or any other ideological form, then by that very fact it ceases to be aesthetic communication and relinquishes its unique character. *What characterizes aesthetic communication is the fact that it is wholly absorbed in the creation of a work of art, and in its continuous re-creations in the co-creation of contemplators, and does not require any other kind of objectification.* But, needless to say, this unique form of communication does not exist *in isolation*; it participates in the unitary flow of social life, it reflects the common economic basis, and it engages in interaction and exchange with other forms of communication.

The purpose of the present study is to try to reach an understanding of the poetic utterance as a form of this special, verbally implemented aesthetic communication. But in order to do so, we must first analyze in detail certain aspects of verbal utterances outside the realm of art – utterances in the *speech of everyday life and behavior*, for in such speech are already embedded the bases, the potentialities of artistic form. Moreover, the social essence of verbal discourse stands out here in sharper relief and the connection between an utterance and the surrounding social milieu lends itself more easily to analysis.

In life, verbal discourse is clearly not self-sufficient. It arises out of an extraverbal pragmatic situation and maintains the closest possible connection with that situation. Moreover, such discourse is directly informed by life itself and cannot be divorced from life without losing its import.

The kind of characterizations and evaluations of pragmatic, behavioral utterances we are likely to make are such things as: 'that's a lie', 'that's the truth', 'that's a daring thing to say', 'you can't say that', and so on and so forth.

All these and similar evaluations, whatever the criteria that govern them (ethical, cognitive, political, or other), take in a good deal more than what is enclosed within the strictly verbal (linguistic) factors of the utterance. *Together with the verbal factors, they also take in the extraverbal situation of the utterance.* These judgements and evaluations refer to a certain whole wherein the verbal discourse directly engages an event in life and merges with that event, forming an indissoluble unity. The verbal discourse itself, taken in isolation as a purely linguistic phenomenon, cannot, of course, be true or false, daring or diffident.

How does verbal discourse in life relate to the extraverbal situation that has engendered it? Let us analyze this matter, using an intentionally simplified example for the purpose.

Two people are sitting in a room. They are both silent. Then one of them says, 'Well!' The other does not respond.

For us, as outsiders, this entire 'conversation' is utterly incomprehensible. Taken in isolation, the utterance 'Well!' is empty and unintelligible.

Nevertheless, this peculiar colloquy of two persons, consisting of only one – although, to be sure, one expressively intoned – word, does make perfect sense, is fully meaningful and complete.

In order to disclose the sense and meaning of this colloquy, we must analyze it. But what is it exactly that we can subject to analysis? Whatever pains we take with the purely verbal part of the utterance, however subtly we define the phonetic, morphological, and semantic factors of the word *well*, we shall still not come a single step closer to an understanding of the whole sense of the colloquy.

Let us suppose that the intonation with which this word was pronounced is known to us: indignation and reproach moderated by a certain amount of humor. This intonation somewhat fills in the semantic void of the adverb *well* but still does not reveal the meaning of the whole.

What is it we lack, then? We lack the 'extraverbal context' that made the word *well* a meaningful locution for the listener. This *extraverbal context* of the utterance is comprised of three factors: (1) the *common spatial purview* of the interlocutors (the unity of the visible – in this case, the room, the window, and so on), (2) the interlocutors' *common knowledge and understanding of the situation*, and (3) their *common evaluation* of that situation.

At the time the colloquy took place, both interlocutors *looked up* at the window and *saw* that it had begun to snow; *both knew* that it was already May and that it was high time for spring to come; finally, *both* were *sick and tired of* the protracted winter – *they both were looking forward* to spring and *both were bitterly disappointed* by the late snowfall. On this 'jointly seen' (snowflakes outside the window), 'jointly known' (the time of year – May) and 'unanimously evaluated' (winter wearied of, spring looked forward to) – on all this the utterance *directly depends*, all this is seized in its actual, living import – is its very sustenance. And yet all this remains without verbal specification or articulation. The snowflakes remain outside the window; the date, on the page of a calendar; the evaluation, in the psyche of the speaker; and nevertheless, all this is *assumed* in the word *well*.

Now that we have been let in on the 'assumed', that is, now that we know the *shared spatial and ideational purview*, the whole sense of the utterance 'Well!' is perfectly clear to us and we also understand its intonation.

How does the extraverbal purview relate to the verbal discourse, how does the said relate to the unsaid?

First of all, it is perfectly obvious that, in the given case, the discourse does not at all reflect the extraverbal situation in the way a mirror reflects an object. Rather, the discourse here *resolves the situation*, bringing it to an *evaluative conclusion*, as it were. Far more often, behavioral utterances actively continue and develop a situation, adumbrate a plan for future action, and organize that action. But for us it is another aspect of the behavioral utterance that is of special importance. Whatever kind it be, the behavioral utterance always joins the participants in the situation together as *co-participants* who know, understand, and evaluate the situation in like manner. *The utterance*, consequently, *depends on their real, material appurtenance to one and the same segment of being and gives this material commonness ideological expression and further ideological development.*

Thus, the extraverbal situation is far from being merely the external cause

of an utterance – it does not operate on the utterance from outside, as if it were a mechanical force. Rather, *the situation enters into the utterance as an essential constitutive part of the structure of its import.* Consequently, a behavioral utterance as a meaningful whole is comprised of two parts: (1) the part realized or actualized in words and (2) the assumed part. On this basis, the behavioral utterance can be likened to the enthymeme.[1]

However, it is an enthymeme of a special order. The very term enthymeme (literally translated from the Greek, something located in the heart or mind) sounds a bit too psychological. One might be led to think of the situation as something in the mind of the speaker and on the order of a subjective-psychical act (a thought, idea, feeling). But that is not the case. The individual and subjective are backgrounded here by *the social and objective.* What *I* know, see, want, love, and so on cannot be assumed. Only what all of us speakers know, see, love, recognize – only those points on which we are all united can become the assumed part of an utterance. Furthermore, this fundamentally social phenomenon is completely objective; it consists, above all, of *the material unity of world that enters the speaker's purview* (in our example, the room, the snow outside the window, and so on) and of *the unity of the real conditions of life* that generate a *community of value judgments* – the speakers' belonging to the same family, profession, class, or other social group, and their belonging to the same time period (the speakers are, after all, contemporaries). Assumed value judgments are, therefore, not individual emotions but regular and essential social acts. *Individual* emotions can come into play only as *overtones* accompanying the *basic tone of social evaluation.* 'I' can realize itself verbally only on the basis of 'we'.

Thus, every utterance in the business of life is an objective social enthymeme. It is something like a 'password' known only to those who belong to the same social purview. The distinguishing characteristic of behavioral utterances consists precisely in the fact that they make myriad connections with the extraverbal context of life and, once severed from that context, lose almost all their import – a person ignorant of the immediate pragmatic context will not understand these utterances.

This immediate context may be of varying scope. In our example, the context is extremely narrow: It is *circumscribed by the room and the moment of occurrence*, and the utterance makes an intelligible statement only for the two persons involved. However, the unified purview on which an utterance depends can expand in both space and time. *The 'assumed' may be that of the family, clan, nation, class and may encompass days or years or whole epochs.* The wider the overall purview and its corresponding social group, the more *constant* the assumed factors in an utterance become.

When the assumed real purview of an utterance is narrow, when, as in our example, it coincides with the actual purview of two people sitting in the same room and seeing the same thing, then even the most momentary change within that purview can become the assumed. Where the purview is wider, the utterance can operate only on the basis of constant, stable factors in life

[1] An authorial note explains 'enthymeme' as a form of syllogism in which one premiss is assumed rather than expressed. For example, in 'Socrates is a man, therefore he is mortal', the assumed premiss 'All men are mortal' is omitted.

and substantive, fundamental social evaluations.

Especially great importance, in this case, belongs to assumed evaluations. The fact is that all the basic social evaluations that stem directly from the distinctive characteristics of the given social group's economic being are usually not articulated. They have entered the flesh and blood of all representatives of the group; they organize behavior and actions; they have merged, as it were, with the objects and phenomena to which they correspond, and for that reason they are in no need of special verbal formulation. We seem to perceive the value of a thing together with its being as one of its qualities, we seem, for instance, to sense, along with its warmth and light, the sun's value for us, as well. All the phenomena that surround us are similarly merged with value judgments. If a value judgment is in actual fact conditioned by the being of a given community, it becomes a matter of dogmatic belief, something taken for granted and not subject to discussion. On the contrary, whenever some basic value judgment is verbalized and justified, we may be certain that if has already become dubious, has separated from its referent, has ceased to organize life, and, consequently, has lost its connection with the existential conditions of the given group.

A healthy social value judgment remains within life and from that position organizes the very form of an utterance and its intonation, but it does not at all aim to find suitable expression in the content side of discourse. Once a value judgment shifts from formal factors to content, we may be sure that a reevaluation is in the offing. Thus, a viable value judgment exists wholly without incorporation into the content of discourse and is not derivable therefrom; instead, it determines the *very selection of the verbal material and the form of the verbal whole.* It finds its purest expression in *intonation.* Intonation establishes a firm link between verbal discourse and the extraverbal context – genuine, living intonation moves verbal discourse beyond the border of the verbal, so to speak.

Let us stop to consider in somewhat greater detail the connection between intonation and the pragmatic context of life in the example utterance we have been using. This will allow us to make a number of important observations about the social nature of intonation.

First of all, we must emphasize that the word *well* – a word virtually empty semantically – cannot to any extent predetermine intonation through its own content. Any intonation – joyful, sorrowful, contemptuous, and so on – can freely and easily operate in this word; it all depends on the context in which the word appears. In our example, the context determining the intonation used (indignant-reproachful but moderated by humor) is provided entirely by the extraverbal situation that we have already analyzed, since, in this instance, there is no immediate verbal context. We might say in advance that even were such an immediate verbal context present and even, moreover, if that context were entirely sufficient for all other points of view, the intonation would still take us beyond its confines. Intonation can be thoroughly understood only when one is in touch with the assumed value judgments of the given social group, whatever the scope of that group might be. *Intonation always lies on the border of the verbal and the nonverbal, the said and the unsaid.* In intonation, discourse comes directly into contact with life. And it is

in intonation above all that the speaker comes into contact with the listener or listeners – intonation is social par.excellence. It is especially sensitive to all the vibrations in the social atmosphere surrounding the speaker.

The intonation in our example stemmed from the interlocutors' shared yearning for spring and shared disgruntlement over the protracted winter. This commonness of evaluations assumed between them supplied the basis for the intonation, the basis for the distinctness and certitude of its major tonality. Given an atmosphere of sympathy, the intonation could freely undergo deployment and differentiation within the range of the major tone. But if there were no such firmly dependable 'choral support', the intonation would have gone in a different direction and taken on different tones – perhaps those of provocation or annoyance with the listener, or perhaps the intonation would simply have contracted and been reduced to the minimum. When a person anticipates the disagreement of his interlocutor or, at any rate, is uncertain or doubtful of his agreement, he intones his words differently. We shall see later that not only intonation but the whole formal structure of speech depends to a significant degree on what the relation of the utterance is to the assumed community of values belonging to the social milieu wherein the discourse figures. A creatively productive, assured, and rich intonation is possible only on the basis of presupposed 'choral support'. Where such support is lacking, the voice falters and its intonational richness is reduced, as happens, for instance, when a person laughing suddenly realizes that he is laughing alone – his laughter either ceases or degenerates, becomes forced, loses its assurance and clarity and its ability to generate joking and amusing talk. *The commonness of assumed basic value judgments constitutes the canvas upon which living human speech embroiders the designs of intonation.*

Intonation's set toward possible sympathy, toward 'choral support', does not exhaust its social nature. It is only one side of intonation – the side turned toward the listener. But intonation contains yet another extremely important factor for the sociology of discourse.

If we scrutinize the intonation of our example, we will notice that it has one 'mysterious' feature requiring special explanation.

In point of fact, the intonation of the word *well* voiced not only passive dissatisfaction with an occurring event (the snowfall) but also active indignation and reproach. To whom is this reproach addressed? Clearly not to the listener but to somebody else. This tack of the intonational movement patently makes an opening in the situation for a *third participant.* Who is this third participant? Who is the recipient of the reproach? The snow? Nature? Fate, perhaps?

Of course, in our simplified example of a behavioral utterance the third participant – the 'hero' of this verbal production – has not yet assumed full and definitive shape; the intonation has demarcated a definite place for the hero but his semantic equivalent has not been supplied and he remains nameless. Intonation has established an active attitude toward the referent, toward the object of the utterance, an attitude of a kind verging on *apostrophe* to that object as the incarnate, living culprit, while the listener – the second participant – is, as it were, called in *as witness and ally.*

Almost any example of live intonation in emotionally charged behavioral

speech proceeds as if it addressed, behind inanimate objects and phenomena, animate participants and agents in life; in other words, it has an inherent *tendency toward personification*. If the intonation is not held in check, as in our example, by a certain amount of irony, then it becomes the source of the mythological image, the incantation, the prayer, as was the case in the earliest stages of culture. In our case, however, we have to do with an extremely important phenomenon of language creativity – *the intonational metaphor*. The intonation of the utterance 'Well!' makes the word sound as if it were reproaching the living culprit of the late snowfall – winter. We have in our example an instance of *pure* intonational metaphor wholly confined within the intonation; but latent within it, in cradle, so to speak, there exists the possibility of the usual *semantic metaphor*. Were this possibility to be realized, the word *well* would expand into some such metaphorical expression as: 'What a *stubborn winter! It just won't give up*, though goodness knows it's time!' But this possibility, inherent in the intonation, remained unrealized and the utterance made do with the almost semantically inert adverb *well*.

It should be noted that the intonation in behavioral speech, on the whole, is a great deal more metaphorical than the words used. The aboriginal myth-making spirit seems to have remained alive in it. Intonation makes it sound as if the world surrounding the speaker were still full of animate forces – it threatens and rails against or adores and cherishes inanimate objects and phenomena, whereas the usual metaphors of colloquial speech for the most part have been effaced and the words become semantically spare and prosaic.

Close kinship unites the intonational metaphor with the *gesticulatory metaphor* (indeed, words were themselves originally lingual gestures, constituting one component of a complex, omnicorporeal gesture) – the term 'gesture' being understood here in a broad sense, including miming as facial gesticulation. Gesture, just as intonation, requires the choral support of surrounding persons; only in an atmosphere of sympathy is free and assured gesture possible. Furthermore, and again just as intonation, gesture makes an opening in the situation and introduces a third participant – the hero. Gesture always has latent within itself the germ of attack or defence, of threat or caress, with the contemplator and listener relegated to the role of ally or witness. Often, the 'hero' is merely some inanimate thing, some occurrence or circumstance in life. How often we shake our fist at 'someone' in a fit of temper or simply scowl at empty space, and there is literally nothing we cannot smile at – the sun, trees, thoughts.

A point that must constantly be kept in mind (something that psychological aesthetics often forgets to do) is this: *Intonation and gesture are active and objective by tendency*. They not only express the passive mental state of the speaker but also always have embedded in them a living, forceful relation with the external world and with the social milieu – enemies, friends, allies. When a person intones and gesticulates, he assumes an active social position with respect to certain specific values, and this position is conditioned by the very bases of his social being. It is precisely this objective and sociological, and not subjective and psychological, aspect of intonation and gesture that should interest theorists of the various relevant arts, inasmuch as it is here that reside forces in the arts that are responsible for aesthetic creativity and that devise and organize artistic form.

As we see then, every instance of intonation is oriented *in two directions*: with respect to the listener as ally or witness and with respect to the object of the utterance as the third, living participant whom the intonation scolds or caresses, denigrates or magnifies. *This double social orientation is what determines all aspects of intonation and makes it intelligible.* And this very same thing is true for all the other factors of verbal utterances. They are all organized and in every way given shape in the same process of the speaker's *double orientation*; this social origin is only most easily detectable in intonation since it is the verbal factor of greatest sensitivity, elasticity, and freedom.

Thus, as we now have a right to claim, *any locution actually said aloud or written down for intelligible communication* (i.e., anything but words merely reposing in a dictionary) *is the expression and product of the social interaction of three participants: the speaker* (author), *the listener* (reader), and *the topic* (the who or what) *of speech* (the hero). Verbal discourse is a social event; it is not self-contained in the sense of some abstract linguistic quantity, nor can it be derived psychologically from the speaker's subjective consciousness taken in isolation. Therefore, both the formal linguistic approach and the psychological approach equally miss the mark. The concrete, sociological essence of verbal discourse, that which alone can make it true or false, banal or distinguished, necessary or unnecessary, remains beyond the ken and reach of both these points of view. Needless to say, it is also this very same 'social soul' of verbal discourse that makes it beautiful or ugly, that is, that makes it artistically meaningful, as well. To be sure, once subordinated to the basic and more concrete sociological approach, both abstract points of view – the formal linguistic and the psychological – retain their value. Their collaboration is even absolutely indispensable; but separately, each by itself in isolation, they are inert. . . .

The meaning and import of an utterance in life (of whatever particular kind that utterance may be) do not coincide with the purely verbal composition of the utterance. Articulated words are impregnated with assumed and unarticulated qualities. What are called the 'understanding' and 'evaluation' of an utterance (agreement or disagreement) always encompass the extraverbal pragmatic situation together with the verbal discourse proper. Life, therefore, does not affect an utterance from without; it penetrates and exerts an influence on an utterance from within, as that unity and commonness of being surrounding the speakers and that unity and commonness of essential social value judgments issuing from that being without all of which no intelligible utterance is possible. Intonation lies on the border between life and the verbal aspect of the utterance; it, as it were, pumps energy from a life situation into the verbal discourse, it endows everything linguistically stable with living historical momentum and uniqueness. Finally, the utterance reflects the social interaction of the speaker, listener, and hero as the product and fixation in verbal material of the act of living communication among them.

Verbal discourse is like a '*scenario*' of a certain event. A viable understanding of the whole import of discourse must *reproduce* this event of the mutual relationship between speakers, must, as it were, 'reenact' it, with the person wishing to understand taking upon himself the role of the listener. But in order to carry out that role, he must distinctly understand the positions of the other two participants, as well.

For the linguistic point of view, neither this event nor its living participants exist, of course; the linguistic point of view deals with abstract, bare words and their equally abstract components (phonetic, morphological, and so on). Therefore, the *total import of discourse* and *its ideological value* – the cognitive, political, aesthetic, or other – are inaccessible to it. Just as there cannot be a linguistic logic or a linguistic politics, so there cannot be a linguistic poetics....

Sociological analysis can take its starting point only, of course, from the purely verbal, linguistic makeup of a work, but it must not and cannot confine itself within those limits, as linguistic poetics does. Artistic contemplation via the reading of a poetic work does, to be sure, start from the grapheme (the visual image of written or printed words), but at the very instant of perception this visual image gives way to and is very nearly obliterated by other verbal factors – articulation, sound image, intonation, meaning – and these factors eventually take us beyond the border of the verbal altogether. And so it can be said that *the purely linguistic factor of a work is to the artistic whole as the grapheme is to the verbal whole.* In poetry, as in life, verbal discourse is a *'scenario' of an event.* Competent artistic perception reenacts it, sensitively surmising from the words and the forms of their organization the specific, living interrelations of the author with the world he depicts and entering into those interrelations as a third participant (the listener's role). Where linguistic analysis sees only words and the interrelations of their abstract factors (phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and so on), there, for living artistic perception and for concrete sociological analysis, relations among *people* stand revealed, relations merely reflected and fixed in verbal material. Verbal discourse is the skeleton that takes on living flesh only in the process of creative perception – consequently, only in the process of living social communication.

In what follows here we shall attempt to provide a brief and preliminary sketch of the essential factors in the interrelationships of the participants in an artistic event – those factors that determine the broad and basic lines of poetic style as a social phenomenon. Any further detailing of these factors would, of course, go beyond the scope of the present essay.

The author, hero, and listener that we have been talking about all this time are to be understood not as entities outside the artistic event but only as entities of the very perception of an artistic work, entities that are essential constitutive factors of the work. They are the living forces that determine form and style and are distinctly detectable by any competent contemplator. This means that all those definitions that a historian of literature and society might apply to the author and his heroes – the author's biography, the precise qualifications of heroes in chronological and sociological terms and so on – are excluded here: They do not enter directly into the structure of the work but remain outside it. The listener, too, is taken here as the listener whom the author himself takes into account, the one toward whom the work is oriented and who, consequently, intrinsically determines the work's structure. Therefore, we do not at all mean the actual people who in fact made up the reading public of the author in question.

The first form-determining factor of content is the *evaluative rank* of the

depicted event and its agent – the hero (whether named or not), taken in strict correlation with the rank of the creator and contemplator. Here we have to do, just as in legal or political life, with a *two-sided relationship*: master–slave, ruler–subject, comrade–comrade, and the like.

The basic stylistic tone of an utterance is therefore determined above all by who is talked about and what his relation is to the speaker – whether he is higher or lower than or equal to him on the scale of the social hierarchy. King, father, brother, slave, comrade, and so on, as heroes of an utterance, also determine its formal structure. And this *specific hierarchical weight* of the hero is determined, in its turn, by that unarticulated context of basic evaluations in which a poetic work, too, participates. Just as the 'intonational metaphor' in our example utterance from life established an organic relationship with the object of the utterance, so also all elements of the style of a poetic work are permeated with the author's evaluative attitude toward content and express his basic social position. Let us stress once again that we have in mind here not those ideological evaluations that are incorporated into the content of a work in the form of judgments or conclusions but that deeper, more ingrained kind of *evaluation via form* that finds expression in the very manner in which the artistic material is viewed and deployed.

Certain languages, Japanese in particular, possess a rich and varied store of special lexical and grammatical forms to be used in strict accordance with the rank of the hero of the utterance (language etiquette).

We might say that what is still a *matter of grammar* for the Japanese has already become for us a *matter of style*. The most important stylistic components of the heroic epic, the tragedy, the ode, and so forth are determined precisely by hierarchical status of the object of the utterance with respect to the speaker.

It should not be supposed that this hierarchical interdefinition of creator and hero has been eliminated from modern literature. It has been made more complex and does not reflect the contemporary sociopolitical hierarchy with the same degree of distinctness as, say, classicism did in its time – but *the very principle of change of style in accordance with change in the social value of the hero of the utterance* certainly remains in force as before. After all, it is not his personal enemy that the poet hates, not his personal friend that his form treats with love and tenderness, not the events from his private life that he rejoices or sorrows over. Even if a poet has in fact borrowed his passion in good measure from the circumstances of his own private life, still, he must *socialize* that passion and, consequently, elaborate the event with which it corresponds to the level of *social significance*.

The second style-determining factor in the interrelationship between hero and creator is *the degree of their proximity to one another*. All languages possess direct grammatical means of expression for this aspect: first, second, and third persons and variable sentence structure in accordance with the person of the subject ('I' or 'you' or 'he'). The form of a proposition about a third person, the form of an address to a second person, the form of an utterance about oneself (and their modifications) are already different in terms of grammar. Thus, here *the very structure of the language reflects the event of the speakers' interrelationship*.

Certain languages have purely grammatical forms capable of conveying

with even greater flexibility the nuances of the speakers' social interrelationship and the various degrees of their proximity. From this angle, the so-called 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' forms of the plural in certain languages present a case of special interest. For example, if a speaker using the form *we* has the listener in mind and includes him in the subject of the proposition, then he uses one form, whereas if he means himself and some other person (*we* in the sense of *I* and *he*), he uses a different form. Such is the use of the dual in certain Australian languages, for instances. There, too, are found two special forms of the triad: one meaning *I and you and he*; the other, *I and he and he* (with *you* – the listener – excluded).

In European languages these and similar interrelationships between speakers have no special grammatical expression. The character of these languages is more abstract and not so capable of reflecting the situation of utterance via grammatical structure. However, interrelationships between speakers do find expression in these languages – and expression of far greater subtlety and diversity – *in the style and intonation of utterances*. Here the social situation of creativity finds thoroughgoing reflection in a work by means of purely artistic devices.

The form of a poetic work is determined, therefore, in many of its factors by *how the author perceives his hero* – the hero who serves as the organizing center of the utterance. The form of *objective narration*, the form of *address or apostrophe* (prayer, hymn, certain lyric forms), the form of *self-expression* (confession, autobiography, lyric avowal – an important form of the love lyric) are determined precisely by the *degree of proximity between author and hero*.

Both the factors we have indicated – the hierarchical value of the hero and the degree of his proximity to the author – are as yet insufficient, taken independently and in isolation, for the determination of artistic form. The fact is that a third participant is constantly in play as well – the listener, whose presence affects the interrelationship of the other two (creator and hero).

The interrelationship of author and hero never, after all, actually is an intimate relationship of two; all the while form makes provision for the third participant – the listener – who exerts crucial influence on all the other factors of the work.

In what way can the listener determine the style of a poetic utterance? Here, too, we must distinguish two basic factors: first, the listener's proximity to the author and, second, his relation to the hero. Nothing is more perilous for aesthetics than to ignore the autonomous role of the listener. A very commonly held opinion has it that the listener is to be regarded as equal to the author, excepting the latter's technical performance, and that the position of a competent listener is supposed to be a simple reproduction of the author's position. In actual fact this is not so. Indeed, the opposite may sooner be said to be true: The listener never equals the author. The listener has *his own independent place* in the event of artistic creation; he must occupy a special, and, what is more, a *two-sided* position in it – with respect to the author and with respect to the hero – and it is this position that has determinative effect on the style of an utterance.

How does the author sense his listener? In our example of an utterance in the business of life, we have seen to what degree the presumed agreement or

disagreement of the listener shaped an utterance. Exactly the same is true regarding all factors of form. To put it figuratively, the listener normally stands *side by side* with the author as his ally, but this classical positioning of the listener is by no means always the case.

Sometimes the listener begins to lean toward the hero of the utterance. The most unmistakable and typical expression of this is the polemical style that aligns the hero and the listener together. Satire, too, can involve the listener as someome calculated to be close to the hero ridiculed and not to the ridiculing author. This constitutes a sort of *inclusive form of ridicule* distinctly different from the exclusive form where the listener is in solidarity with the jeering author. In romanticism, an interesting phenomenon can be observed where the author *concludes an alliance*, as it were, *with his hero against the listener* (Friedrich Schlegel's *Lucinda* and, in Russian literature, *Hero of Our Time* to some extent).[2]

Of very special character and interest for analysis is the author's sense of his listener in the forms of the confession and the autobiography. All shades of feeling from humble reverence before the listener, as before a veritable judge, to contemptuous distrust and hostility can have determinative effect on the style of a confession or an autobiography. Extremely interesting material for the illustration of this contention can be found in the works of Dostoevskij. The confessional style of Ippolit's 'article' (*The Idiot*) is determined by an almost extreme degree of contemptuous distrust and hostility directed toward all who are to hear this dying confession. Similar tones, but somewhat softened, determined the style of *Notes from Underground*. The style of 'Stavrogin's Confession' (*The Possessed*) displays far greater trust in the listener and acknowledgments of his rights, although here too, from time to time, a feeling almost of hatred for the listener erupts, which is what is responsible for the jaggedness of its style. Playing the fool, as a special form of utterance, one, to be sure, lying on the periphery of the artistic, is determined above all by an extremely complex and tangled conflict of the speaker with the listener.

A form especially sensitive to the position of the listener is the lyric. The underlying condition for lyric intonation is *the absolute certainty of the listener's sympathy*. Should any doubt on this score creep into the lyric situation, the style of the lyric changes drastically. This conflict with the listener finds its most egregious expression in so-called lyric irony (Heine, and in modern poetry, Laforgue, Annenskij, and others).[3] The form of irony in general is conditioned by a social conflict: It is the encounter in one voice of two incarnate value judgments and their interference with one another.[4] ...

It would not be amiss at this point to stress once again that we have in mind, and have had in mind all this time, the listener as an immanent participant in the artistic event who has determinative effect on the form of the work from within. This listener, on a par with the author and the hero, is an essential, intrinsic factor of the work and does not at all coincide with the so-called reading public, located outside the work, whose artistic tastes and

[2] Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829); Mikhail Lermontov (1814–41), *A Hero of Our Time*.

[3] Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), a German poet; Jules Laforgue (1860–87), a French *symboliste* poet; I. F. Annensky (1856–1909) Russian poet and playwright.

demands can be consciously taken into account. Such a conscious account is incapable of direct and profound effect on artistic form in the process of its living creation. What is more, if this conscious account of the reading public does come to occupy a position of any importance in a poet's creativity, that creativity inevitably loses its artistic purity and degrades to a lower social level.

This external account bespeak's the poet's loss of *his immanent listener*, his divorce from the *social whole* that *intrinsically*, aside from all abstract considerations, has the capability of determining *his value judgments* and the artistic form of his poetic utterances, which form is the expression of those crucial social value judgments. The more a poet is cut off from the social unity of his group, the more likely he is to take into account the *external* demands of a *particular reading public*. Only a social group alien to the poet can determine his creative work from outside. One's *own* group needs no such external definition. It exists in the poet's voice, in the basic tone and intonations of that voice – whether the poet himself intends this or not.

The poet acquires his words and learns to intone them *over the course of his entire life* in the process of his every-sided contact with his environment. The poet begins to use those words and intonations already in the *inner speech* with the help of which he thinks and becomes conscious of himself, even when he does not produce utterances. It is naive to suppose that one can assimilate as one's own *an external speech that runs counter to one's inner speech*, that is, runs counter to one's whole inner verbal manner of being aware of oneself and the world. Even if it is possible to create such a thing for some pragmatic occasion, still, as something cut off from all sources of sustenance, it will be devoid of any artistic productiveness. A poet's style is engendered from *the style of his inner speech*, which does not lend itself to control, and his inner speech is itself the product of his entire social life. 'Style is the man', they say; but we might say: Style is at least two persons or, more accurately, one person plus his social group in the form of its authoritative representative, the listener – the constant participant in a person's inner and outward speech.

The fact of the matter is that no conscious act of any degree of distinctness can do without inner speech, without words and intonations – without evaluations, and, consequently, every conscious act is already a social act, an act of communication. Even the most intimate self-awareness is an attempt to translate oneself into the common code, to take stock of another's point of view, and, consequently, entails orientation toward a possible listener. This listener may be only the bearer of the value judgments of the social group to which the 'conscious' person belongs. In this regard, consciousness, provided that we do not lose sight of its content, is *not just a psychological phenomenon* but also, and above all, an *ideological phenomenon, a product of social intercourse*. This constant *coparticipant* in all our conscious acts determines not only the content of consciousness but also – and this is the main point for us – the very *selection* of the content, the selection of what precisely we become conscious of, and thus determines also those *evaluations* which per-

[4] This short statement becomes a central theme in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, especially in the last part. See *Reader*, pp. 62–73.

meate consciousness and which psychology usually calls the 'emotional tone' of consciousness. It is precisely from this constant participant in all our conscious acts that the listener who determines artistic form is engendered.

There is nothing more perilous than to conceive of this subtle social structure of verbal creativity as analogous with the conscious and cynical speculations of the bourgeois publisher who 'calculates the prospects of the book market', and to apply to the characterization of the immanent structure of a work categories of the 'supply-demand' type. Alas, all too many 'sociologists' are likely to identify the creative writer's service to society with the vocation of the enterprising publisher.

Under the conditions of the bourgeois economy, the book market does, of course, 'regulate' writers, but this is not in any way to be identified with the regulative role of the listener as a constant structural element in artistic creativity. For a historian of the literature of the capitalist era, the market is a very important factor, but for theoretical poetics, which studies the basic ideological structure of art, that external factor is irrelevant. However, even in the historical study of literature the history of the book market must not be confused with the history of literature.

All the form-determining factors of an artistic utterance that we have analyzed – (1) the hierarchical value of the hero or event serving as the content of the utterance, (2) the degree of the latter's proximity to the author, and (3) the listener and his interrelationship with the author, on the one side, and the hero, on the other – all those factors are *the contact points between the social forces of extraartistic reality and verbal art.* Thanks precisely to that kind of *intrinsically social structure* which artistic creation possesses, it is *open on all sides to the influence of other domains of life.* Other ideological spheres, prominently including the sociopolitical order and the economy, have determinative effect on verbal art not merely from outside but with direct bearing upon its intrinsic structural elements. And, conversely, the artistic interaction of author, listener, and hero may exert its influence on other domains of social intercourse.

14 Genres as Ideological Forms

The first three extracts in this section of the *Reader* are all concerned with the need for a sociological approach to verbal art. They insist, in various ways, that the complex inter-relationship of the intrinsic aspects of the work with the extrinsic, the form with the content, can only be adequately understood by relating the work to the determining dynamics of its extraverbal social context.

The three final extracts of the section extend the sociological approach from the immediate determining situation of a specific work to a consideration of the long historical development of genres. Here, too, it is essential to

recognize the inseparability of form and content.

This first extract, taken from *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, Chapter 7, begins by stressing the need to base literary study upon an understanding of genres, since it is these which determine the intrinsic formal unity of verbal art. What determines the formal unity of any genre is its double orientation towards social reality. Extrinsically, it is determined by the specific conditions of its actualization in real time and space; is it a public form or a personal one, it is for a religious or civic celebration or for everyday?

The second orientation towards social reality is intrinsic; it is determined by the 'thematic unity' of the form understood as the total conception of reality produced by the generic structure as a whole, not by its content or simply by the words used. Different generic forms develop different artistic devices and structures and so they offer different ways of comprehending social reality. In any genre these intrinsic and extrinsic orientations are mutually interactive and are simultaneously influenced by and actively influence other social and ideological conceptions of life. 'Therefore, a genuine poetics of genre can only be a sociology of genre.'

From M. M. Bakhtin and P. N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, 1928.

Trans. A. J. Wehrle, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Md., 1978.

The last problem the formalists encountered was that of genre. This problem was inevitably last because their first problem was poetic language rather than the construction of the work.

They arrived at the problem of genre when all the other basic elements of the construction were already studied and defined and the formalist poetics was finished.

The formalists usually define genre as a certain constant, specific grouping of devices with a defined dominant.[1] Since the basic devices had already been defined, genre was mechanically seen as being composed of devices. Therefore, the formalists did not understand the real meaning of genre.

Poetics should really begin with genre, not end with it. For genre is the typical form of the whole work, the whole utterance. A work is only real in the form of a definite genre. Each element's constructive meaning can only be understood in connection with genre. If the problem of genre, as the problem of the artistic whole, had been formulated at the right time, it would have

[1] For a definition of 'dominant', see *Reader*, p. 93, n. 3.

been impossible for the formalists to ascribe independent constructive significance to abstract elements of language.

Genre is the typical totality of the artistic utterance, and a vital totality, a finished and resolved whole. The problem of finalization [*zavershenie*] is one of the most important problems of genre theory.

Suffice it to say that, except for art, no sphere of ideological creativity knows finalization in the strict sense of the word. Outside of art, all finalization, every end, is conditional, superficial, and is most often defined by external factors rather than factors intrinsic to the object itself. The end of a scientific work is an illustration of such a conditional finalization. In essence, a scientific work never ends: one work takes up where the other leaves off. Science is an endless unity. It cannot be broken down into a series of finished and self-sufficient works. The same is true of other spheres of ideology. There are really no finished works there.

Furthermore, where the practical or scientific utterance does show a certain superficial finalization, this finalization is semiartistic in nature. It does not affect the object of the utterance.

To put it another way: compositional finalization is possible in all spheres of ideological creation, but real thematic finalization is impossible. Only a few philosophical systems, such as that of Hegel, pretend to thematic finalization in epistemology. In the other spheres of ideology, only religion has such pretensions.

But the essence of literature is in substantial, objective, thematic finalization, as opposed to the superficial finalization of the utterance in speech. Compositional finalization, confined to the literary periphery, can at times even be absent. The device of vagueness [*nedoskazannost'*] is possible. But this external vagueness only sets off the inner thematic finalization more strongly.

Finalization should not be confused with ending. Termination is only possible in the temporal arts.

The problem of finalization has not yet been properly appreciated, despite its importance as a specific feature of art that distinguishes it from all other spheres of ideology.

Every art has its own proper types and modes of finalization, depending upon the material and its constructive possibilities. The breakdown of the various arts into genres is, to a significant extent, determined by types of finalization. Every genre represents a special way of constructing and finalizing a whole, finalizing it essentially and thematically (we repeat), and not just conditionally or compositionally. . . .

An artistic whole of any type, i.e., of any genre, has a two-fold orientation in reality, and the characteristics of this orientation determine the type of the whole, i.e., its genre.

In the first place, the work is oriented toward the listener and perceiver, and toward the definite conditions of performance and perception. In the second place, the work is oriented in life, from within, one might say, by its thematic content. Every genre has its own orientation in life, with reference to its events, problems, etc.

The first orientation is in the direction of real space and real time: the work

is loud or soft, it is associated with the church, or the stage or screen. It is a part of a celebration, or simply leisure. It presupposes a particular audience, this or that type of reaction, and one or another relationship between the audience and the author. The work occupies a certain place in everyday life and is joined to or brought nearer some ideological sphere.

The ode, for instance, was part of the civil celebration, i.e., was directly connected with political life. The lyrical prayer could be part of religious worship or, in any case, could be associated with it.

Thus the work enters life and comes into contact with various aspects of its environment. It does so in the process of its actual realization as something performed, heard, read at a definite time, in a definite place, under definite conditions. Its phonetic temporal body occupies a definite place in life. It takes a position between people organized in some way. The varieties of the dramatic, lyrical, and epic genres are determined by this direct orientation of the word as fact, or, more precisely, by the word as a historic achievement in its surrounding environment.

But the intrinsic, thematic determinateness of genres is no less important.

Each genre is only able to control certain definite aspects of reality. Each genre possesses definite principles of selection, definite forms for seeing and conceptualizing reality, and a definite scope and depth of penetration.

What is the thematic unity of the work? In what plane is its unity defined?...

The thematic unity of the work is not the combination of the meanings of its words and individual sentences. The extremely difficult problem of the relationship of word to theme is distorted by this definition. The linguistic conception of the meaning of the word and sentence is satisfactory for the word and sentence as such, but not for the theme. The theme is not composed of these meanings; it is formed with their help, but they only help to the same extent as all the other semantic elements of language. Language helps us master the theme, but we should not make theme an element of language.

Theme always transcends language. Furthermore, it is the whole utterance as speech performance that is directed at the theme, not the separate word, sentence, or period. It is the whole utterance and its forms, which cannot be reduced to any linguistic forms, which control the theme. The theme of the work is the theme of the whole utterance as a definite sociohistorical act. Consequently, it is inseparable from the total situation of the utterance to the same extent that it is inseparable from linguistic elements.

Therefore, one cannot place theme in the utterances as if locking it into a box. The aggregate of the meanings of the work's literary elements is only one of the means of controlling the theme and is not the theme itself. And it is only possible to speak of the themes of the various parts of the work by imagining these parts to be separate and finished utterances independently oriented in reality.

The fact that theme does not correspond to the aggregate of meanings of the work's literary elements and cannot be made an element of the word gives rise to a number of important methodological principles....

Further, it becomes clear that the forms of the whole, i.e., the genre forms, essentially determine the theme. It is not the sentence, the period, or their

aggregate that implement the theme, but the novella, the novel, the lyric, the fairy tale – and these genre forms do not lend themselves to any syntactic definition. The fairy tale as such does not consist of sentences and periods. It follows that the thematic unity of the work is inseparable from its primary orientation in its environment, inseparable, that is to say, from the circumstances of place and time.

Thus, between the two-fold orientation of the work in reality, between the external, direct orientation and the internal, thematic orientation, an unbreakable connection and interdependence develops. One determines the other. The two-fold orientation turns out to be a single, two-sided orientation.

The thematic unity of the work and its real place in life organically grow together in the unity of the genre. The unity of the factual reality of the word and its meaning.... is most fully realized in the genre. Reality is comprehended with the help of the real word, the word-utterance. The word's definite forms of reality are connected with the definite forms of reality the word helps comprehend. In poetry this connection is organic and comprehensive, which makes the finalization of the utterance possible. Genre is the organic unity of theme with what lies beyond it.

If we approach genre from the point of view of its intrinsic thematic relationship to reality and the generation of reality, we may say that every genre has its methods and means of seeing and conceptualizing reality, which are accessible to it alone. Just as a graph is able to deal with aspects of spatial form inaccessible to artistic painting, and vice versa, the lyric, to choose one example, has access to aspects of reality and life which are either inaccessible or accessible in a lesser degree to the novella or drama. The dramatic genres, for their part, possess means of seeing and demonstrating aspects of the human character and fate which the means of the novel can only reveal and illuminate to a lesser degree, if they can do so at all. Every significant genre is a complex system of means and methods for the conscious control and finalization of reality.

The old concept that man is conscious of and conceptualizes reality through language is basically correct. It is true that no distinct or clear consciousness of the world is possible outside of the word. Language and its forms play an essential role in the process of the consciousness's refraction of existence.

However, an important point must be added to this principle. The consciousness and cognition of reality is not achieved through language and its forms understood in the precise linguistic sense. It is the forms of the utterance, not the forms of language, that play the most important role in consciousness and the comprehension of reality. To say that we think in words, that the process of experiencing, seeing, and comprehending is carried along in a stream of inner speech, is to fail to clearly realize what this means. For we do not think in words and sentences, and the stream of inner speech which flows within us is not a string of words and sentences.

We think and conceptualize in utterances, complexes complete in themselves. As we know, the utterance cannot be understood as a linguistic whole, and its forms are not syntactic forms. These integral, materially expressed

inner acts of man's orientation in reality and the forms of these acts are very important. One might say that human consciousness possesses a series of inner genres for seeing and conceptualizing reality. A given consciousness is richer or poorer in genres, depending on its ideological environment.

Literature occupies an important place in this ideological environment. As the plastic arts give width and depth to the visual realm and teach our eye to see, the genres of literature enrich our inner speech with new devices for the awareness and conceptualization of reality.

It is true here that our consciousness is not concerned with the finalizing functions of genres. It is concerned with conceptualizing, not finalizing. Only crude, unjustifiable estheticism finds finalization in reality outside of art.

The process of seeing and conceptualizing reality must not be severed from the process of embodying it in the forms of a particular genre. It would be naive to assume that the painter sees everything first and then shapes what he saw and puts it onto the surface of his painting according to a certain technique. In real fact, seeing and representation merge. New means of representation force us to see new aspects of visible reality, but these new aspects cannot clarify or significantly enter our horizon if the new means necessary to consolidate them are lacking. One is inseparable from the other.

The same is true in literature. The artist must learn to see reality with the eyes of the genre. A particular aspect of reality can only be understood in connection with the particular means of representing it. On the other hand, the means of expression are only applicable to certain aspects of reality. The artist does not squeeze pre-made material onto the surface of the work. The surface helps him to see, understand, and select his material.

The ability to find and grasp the unity of an anecdotal event of life presupposes a certain ability to construct and relate an anecdote, and to a certain extent presupposes an orientation toward the means for the anecdotal development of the material. But these means would mean nothing in themselves if there were not an anecdotal aspect to life.

In order to create a novel it is necessary to learn to see life in terms of the novelistic story [*fabula*], necessary to learn to see the wider and deeper relationships of life on a large scale. There is an abyss of difference between the ability to grasp the isolated unity of a chance situation and the ability to understand the unity and inner logic of a whole epoch. There is, therefore, an abyss between the anecdote and the novel. But the mastery of any aspect of the epoch – family life, social or psychological life, etc. – is inseparable from the means of representation, i.e., from the basic possibilities of genre construction.

The logic of the novelistic construction permits the mastery of the unique logic of new aspects of reality. The artist organically places life as he sees it into the plane of the work. The scientist sees life in a different way, from the point of view of the means and devices for mastering it. Therefore other aspects of life, other relationships, are inaccessible to him.

Thus the reality of the genre and the reality accessible to the genre are organically interrelated. But we have seen that the reality of the genre is the social reality of its realization in the process of artistic intercourse. Therefore, genre is the aggregate of the means of collective orientation in reality, with the orientation toward finalization. This orientation is capable of mastering

new aspects of reality. The conceptualization of reality develops and generates in the process of ideological social intercourse. Therefore, a genuine poetics of genre can only be a sociology of genre.

15 Aesthetic Visualizing of Time/Space: The Chronotope

The first part of this extract is taken from Bakhtin's essay 'Epic and Novel' (1941) and the second part from his essay 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel' (1937–38), both of which are in *The Dialogic Imagination*. In 'Epic and Novel', Bakhtin stresses the relative newness of the novel genre: all the other major genres, he claims, are known to us in their long-completed form whereas the novel form is as yet uncompleted. 'The forces that define it as a genre are at work before our very eyes.... The generic skeleton of the novel is still far from having hardened, and we cannot foresee all its plastic possibilities' (p. 3). This plasticity creates difficulty in constructing a novelistic poetics and this difficulty is increased by the anti-canonicity of the genre which parodies other genres, exposing the conventionality of their forms and language. Bakhtin suggests that one way of gaining a sense of novelistic form is by comparing it to epic structure. Central to this comparison is the representation of time in both genres: whereas the novel is typified by a perception of time as a process of becoming, the epic world inhabits a timeless past. In the epic, the hero cannot change; the meaning of his character and life are fixed and unquestionable.

In the second part of the extract Bakhtin considers early forms of assimilating time and space in artistic images. At the centre of his concern is the aesthetic visualizing of a human being in relation to their temporal and spatial world. This is ultimately an ideological perception; a way of comprehending human life as materially and simultaneously present within a physical-geographical space and a specific point of historical time. Bakhtin names this unified time/space determined perception, chronotopic, and he analyses the development of this chronotopic sense of human life in three influential early types of novel. Their ancient chronotopic images have been carried forward within generic structure to the present day bringing with them, intact, many of their originating ideological values.

The first type discussed is the Greek romance as 'adventure novel of ordeal' which would include all the so-called 'Greek' or 'Sophist' novels written between the second and sixth centuries AD. Its typical plot begins with the unexpected meeting and instantaneous love between the hero and heroine, both of whom are of unknown lineage, exceptionally beautiful and chaste. The 'story' tells of the obstacles they face, their separations, their adventures as they strive to return (shipwrecks, kidnapping, battles, court trials, etc.) and their final reunion and marriage. These events take place

within a wide geographical space, often involving detailed descriptions of countries and cities in which a sense of the exotic and foreign are highlighted. All of these elements predate the adventure novel as such; the constitutive feature of its form is 'adventure time'. The novel begins with a meeting and ends with marriage; in between these two poles the hero and heroine are caught up in an ever-changing sequence of improbable adventures but they are completely unchanged. They are as young, good and beautiful at the end as when they first saw each other. Adventure time has not even an elementary biological or maturational duration, and there is no sense of everyday cyclicity or of historical era. Within adventure time, life is ruled entirely by chance, everything happens fortuitously without causation. Hence within this chronotope the motif of the fateful meeting is recurrent and is an influential legacy within the generic development of the novel. But the most important tradition deriving from this chronotope is the concept of ordeal, the testing of the hero's integrity and selfhood. However, due to the changeless, atemporal and exotic, foreign characteristics of the time/space determinants, the hero lacks any sense of historical becoming. What is positively affirmed by this chronotope is the durability and continuity of human identity; this constitutes its artistic and ideological meaning.

Bakhtin designates the second type of ancient novel the 'adventure novel of everyday life'. As this suggests, it unites adventure time with everyday temporality; central to it is the theme of metamorphosis or transformation. A typical example is Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* in which the hero, changed into an ass, wanders the Mediterranean countries observing human folly and falling into adventures. Transformation into a lower social sphere allows the hero to 'eavesdrop' upon everyday life and this chronotope is influential in the picaresque novel with its low-life hero as servant or rogue. An enduring chronotopic motif is that of the road, as 'path of life' or meeting place. Metamorphosis, Bakhtin says, 'is a mythological sheath for the idea of development – but one that unfolds not so much in a straight line as spasmodically, a line with "knots" in it' (p. 113). This chronotope structures time around moments of biographical crisis which show how an individual becomes other than what he was. However, because the hero's relation to his spatial world remains fortuitous and external, change is confined within his individual life, unrelated to any sense of historical time. What is positive here is the envisaging of human life as open to change and the grounding of that change not in fate but in individual responsibility.

The third type of ancient novel is 'biographical' and it derives from two sources. The first is Platonic, involving an individual's life as seeking after true knowledge. Such a life is broken down into precise stages marking the seeker's progress towards full enlightenment. The second source is the rhetorical *encomium* as civic funeral or memorial speech. Essential to these is a sense of public being; there is no feel of interiority, no inner psyche. Indeed the distinction between public and private, internal and external, is one the Greeks did not recognize. Thus the human being can be envisaged only as part of the collective; a sense of 'muteness' was unacknowledged and human nature, therefore, was public nature. However, despite the perception of organic unity between human life and civic life, this early chronotope lacks any sense of historical temporality. In the *encomium* only an

idealized image of the person is presented and their life has assumed a closed unchangeable pattern.

Of crucial importance for Bakhtin is the dialogic impact upon this classical tradition of a popular literature from the 'dregs' of society featuring three prominent types: the rogue, the clown and the fool. These figures, born in the depths of folklore, help to shatter the static figure of the human being as imaged in the above chronotopes. They are 'life's maskers', they are not as they seem and they cannot be taken literally. They are laughed at by others and they laugh at themselves. In these figures a public perception of human life is fused with a sense of a person's unfinalizability.

From M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays.*

Trans. M. Holquist and C. Emerson, ed. M. Holquist, University of Texas Press, Austin, Tex., 1981.

I

Whatever its origins, the epic as it has come down to us is an absolutely completed and finished generic form, whose constitutive feature is the transferral of the world it describes to an absolute past of national beginnings and peak times. The absolute past is a specifically evaluating (hierarchical) category. In the epic world view, 'beginning', 'first', 'founder', 'ancestor', 'that which occurred earlier' and so forth are not merely temporal categories but *valorized* temporal categories, and valorized to an extreme degree. This is as true for relationships among people as for relations among all the other items and phenomena of the epic world. In the past, everything is good: all the really good things (i.e., the 'first' things) occur *only* in this past. The epic absolute past is the single source and beginning of everything good for all later times as well....

The epic past is called the 'absolute past' for good reason: it is both monochronic and valorized (hierarchical); it lacks any relativity, that is, any gradual, purely temporal progressions that might connect it with the present. It is walled off absolutely from all subsequent times, and above all from those times in which the singer and his listeners are located. This boundary, consequently, is immanent in the form of the epic itself and is felt and heard in its every word.

To destroy this boundary is to destroy the form of the epic as a genre. But precisely because it is walled off from all subsequent times, the epic past is absolute and complete. It is as closed as a circle; inside it everything is finished, already over. There is no place in the epic world for any openendedness, indecision, indeterminacy. There are no loopholes[1] in it through which

[1] The idea of a 'loophole' as an opening out of various forms of closure recurs in Bakhtin's work. See *Problems*, pp. 205, 222, 232–36.

we glimpse the future; it suffices unto itself, neither supposing any continuation nor requiring it.... Absolute conclusiveness and closedness is the outstanding feature of the temporally valorized epic past.

Let us move on to tradition. The epic past, walled off from all subsequent times by an impenetrable boundary, is preserved and revealed only in the form of national tradition. The epic relies entirely on this tradition. Important here is not the fact that tradition is the factual source for the epic – what matters rather is that a reliance on tradition is immanent in the very form of the epic, just as the absolute past is immanent in it. Epic discourse is a discourse handed down by tradition. By its very nature the epic world of the absolute past is inaccessible to personal experience and does not permit an individual, personal point of view or evaluation. One cannot glimpse it, grope for it, touch it; one cannot look at it from any point of view; it is impossible to experience it, analyze it, take it apart, penetrate into its core. It is given solely as tradition, sacred and sacrosanct, evaluated in the same way by all and demanding a pious attitude toward itself....

The changes that take place in temporal orientation, and in the zone where images are constructed, appear nowhere more profoundly and inevitably than in the process of re-structuring the image of the individual in literature. Within the bounds of the present article, however, I can touch on this great and complex question only briefly and superficially.

The individual in the high distanced genres is an individual of the absolute past and of the distanced image. As such he is a fully finished and completed being. This has been accomplished on a lofty heroic level, but what is complete is also something hopelessly ready-made; he is all there, from beginning to end he coincides with himself, he is absolutely equal to himself.[2] He is, furthermore, completely externalized. There is not the slightest gap between his authentic essence and its external manifestation.... His view of himself coincides completely with others' views of him – the view of his society (his community), the epic singer and the audience also coincide....

The destruction of epic distance and the transferral of the image of an individual from the distanced plane to the zone of contact with the inconclusive events of the present (and consequently of the future) result in a radical restructuring of the image of the individual in the novel – and consequently in all literature. Folklore and popular-comic sources for the novel played a huge role in this process. Its first and essential step was the comic familiarization of the image of man. Laughter destroyed epic distance; it began to investigate man freely and familiarly, to turn him inside out, expose the disparity between his surface and his center, between his potential and his reality. A dynamic authenticity was introduced into the image of man, dynamics of inconsistency and tension between various factors of this image; man ceased to coincide with himself, and consequently men ceased to be exhausted entirely by the plots that contain them....

[2] For Dostoevsky's opposing conception of the hero as never coinciding with himself, see *Reader*, pp. 92–3.

II

We will give the name *chronotope* (literally, 'time space') to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. This term [space-time] is employed in mathematics, and was introduced as part of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The special meaning it has in relativity theory is not important for our purposes; we are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely). What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space). We understand the chronotope as a formally constitutive category of literature: we will not deal with the chronotope in other areas of culture.[3]

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope.

The chronotope in literature has an intrinsic *generic* significance. It can even be said that it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre and generic distinctions, for in literature the primary category in the chronotope is time. The chronotope as a formally constitutive category determines to a significant degree the image of man in literature as well. The image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic.[4] . . .

Three basic types of novels developed in ancient times, and there are consequently three corresponding methods for artistically fixing time and space in these novels – in short, there were three novelistic chronotopes. These three types turned out to be extraordinarily productive and flexible, and to a large degree determined the development of the adventure novel up to the mid-eighteenth century. . . .

i) The Greek Romance: Adventure Novel of Ordeal

'Suddenly' and 'at just that moment' best characterize this type of time, for this time usually has its origin and comes into its own in just those places where the normal, pragmatic and premeditated course of events is interrupted – and provides an opening for sheer chance, which has its own specific logic. This logic is one of *random contingency* [*sovpadenie*], which is to say, chance *simultaneity* [meetings] and *chance rupture* [nonmeetings], that is, a logic of random *disjunctions* in time as well. In this random contingency, 'earlier' and 'later' are crucially, even decisively, significant. Should something happen a minute earlier or a minute later, that is, should there be no chance

[3] An authorial note here states that the author attended a lecture on the chronotope in biology given by A. A. Uxtomsky in the summer of 1925. Questions of aesthetics were also mentioned.

[4] An authorial note here refers to Kant's recognition of time and space as indispensable forms of any cognition. However, Kant's transcendentalism is rejected; for Bakhtin the forms of time and space are of the most immediate reality. 'We shall attempt to show the role these forms play in the process of concrete artistic cognition (artistic visualization)'.

simultaneity or chance disjunctions in time, there would be no plot at all, and nothing to write a novel about....

How indeed can a human being be portrayed in the 'adventure-time' that we have outlined above, where things occur simultaneously by chance and also *fail* to occur simultaneously by chance, where events have no consequences, where the initiative belongs everywhere exclusively to chance? It goes without saying that in this type of time, an individual can be nothing other than completely *passive*, completely *unchanging*, ... to such an individual things can merely *happen*. He himself is deprived of any initiative. He is merely the physical subject of the action. And it follows that his actions will be by and large of an elementary-spatial sort. In essence, all the character's actions in Greek romance are reduced to *enforced movement through space* (escape, persecution, quests); that is, to a change in spatial location. Human movement through space is precisely what provides the basic *indices* for measuring space and time in the Greek romance, which is to say, for its chronotope.

It is nevertheless a *living human being* moving through space and not merely a physical body in the literal sense of the term. While it is true that his life may be completely passive – 'Fate' runs the game – he nevertheless *endures* the game fate plays. And he not only endures – he *keeps on being the same person* and emerges from this game, from all these turns of fate and chance, with his *identity* absolutely unchanged.

This *distinctive correspondence of an identity with a particular self* is the *organizing center* of the human image in the Greek romance. And one must not underestimate the significance, the profound ideological implications raised by this factor of human identity. In this way the Greek romance reveals its strong ties with a *folklore that predates class distinctions*, assimilating one of the essential elements in the folkloric concept of a man, one that survives to the present in various aspects of folklore, especially in folktales. No matter how impoverished, how denuded a human identity may become in a Greek romance, there is always preserved in it some precious kernel of folk humanity; one always senses a faith in the indestructible power of man in his struggle with nature and with all inhuman forces....

ii) Adventure Novel of Everyday Life

The themes of *metamorphosis (transformation)* – particularly human transformation – and *identity* (particularly human identity) are drawn from the treasury of pre-class world folklore. The folkloric image of man is intimately bound up with transformation and identity. This combination may be seen with particular clarity in the popular folktale [*skazka*]. The folktale image of man – throughout the extraordinary variety of folkloric narratives – always orders itself around the motifs of *transformation* and *identity* (no matter how varied in its turn the concrete expression of these motifs might be)....

Metamorphosis serves as the basis for a method of portraying the whole of an individual's life in its more important moments of *crisis*: for showing *how an individual becomes other than what he was*. We are offered various sharply differing images of one and the same individual, images that are united in

him as various epochs and stages in the course of his life. There is no evolution in the strict sense of the word; what we get, rather, is crisis and rebirth.

This is what essentially distinguishes the Apuleian plot[5] from the plots of the Greek romance. The events that Apuleius describes determine the life of the hero; they define his *entire* life. But of course his entire life, from childhood through old age and death, is not laid out for us. This is not, therefore, a *biographical life* in its entirety. In the crisis-type of portrayal we see only one or two moments that decide the fate of a man's life and determine its entire disposition. . . .

The *primary initiative*, therefore, belongs to *the hero himself* and to his own *personality*. It is true that this initiative is *not positive in a creative sense* (but this is not very important); what we have is *guilt, moral weakness, error* (and in its Christian hagiographic variant, sin) as initiating forces. . . .

The series of adventures that the hero undergoes does not result in a simple affirmation of his identity, but rather in the construction of a new image of the hero, a man who is now purified and reborn. Therefore, the chance governing within the limits of separate adventures must be interpreted in a new way. . . .

The most characteristic thing about this novel is the way it fuses the course of an individual's life (at its major turning points) with his actual spatial course or road – that is, with his wanderings. Thus is realized the metaphor 'the path of life'. The path itself extends through familiar, native territory, in which there is nothing exotic, alien or strange. Thus a unique novelistic chronotope is created, one that has played an enormous role in the history of the genre. At its heart is folklore. Various means for realizing the metaphor 'the path of life' play a large role in all aspects of folklore. One can even go as far as to say that in folklore a road is almost never merely a road, but always suggests the whole, or a portion of, 'a path of life'. The choice of a real itinerary equals the choice of 'the path of life'. . . .

iii) Ancient Biography and Autobiography

These classical forms of autobiography and biography were not works of a literary or bookish nature, kept aloof from the concrete social and political act of noisily making themselves public. On the contrary, such forms were completely determined by events: either verbal praise of civic and political acts, or real human beings giving a public account of themselves. Therefore, the important thing here is not only, and not so much, their internal chrontope (that is, the time-space of their represented life) as it is rather, and preeminently, that exterior real-life chronotope in which the representation of one's own or someone else's life is realized either as verbal praise of a civic-political act or as an account of the self. It is precisely under the conditions of this real-life chrontope, in which one's own or another's life is laid bare (that is, made public), that the limits of a human image and the life it leads are illuminated in all their specificity.

[5] Lucius Apuleius (c.AD 115–after 180), author of the prose romance *Metamorphosis or The Golden Ass*.

This real-life chronotope is constituted by the public square (the *agora*). In ancient times the autobiographical and biographical self-consciousness of an individual and his life was first laid bare and shaped in the public square....

But the square in earlier (ancient) times itself constituted a state (and more – it constituted the entire state apparatus, with all its official organs), it was the highest court, the whole of science, the whole of art, the entire people participated in it. It was a remarkable chronotope, in which all the most elevated categories, from that of the state to that of revealed truth, were realized concretely and fully incarnated, made visible and given a face. And in this concrete and as it were all-encompassing chronotope, the laying bare and examination of a citizen's whole life was accomplished, and received its public and civic stamp of approval....

In following epochs, man's image was distorted by his increasing participation in the mute and invisible spheres of existence. He was literally drenched in muteness and invisibility. And with them entered loneliness. The personal and detached human being – 'the man who exists for himself' – lost the unity and wholeness that had been a product of his public origin. Once having lost the popular chronotope of the public square, his self-consciousness could not find an equally real, unified and whole chronotope; it therefore broke down and lost its integrity, it became abstract and idealistic....

What is the significance of all these chronotopes? What is most obvious is their meaning for *narrative*. They are the organizing centers for the fundamental narrative events of the novel. The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied. It can be said without qualification that to them belongs the meaning that shapes narrative.

We cannot help but be strongly impressed by the *representational* importance of the chronotope. Time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins....

Thus the chrontope, functioning as the primary means for materializing time in space, emerges as a center for concretizing representation, as a force giving body to the entire novel. All the novel's abstract elements – philosophical and social generalizations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect – gravitate toward the chronotope and through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work. Such is the representational significance of the chronotope.

16 The Serio-Comical Tradition of the Menippea

This extract, from Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1963), comes from the rewritten Chapter 4, and opens with a good example of Bakhtin's complex sense of time. Generic form is perceived as originating in specific historical contexts but as outliving its originating moment. Aspects of form, determined in ancient eras, retain their signifying potential through-

out the long historical development of the genre. Indeed it is this generative potential for renewal in response to changing social reality that energizes the process of development. For example, archaic traditional features within novelistic prose provided Dostoevsky with the formal means of representing his new dialogic perception of human consciousness.

In this extract Bakhtin identifies three fundamental roots of the novel genre within ancient literature: the epic, the rhetorical and the carnivalesque. This last strongly influenced the serio-comic verbal realm of literature in classical antiquity. The two most important serio-comic genres to shape novelistic prose were the Socratic dialogue and Menippean satire. The first of these developed the tradition of a dialogic testing of truth while the second was influential in rupturing the epic view of the world as a closed unity, opening up the potential to envisage human consciousness and social reality as unfinalizable. In this extract Bakhtin outlines his sense of the Menippea.

From M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 1963.

Trans. C. Emerson, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minn., 1984.

A literary genre, by its very nature, reflects the most stable, 'eternal' tendencies in literature's development. Always preserved in a genre are undying elements of the *archaic*. True, these archaic elements are preserved in it only thanks to their constant *renewal*, which is to say, their contemporization. A genre is always the same and yet not the same, always old and new simultaneously. Genre is reborn and renewed at every new stage in the development of literature and in every individual work of a given genre. This constitutes the life of the genre. Therefore even the archaic elements preserved in a genre are not dead but eternally alive; that is, archaic elements are capable of renewing themselves. A genre lives in the present, but always *remembers* its past, its beginning. Genre is a representative of creative memory in the process of literary development. Precisely for this reason genre is capable of guaranteeing the *unity* and *uninterrupted continuity* of this development.

For the correct understanding of a genre, therefore, it is necessary to return to its sources....

Speaking somewhat too simplistically and schematically, one could say that the novelistic genre has three fundamental roots: the *epic*, the *rhetorical*, and the *carnivalistic* (with, of course, many transitional forms in between). It is in the realm of the serio-comical that one must seek the starting points of development for the diverse varieties of the third, that is the carnivalistic, line of the novel, including that variety which leads to Dostoevsky.

In shaping that variety in the development of the novel, and in shaping that artistic prose which we will provisionally call 'dialogic' and which, as we have

said, leads to Dostoevsky, two genres from the realm of the serio-comical have definitive significance: the *Socratic dialogue* and *Menippean satire*. They must be treated in somewhat greater detail. . . .

Menippean satire exercised a very great influence on old Christian literature (of the ancient period) and on Byzantine literature (and through it, on ancient Russian writing as well). In diverse variants and under diverse generic labels it also continued its development into the post-classical epochs: into the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and Reformation, and modern times; in fact it continues to develop even now (both with and without a clear-cut awareness of itself as a genre). This carnivalized genre, extraordinarily flexible and as changeable as Proteus, capable of penetrating other genres, has had an enormous and as yet insufficiently appreciated importance for the development of European literatures. Menippean satire became one of the main carriers and channels for the carnival sense of the world in literature, and remains so to the present day. . . .

The menippea is characterized by an *extraordinary freedom of plot and philosophical invention*. The fact that the leading heroes of the menippea are historical and legendary figures (Diogenes, Menippus and others) presents no obstacle. Indeed, in all of world literature we could not find a genre more free than the menippea in its invention and use of the fantastic.

The most important characteristic of the menippea as a genre is the fact that its bold and unrestrained use of the fantastic and adventure is internally motivated, justified by and devoted to a purely ideational and philosophical end: the creation of *extraordinary situations* for the provoking and testing of a philosophical idea, a discourse, a *truth*, embodied in the image of a wise man, the seeker of this truth. We emphasize that the fantastic here serves not for the positive *embodiment* of truth, but as a mode for searching after truth, provoking it, and, most important, *testing* it. To this end the heroes of Menippean satire ascend into heaven, descend into the nether world, wander through unknown and fantastic lands, are placed in extraordinary life situations (Diogenes, for example, sells himself into slavery in the marketplace, Peregrinus triumphantly immolates himself at the Olympic Games, Lucius the Ass finds himself constantly in extraordinary situations).[1] Very often the fantastic takes on the character of an adventure story; sometimes it assumes a symbolic or even mystical-religious character (as in Apuleius). But in all these instances the fantastic is subordinated to the purely ideational function of provoking and testing a truth. The most unrestrained and fantastic adventures are present here in organic and indissoluble artistic unity with the philosophical idea. And it is essential to emphasize once again that the issue is precisely the testing of an *idea*, of a *truth*, and not the testing of a particular human character, whether an individual or a social type. The testing of a wise man is a test of his philosophical position in the world, not a test of any other features of his character independent of that position. In this sense one can say that the content of the menippea is the adventures of an *idea* or a *truth* in

[1] Diogenes (*c*. 400–*c*. 325 BC), founder of the Cynic sect, became the hero of satirical novels and dialogues after his death; Peregrinus of Parium (*c*. AD 100–65), a Cynic of eccentric behaviour known largely through the writings of the Greek satirist Lucian; *Metamorphosis' or The Golden Ass*, is a prose romance by Lucius Apuleius (fl. AD 150) in which a man, transformed into an ass, wanders the Mediterranean lands.

the world: either on earth, in the nether regions, or on Olympus.

A very important characteristic of the menippea is the organic combination within it of the free fantastic, the symbolic, at times even a mystical-religious element with an extreme and (from our point of view) crude *slum naturalism*. The adventures of truth on earth take place on the high road, in brothels, in the dens of thieves, in taverns, marketplaces, prisons, in the erotic orgies of secret cults, and so forth. The idea here fears no slum, is not afraid of any of life's filth. The man of the idea – the wise man – collides with worldly evil, depravity, baseness, and vulgarity in their most extreme expression. This slum naturalism is apparently already present in the earliest menippea.... The organic combination of philosophical dialogue, lofty symbol-systems, the adventure-fantastic, and slum naturalism is the outstanding characteristic of the menippea, and it is preserved in all subsequent stages in the development of the dialogic line of novelistic prose right up to Dostoevsky.

Boldness of invention and the fantastic element are combined in the menippea with an extraordinary philosophical universalism and a capacity to contemplate the world on the broadest possible scale. The menippea is a genre of 'ultimate questions'. In it ultimate philosophical positions are put to the test. The menippea strives to provide, as it were, the ultimate and decisive words and acts of a person, each of which contains the whole man, the whole of this life in its entirety....

In connection with the philosophical universalism of the menippea, a three-planed construction makes its appearance: action and dialogic syncrisis are transferred from earth to Olympus and to the nether world. This three-planed construction is present with great external visibility in, for example, Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*,[2] here also 'dialogues of the threshold' are presented with great external clarity: at the gates of Olympus (where Claudius was not admitted) and on the threshold of the underworld. The three-planed construction of the menippea exercised a decisive influence on the corresponding structure of the medieval mystery play and mystery scene. The genre of the 'threshold dialogue' was also extremely widespread in the Middle Ages, in the serious as well as the comic genres (the famous fabliau of the peasant arguing at the gates of heaven, for example), and is especially well represented in the literature of the Reformation – the so-called 'literature of the heavenly gates' (*Himmelspforten-Literatur*). The menippea accorded great importance to the *nether world*: here was born that special genre of 'dialogues of the dead', widespread in European literature of the Renaissance, and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In the menippea a special type of *experimental fantasticality* makes its appearance, completely foreign to ancient epic and tragedy: observation from some unusual point of view, from on high, for example, which results in a radical change in the scale of the observed phenomena of life; Lucian's *Icaromenippus*, for example, or Varro's *Endymiones* (observations of the life of a city from a great height). This line of experimental fantasticality continues, under the defining influence of the menippea, into the subsequent

[2] Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BC–AD 65), a Roman scholar, tragedian and Stoic philosopher whose *Apocolocyntosis* is a genuine Menippean satiric fantasy figuring the Emperor Claudius.

epochs as well – in Rabelais, Swift, Voltaire (*Micromégas*) and others.

In the menippea there appears for the first time what might be called moral-psychological experimentation: a representation of the unusual, abnormal moral and psychic states of man – insanity of all sorts (the theme of the maniac), split personality, unrestrained daydreaming, unusual dreams, passions bordering on madness, suicides, and so forth. These phenomena do not function narrowly in the menippea as mere themes, but have a formal generic significance. Dreams, daydreams, insanity destroy the epic and tragic wholeness of a person and his fate: the possibilities of another person and another life are revealed in him, he loses his finalized quality and ceases to mean only one thing; he ceases to coincide with himself. Dreams are common in the epic as well, but there they are prophetic, motivating, cautionary – they do not take the person beyond the bounds of his fate and his character, they do not violate his integrity. Of course, this unfinalizability of a man, his non-coincidence with himself, are still rather elementary and embryonic in the menippea, but they are openly there and permit us to look at a person in a new way. This destruction of the wholeness and finalized quality of a man is facilitated by the appearance, in the menippea, of a dialogic relationship to one's own self (fraught with the possibility of split personality)....

Very characteristic for the menippea are scandal scenes, eccentric behavior, inappropriate speeches and performances, that is, all sorts of violations of the generally accepted and customary course of events and the established norms of behavior and etiquette, including manners of speech. These scandals are sharply distinguished by their artistic structure from epic events and tragic catastrophes. They are also different in essence from comic brawls and exposés. One could say that in the menippea new artistic categories of the scandalous and the eccentric emerge which are completely foreign to the classical epic and to the dramatic genres (on the carnivalistic character of these categories we shall speak in more detail below). Scandals and eccentricities destroy the epic and tragic wholeness of the world, they make a breach in the stable, normal ('seemly') course of human affairs and events, they free human behavior from the norms and motivations that predetermine it. Scandals and eccentric scenes fill the meetings of the gods on Olympus (in Lucian, Seneca, Julian the Apostate, and others) as well as scenes on earth (in Petronius, for example, the scandals on the public square, in the hotel, in the bath).[3] The 'inappropriate word' – inappropriate because of its cynical frankness, or because it profanely unmasks a holy thing, or because it crudely violates etiquette – is also very characteristic for the menippea.

The menippea is full of sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations: the virtuous hetaera, the true freedom of the wise man and his servile position, the emperor who becomes a slave, moral downfalls and purifications, luxury and poverty, the noble bandit, and so forth. The menippea loves to play with abrupt transitions and shifts, ups and downs, rises and falls, unexpected comings together of distant and disunited things, mésalliances of all sorts.

[3] Julian the Apostate (AD 332–63) reinstated pagan practices on becoming emperor in AD 361 and proclaimed general religious toleration; Petronius (d. AD 65), courtier of the Emperor Nero and author of *Satyricon*, a genuine Menippean utilizing many styles to satirize contemporary issues and people.

The menippea often includes elements of *social utopia* which are incorporated in the form of dreams or journeys to unknown lands; sometimes the menippea grows outright into a utopian novel (*Abaris* by Heraclides Ponticus).[4] This utopian element is organically combined with all the other elements of the genre.

Characteristic for the menippea is a wide use of inserted genres: novellas, letters, oratorical speeches, symposia, and so on; also characteristic is a mixing of prose and poetic speech. The inserted genres are presented at various distances from the ultimate authorial position, that is, with varying degrees of parodying and objectification. Verse portions are almost always given with a certain degree of parodying.

The presence of inserted genres reinforces the multi-styled and multi-toned nature of the menippea; what is coalescing here is a new relationship to the word as the material of literature, a relationship characteristic for the entire dialogic line of development in artistic prose.

Finally, the last characteristic of the menippea: its concern with current and topical issues. This is, in its own way, the 'journalistic' genre of antiquity, acutely echoing the ideological issues of the day. The satires of Lucian, taken as a group, are an entire encyclopedia of his times: they are full of overt and hidden polemics with various philosophical, religious, ideological and scientific schools, and with the tendencies and currents of his time; they are full of the images of contemporary or recently deceased public figures, 'masters of thought' in all spheres of societal and ideological life (under their own names, or disguised); they are full of allusions to the great and small events of the epoch; they feel out new directions in the development of everyday life; they show newly emerging types in all layers of society, and so on....

Such are the basic generic characteristics of the menippea. We must again emphasize the organic unity of all these seemingly very heterogeneous features, the deep internal integrity of this genre. It was formed in an epoch when national legend was already in decay, amid the destruction of those ethical norms that constituted the ancient idea of 'seemliness' ('beauty', 'nobility'), in an epoch of intense struggle among numerous and heterogeneous religious and philosophical schools and movements, when disputes over 'ultimate questions' of worldview had become an everyday mass phenomenon among all strata of the population and took place whenever and wherever people came together – in marketplaces, on the streets and highroads, in taverns, in bathhouses, on the decks of ships; when the figure of the philosopher, the wise man (the cynic, the stoic, the epicurean) or of the prophet or wonder-worker became typical and were encountered more often than one met the figure of the monk in the Middle Ages during the greatest flowering of the monastic orders. It was the epoch of preparation and formation of a new world religion: Christianity.

The other side of this epoch was a devaluation of all external positions that a person might hold in life, their transformation into *roles* played out on the stageboards of the theater of the world in accordance with the wishes of blind fate (there is a profound philosophical awareness of this in Epictetus and

[4] Heraclides Ponticus (4th c. AD), an academic philosopher.

Marcus Aurelius, and on the literary plane in Lucian and Apuleius).[5] This led to the destruction of the epic and tragic wholeness of a man and his fate.

Thus the genre of the menippea is perhaps the most adequate expression of the characteristics of the epoch. Here, the content of life was poured into a stable form that possessed an *inner logic*, insuring the indissoluble linking up of all its elements. Thanks to this, the genre of the menippea was able to wield such immense influence – to this day almost entirely unappreciated in scholarship – in the history of the development of European novelistic prose.

[5] Epictetus (*c.* AD 55–*c.* 135), originally a slave, became a Stoic philosopher whose writings influenced Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor (AD 161–80), and also Stoic philosopher.

SECTION FOUR
Carnival Ambivalence

17 Folk Humour and Carnival Laughter

In 1940 Bakhtin submitted his thesis on the great French humanist writer, François Rabelais (*c.* 1494–1553), to the Gorky Institute of World Literature in Moscow. The outbreak of war delayed proceedings and it was not until 1947 that Bakhtin was called to defend his dissertation. This was a time of extreme ideological orthodoxy in Soviet literary and intellectual circles; in particular any association with Western decadence was condemmed. Such a context was far from favourable to Bakhtin, already punished with exile for his political unreliability. However his defence was so impressive that he was awarded the degree although conservatives on the examining committee prevented him from receiving it until 1951. It was not until 1965 that the work was published in Russia under the title, *François Rabelais and the Folk Culture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*.

This repressive context did not have only an extrinsic effect upon the work in delaying its publication. Michael Holquist has argued that it should be read throughout as double voiced; as a scholarly account of a long tradition of folk culture reaching its fullest expression in the Middle Ages and as a subversively satiric attack upon many specific aspects of official Stalinist repression. It is a brave affirmation of freedom written during the worst years of terror. Holquist writes in his 'Prologue' to *Rabelais and His World*, 'At one level *Rabelais and His World* is a parable and guidebook for its times, inexplicable without reference to the close connection between circumstances of its own production and Soviet intellectual and political history' (pp. xiv–xv).

However, as Holquist admits, it would be absurd to restrict the relevance of this passionate and scholarly book to the immediacy of its moment of production, and quite contrary to Bakhtin's own complex sense of a text's relationship to history. Indeed, the study begins with concern at the difficulty Rabelais poses for more recent critics and readers. This is because his work, more even than that of his equally great near-contemporaries, Shakespeare, Boccaccio, Dante, Cervantes, is nourished by a thousand-year tradition of folk humour which has remained unexplored by literary and cultural scholarship. This folk humour constitutes a second reality outside the official realm; it is a complex system of meaning existing alongside and in opposition to the 'authoritarian word' of dominant orthodoxy. Its most powerful mode of expression is laughter, but it stems from a comprehensive way of seeing human existence that cannot be isolated in any particular aesthetic form or practice. Everybody participates in carnival. Nevertheless,

Bakhtin recognizes three arenas of particular significance in the development of life and folk culture: carnival festivities, especially the feast, the realm of parodic literature and the language of the market-place.

What unites these three spheres is a perception of human existence which finds representation in the mode Bakhtin refers to as grotesque realism and especially in the central image within that mode: the image of the grotesque body. The exaggerated bodily protruberances, the emphasis on eating and excrement, the frequent physical abuse in the form of beatings and comic debasements are all elements of a complex communal perception of human life. The grotesque body is not individualized; it is the undying body of all the people, comically debased so that it may be festively reborn. For this reason all the elements of folk humour are deeply ambivalent; ridicule and abuse are always the other side of praise and celebration, death is always associated with birth. Bakhtin sets out the fundamental aspects of this folk culture in the 'Introduction' to *Rabelais and His World* (from which this extract is taken) and in subsequent chapters he develops these in detail, showing how they migrated into high culture during the Renaissance in the work of writers like Rabelais.

From M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 1965.

Trans. H. Iswolsky, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind., 1984.

The aim of the present introduction is to pose the problem presented by the culture of folk humor in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and to offer a description of its original traits.

Laughter and its forms represent, as we have said, the least scrutinized sphere of the people's creation. The narrow concept of popular character and of folklore was born in the pre-Romantic period and was basically completed by von Herder and the Romantics.[1] There was no room in this concept for

[1] Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), German philosopher, critic, collector of folk songs. In part of the Introduction not included here Bakhtin traces the changing conception of carnival through to Romanticism. The Renaissance was a crossroads of two types of imagery or two canons using that term 'in the wider sense of a manner of representing the human body and bodily life' (p. 30). In the classical canon, derived from the high art of antiquity, the body is conceived as a totally completed, finished product, separate from all other bodies. In contrast, the grotesque canon represents the body as unfinished, open and proliferating. After their creative fusion during the Renaissance, these two canons split apart again and, from the seventeenth century onwards, there is a narrowing down of the grotesque canon as its roots with folk culture wither and it becomes almost wholly a literary tradition. In Romantic writing the grotesque has become individualized and subjective. Laughter is no longer ambivalent; it has given way to irony and sarcasm. Hence it is no longer able to combat terror; the grotesque elements of Romanticism – madness, the devil, the mask – have lost their festive ambivalence and thus their regenerative potential. Behind the Romantic mask is 'a terrible vacuum, a nothingness lurks behind it' (p. 40). Bakhtin concludes his historical survey by noting that another revival of the grotesque occurs in the twentieth century in the work of Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Pablo Neruda and others.

the peculiar culture of the marketplace and of folk laughter with all its wealth of manifestations. Nor did the generations that succeeded each other in that marketplace become the object of historic, literary, or folkloristic scrutiny as the study of early cultures continued. The element of laughter was accorded the least place of all in the vast literature devoted to myth, to folk lyrics, and to epics. Even more unfortunate was the fact that the peculiar nature of the people's laughter was completely distorted; entirely alien notions and concepts of humor, formed within the framework of bourgeois modern culture and aesthetics, were applied to this interpretation. We may therefore say without exaggeration that the profound originality expressed by the culture of folk humor in the past has remained unexplored until now.

And yet, the scope and the importance of this culture were immense in the Renaissance and the Middle Ages. A boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture. In spite of their variety, folk festivities of the carnival type, the comic rites and cults, the clowns and fools, giants, dwarfs, and jugglers, the vast and manifold literature of parody – all these forms have one style in common: they belong to one culture of folk carnival humor.

The manifestations of this folk culture can be divided into three distinct forms.

1. *Ritual spectacles*: carnival pageants, comic shows of the marketplace.
2. *Comic verbal compositions*: parodies both oral and written, in Latin and in the vernacular.
3. *Various genres of billingsgate*: curses, oaths, popular blazons.

These three forms of folk humor, reflecting in spite of their variety a single humorous aspect of the world, are closely linked and interwoven in many ways.

Let us begin by describing each of these forms.

Carnival festivities and the comic spectacles and ritual connected with them had an important place in the life of medieval man. Besides carnivals proper, with their long and complex pageants and processions, there was the 'feast of fools' (*festa stultorum*) and the 'feast of the ass'; there was a special free 'Easter laughter' (*risus paschalis*), consecrated by tradition. Moreover, nearly every Church feast had its comic folk aspect, which was also traditionally recognized. Such, for instance, were the parish feasts, usually marked by fairs and varied open-air amusements, with the participation of giants, dwarfs, monsters, and trained animals. A carnival atmosphere reigned on days when mysteries and *soties*[2] were produced. This atmosphere also pervaded such agricultural feasts as the harvesting of grapes (*vendange*) which was celebrated also in the city. Civil and social ceremonies and rituals took on a comic aspect as clowns and fools, constant participants in these festivals, mimicked serious rituals such as the tribute rendered to the victors at tournaments, the transfer of feudal rights, or the initiation of a knight. Minor occasions were also marked by comic protocol, as for instance the election of a king and queen to preside at a banquet 'for laughter's sake' (*roi pour rire*).

A *soti* is a satirical farce, popular in France during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

All these forms of protocol and ritual based on laughter and consecrated by tradition existed in all the countries of medieval Europe; they were sharply distinct from the serious official, ecclesiastical, feudal, and political cult forms and ceremonials. They offered a completely different, nonofficial, extraecclesiastical and extrapolitical aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations; they built a second world and a second life outside officialdom, a world in which all medieval people participated more or less, in which they lived during a given time of the year. If we fail to take into consideration this two-world condition, neither medieval cultural consciousness nor the culture of the Renaissance can be understood. To ignore or to underestimate the laughing people of the Middle Ages also distorts the picture of European culture's historic development.

This double aspect of the world and of human life existed even at the earliest stages of cultural development. In the folklore of primitive peoples, coupled with the cults which were serious in tone and organization were other, comic cults which laughed and scoffed at the deity ('ritual laughter'); coupled with serious myths were comic and abusive ones; coupled with heroes were their parodies and doublets. These comic rituals and myths have attracted the attention of folklorists.

But at the early stages of preclass and prepolitical social order it seems that the serious and the comic aspects of the world and of the deity were equally sacred, equally 'official'. This similarity was preserved in rituals of a later period of history. For instance, in the early period of the Roman state the ceremonial of the triumphal procession included on almost equal terms the glorifying and the deriding of the victor. The funeral ritual was also composed of lamenting (glorifying) and deriding the deceased. But in the definitely consolidated state and class structure such an equality of the two aspects became impossible. All the comic forms were transferred, some earlier and others later, to a nonofficial level. There they acquired a new meaning, were deepened and rendered more complex, until they became the expression of folk consciousness, of folk culture. Such were the carnival festivities of the ancient world, especially the Roman Saturnalias, and such were medieval carnivals. They were, of course, far removed from the primitive community's ritual laughter.

What are the peculiar traits of the comic rituals and spectacles of the Middle Ages? Of course, these are not religious rituals like, for instance, the Christian liturgy to which they are linked by distant genetic ties. The basis of laughter which gives form to carnival rituals frees them completely from all religious and ecclesiastic dogmatism, from all mysticism and piety. They are also completely deprived of the character of magic and prayer; they do not command nor do they ask for anything. Even more, certain carnival forms parody the Church's cult. All these forms are systematically placed outside the Church and religiosity. They belong to an entirely different sphere.

Because of their obvious sensuous character and their strong element of play, carnival images closely resemble certain artistic forms, namely the spectacle. In turn, medieval spectacles often tended toward carnival folk culture, the culture of the marketplace, and to a certain extent became one of its components. But the basic carnival nucleus of this culture is by no means a purely artistic form nor a spectacle and does not, generally speaking, belong to the

sphere of art. It belongs to the borderline between art and life. In reality, it is life itself, but shaped according to a certain pattern of play.

In fact, carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators. Footlights would destroy a carnival, as the absence of footlights would destroy a theatrical performance. Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants. It was most clearly expressed and experienced in the Roman Saturnalias, perceived as a true and full, though temporary, return of Saturn's golden age upon earth. The tradition of the Saturnalias remained unbroken and alive in the medieval carnival, which expressed this universal renewal and was vividly felt as an escape from the usual official way of life.

Clowns and fools, which often figure in Rabelais' novel, are characteristic of the medieval culture of humor. They were the constant, accredited representatives of the carnival spirit in everyday life out of carnival season. Like Triboulet[3] at the time of Francis I, they were not actors playing their parts on a stage, as did the comic actors of a later period, impersonating Harlequin, Hanswurst, etc., but remained fools and clowns always and wherever they made their appearance. As such they represented a certain form of life, which was real and ideal at the same time. They stood on the borderline between life and art, in a peculiar midzone as it were; they were neither eccentrics nor dolts, neither were they comic actors.

Thus carnival is the people's second life, organized on the basis of laughter. It is a festive life. Festivity is a peculiar quality of all comic rituals and spectacles of the Middle Ages.

All these forms of carnival were also linked externally to the feasts of the Church. (One carnival did not coincide with any commemoration of sacred history or of a saint but marked the last days before Lent, and for this reason was called *Mardi gras* or *carême-prenant* in France and *Fastnacht* in Germany.) Even more significant is the genetic link of these carnivals with ancient pagan festivities, agrarian in nature, which included the comic element in their rituals.

The feast (every feast) is an important primary form of human culture. It cannot be explained merely by the practical conditions of the community's work, and it would be even more superficial to attribute it to the physiological demand for periodic rest. The feast had always an essential, meaningful philosophical content. No rest period or breathing spell can be rendered festive per se; something must be added from the spiritual and ideological dimension. They must be sanctioned not by the world of practical conditions but by the highest aims of human existence, that is, by the world of ideals. Without this sanction there can be no festivity.

The feast is always essentially related to time, either to the recurrence of

[3] Triboulet appears frequently in Rabelais' writing; he is derived from Fevrial or Le Feurial who was the court fool of Francis I and Louis XII (trans. note).

an event in the natural (cosmic) cycle, or to biological or historic timeliness. Moreover, through all the stages of historic development feasts were linked to moments of crisis, of breaking points in the cycle of nature or in the life of society and man. Moments of death and revival, of change and renewal always led to a festive perception of the world. These moments, expressed in concrete form, created the peculiar character of the feasts.

In the framework of class and feudal political structure this specific character could be realized without distortion only in the carnival and in similar marketplace festivals. They were the second life of the people, who for a time entered the utopian realm of community, freedom, equality, and abundance.

On the other hand, the official feasts of the Middle Ages, whether ecclesiastic, feudal, or sponsored by the state, did not lead the people out of the existing world order and created no second life. On the contrary, they sanctioned the existing pattern of things and reinforced it. The link with time became formal; changes and moments of crisis were relegated to the past. Actually, the official feast looked back at the past and used the past to consecrate the present. Unlike the earlier and purer feast, the official feast asserted that all was stable, unchanging, perennial: the existing hierarchy, the existing religious, political, and moral values, norms, and prohibitions. It was the triumph of a truth already established, the predominant truth that was put forward as eternal and indisputable. This is why the tone of the official feast was monolithically serious and why the element of laughter was alien to it. The true nature of human festivity was betrayed and distorted. But this true festive character was indestructible; it had to be tolerated and even legalized outside the official sphere and had to be turned over to the popular sphere of the marketplace.

As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed.

The suspension of all hierarchical precedence during carnival time was of particular significance. Rank was especially evident during official feasts; everyone was expected to appear in the full regalia of his calling, rank, and merits and to take the place corresponding to his position. It was a consecration of inequality. On the contrary, all were considered equal during carnival. Here, in the town square, a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age. The hierarchical background and the extreme corporative and caste divisions of the medieval social order were exceptionally strong. Therefore such free, familiar contacts were deeply felt and formed an essential element of the carnival spirit. People were, so to speak, reborn for new, purely human relations. These truly human relations were not only a fruit of imagination or abstract thought; they were experienced. The utopian ideal and the realistic merged in this carnival experience, unique of its kind.

This temporary suspension, both ideal and real, of hierarchical rank created during carnival time a special type of communication impossible in everyday life. This led to the creation of special forms of marketplace speech and gesture, frank and free, permitting no distance between those who came in

contact with each other and liberating from norms of etiquette and decency imposed at other times. A special carnivalesque, marketplace style of expression was formed which we find abundantly represented in Rabelais' novel.

During the century-long development of the medieval carnival, prepared by thousands of years of ancient comic ritual, including the primitive Saturnalias, a special idiom of forms and symbols was evolved – an extremely rich idiom that expressed the unique yet complex carnival experience of the people. This experience, opposed to all that was ready-made and completed, to all pretense at immutability, sought a dynamic expression; it demanded ever changing, playful, undefined forms. All the symbols of the carnival idiom are filled with this pathos of change and renewal, with the sense of the gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities. We find here a characteristic logic, the peculiar logic of the 'inside out' (*à l'envers*), of the 'turnabout', of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings. A second life, a second world of folk culture is thus constructed; it is to a certain extent a parody of the extracarnival life, a 'world inside out'. We must stress, however, that the carnival is far distant from the negative and formal parody of modern times. Folk humor denies, but it revives and renews at the same time. Bare negation is completely alien to folk culture.

Our introduction has merely touched upon the exceptionally rich and original idiom of carnival forms and symbols. The principal aim of the present work is to understand this half-forgotten idiom, in so many ways obscure to us. For it is precisely this idiom which was used by Rabelais, and without it we would fail to understand Rabelais' system of images. This carnival imagery was also used, although differently and to a different degree, by Erasmus, Shakespeare, Lope de Vega, Guevara, and Quevedo, by the German 'literature of fools' (*Narren-literatur*), and by Hans Sachs, Fischart, Grimmelshausen, and others.[4] Without an understanding of it, therefore, a full appreciation of Renaissance and grotesque literature is impossible. Not only belles lettres but the utopias of the Renaissance and its conception of the universe itself were deeply penetrated by the carnival spirit and often adopted its forms and symbols.

Let us say a few initial words about the complex nature of carnival laughter. It is, first of all, a festive laughter. Therefore it is not an individual reaction to some isolated 'comic' event. Carnival laughter is the laughter of all the people. Second, it is universal in scope; it is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival's participants. The entire world is seen in its droll aspect, in its gay relativity. Third, this laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives. Such is the laughter of carnival.

Let us enlarge upon the second important trait of the people's festive laughter: that it is also directed at those who laugh. The people do not

[4] Lope Felix de Vega Carpio (1562–1635), Spanish poet and playwright; Antonio de Guevara (d. 1545?), Spanish writer whose most famous work is *Diall of Princes*; Francisco de Quevedo Villegas (1580–1645), Spanish satirist and author of the picaresque novel *La Vida del Buscon*; Hans Sachs (1494–1576), shoemaker of Nuremberg, prolific poet and playwright; Johann Fischart, a junior contemporary of Rabelais; Johannes Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen (*c.* 1621–76): a German writer and author of the picaresque novel *Simplicissimus*.

exclude themselves from the wholeness of the world. They, too, are incomplete, they also die and are revived and renewed. This is one of the essential differences of the people's festive laughter from the pure satire of modern times. The satirist whose laughter is negative places himself above the object of his mockery, he is opposed to it. The wholeness of the world's comic aspect is destroyed, and that which appears comic becomes a private reaction. The people's ambivalent laughter, on the other hand, expresses the point of view of the whole world; he who is laughing also belongs to it.

Let us here stress the special philosophical and utopian character of festive laughter and its orientation toward the highest spheres. The most ancient rituals of mocking at the deity have here survived, acquiring a new essential meaning. All that was purely cultic and limited has faded away, but the all-human, universal, and utopian element has been retained.

The greatest writer to complete the cycle of the people's carnival laughter and bring it into world literature was Rabelais. His work will permit us to enter into the complex and deep nature of this phenomenon.

The problem of folk humor must be correctly posed. Current literature concerning this subject presents merely gross modernizations. The present-day analysis of laughter explains it either as purely negative satire (and Rabelais is described as a pure satirist), or else as gay, fanciful, recreational drollery deprived of philosophic content. The important point made previously, that folk humor is ambivalent, is usually ignored.

We shall now turn to the second form of the culture of folk humor in the Middle Ages: the comic verbal compositions, in Latin or in the vernacular.

This, of course, is not folklore proper although some of these compositions in the vernacular could be placed in that category. But comic literature was infused with the carnival spirit and made wide use of carnival forms and images. It developed in the disguise of legalized carnival licentiousness and in most cases was systematically linked with such celebrations.[5] Its laughter was both ambivalent and festive. It was the entire recreational literature of the Middle Ages.

Celebrations of a carnival type represented a considerable part of the life of medieval men, even in the time given over to them. Large medieval cities devoted an average of three months a year to these festivities. The influence of the carnival spirit was irresistible: it made a man renounce his official state as monk, cleric, scholar, and perceive the world in its laughing aspect. Not only schoolmen and minor clerics but hierarchs and learned theologians indulged in gay recreation as relaxation from pious seriousness. 'Monkish pranks' (*Joca monacorum*) was the title of one of the most popular medieval comic pieces. Confined to their cells, monks produced parodies or semiparodies of learned treatises and other droll Latin compositions.

The comic literature of the Middle Ages developed throughout a thousand years or even more, since its origin goes back to Christian antiquity. During this long life it underwent, of course, considerable transformation, the Latin compositions being altered least. A variety of genres and styles were elabo-

[5] An authorial note states that a similar situation existed in ancient Rome where comic literature reflected the licentiousness of the Saturnalias, to which it was closely linked.

rated. But in spite of all these variations this literature remained more or less the expression of the popular carnival spirit, using the latter's forms and symbols.

The Latin parody or semiparody was widespread. The number of manuscripts belonging to this category is immense. The entire official ideology and ritual are here shown in their comic aspect. Laughter penetrates the highest forms of religious cult and thought.

One of the oldest and most popular examples of this literature, 'Cyprian's supper' (*coena Cypriani*) offers a peculiar festive and carnivalesque travesty of the entire Scriptures. This work was consecrated by the tradition of 'Paschal laughter' (*risus paschalis*); the faraway echoes of the Roman Saturnalia can be heard in it. Another ancient parody is the 'Grammatical Virgil Maro' (*Vergilius Maro Grammaticus*), a semiparodical learned treatise on Latin grammar which is at the same time a parody of the scholarly wisdom and of the scientific methods of the early Middle Ages. Both works, composed at the very borderline between the antique world and the Middle Ages, inaugurated this humorous genre and had a decisive influence on its later forms. Their vogue lasted almost up to the Renaissance.

In the further development of humorous Latin literature, parodical doublets of every ecclesiastical cult and teaching were created – the so-called *parodia sacra*, 'sacred parody', one of the most peculiar and least understood manifestations of medieval literature. There is a considerable number of parodical liturgies ('The Liturgy of the Drunkards', 'The Liturgy of the Gamblers'), parodies of Gospel readings, of the most sacred prayers (the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria), of litanies, hymns, psalms, and even Gospel sayings. There were parodies of wills ('The Pig's Will', 'The Will of the Ass'), parodies of epitaphs, council decrees, etc. The scope of this literature is almost limitless. All of it was consecrated by tradition and, to a certain extent, tolerated by the Church. It was created and preserved under the auspices of the 'Paschal laughter', or of the 'Christmas laughter'; it was in part directly linked, as in the parodies of liturgies and prayers, withe the 'feast of fools' and may have been performed during this celebration.

There were other parodies in Latin: parodies of debates, dialogues, chronicles, and so forth. All these forms demanded from their authors a certain degree of learning, sometimes at a high level. All of them brought the echoes of carnival laughter within the walls of monasteries, universities, and schools.

Medieval Latin humor found its final and complete expression at the highest level of the Renaissance in Erasmus' 'In Praise of Folly', one of the greatest creations of carnival laughter in world literature, and in von Hutten's 'Letters of Obscure People'.[6]

No less rich and even more varied is medieval humorous literature composed in the vernacular. Here, too, we find forms similar to the *parodia sacra*: parodies of prayers, of sermons (the *sermons joyeux* in France), of Christmas carols, and legends of the saints. But the prevailing forms are the secular parody and travesty, which present the droll aspect of the feudal system and of

[6] Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523), soldier and humanist, thought to be responsible for *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, an anonymous collection of letters in Latin parodying opponents of new humanist learning.

feudal heroics. The medieval epic parodies are animal, jesting, roguish, foolish; they deal with heroic deeds, epic heroes (the comic Roland), and knightly tales ('The Mule without a Bridle', 'Aucassin and Nicolette'). There are various genres of mock rhetoric: carnivalesque debates, comic dialogues, and *euloges*. Carnivalesque humor is also reflected in the *fabliaux* and in the peculiar comic lyrics of vagrant scholars.[7] ...

Let us now look at the third form of the culture of folk humor: certain specific manifestations and genres of medieval and Renaissance familiar speech in the marketplace.

We have already said that during carnival there is a temporary suspension of all hierarchic distinctions and barriers among men and of certain norms and prohibitions of usual life. We added that an ideal and at the same time real type of communication, impossible in ordinary life, is established.

A new type of communication always creates new forms of speech or a new meaning given to the old forms. For instance, when two persons establish friendly relations, the form of their verbal intercourse also changes abruptly; they address each other informally, abusive words are used affectionately, and mutual mockery is permitted. (In formal intercourse only a third person can be mocked.) The two friends may pat each other on the shoulder and even on the belly (a typical carnivalesque gesture). Verbal etiquette and discipline are relaxed and indecent words and expressions may be used. But obviously such familiar intercourse in our days is far from the free familiar communication of the people in carnival time. It lacks the essentials: the all-human character, the festivity, utopian meaning, and philosophical depth. Let us point out that elements of the old ritual of fraternization were preserved in the carnival and were given a deeper meaning. Some of these elements have entered modern life but have entirely lost their primitive connotation.

The new type of carnival familiarity was reflected in a series of speech patterns. Let us examine some of them.

It is characteristic for the familiar speech of the marketplace to use abusive language, insulting words or expressions, some of them quite lengthy and complex. The abuse is grammatically and semantically isolated from context and is regarded as a complete unit, something like a proverb. This is why we can speak of abusive language as of a special genre of billingsgate. Abusive expressions are not homogeneous in origin; they had various functions in primitive communication and had in most cases the character of magic and incantations. But we are especially interested in the language which mocks and insults the deity and which was part of the ancient comic cults. These abuses were ambivalent: while humiliating and mortifying they at the same time revived and renewed. It was precisely this ambivalent abuse which determined the genre of speech in carnival intercourse. But its meaning underwent essential transformation; it lost its magic and its specific practical direction and acquired an intrinsic, universal character and depth. In this new form abuse contributed to the creation of the free carnival atmosphere, to the second, droll aspect of the world.

[7] An *euloge* is a speech or written praise of a person, usually after their death; a *fabliau* is a verse tale, usually burlesque in style, from the early period of French poetry.

Profanities and oaths (*jurons*) are in many ways similar to abusive language. They too invaded billingsgate speech. Profanities must also be considered a special genre with the same attributes as abuse – isolation from context and intrinsic character. Profanities and oaths were not initially related to laughter, but they were excluded from the sphere of official speech because they broke its norms; they were therefore transferred to the familiar sphere of the marketplace. Here in the carnival atmosphere they acquired the nature of laughter and became ambivalent.

The fate of other patterns of speech, for instance of various indecent expressions, was similar to that of the genres previously discussed. The familiar language of the marketplace became a reservoir in which various speech patterns excluded from official intercourse could freely accumulate. In spite of their genetic differences, all these genres were filled with the carnival spirit, transformed their primitive verbal functions, acquired a general tone of laughter, and became, as it were, so many sparks of the carnival bonfire which renews the world. . . .

Such are the three basic forms of the culture of folk humor as expressed in the Middle Ages. All the influences we have analyzed have been known to scholars and have been studied by them, especially humorous literature in the vernacular. But these influences have been examined separately, completely severed from their maternal womb – from the carnival, ritual, and spectacle. This means that the studies have been pursued outside the unity of folk culture, the problem of which was not posed. This is why, dealing with the variety and heterogeneous character of these phenomena, the scholars did not see the one deeply original humorous aspect of the world, presented in isolated fragments. The influences were interpreted in the light of cultural, aesthetic, and literary norms of modern times; they were measured not within their own dimensions but according to measurements completely alien to them. They were modernized, which means that they were subject to a false evaluation. The peculiarity of comic imagery, which is one in spite of its variety and is inherent to medieval folk culture and generally foreign to modern times (especially to the nineteenth century), was also not understood. We must now undertake the characterization of this comic imagery.

It is usually pointed out that in Rabelais' work the material bodily principle, that is, images of the human body with its food, drink, defecation, and sexual life, plays a predominant role. Images of the body are offered, moreover, in an extremely exaggerated form. Rabelais was proclaimed by Victor Hugo the greatest poet of the 'flesh' and 'belly', while others accused him of 'gross physiologism', of 'biologism', or 'naturalism'. Similar traits were also found to a lesser degree in other representatives of Renaissance literature, in Boccaccio, Shakespeare, and Cervantes, and were interpreted as a 'rehabilitation of the flesh' characteristic of the Renaissance in reaction against the ascetic Middle Ages. Sometimes they were seen as a typical manifestation of the Renaissance bourgeois character, that is, of its material interest in 'economic man'.

All these and similar explanations are nothing but interpretations according to the narrow and modified meaning which modern ideology, especially

that of the nineteenth century, attributed to 'materiality' and to the 'body'.

Actually, the images of the material bodily principle in the work of Rabelais (and of the other writers of the Renaissance) are the heritage, only somewhat modified by the Renaissance, of the culture of folk humor. They are the heritage of that peculiar type of imagery and, more broadly speaking, of that peculiar aesthetic concept which is characteristic of this folk culture and which differs sharply from the aesthetic concept of the following ages. We shall call it conditionally the concept of grotesque realism.

The material bodily principle in grotesque realism is offered in its all-popular festive and utopian aspect. The cosmic, social, and bodily elements are given here as an indivisible whole. And this whole is gay and gracious.

In grotesque realism, therefore, the bodily element is deeply positive. It is presented not in a private, egotistic form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as something universal, representing all the people. As such it is opposed to severance from the material and bodily roots of the world; it makes no pretense to renunciation of the earthly, or independence of the earth and the body. We repeat: the body and bodily life have here a cosmic and at the same time an all-people's character; this is not the body and its physiology in the modern sense of these words, because it is not individualized. The material bodily principle is contained not in the biological individual, not in the bourgeois ego, but in the people, a people who are continually growing and renewed. This is why all that is bodily becomes grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable.

This exaggeration has a positive, assertive character. The leading themes of these images of bodily life are fertility, growth, and a brimming-over abundance. Manifestations of this life refer not to the isolated biological individual, not to the private, egotistic 'economic man', but to the collective ancestral body of all the people. Abundance and the all-people's element also determine the gay and festive character of all images of bodily life; they do not reflect the drabness of everyday existence. The material bodily principle is a triumphant, festive principle, it is a 'banquet for all the world'.[8] This character is preserved to a considerable degree in Renaissance literature, and most fully, of course, in Rabelais.

The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity. Thus 'Cyprian's supper' and many other Latin parodies of the Middle Ages are nothing but a selection of all the degrading, earthly details taken from the Bible, the Gospels, and other sacred texts. In the comic dialogues of Solomon with Morolf which were popular in the Middle Ages, Solomon's sententious pronouncements are contrasted to the flippant and debasing dictums of the clown Morolf, who brings the conversation down to a strongly emphasized bodily level of food, drink, digestion and sexual life.[9] One of the main attributes of the medieval clown was precisely the transfer of every high ceremo-

[8] In old Russian tales and epics this is a frequent expression used to describe a great banquet, usually the happy ending of the story (trans. note).

[9] An authorial note states that there is a similar earthiness in the dialogues of Don Quixote and Sancho.

nial gesture or ritual to the material sphere; such was the clown's role during tournaments, the knight's initiation, and so forth. It is in this tradition of grotesque realism that we find the source of the scenes in which Don Quixote degrades chivalry and ceremonial. . . .

Not only parody in its narrow sense but all the other forms of grotesque realism degrade, bring down to earth, turn their subject into flesh. This is the peculiar trait of this genre which differentiates it from all the forms of medieval high art and literature. The people's laughter which characterized all the forms of grotesque realism from immemorial times was linked with the bodily lower stratum. Laughter degrades and materializes. . . .

Degradation and debasement of the higher do not have a formal and relative character in grotesque realism. 'Upward' and 'downward' have here an absolute and strictly topographical meaning. 'Downward' is earth, 'upward' is heaven. Earth is an element that devours, swallows up (the grave, the womb) and at the same time an element of birth, of renascence (the maternal breasts). Such is the meaning of 'upward' and 'downward' in their cosmic aspect, while in their purely bodily aspect, which is not clearly distinct from the cosmic, the upper part is the face or the head and the lower part is the genital organs, the belly, and the buttocks. These absolute topographical connotations are used by grotesque realism, including medieval parody. Degradation here means coming down to earth, the contact with earth as an element that swallows up and gives birth at the same time. To degrade is to bury, to sow, and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something more and better. To degrade also means to concern oneself with the lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and the reproductive organs; it therefore relates to acts of defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy, and birth. Degradation digs a bodily grave for a new birth; it has not only a destructive, negative aspect, but also a regenerating one. To degrade an object does not imply merely hurling it into the void of nonexistence, into absolute destruction, but to hurl it down to the reproductive lower stratum, the zone in which conception and a new birth take place. Grotesque realism knows no other lower level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving.

18 Carnival Ambivalence: Laughter, Praise and Abuse

In this extract, taken from Chapters 1–3 of *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin considers three aspects of folk humour: laughter, the language of the market-place and the mock beatings and uncrownings typical of carnival. The first part gives an account of the two worlds of the Middle Ages: the world of official seriousness and the unofficial world of popular culture which existed, almost licensed, alongside it. The power of laughter generated in the forms

of the unofficial is seen by Bakhtin as a liberating force challenging the grip of religious dogma and intimidation and so opening the way for the Renaissance consciousness.

The second part of the extract deals specifically with colloquial language of praise and abuse and especially with the frequent and familiar references to the human body and its physical functions. Typical of this form of speech is market-place billingsgate. Bakhtin stresses that the indecencies and scatalogical aspects must not be isolated (as they have become in modern times) from the organic framework of thought to which they belong. He analyses the pervasive influence of this language on passages of Rabelais' novel to reveal the way grotesque and exaggerated images of food, excrement and the lower regions of the body are all profoundly inter-related and ambivalent. They signify a world that dies to be born, devouring and devoured, continually growing and multiplying; the body that is also the earth, the grave and the womb.

The final part of the extract links the market-place images of food and body to the frequent representation of beatings in Rabelais' work. Bakhtin sees these ritual thrashings as part of the carnival tradition which decrowns and mocks figures of authority and power. This enacts the triumph of a new order over the old. Those in authority always attempt to deny the process of time, upholding their view of things as an eternal truth. Carnival, by contrast, expresses a utopian belief in a future time in which fear and authority are vanquished. Thus all three aspects of folk culture in this extract form part of a unified cosmic system of meaning, a comprehensive way of seeing the world which is dialogically at odds with official Medieval truth.

From M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 1965.

Trans. H. Iswolşky, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind., 1984.

I

In the Renaissance, laughter in its most radical, universal, and at the same time gay form emerged from the depths of folk culture; it emerged but once in the course of history, over a period of some fifty or sixty years (in various countries and at various times) and entered with its popular (vulgar) language the sphere of great literature and high ideology. It appeared to play an essential role in the creation of such masterpieces of world literature as Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the novels of Rabelais and Cervantes, Shakespeare's dramas and comedies, and others. The walls between official and nonofficial literature were inevitably to crumble, especially because in the most important ideological sectors these walls also served to separate languages – Latin from the vernacular. The adoption of vernacular by literature and by certain

ideological spheres was to sweep away or at least weaken these boundaries.

A number of other factors concerned with the disintegration of the feudal and theocratic order of the Middle Ages also contributed to the fusion of the official and nonofficial. The culture of folk humor that had been shaped during many centuries and that had defended the people's creativity in nonofficial forms, in verbal expression or spectacle, could now rise to the high level of literature and ideology and fertilize it. Later, in times of absolute monarchy and the formation of a new official order, folk humor descended to the lower level of the genre hierarchy. There it settled and broke away from its popular roots, becoming petty, narrow, and degenerate.

A millenium of folk humor broke into Renaissance literature. This thousand-year-old laughter not only fertilized literature but was itself fertilized by humanist knowledge and advanced literary techniques. In Rabelais we see the speech and mask of the medieval clown, folk and carnival gaiety, the defiance of the democratic cleric, the talk and gestures of the mountebank – all combined with humanist scholarship, with the physician's science and practice, and with political experience....

As we have said, laughter in the Middle Ages remained outside all official spheres of ideology and outside all official strict forms of social relations. Laughter was eliminated from religious cult, from feudal and state ceremonials, etiquette, and from all the genres of high speculation. An intolerant, one-sided tone of seriousness is characteristic of official medieval culture. The very contents of medieval ideology – asceticism, somber providentialism, sin, atonement, suffering, as well as the character of the feudal regime, with its oppression and intimidation – all these elements determined this tone of icy petrified seriousness. It was supposedly the only tone fit to express the true, the good, and all that was essential and meaningful. Fear, religious awe, humility, these were the overtones of this seriousness.

Early Christianity had already condemned laughter. Tertullian, Cyprian, and John Chrysostom preached against ancient spectacles, especially against the mime and the mime's jests and laughter.[1] John Chrysostom declared that jests and laughter are not from God but from the devil. Only permanent seriousness, remorse, and sorrow for his sins befit the Christian. During the struggle against the Aryans, Christians were accused of introducing elements of the mime – song, gesticulation, laughter – into religious services.

But this intolerant seriousness of official church ideology made it necessary to legalize the gaiety, laughter, and jests which had been eliminated from the canonized ritual and etiquette. Thus forms of pure laughter were created parallel to the official forms....

Summing up, we can say that laughter, which had been eliminated in the Middle Ages from official cult and ideology, made its unofficial but almost legal nest under the shelter of almost every feast. Therefore, every feast in addition to its official, ecclesiastical part had yet another folk carnival part

[1] Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullian (*c.* AD 160–*c.* 240), born near Carthage, was converted to Christianity and became an eloquent defender of its moral code; Thascius Caecilius Cyprian (*c.* AD 200–58), became bishop of Carthage (248); John Chrysostom (*c.* AD 354–407), bishop of Constantinople.

whose organizing principles were laughter and the material bodily lower stratum. This part of the feast had its own pattern, its own theme and imagery, its own ritual. The origin of the various elements of this theme is varied. Doubtless, the Roman Saturnalia continued to live during the entire Middle Ages. The tradition of the antique mime also remained alive. But the main source was local folklore. It was this folklore which inspired both the imagery and the ritual of the popular, humorous part of the feast.

Lower- and middle-class clerics, schoolmen, students, and members of corporations were the main participants in these folk meriments. People of various other unorganized elements which belonged to none of these social groups and which were numerous at that time also participated in the celebrations. But the medieval culture of folk humor actually belonged to all the people. The truth of laughter embraced and carried away everyone; nobody could resist it. . . .

Besides universalism and freedom, the third important trait of laughter was its relation to the people's unofficial truth.

The serious aspects of class culture are official and authoritarian; they are combined with violence, prohibitions, limitations and always contain an element of fear and of intimidation. These elements prevailed in the Middle Ages. Laughter, on the contrary, overcomes fear, for it knows no inhibitions, no limitations. Its idiom is never used by violence and authority.

It was the victory of laughter over fear that most impressed medieval man. It was not only a victory over mystic terror of God, but also a victory over the awe inspired by the forces of nature, and most of all over the oppression and guilt related to all that was consecrated and forbidden ('mana' and 'taboo'). It was the defeat of divine and human power, of authoritarian commandments and prohibitions, of death and punishment after death, hell and all that is more terrifying than the earth itself. Through this victory laughter clarified man's consciousness and gave him a new outlook on life. This truth was ephemeral; it was followed by the fears and oppressions of everyday life, but from these brief moments another unofficial truth emerged, truth about the world and man which prepared the new Renaissance consciousness.

The acute awareness of victory over fear is an essential element of medieval laughter. This feeling is expressed in a number of characteristic medieval comic images. We always find in them the defeat of fear presented in a droll and monstrous form, the symbols of power and violence turned inside out, the comic images of death and bodies gaily rent asunder. All that was terrifying becomes grotesque. We have already mentioned that one of the indispensable accessories of carnival was the set called 'hell'. This 'hell' was solemnly burned at the peak of the festivities. This grotesque image cannot be understood without appreciating the defeat of fear. The people play with terror and laugh at it; the awesome becomes a 'comic monster'.

Neither can this grotesque image be understood if oversimplified and interpreted in the spirit of abstract rationalism. It is impossible to determine where the defeat of fear will end and where joyous recreation will begin. Carnival's hell represents the earth which swallows up and gives birth, it is often transformed into a cornucopia; the monster, death, becomes pregnant. Various deformities, such as protruding bellies, enormous noses, or humps, are symptoms of pregnancy or of procreative power. Victory over fear is not

its abstract elimination; it is a simultaneous uncrowning and renewal, a gay transformation. Hell has burst and has poured forth abundance.

We have said that medieval laughter defeated something which was more terrifying than the earth itself. All unearthly objects were transformed into earth, the mother which swallows up in order to give birth to something larger that has been improved. There can be nothing terrifying on earth, just as there can be nothing frightening in a mother's body, with the nipples that are made to suckle, with the genital organ and the warm blood. The earthly element of terror is the womb, the bodily grave, but it flowers with delight and a new life.

However, medieval laughter is not a subjective, individual and biological consciousness of the uninterrupted flow of time. It is the social consciousness of all the people. Man experiences this flow of time in the festive marketplace, in the carnival crowd, as he comes into contact with other bodies of varying age and social caste. He is aware of being a member of a continually growing and renewed people. This is why festive folk laughter presents an element of victory not only over supernatural awe, over the sacred, over death; it also means the defeat of power, of earthly kings, of the earthly upper classes, of all that oppresses and restricts.

Medieval laughter, when it triumphed over the fear inspired by the mystery of the world and by power, boldly unveiled the truth about both. It resisted praise, flattery, hypocrisy. This laughing truth, expressed in curses and abusive words, degraded power. The medieval clown was also the herald of this truth....

II

In the well-known episode of Panurge's flock in the Fourth Book, the merchant Dingdong praises his sheep by saying that their urine is endowed with the magic power to increase the fertility of the earth, as does the urine of the gods. In the *briefve déclaration* added to the Fourth Book Rableais himself (or in any case, a contemporary and a man belonging to the same cultural circle) gives the following explanation of this passage: 'if God had urinated here' (*si Dieu y eust pissé*). This is a popular expression in Paris and in all France among the simple folk who consider blessed the place where Our Lord urinated or performed some other act of nature, as for instance the one related by Saint John, 9:6, '... he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle'.

This passage is characteristic. It proves that at the time of folk legends the language of excrement was closely linked with fertility and that Rabelais himself knew this link and made use of it in full awareness. Further, we see that Rabelais did not hesitate to combine the words 'our Lord' and 'the Lord's blessing' with the image of excrement. (These images were already combined in the popular expression he quotes.) He saw no sacrilege in doing so and did not anticipate the stylistic abyss that was to draw the line between the two terms for the men of the seventeenth century.

For the correct understanding of these carnivalesque gestures and images we must take into consideration that all such gesticulations and verbal images are part of the carnival as a whole, infused with one single logic of imagery.

This is the drama of laughter presenting at the same time the death of the old and the birth of the new world. Each image is subject to the meaning of the whole; each reflects a single concept of a contradictory world of becoming, even though the image may be separately presented. Through its participation in the whole, each of these images is deeply ambivalent, being intimately related to life-death-birth. This is why such images are devoid of cynicism and coarseness in our sense of the words. But these images, such as the tossing of excrement and drenching in urine, become coarse and cynical if they are seen from the point of view of another ideology. If the positive and negative poles of becoming (death-birth) are torn apart and opposed to each other in various diffuse images, they lose their direct relation to the whole and are deprived of their ambivalence. They then retain the merely negative aspect, and that which they represent (defecation, urination) acquires a trivial meaning, our own contemporary meaning of these words. The images, or more correctly speaking, the verbal expressions, continue to live in popular colloquialisms but with a radically transformed aspect. True, they still preserve a distant echo of the old philosophy, a faint memory of billingsgate liberties. Only thus can their vitality and persistence be explained.

Rabelais scholars usually understand and evaluate the novel's billingsgate and marketplace elements in the spirit of modern interpretation, distinct from the carnival action as a whole. The deep ambivalence of these images is no longer understood.

Let us offer a few other examples proving that in the time of Rabelais the principle of regeneration, fertility, and renewal was still fully alive in these images.

Folengo's *Baldus*, a macaronic work, had a certain influence on Rabelais;[2] we find in it an episode in hell in which Zingar resurrects a youth by drenching him in urine.

In the 'Extraordinary Chronicle'[3] Gargantua urinates for three months, seven days, thirteen hours and forty-seven minutes, thus giving birth to the river Rhone and to seven hundred ships.

In Rabelais (Second Book) all the warm medicinal springs of France and Italy were generated by the hot urine of the sick Pantagruel.

In the Third Book (Chapter 17) we find an allusion to the antique myth in which the urine of Jupiter, Neptune, and Mercury gave birth to Orion (from the Greek *οὐρεῖν*, to urinate). Rabelais, drawing on Ovid's *Fasti*, presents this episode thus: Jupiter, Neptune and Mercury ... *officialement, forgèrent Orion*. The 'official' was an officer of the Church police, but in the debasing spirit of familiar speech the word meant a chamber pot, and this meaning was already a part of fifteenth-century vocabulary. (We in Russia sometimes call a chamber pot 'the general'.) Rabelais, making an exceptionally free play on words, created *officialement*. The debasing and generating power of urine is fancifully combined in this image.

Another example can be found in the famous *Manneken-Pis* of the

[2] Teophilo Folengo (1491–1544), an Italian monk who wrote a long burlesque-heroic poem, *Opus Macaronicum*, in macaronic verse, that is, verse in which two or more languages are mingled together. In this case it was vernacular with Latin.

[3] An authorial note states that this is an extended edition of 'The Great Chronicles' with some passages borrowed from *Pantagruel*. The author is Francois Girault.

Brussels fountain. This is an ancient figure of a boy urinating with complete openness. The people of Brussels consider him their mascot.

There are many similar examples which we shall discuss later, but for the present we shall limit ourselves to those already described. The images of feces and urine are ambivalent, as are all the images of the material bodily lower stratum; they debase, destroy, regenerate, and renew simultaneously. They are blessing and humiliating at the same time. Death and death throes, labor, and childbirth are intimately interwoven.[4] On the other hand, these images are closely linked to laughter. When death and birth are shown in their comic aspect, scatological images in various forms nearly always accompany the gay monsters created by laughter in order to replace the terror that has been defeated. For this reason, too, these images are indissolubly linked with the underworld. It can be said that excrement represents bodies and matter that are mostly comic; it is the most suitable substance for the degrading of all that is exalted. For this reason it plays an important part in comic folklore and in the grotesque realism of Rabelais' novel, as well as in current degrading familiar speech. But when Victor Hugo says in connection with Rabelais' world, *totus homo fit excrementum*, he ignores the regenerating and renewing element of the images, already lost in Europe's literary consciousness. . . .

We have discussed the cynicism, the indecencies, and the billingsgate in Rabelais' novel. But all these terms are conventional and far from adequate. First of all, these elements are not isolated; they are an organic part of the entire system of images and style. They become isolated and specific only for modern literary consciousness. Within the system of grotesque realism and popular festive forms they were an essential part of the imagery representing the material bodily lower stratum. True, they were unofficial in character, but so too was all popular-festive literature of the Middle Ages, so too was laughter. We, therefore, brought out the billingsgate and marketplace images only conventionally. We mean by these terms all that is directly linked with the life of the people, bearing its mark of nonofficial freedom; but at the same time these images cannot be referred to as popular-festive literature in the strict sense of this word.

First of all, we have in mind certain forms of familiar speech – curses, profanities, and oaths – and second the colloquialisms of the marketplace: the *cris de Paris* and the announcements made during fairs by quacks and vendors of drugs. These genres are not 'separated by a Chinese wall' from the literature and spectacles of folk festivals; they are part of them and often play in them a leading stylistic role. We continually find them in the *dits* and *débats*, in diableries, *soties*, and farces.[5] The colloquial and artistic forms are sometimes so closely interwoven that it is difficult to trace a dividing line, and no wonder, since the barkers and vendors of drugs were also actors in performances at the fair. The *cris de Paris* were composed in verse and were sung in

[4] An authorial note adds that in world literature, especially oral traditions, there are many examples of the linking of death with defecation. In Rabelais there is the incident where the inhabitants of the 'Isle of Winds' die while emitting gases, their souls leaving via the rectum.

[5] In Medieval literature a *dit* is a flexible verse composition; a *débat* is a didactic *dit* in the form of a dialogue; diablery is folklore concerning the devil. For *sorti*, see *Reader*, p. 196, n. 2.

a peremptory tone. The style of the barker inviting customers to his booth did not differ from that of the hawker of chapbooks, and even the long titles of these books were usually composed in the form of popular advertisements. The marketplace of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was a world in itself, a world which was one; all 'performances' in this area, from loud cursing to the organized show, had something in common and were imbued with the same atmosphere of freedom, frankness, and familiarity. Such elements of familiar speech as profanities, oaths, and curses were fully legalized in the marketplace and were easily adopted by all the festive genres, even by Church drama. The marketplace was the center of all that is unofficial; it enjoyed a certain extraterritoriality in a world of official order and official ideology, it always remained 'with the people'.

This popular aspect was especially apparent on feast days. The dates of the fairs were usually adapted to the great feasts of the year but were extended over a long period. For instance, the famous fairs of Lyon were held four times a year, and each lasted fifteen days. Thus every year Lyon led for two months a life of fairs and carnivals, for even if there was no carnival, strictly speaking, its atmosphere reigned at every fair.

Thus, the unofficial folk culture of the Middle Ages and even of the Renaissance had its own territory and its own particular time, the time of fairs and feasts. This territory, as we have said, was a peculiar second world within the official medieval order and was ruled by a special type of relationship, a free, familiar, marketplace relationship. Officially the palaces, churches, institutions, and private homes were dominated by hierarchy and etiquette, but in the marketplace a special kind of speech was heard, almost a language of its own, quite unlike the language of Church, palace, courts, and institutions. It was also unlike the tongue of official literature or of the ruling classes – the aristocracy, the nobles, the high-ranking clergy and the top burghers – though the elemental force of the folk idiom penetrated even these circles. On feast days, especially during the carnivals, this force broke through every sphere, and even through the Church, as in 'the feast of fools'. The festive marketplace combined many genres and forms, all filled with the same unofficial spirit.

In all world literature there is probably no other work reflecting so fully and deeply all aspects of the life of the marketplace as does Rabelais' novel.[6] ...

We enter into the marketplace world from the very first lines of the five books, in the prologue to *Pantagruel*, chronologically the first book to be written and published.

How is the prologue of *Pantagruel* constructed? It begins thus:

> O most illustrious and most valorous champions, gentlemen and all others who delight in honest entertainment and wit. I address this book to you. You have read and digested the *Mighty and Inestimable Chronicles of the Huge Giant Gargantua*. Like true believers you have taken them upon faith as you do the texts of the Holy Gospel. Indeed, having run out of gallant speeches, you have often spent hours at a time relating lengthy stories culled from these *Chronicles* to a rapt audience of

[6] In the passage which follows, omitted in the extract, Bakhtin details Rabelais' close association with actual fairs throughout France; this participation in many popular aspects of Medieval life is responsible for the concrete particularity of Rabelais' writing which Bakhtin stresses.

noble dames and matrons of high degree. On this count, then, you deserve vast praise and sempiternal memory. (Book 2, Prologue)

Here we see combined the praise of the 'Chronicles of Gargantua' and of the readers who enjoy this chapbook. The praise and glorification are composed in the advertising spirit of the barker at a show or the hawker of chapbooks, who praise not only their wondrous merchandise but also the 'most illustrious' public. This is a typical example of the tone and style of the fair....

In the following paragraphs of the prologue we hear the cry of the quack and druggist at the fair. He praises the 'Chronicles' as an excellent remedy for toothache and offers a prescription for its use: to be wrapped in warm linen and applied to the sensitive area. Such mock prescriptions are one of the most widespread genres of grotesque realism.[7] Further, the 'Chronicles' is praised as a potent medicine for pain inflicted by gout and venereal disease.

Sufferers from gout and venereal disease are often featured in Rabelais' novel and in comic literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially. Gout and syphilis are 'gay diseases', the result of overindulgence in food, drink, and sexual intercourse. They are essentially connected with the material bodily lower stratum. Pox was still a 'fashionable disease' in those days. As to gout, it was widespread in grotesque realism; we find it as far back as Lucian.[8] ...

Having enumerated the 'Chronicles" merits in the prologue of the Second Book, the author continues:

> Is this nothing? Then find me a book in any language, in any branch of art and science that possesses such virtues, properties and prerogatives. Find it, I say, and I will buy you a pint of tripes! No, gentlemen, no, none such exists. My book is peerless, incomparable, nonpareil, and – I maintain it in the teeth of hellfire – unique! If anyone contradicts me, let him be herewith denounced as a false prophet, a champion of predestination, a poisoner, and a seducer of the people. (Book 2, Prologue)

Besides the enormous accumulation of superlatives, typical of marketplace advertising, we find the characteristic method of testifying to the speaker's honesty: comic pledges and oaths. He promises to pay 'a pint of tripes'; he is ready to assert in the teeth of hellfire that no better book exists, it is unique. Such ironic parodies were current in advertisements of the fair.

Let us pay special attention to the 'pint of tripes'. This word figures more than once in Rabelais as well as in all the literature of grotesque realism (in the Latin versions the word *viscera* corresponds to tripe). In the given context the words refer, of course, to food. The stomach and bowels of cattle, tripe, were carefully cleaned, salted, and cooked. Tripe could not be preserved long; they were therefore consumed in great quantities on slaughtering days and cost nothing. Moreover, it was believed that after cleaning, tripe still contained ten per cent excrement which was therefore eaten with the rest of the meal. We shall find tripe again in one of *Gargantua's* most famous episodes.

But why did this image play such a role in grotesque realism? Tripe, stom-

[7] An authorial note adds that a mock prescription of the early Middle Ages recommending a remedy for baldness has been preserved.

[8] For Lucian, see *Reader*, p. 189, n. 1 and p. 193.

ach, intestines are the bowels, the belly, the very life of man. But at the same time they represent the swallowing, devouring belly. Grotesque realism played with this double image, we might say with the top and the bottom of the word. . . .

But our image is more complex. The bowels are related to defecation and excrement. Further, the belly does not only eat and swallow, it is also eaten, as tripe. In 'the palaver of the potulent' (First Book) one guest says to another as he prepares drinks, 'Have you anything to send to the river? That's where tripe is washed'. Here he had in mind the food he had just eaten as well as his own belly. Further, tripe is linked with death, with slaughter, murder, since to disembowel is to kill. Finally, it is linked with birth, for the belly generates.

Thus, in the image of tripe life and death, birth, excrement, and food are all drawn together and tied in one grotesque knot; this is the center of bodily topography in which the upper and lower stratum penetrate each other. This grotesque image was a favorite expression of the ambivalence of the material bodily lower stratum, which destroys and generates, swallows and is swallowed. The 'swing' of grotesque realism, the play of the upper with the lower sphere, is strikingly set into motion; the top and the bottom, heaven and earth, merge in that image. We shall further see the remarkable symphony of laughter derived by Rableais from the ambivalent and varied meaning of the word tripe in the first chapters of *Gargantua* (the feast of the cattle slaughter, the palaver of the potulent, the birth of Gargantua).

In our example the pint of tripe as the author's pledge does not only mean a cheap variety of food but also life, the bowels, in the sense of 'all my tripes'. This picture, too, is ambivalent.

The last line of the excerpt is no less typical. After words of praise the author turns to curses (the reverse of marketplace praise). Those who do not share the positive view of the 'Chronicles' are branded as poisoners and seducers of the people. These pejoratives were especially applied to persons accused of heresy, doomed to the stake. The play with serious and dangerous subjects continues. The author compares the 'Chronicles' to the Bible and the Gospels. Like the Church, he condemns all dissidents for heresy with all the inevitable consequences. The bold allusion to the Church and Church politics has a realistic note. The abusive words 'champions of predestination' obviously had in mind the Protestants who professed this doctrine.

Thus we have on the one hand the author's exaggerated praise of the 'Chronicles' as the best, the only book in the world, his praise of those who read it and believe in it and are ready to die for it, of those who defend their belief in the potency of the book and give up their life for it (in the ironic ambivalent form of the 'pint of tripe'). On the other hand there is the accusation of heresy for all who disagree. All this is a parody of the Church as the only guardian of salvation and interpreter of the Gospels. But this dangerous parody is offered in the form of laughter and gay advertisements, the language and style of the fair being strictly observed. The barker of a show would not be accused of heresy, no matter what he might say, provided he maintained his clownery. Rabelais maintained it. The comic aspect of the world was legalized. He was not afraid to declare in his prologue that more copies of the 'Chronicles' were sold than those of the Bible during nine years.

The prologue ends in a torrent of abuses and curses hurled at the author if there is a single lie in his book, as well as at those who do not believe him:

> However, before I conclude this prologue, I hereby deliver myself up body and soul, belly and bowels, to a hundred thousand basketfuls of raving demons, if I have lied so much as once throughout this book. By the same token, may St. Anthony sear you with his erysipelatous fire ... may Mahomet's disease whirl you in epileptic jitters ... may the festers, ulcers and chancres of every purulent pox infect, scathe, mangle and rend you, entering your bumgut as tenuously as mercuralized cow's hair ... and may you vanish into an abyss of brimstone and fire, like Sodom and Gomorrah, if you do not believe implicitly what I am about to relate in the present *Chronicles* ... (Book 2, Prologue)

These are typical billingsgate abuses. The passing from excessive praise to excessive invective is characteristic, and the change from one to the other is perfectly legitimate. Praise and abuse are, so to speak, the two sides of the same coin. If the right side is praise, the wrong side is abuse, and vice versa. The billingsgate idiom is a two-faced Janus.[9] The praise, as we have said, is ironic and ambivalent. It is on the brink of abuse; the one leads to the other, and it is impossible to draw the line between them. Though divided in form they belong to the same body, or to the two bodies in one, which abuses while praising and praises while abusing. This is why in familiar billingsgate talk abusive words, especially indecent ones, are used in the affectionate and complimentary sense. (We shall further analyze many examples from Rabelais.) This grotesque language, particularly in its oldest form, was oriented toward the world and toward all the world's phenomena in their condition of unfinished metamorphosis: the passing from night to morning, from winter to spring, from the old to the new, from death to birth. Therefore, this talk showers both compliments and curses. Perhaps our example does not clearly typify this, but its ambivalence raises no doubt. This ambivalence determines the organic and spontaneous character of the change from praise to abuse and back to praise again, as well as the uncertainty as to whom the talk is addressed.[10] ...

The curses at the end of the prologue bring it to a dynamic conclusion in a powerful and rough debasing gesture, the 'grotesque swing' which lowers it to earth before it comes to a stop. Rabelais usually concludes his speeches either with an abuse or an invitation to feasting and drinking.

Such is the structure of *Pantagruel's* prologue. It is written from beginning to end in the style and tone of the marketplace. We hear the cry of the barker, the quack, the hawker of miracle drugs, and the bookseller; we hear the curses that alternate with ironic advertisements and ambiguous praise. The prologue is organized according to the popular verbal genres of hawkers. The words are actually a cry, that is, a loud interjection in the midst of a crowd, coming out of the crowd and addressed to it. The man who is speak-

[9] For a similar expression in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, see *Reader*, p. 55.

[10] An authorial note adds: 'At close range this many-faced person is the crowd which surrounds the barker's booth, and also the many-faced reader'. Some among these may represent the old dying world and ideology, 'agelasts' or men who do not know how to laugh, while others are the representatives of the new world. This crowd forms one people, dying and renewed, praised and abused, but in the longer view, beyond the crowd, there is the whole unfinished world.

ing is one with the crowd; he does not present himself as its opponent, nor does he teach, accuse, or intimidate it. He *laughs* with it. There is not the slightest tone of morose seriousness in his oration, no fear, piety, or humility. This is an absolutely gay and fearless talk, free and frank, which echoes in the festive square beyond all verbal prohibitions, limitations, and conventions.

At the same time, however, this entire prologue is a parody and travesty of the ecclesiastical method of persuasion. Behind the 'Chronicles' stands the Gospel; behind the offer of the 'Chronicles' as the only book of salvation stands the exclusiveness of the Church's truth; behind the abuses and curses are the Church's intolerance, intimidation, and *autos-da-fé*. The ecclesiastical policy is translated into the language of ironical hawking. But the prologue is wider and deeper than the usual grotesque parody. It travesties the very foundations of medieval thought, the methods of establishing truth and conviction which are inseparable from fear, violence, morose and narrow-minded seriousness and intolerance. The prologue introduces us into a completely different atmosphere, the atmosphere of fearless, free, and gay truth....

All the other images of the prologue[11] are also steeped in the atmosphere of the fair. We find everywhere the abuse-praise combination as the basic moving force which determines the style and the dynamics of the speeches. There are almost no objective words, that is, words which imply neither praise nor abuse. The comparative and superlative are commonly used. For instance: 'how much more reconciling, smiling and beguiling wine is than oil', or 'these fine, full-flavored volumes'. In the first case we hear the rhythmic beat of the vendor. In the second case the word 'full-flavored' lauds the supreme quality of venison and meats. The market that young Gargantua visited under Ponocrates' wise guidance cries out in this prologue, with its herbalists and apothecaries, with exotic unguents, with the tricks and oratory of the people from Chauny, 'born jabberers' and experts in cheating. All the images of the new humanist culture, and there are many of them in this prologue, are steeped in the atmosphere of the market.

Let us quote from the end of the prologue: 'And now, my hearties, be gay, and gayly read the rest, with ease of body and in the best of kidney! And you, donkey-pizzles, hark! May a canker rot you! Remember to drink to me gallantly, and I will counter with a toast at once.' (Book 1, Prologue)

As we see, this prologue ends on a note somewhat different from that of the prologue introducing *Pantagruel*. Instead of a string of oaths, we have here an invitation to drink and be merry. Here too we find abuses, but they have an affectionate tone. The same persons are addressed as 'my hearties' (*mes amours*) and donkey-pizzles' (*viédazes*). We also find the Gascon expression *le maulubec vous trousque* that we have already encountered in the *Pantagruel* prologue. In these last lines of the *Gargantua* prologue the entire Rabelaisian complex is offered in its most elementary expression: the gaiety, the indecent abuse, and the banquet. But this is also the most simplified festive expression of the ambivalent lower stratum: laughter, food, the procreative force, abuse....

[11] The prologue referred to here is the prologue to *Gargantua* which begins with a parody of Plato's *Symposium*.

We have examined the role of the marketplace and its voices in Rabelais' work. We said that the popular genres penetrated the literary sphere of that time, and we have seen this exemplified in the prologues. We shall now deal with certain genres of this category individually.

Let us first look at the simplest genre but one that is important for Rabelais – the street cries, especially the cries of Paris. The *cris* were loud advertisements called out by the Paris street vendors, and composed according to a certain versified form; each cry had four lines offering and praising a certain merchandise. . . .

The role of the cries in the marketplace and in the streets was important. The city rang with these many voices. Each food, wine, or other merchandise had its own words and melody and its special intonations, its distinct verbal and musical imagery. We may judge of this immense variety from the 1545 collection by Truque: 'One hundred and seven cries which are cried every day in Paris.' Even the examples given in this collection do not embrace the entire subject, since many more cries than those listed by Truque could be heard in the Paris streets. We must recall that not only was all advertising oral and loud in those days, actually a cry, but that all announcements, orders, and laws were made in this loud oral form. Sound, the proclaimed word, played an immense role in everyday life as well as in the cultural field. It was even greater than in our days, in the time of the radio. (As for the nineteenth century, compared with the era of Rabelais it was silent.) This fact should not be ignored when studying the style of the sixteenth century and especially the style of Rabelais. The culture of the common folk idiom was to a great extent a culture of the loud word spoken in the open, in the street and marketplace. And the cries of Paris played their own considerable part in this culture.

What did the *cris* mean to Rabelais? . . .

First of all we must be reminded of the important role of advertising and announcements in Rabelais' novels. True, it is not always possible to distinguish in the novel the images of commercial advertising of the city streets from those of the barker, apothecary, actor, quack, and astrologer making their announcements at the fairs, but the *cris* doubtless made their contribution to Rabelais' work. Their influence is found in certain of the epithets in the novel that reveal a culinary origin and are borrowed from the vocabulary praising the foods and wines offered for sale.

Under Rabelais' pen the names of dishes, venison, vegetables, wines, household objects, and kitchen utensils have an intrinsic value. An object is named for its own sake. The world of food and material objects occupies considerable space in the novel. But this is the very world which was daily offered in all its richness and variety in the cries of the street vendors. We also find food, drink, and houseware in the paintings of the Flemish masters, as well as in the minute descriptions of banquets so often presented in sixteenth-century literature. All that was related to the table and kitchen suited the taste and spirit of the times. But the cries of Paris represented in themselves a noisy kitchen and a loud, abundantly served banquet; every food and dish had its own rhyme and melody. Together, they made a never-ending symphony of feasting, a symphony that obviously influenced literary images, and those of Rabelais in particular.

In writings contemporary to our author banquet and kitchen imagery was not narrowed to the petty details of everyday life but had a more or less universal meaning. One of the best Protestant satires of the second part of the sixteenth century is entitled: 'The Satire of the Pope's Kitchen' (*Les Satires chrestiennes de la Cuisine Papale*). The eight satires represent the Catholic church as a gigantic kitchen spread all over the earth: chimneys form the belfry, the bells are cooking pans, the altars dining tables. The various prayers and rituals are pictured as foods, an extremely rich culinary nomenclature being used for this purpose. The Protestant satire is the heir to grotesque realism. It debases the Catholic church and its rituals by bringing them down to the lower bodily stratum symbolized by food and kitchen. A universal meaning is obviously given to these images.

The link with the lower stratum is even more clearly shown in the culinary images of macaronic poetry. It can also be clearly seen in the *moralités*, farces, *soties*, and other genres where symbolically broad kitchen and banquet scenes play a considerable part. We have already mentioned the meaning of food and kitchen utensils in such popular-festive forms as carnivals, charivari, and diableries; the participants of these shows were armed with oven forks, pokers, roasting spits, pots, and pans. We know of the huge sausages and buns specially prepared for carnivals and carried in solemn procession.[12] Indeed, one of the oldest forms of hyperbolic grotesque was the exaggerated size of foodstuffs. In this exaggerated form of valuable matter we see for the first time the positive and absolute meaning of size and quantity in an aesthetic image. Hyperboles of food parallel the most ancient hyperboles of belly, mouth, and phallus.

A distant echo of these material positive hyperboles is heard in literature presenting symbolically enlarged images of the inn, the hearth, and the market. Even in Zola's 'The Belly of Paris' we find such a symbolic enlargement, a kind of 'mythologization' of a market. Victor Hugo has many Rabelaisian allusions. Describing his voyage down the Rhine, he exclaims in one scene in which he enters an inn with its blazing hearth: *Si j'étais Homère ou Rabelais, je dirais: cette cuisine est un monde dont cette cheminée est le soleil.* (If I where Homer or Rabelais I would say that this kitchen is a world and this chimney its sun). Hugo understood to perfection the universal, cosmic meaning of the kitchen and hearth in the Rabelaisian system of images.

So we have seen that the *cris* were connected with one of the most important trends of thought in the imagery of the sixteenth century. They were interpreted in the light of the hearth and the kitchen which in its turn reflected the light of the sun. They were part of the great utopia of the banquet. It is in this broad connection that we must recognize the direct influence of the cries of Paris on Rabelais and their importance in helping us to understand his work and the entire literature of the Renaissance.

For Rabelais and his contemporaries the cries of Paris were not a mere document of life in the modern sense of the world. This genre, which later became in literature a mere picture of mores, was filled with philosophic meaning for our author. The cries were not isolated from current events,

[12] An authorial note examples the Konigsberg carnival of 1583 for which butchers produced a sausage weighing 440 pounds.

from history. They were an essential part of the marketplace and street, they merged with the general popular-festive and utopian world. Rabelais heard in them the tones of a banquet for all the people, 'for all the world'. These utopian tones were immersed in the depths of concrete, practical life, a life that could be touched, that was filled with aroma and sound. This was completely in accord with the specific character of all Rabelaisian images, which combine a broad universalism and utopianism with extraordinarily concrete, obvious, and vivid traits, strictly localized and technically precise....

The cries of Paris and the cries of quacks and druggists operating at the fairs belong to the eulogizing genres of folk humor. They too, of course, are ambivalent: they too are filled with both laughter and irony. They may at any moment show their other side; that is, they may be turned into abuses and oaths. They too exercise the debasing function, they materialize the world, lending it a bodily substance. They are essentially connected with the lower stratum.

The other side of marketplace hawking is represented, as we have said, by abuses, curses, and oaths. They are ambivalent, but it is the negative pole of the lower stratum which here prevails: death, sickness, disintegration, dismemberment of the body, its rending apart and swallowing up.

We have analyzed a series of curses and abuses in our discussion of the prologues. Now we shall have to examine another form of billingsgate speech, the profanities and oaths. They are related to the curses and abuses in origin and also in ideological and artistic function.

Abuses, curses, profanities, and improprieties are the unofficial elements of speech. They were and are still conceived as a breach of the established norms of verbal address; they refuse to conform to conventions, to etiquette, civility, respectability. These elements of freedom, if present in sufficient numbers and with a precise intention, exercise a strong influence on the entire contents of speech, transferring it to another sphere beyond the limits of conventional language. Such speech forms, liberated from norms, hierarchies, and prohibitions of established idiom, become themselves a peculiar argot and create a special collectivity, a group of people initiated in familiar intercourse, who are frank and free in expressing themselves verbally. The marketplace crowd was such a collectivity, especially the festive, carnivalesque crowd at the fair.

The character of the elements capable of transforming a language and of creating a free collectivity of familiar intercourse was subject to certain changes in each successive period. Many improprieties that in the seventeenth century acquired the power of transforming the context of speech did not possess this power in the time if Rabelais. They did not then transgress the limits of the established language. Unofficial (unprintable) argot also varied in force. Every age has its own norms of official speech and propriety. And every age has its own type of words and expressions that are given as a signal to speak freely, to call things by their own names, without any mental restrictions and euphemisms. The use of these colloquialisms created the atmosphere of frankness, inspired certain attitudes, a certain unofficial view of the world. These liberties were fully revealed in the festive square when all hierarchic barriers between men were lifted and a true familiar contact was

established. Here all men became conscious participants in that one world of laughter.

In Rabelais' time the so-called *jurons*, that is, profanities and oaths, were just such colloquialisms. They were mostly concerned with sacred themes: 'the body of Christ', 'the blood of Christ', holy days, saints, and relics. In most cases these expressions were the remnants of ancient sacral formulas. The *jurons* abounded in familiar speech; distinct social groups and even individuals had their own vocabulary of oaths, or a favorite that they used continually. Among Rabelais' heroes Friar John, especially, marks his speech with a flow of oaths; he cannot make a single step without them. When Ponocrates asks him why he uses them, the friar answers that they adorn his speech. They are the flowers of Cicero's rhetoric. Neither does Panurge spare his profane language.

Oaths, as we have seen, were the unofficial element of speech. They were even directly forbidden. The struggle to suppress them was conducted from both sides: by the Church and government on one hand and by the 'chamber' humanists on the other. The latter saw oaths as useless, parasitical forms of speech which only polluted it and were the heritage of the barbaric Middle Ages. This is the point of view expressed by Ponocrates in the dialogue with Friar John. The Church and government disapproved of the sacrilegious use of holy names, and under the Church's influence the government often condemned the *jurons* in ordinances proclaimed by the heralds. Such ordinances were issued by Charles VII, Louis XI (May 12, 1478), and by Francis I (March, 1525). These condemnations and prohibitions merely strengthened the oath's unofficial character; they sharpened the feeling that the use of a *juron* meant a breach of the norm of established speech. This in turn intensified the color of speech studded with oaths, rendering it familiar and free. Oaths began to be considered as a certain rejection of official philosophy, a verbal protest....

What is the thematic content of the oaths? It is mainly the rending of the human body. Swearing was mostly done in the name of the members and the organs of the divine body: the Lord's body, his head, blood, wounds, bowels; or in the name of the relics of saints and martyrs – feet, hands, fingers – which were preserved in churches. The most improper and sinful oaths were those invoking the body of the Lord and its various parts, and these were precisely the oaths most frequently used. The preacher Menot (one of Rabelais' senior contemporaries) condemned in his sermons the excessive use of these oaths, saying: 'the one seizes God by his beard, the other by his throat, the third by his head.... There are some who speak of Christ the Saviour's humanity with less respect than does a butcher about meat.' ...

The dismembered body and its anatomization play a considerable part in Rabelais' novel. This is why the theme of oaths and curses is organically woven into the pattern of Rabelaisian images. Friar John, a great lover of oaths, is nicknamed 'd'Entommeure', chopped meat.... The important fact is that the fighting temperament (war, battles) and the kitchen cross each other at a certain point, and this point is the dismembered, minced flesh. Culinary images accompanying battle scenes were widely used in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; they were frequent precisely in the sphere where literature was connected with folk tradition of humor. Pulci compared the battlefield of

Ronceveaux to 'a kettle filled with blood-stew of heads, legs and other members of the human body'.[13] These images can already be found in the epics of the minstrels.

Friar John is truly the *d'Entommeure* in both senses of this word; the essential link between the two meanings is clearly shown in Rabelais' work. In the episode of the 'sausage war' Friar John develops the idea of the military importance of cooks, basing his idea on historic examples of marshals and others who were cooks. The friar becomes the commander of 154 cooks armed with spits, forks, and frying pans, and leads them into the 'pig', which plays the role of the Trojan horse. During the battle Friar John behaves as a systematic 'anatomizer', transforming human bodies into 'minced meat'. His anatomizer function is also pictured in the battle in the vineyard (in which, incidentally, he uses the staff of a cross). This episode contains a long and detailed anatomic list of wounded members and organs, broken bones, and joints. Here is an excerpt from this chapter:

> He brained some, smashed the legs and arms of others, broke a neck here, cracked a rib there. He flattened a nose or knocked an eye out, crushed a jaw or sent thirty-two teeth rattling down a bloody gullet. Some had their shoulderblades dislocated, others their thighs lammed to pulp, others their hips wrenched, others their arms battered beyond recognition (Book 1, Chapter 27)

This long enumeration is typical of Rabelais' anatomization and dismemberment of the human body. The anatomic and culinary treatment is based on the grotesque image of the dissected body which we have already seen in the discussion of abuses, curses, and oaths.

And thus, the oaths were their profane culinary dismemberment of the sacred body have brought us back to the culinary theme of the *cris de Paris*; they have returned us to the grotesque bodily billingsgate themes: diseases, monstrosities, organs of the lower stratum. All the elements examined ... are related to each other both in form and theme. All of them, independently of their literal content, refer to the unofficial aspect of the world, unofficial in tone (laughter) and in contents (the lower stratum). All of them relate to the world's gay matter, which is born, dies and gives birth, is devoured and devours; this is the world which continually grows and multiplies, becomes ever greater and better, ever more abundant. Gay matter is ambivalent, it is the grave and the generating womb, the receding past and the advancing future, the becoming.

In spite of their variety, the images analyzed ... are marked by the inner unity of medieval folk culture; but in Rabelais' novel this unity is organically related to the new Renaissance principle. In this respect the prologues are especially typical; all five (there are two in the Fourth Book), are excellent examples of Renaissance journalism based on popular genres. We have seen in them the uncrowning of the old medieval philosophy relegated to the past; on the other hand, the prologues are filled with allusions and echoes of the ideological and political highlights of the day.

The genres we have examined are relatively primitive; some are even

[13] Luigi Pulci (1432–84), a Florentine poet whose humorous epic poem, *Morgante Maggiore*, influenced Rabelais.

archaic. They have, however, great power of travesty, of debasement, and materialization which render the world more carnal. They are deeply traditional and popular bringing an atmosphere of freedom, frankness, and familiarity. Therefore Rabelais needed them for stylistic purposes. We have seen their role in the prologues, they helped to create an absolutely gay, frank, and fearless speech that was necessary for the attack undertaken by Rabelais against 'Gothic darkness'. These primitive marketplace genres prepared the setting for the popular-festive forms and images of the language in which Rabelais expressed his own new truth about the world....

III

We spoke of the 'anatomizing' presentation of beatings and blows and of Rabelais' peculiar 'carnival and culinary' anatomy. These scenes are frequent in his novel, but they do not describe commonplace events. Let us analyze some of them.

In the Fourth Book, Pantagruel and his companions visit the island of the Catchpoles. Its inhabitants earn their living by letting themselves be thrashed. Friar John selects a 'red-snouted' catchpole (*Rouge museau*) and pays him twenty gold crowns: 'Friar John swung his staff manfully, thwacking and cracking Redsnout so lustily on belly and back, on head and legs that, as he fell to earth, a battered pulp, I feared for the Catchpole's death.' (Book 4, Chapter 16.) We see that the anatomic enumeration of the parts of the body has not been neglected. Rabelais goes on to relate: 'Then he gave him his twenty crowns. But the churl rose, happy as a king – or a pair of kings, for that matter.' (*Et mon villain debout, aisé comme un roy ou deux.*)

This image of a 'king' and 'two kings' is here directly introduced in order to describe the highest degree of happiness reached by the Catchpole who has received his reward. But the image is essentially related to the gay thrashings and abuse as well as to the red snout of the Catchpole, to his apparent death, sudden return to life, and jumping up like a clown who has received a beating.

Here is a dimension in which thrashing and abuse are not a personal chastisement but are symbolic actions directed at something on a higher level, at the king. This is the popular-festive system of images, which is most clearly expressed in carnival (but, of course, not in carnival alone). In this dimension, as previously pointed out, the kitchen and the battle meet and cross each other in the image of the rent body. At the time of Rabelais these images were still alive and full of meaning in various forms of folk entertainments as well as in literature.

In such a system the king is the clown. He is elected by all the people and is mocked by all the people. He is abused and beaten when the time of his reign is over, just as the carnival dummy of winter or of the dying year is mocked, beaten, torn to pieces, burned, or drowned even in our time. They are 'gay monsters'. The clown was first disguised as a king, but once his reign had come to an end his costume was changed, 'travestied', to turn him once more into a clown. The abuse and thrashing are equivalent to a change of costume, to a metamorphosis. Abuse reveals the other, true face of the abused, it tears off his disguise and mask. It is the king's uncrowning.

Abuse is death, it is former youth transformed into old age, the living body turned into a corpse. It is the 'mirror of comedy' reflecting that which must die a historic death. But in this system death is followed by regeneration, by the new year, new youth, and a new spring. Therefore, abuse is followed by praise; they are two aspects of one world, each with its own body.

Abuse with uncrowning, as truth about the old authority, about the dying world, is an organic part of Rabelais' system of images. It is combined with carnivalesque thrashings, with change of costume and travesty. Rabelais drew these images from the living popular-festive tradition of his time, but he was also well versed in the antique scholarly tradition of the Saturnalia, with its own rituals of travesties, uncrownings, and thrashings. . . .

Let us sum up the episode we have been analyzing – the thrashing in the house of Basché. All the events shown in this episode present the character of a popular-festive comic performance: it is a gay and free play, but it is also full of deep meaning. Its hero and author is time itself, which uncrowns, covers with ridicule, kills the old world (the old authority and truth), and at the same time gives birth to the new. In this game there is a protagonist and a laughing chorus. The protagonist is the representative of a world which is aging, yet pregnant and generating. He is beaten and mocked, but the blows are gay, melodious, and festive. The abuses also follow this merry and creative pattern. The protagonist is adorned as a comic victim with bright ribbons. The images of the bodies rent apart are also important. As each Catchpole is beaten, a detailed anatomizing description is added to the scene. The thrashing of the third Catchpole and of his bailiffs offers a particularly large amount of torn flesh. Beside the direct injuries inflicted upon them, there is a long list of indirectly hurt organs and members: sprained shoulders, black eyes, crippled legs and arms, injured genital parts. It is a bodily sowing, or more correctly speaking, a bodily harvest, something like a fragment from Empidocles. There is a combination of the battlefield with the kitchen or butcher shop. But such is also, as we know, the theme of billingsgate oaths and curses. . . .

Thus, everything in this episode is styled in the popular-festive comic spirit. But these forms, developed during thousands of years, serve the new historic aims of the epoch; they are filled with powerful historic awareness and lead to a deeper understanding of reality. . . .

Thanks to this process, popular-festive images became a powerful means of grasping reality; they served as a basis for an authentic and deep realism. Popular imagery did not reflect the naturalistic, fleeting, meaningless, and scattered aspect of reality but the very process of becoming, its meaning and direction. Hence the universality and sober optimism of this system. . . .

We have shown the essential link of blows and abuses with uncrowning. In Rabelais abuse never assumes the character merely of personal invective; it is universal, and when all is said and done it always aims at the higher level. Behind each victim of abuse and blows Rabelais sees the king, the former king, the pretender. But at the same time the images of all these uncrowned personages are real and very much alive. And so are all these Catchpoles, intriguers, sombre hypocrites and slanderers, whom he beats, chases, and abuses. They are all subject to mockery and punishment as individual incarnations of the dying truth and authority of prevailing thought, law, and virtues.

This old authority and truth pretend to be absolute, to have an extratemporal importance. Therefore, their representatives (the agelasts) are gloomily serious. They cannot and do not wish to laugh; they strut majestically, consider their foes the enemies of eternal truth, and threaten them with eternal punishment. They do not see themselves in the mirror of time, do not perceive their own origin, limitations and end; they do not recognize their own ridiculous faces or the comic nature of their pretentions to eternity and immutability. And thus these personages come to the end of their role still serious, although their spectators have been laughing for a long time. They continue to talk with the majestic tone of kings and heralds announcing eternal truths, unaware that time has turned their speeches into ridicule. Time has transformed old truth and authority into a Mardi Gras dummy, a comic monster that the laughing crowd rends to pieces in the marketplace.[14] ...

The carnivalesque crowd in the marketplace or in the streets is not merely a crowd. It is the people as a whole, but organized *in their own way*, the way of the people. It is outside of and contrary to all existing forms of the coercive socioeconomic and political organization, which is suspended for the time of the festivity.

This festive organization of the crowd must be first of all concrete and sensual. Even the pressing throng, the physical contact of bodies, acquires a certain meaning. The individual feels that he is an indissoluble part of the collectivity, a member of the people's mass body. In this whole the individual body ceases to a certain extent to be itself; it is possible, so to say, to exchange bodies, to be renewed (through change of costume and mask). At the same time the people become aware of their sensual, material bodily unity and community.

During his Italian journey Goethe visited the ampitheater of Verona. It was, of course, deserted. Apropos of this visit, Goethe expressed an interesting idea concerning the self-awareness which this amphitheater brought to the people; thanks to it, they could perceive the concrete, sensual, visible form of their mass and unity.

> Crowded together, its members are astonished at themselves. They are accustomed at other times to seeing each other running hither and thither in confusion, bustling about without order or discipline. Now this many-headed, many-minded, fickle, blundering monster suddenly sees itself united as one noble assembly, welded into one mass, a single body animated by a single spirit.[15]

A similar sense of unity was brought to the people by all the forms and images of medieval popular-festive life. But the unity did not have such a simple geometric character. It was more complex and differentiated; most important of all, it had an historic nature. The body of the people on carnival square is first of all aware of its unity in time; it is conscious of its uninterrupted continuity within time, of its relative historic immortality. Therefore the people do not perceive a static image of their unity (*eine Gestalt*) but

[14] An authorial note here adds: 'All these representatives of old authority and truth are, in the words of Marx, "mere comedians of the world order whose real heroes have already died" ' (see K. Marx and F. Engels, *Works*, i, p. 118).

[15] 'The Roman Carnival' in *Italian Journey* (trans. W. H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer). Pantheon, 1962, p. 35. Reprinted by permission of Random House Inc.

instead the uninterrupted continuity of their becoming and growth, of the unfinished metamorphosis of death and renewal. For all these images have a dual body; everywhere the genital element is emphasized: pregnancy, giving birth, the procreative force (Pulcinella's double hump, the protruding belly).... Carnival with all its images, indecencies, and curses affirms the people's immortal, indestructible character. In the world of carnival the awareness of the people's immortality is combined with the realization that established authority and truth are relative.

Popular-festive forms look into the future. They present the victory of this future, of the golden age, over the past. This is the victory of all the people's material abundance, freedom, equality, brotherhood. The victory of the future is ensured by the people's immortality. The birth of the new, of the greater and the better, is as indispensable and as inevitable as the death of the old. The one is transferred to the other, the better turns the worse into ridicule and kills it. In the whole of the world and of the people there is no room for fear. For fear can only enter a part that has been separated from the whole, the dying link torn from the link that is born. The whole of the people and of the world is triumphantly gay and fearless. This whole speaks in all carnival images; it reigns in the very atmosphere of this feast, making everyone participate in this awareness.

19 The Banquet, the Body and the Underworld

Bakhtin states that his main interest in Rabelais lies in the 'basic struggle', expressed in his work, between the world of folk culture and the official Middle Ages. He writes: 'We may say with assurance that the entire novel, from beginning to end, grew out of the very depths of [Medieval] life.... His images link the immeasurable depth and breadth of folk universalism with ... a detailed presentation of living actuality' (pp. 437—38). This extract, taken from Chapters 4–6 of *Rabelais and His World*, contains Bakhtin's discussion of three closely inter-related images in Rabelais' novel: the banquet, the grotesque devouring body and the underworld. These are shown to be organically linked to the cosmic and comic perception of folk culture. This perception, founded upon the 'living actuality' of bodily life, provides a way of experiencing and understanding human existence which frees consciousness from the grip of religious and cosmic fears.

Food, eating and feasting are inherently connected to bodily contact with and mastery of the material world. Traditionally, communal labour ends in feasting. The sharing of food is also closely associated with free speech and with the defeat of time; festive talk looks towards a utopian future.

The image of the grotesque body also expresses the defeat of time and death. The grotesque exaggeration of mouth, belly and genitals affirm the physical body as open to the world, encompassing it and endlessly reproducing it and itself. Bakhtin contrasts this grotesque realism with the representation of the body in the new classical canon as it developed after the

Renaissance. In the new canon the body is individualized and closed. Thus it cannot express the regenerative potential of the grotesque body of folk culture; for the individualized body 'death is only death'. This offers no means of overcoming the cosmic terror of death or of the vast physical forces of the universe. The downward thrust of bodily imagery in folk culture which associates the procreative belly with the earth as womb combats such fear. The body itself comes to represent the cosmos and in the hyperbolic comic images of gargantuan feats of eating, defecation, sexual exploits and misadventures, terror is mocked, transformed and mastered.

In particular, the devouring belly is associated in folk culture with the idea of hell in order to humanize and tame religious fear. In the official culture of the Middle Ages hell is the foundation of a system of hierarchical values. The only movement within this conceptual framework is vertical between the poles of heaven and hell, beatitude and damnation. There is no possibility within this thinking for a sense of the horizontal movement of historical time. The upward impulse of official ideology rejects all that is earthly and material. But the downward thrust of grotesque realism affirms the material life of the body and of the earthly world. The conquest of fear makes possible the disintegration of Medieval thinking opening the way for a new historical perception of human life.

From M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 1965.

Trans. H. Iswolsky, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Ind., 1984.

The banquet images – food, drink, swallowing – are closely linked in Rabelais' novel with the popular-festive forms.... This is no commonplace, privately consumed food and drink, partaken of by individuals. This is a popular feast, a 'banquet for all the world'. The mighty aspiration to abundance and to a universal spirit is evident in each of these images. It determines their forms, their positive hyperbolism, their gay and triumphant tone. This aspiration is like yeast added to the images. They rise, grow, swell with this leaven until they reach exaggerated dimensions. They resemble the gigantic sausages and buns that were solemnly carried in carnival processions.[1]

Rabelaisian banquets are organically combined with all other popular-festive forms. Feasting is part of every folk merriment. Not a single comic scene can do without it. We saw that in Lord Basché's castle the Catchpoles are beaten during the wedding banquet. Tappecoue is also dismembered while

[1] This paragraph provides a good illustration of the way Bakhtin's own style seems to get imbued with the spirit of the author he is concerned with; in the case of Rabelais, it is a sense of abundance, hyperbole, expansiveness.

the diablerie players are feasting at the inn. All this is, obviously, no mere coincidence.

Banquet images play an important role in Rabelais' novel. There is scarcely a single page in his book where food and drink do not figure, if only as metaphors and epithets. These images are closely interwoven with those of the grotesque body. At times it is difficult to draw a line between them, so strong is their original tie. An example is the episode of cattle slaughter ... representing the fusion of the devouring and devoured body. If we turn to *Pantagruel* (chronologically the first book) we immediately see how intimately these images are connected. The author relates that after Abel's killing the earth absorbed his blood and became fertile. Further, the people eat boxthorn berries and thanks to them their bodies reach gigantic dimensions. The wide-open mouth is the leading theme of *Pantagruel*, with the theme of swallowing, which is on the borderline between body and food images. Another image is the open womb of Pantagruel's mother in the throes of childbirth, from which issued a caravan of wagons loaded with salted food. We see how closely food images are connected with those of the body and of procreation (fertility, growth, birth)....

The role of banquets is also considerable in *Gargantua*, chronologically the second book of the novel. The story begins with the cattle-slaughtering feast. Images of eating and drinking also play a substantial part in Gargantua's education. When he comes home at the beginning of the Picrochole war, he holds a banquet, and there is a detailed enumeration of all the dishes and game appearing on the table. We saw the role played by bread and wine at the start of the Picrochole war and in the fight in the monastery close. This book abounds in metaphors and comparisons borrowed from the vocabulary of food and drink and ends with the words: '*et grande chère*'....

What is the meaning of these banquet images? We have already said that they are indissolubly linked with festivities, comic scenes, and the grotesque body. Moreover, they are intimately connected with speech, with wise conversation and gay truth. We have also pointed out their inherent tendency toward abundance and toward an all-embracing popular element. How can such an exceptional and universal role of the banquet theme be explained?

Eating and drinking are one of the most significant manifestations of the grotesque body. The distinctive character of this body is its open unfinished nature, its interaction with the world. These traits are most fully and concretely revealed in the act of eating; the body transgresses here its own limits: it swallows, devours, rends the world apart, is enriched and grows at the world's expense. The encounter of man with the world, which takes place inside the open, biting, rending, chewing mouth, is one of the most ancient, and most important objects of human thought and imagery. Here man tastes the world, introduces it into his body, makes it part of himself. Man's awakening consciousness could not but concentrate on this moment, could not help borrowing from it a number of substantial images determining its interrelation with the world. Man's encounter with the world in the act of eating is joyful, triumphant; he triumphs over the world, devours it without being devoured himself. The limits between man and the world are erased, to man's advantage.

In the oldest system of images food was related to work. It concluded work

and struggle and was their crown of glory. Work triumphed in food. Human labor's encounter with the world and the struggle against it ended in food, in the swallowing of that which had been wrested from the world. As the last victorious stage of work, the image of food often symbolized the entire labor process. There were no sharp dividing lines; labor and food represented the two sides of a unique phenomenon, the struggle of man against the world, ending in his victory. It must be stressed that both labor and food were collective; the whole of society took part in them. Collective food as the conclusion of labor's collective process was not a biological, animal act but a social event. If food is separated from work and conceived as part of a private way of life, then nothing remains of the old images: man's encounter with the world and tasting the world, the open mouth, the relation of food and speech, the gay truth. Nothing is left but a series of artificial, meaningless metaphors. The original system of images symbolized the working people, continuing to conquer life and food through struggle and labor and to absorb only that part of the world that has been conquered and mastered. In such a system the banquet images preserve their initial meaning: their universalism, their essential relation to life, death, struggle, triumph, and regeneration. This is why banquet imagery went on living in the creative life of the people. The images continued to developed, to be renewed and filled with a richer meaning. They grew and were regenerated together with the people who created them.

Therefore, in contradiction to the opinion of some ethnographers and folklorists, banquet images are not the vestiges of dead ages, when collective hunting was followed by collective feasts, when the defeated animal was torn to pieces and devoured. Such simplified pictures of the primitive hunt seem to explain the origin of images related to dismemberment and devouring, but even these images, belonging to the remotest past (like those of the grotesque body), are far more complex than primitive concepts. They show a deep awareness; they are purposeful, philosophical, rich in nuances. They have a living connection with the surrounding context and are quite unlike the extinct remains of forgotten concepts. But those images that survive in the cults and rites of the official religious systems are different. Here the more ancient stage of development has been fixed in a sublimated form, while in the popular-festive system the development continued over thousands of years. At the time of Rabelais the banquet images still had a meaningful and artistically creative life.

The creative and rich life of banquet images was expressed especially in grotesque realism. It is in this sphere that we must seek the main source of Rabelais' banquet images. The influence of the ancient symposium is of secondary importance.

In the act of eating, as we have said, the confines between the body and the world are overstepped by the body; it triumphs over the world, over its enemy, celebrates its victory, grows at the world's expense. This element of victory and triumph is inherent in all banquet images. No meal can be sad. Sadness and food are incompatible (while death and food are perfectly compatible). The banquet always celebrates a victory and this is part of its very nature. Further, the triumphal banquet is always universal. It is the triumph of life over death. In this respect it is equivalent to conception and birth. The

victorious body receives the defeated world and is renewed.

This is the reason why the banquet as a triumphal celebration and renewal often fulfills the function of completion. It is equivalent to nuptials (an act of procreation). Two epilogues are combined in the image of the wedding feast that concludes folktales. The fact is that 'a feast' and 'a wedding', put together in the nuptial banquet, offer a completed picture: the potentiality of a new beginning instead of the abstract and bare ending. Characteristically enough, death is never such a completion in the folktale. Even if it appears at the end of the story, it is followed by the funeral banquet (as in the *Iliad*) which forms the true epilogue. This form is related to the ambivalence of all folk images. The end must contain the potentialities of the new beginning, just as death leads to a new birth.

The triumphant nature of every banquet renders it not only a fit conclusion but also a framework for a number of essential events. Thus the Rabelaisian banquets may represent either an epilogue or a stage setting, as in the beating of the Catchpoles.

But the banquet is even more important as the occasion for wise discourse, for the gay truth. There is an ancient tie between the feast and the spoken word. The antique symposium presents this relation in its clearest and most classic form. But medieval grotesque realism had its own original symposium, that is, the tradition of festive speech.

One would be tempted to seek the origin of this connection of food with the spoken word at the very cradle of human language. But this ultimate origin, even if established with a certain measure of probability, would offer but little to the understanding of the later development and meaning of such a connection. Even for the authors of the antique symposium, for Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch, Athenaeus, Macrobius, Lucian,[2] and others, the link between eating and speaking was not an obsolete remnant of this past but had a living meaning. Such was also the form of the grotesque symposium, and the work of Rabelais was the last link to present and to complete this heritage.

Rabelais speaks directly of the connection in his prologue to *Gargantua*:

> I may add that in composing this masterpiece I have not spent or wasted more leisure than is required for my bodily refection – food and drink to you! Is that not the proper time to commit to the page such sublime themes and such profound wisdom? Homer, the paragon of all philologists, knew it perfectly well and Ennius also, the father of the Latin poets, as Horace testifies, though a certain sorry clown has said that his poems smelled more of wine than of oil.
>
> So, too, spoke a third-rate cynic about my books, but a ripe turd to the fellow! Oh, the sweet fragrance of wine! How much more reconciling, smiling and beguiling wine is than oil! Let the world say that I spent more on wine than on oil: I shall glory in it like Demosthenes when they accused him of the opposite. For my part, I consider it honorable and noble to be a sportsman and a wit, for as such I am welcome whenever two or three Pantagruelists are gathered together. (Book 1, Prologue)

[2] Xenophon (*c.* 428–*c.* 354 BC), Greek historian and disciple of Socrates; Plutarch (*c.* AD 46–*c.* 120), Greek biographer, historian and moral philosopher; Athenaeus (*c.* AD 200), Greek author of *Deipnosophistai* ('men learned in the arts of the banquet'); Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius (*c.* AD 400), Roman writer and philosopher; Lucian (*c.* AD 115–after 180), from Syria but wrote prolifically in Greek.

In the beginning of this prologue the author intentionally debases his work. He can write only while eating; in other words, he spends but little time on his work, which is, as it were, a mere joke. Therefore, the expressions 'sublime themes' and 'profound wisdom' can be understood ironically. But this debasement is immediately effaced by allusions to Homer and Ennius who did the same.

Prandial speech is a free and jocular speech. The popular-festive right of laughter and clowneries, the right to be frank was extended to the table. Rabelais covers his novel with the fool's cap. But at the same time the inner meaning of this table talk satisfies him. He actually does prefer wine to oil, oil being the symbol of Lenten, pious seriousness.

He was convinced that free and frank truth can be said only in the atmosphere of the banquet, only in table talk. Outside all considerations of prudence, such an atmosphere and such a tone corresponded to the very essence of truth as Rabelais understood it: a truth inwardly free, gay, and materialistic.

Behind the sanctimonious seriousness of all exalted and official genres, Rabelais saw the receding authority of the past: of characters like Picrochole, Anarchus, Janotus, Tappecoue, the Catchpoles, the plotters and slanderers, the executioners and agelasts, and the cannibals, who barked instead of laughing. In the eyes of Rabelais seriousness was either the tone of that receding truth and doomed authority, or the tone of feeble men intimidated and filled with terror. The grotesque symposium, the carnivalesque, popular-festive or antique 'table talks' provided him with the laughing tone, the vocabulary, the entire system of images which expressed his own conception of truth. The banquet with its variations was the most favorable milieu for this absolutely fearless and gay truth. Bread and wine (the world defeated through work and struggle) disperse fear and liberate the word. The merry triumphant encounter with the world in the act of eating and drinking, in which man partakes of the world instead of being devoured by it, was profoundly congenial to Rabelais' outlook. This victory over the world in the act of eating was concrete, tangible, bodily. It gave the very taste of the defeated world, which had fed and would feed mankind. In this image there was no trace of mysticism, no abstract-idealistic sublimation.

This image materializes truth and does not permit it to be torn away from the earth, at the same time preserving the earth's universal and cosmic nature. The themes of table talk are always 'sublime', filled with 'profound wisdom', but these themes are uncrowned and renewed on the material bodily level. The grotesque symposium does not have to respect hierarchical distinctions; it freely blends the profane and the sacred, the lower and the higher, the spiritual and the material. There are no *mésalliances* in its case.

Let us stress in the previously quoted excerpt the opposition of wine and oil. As we have said, oil is the symbol of official bigoted seriousness, of the sanctimonious fear of God. Wine liberates from fear and sanctimoniousness. *In vino veritas.*

We must point out another important element: the link with the future of the words pronounced at the banquet, as well as with the praise-mockery complex. This element has survived in toasts and festive speeches; one might say that they belong to time itself, which kills and gives birth in a single act. (Hence its ambiguity and ambivalence.) Even within the rigid framework of

Plato's and Xenophon's classical symposia, praise maintains its ambivalence, though in a mitigated form. The eulogy of Socrates permits the speaker to mention his ugliness, and Socrates may eulogize himself (in Xenophon) as a go-between. Old age and youth, beauty and ugliness, death and childbirth are often combined in a single two-faced image. But the festive voice of time speaks first of all about the future. The festive occasion inevitably suggests looking into better days to come. This lends a special character to table talk, liberated from the shackles of the past and present. In the Hippocrates collection there is a treatise on 'Winds' with which Rabelais was well acquainted.[3] It contained the following description of inebriety at banquets: 'due to a sudden increase of blood, there is a change in the soul and in the thoughts it contains; then men forget their present misfortunes and are inspired with the hope of a happy future.' But this utopian nature of prandial speeches does not separate men from earth; future triumphs are presented in material bodily images of abundance and rebirth.[4] ...

In the banquet images discussed ... we have seen gross exaggeration and hyperbole. Such exaggeration is also inherent in other images of the body's life but is most strongly expressed in picturing the body and food. Here we must seek the deepest source and the creative principle of all other hyperbole of the Rabelaisian world, the source of all that is excessive and superabundant in it.

Exaggeration, hyperbolism, excessiveness are generally considered fundamental attributes of the grotesque style.

The most consistent and well-documented endeavor to give the history and, in part, the theory of the grotesque was made by the German scholar G. Schneegans in his *Geschichte der Grotesken Satyre*, 'The History of Grotesque Satire,' 1894....

As an example of the clownish, Schneegans presents a scene from the Italian *commedia dell'arte*.... A stutterer talking with Harlequin cannot pronounce a difficult word; he makes a great effort, loses his breath, keeping the word down in his throat, sweats and gapes, trembles, chokes. His face is swollen, his eyes pop; 'it looks as if he were in the throes and spasms of childbirth'. Finally Harlequin, weary of waiting, relieves the stutterer by surprise; he rushes head forward and hits the man in the abdomen. The difficult word is 'born' at last....

What is the objective content of the ... example? Schneegans himself describes it in such a way that we cannot be left in doubt: the stutterer enacts a scene of childbirth. He is pregnant, bearing the word that he is unable to deliver. Schneegans says that 'it looks as if he were in the throes and spasms of childbirth'. The gaping mouth, the protruding eyes, sweat, trembling, suffocation, the swollen face – all these are typical symptoms of the grotesque life of the body; here they have the meaning of the act of birth. Harlequin's gesture is also quite obvious: he helps to deliver the word, and the word is

[3] The *Hippocratic Corpus* consists of sixty treatises on all aspects of medicine; it is associated with Hippocrates (*c.* BC 460–*c.* 370), the Greek physician, although there is no evidence that he wrote them.

[4] In another part of the chapter, Bakhtin points out that the word 'to die' 'had among its various connotations the meaning of "being swallowed" or being "eaten up" ' (p. 301).

actually born. We specify that it is the word that is born, and we stress this fact: a highly spiritual act is degraded and uncrowned by the transfer to the material bodily level of childbirth, realistically represented. But thanks to degradation the word is renewed; one might say reborn. (We are still within the cycle of delivery and childbirth.) We further see the essential topographical element of the bodily hierarchy turned upside down; the lower stratum replaces the upper stratum. The word is localized in the mouth and in the head (thought); from there it is transferred to the abdomen and is pushed out under the impact of Harlequin's head. This traditional gesture of the head ramming the abdomen or the buttocks is essentially topographical. Here once more we have the logic of opposites, the contact of the upper and the lower level. We have also an exaggeration: the symptoms produced by the stutterer's distress (tension of the eyes, sweat) are increased to such an extent as to typify childbirth. Thus the entire mechanism of the word is transferred from the apparatus of speech to the abdomen. An objective analysis of this brief scene discloses the fundamental and essential traits of the grotesque. It reveals a great wealth and fullness of meaning, worked out to the smallest detail. It has at the same time a universal character; it is a miniature satyrical drama of the word, of its material birth, or the drama of the body giving birth to the word. The extraordinary realism, the wealth of meaning are inherent in this excellent sketch, as in all comic folk images. . . .

Of all the features of the human face, the nose and mouth play the most important part in the grotesque image of the body; the head, ears, and nose also acquire a grotesque character when they adopt the animal form or that of inanimate objects. The eyes have no part in these comic images; they express an individual, so to speak, self-sufficient human life, which is not essential to the grotesque. The grotesque is interested only in protruding eyes, like the eyes of the stutterer in the scene described earlier. It is looking for that which protrudes from the body, all that seeks to go out beyond the body's confines. Special attention is given to the shoots and branches, to all that prolongs the body and links it to other bodies or to the world outside. Moreover, the bulging eyes manifest a purely bodily tension. But the most important of all human features for the grotesque is the mouth. It dominates all else. The grotesque face is actually reduced to the gaping mouth; the other features are only a frame encasing this wide-open bodily abyss.

The grotesque body, as we have often stressed, is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body. Moreover, the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world (let us recall the grotesque image in the episode of Gargantua's birth on the feast of cattle-slaughtering). This is why the essential role belongs to those parts of the grotesque body in which it outgrows its own self, transgressing its own body, in which it conceives a new, second body: the bowels and the phallus. These two areas play the leading role in the grotesque image, and it is precisely for this reason that they are predominantly subject to positive exaggeration, to hyperbolization; they can even detach themselves from the body and lead an independent life, for they hide the rest of the body, as something secondary. (The nose can also in a way detach itself from the body.) Next to the bowels and the genital organs is the mouth, through which enters the world to be

swallowed up. And next is the anus. All these convexities and orifices have a common characteristic; it is within them that the confines between bodies and between the body and the world are overcome: there is an interchange and an interorientation. This is why the main events in the life of the grotesque body, the acts of the bodily drama, take place in this sphere. Eating, drinking, defecation and other elimination (sweating, blowing of the nose, sneezing), as well as copulation, pregnancy, dismemberment, swallowing up by another body – all these acts are performed on the confines of the body and the outer world, or on the confines of the old and new body. In all these events the beginning and end of life are closely linked and interwoven.

Thus the artistic logic of the grotesque image ignores the closed, smooth, and impenetrable surface of the body and retains only its excrescences (sprouts, buds) and orifices, only that which leads beyond the body's limited space or into the body's depths. Mountains and abysses, such is the relief of the grotesque body; or speaking in architectural terms, towers and subterranean passages.

Grotesque images may, of course, present other members, organs and parts of the body (especially dismembered parts), but they play a minor role in the drama. They are never stressed unless they replace a leading image.

Actually, if we consider the grotesque image in its extreme aspect, it never presents an individual body; the image consists of orifices and convexities that present another, newly conceived body. It is a point of transition in a life eternally renewed, the inexhaustible vessel of death and conception.

As we have said, the grotesque ignores the impenetrable surface that closes and limits the body as a separate and completed phenomenon. The grotesque image displays not only the outward but also the inner features of the body: blood, bowels, heart and other organs. The outward and inward features are often merged into one.

We have already sufficiently stressed the fact that grotesque imagery constructs what we might call a double body. In the endless chain of bodily life it retains the parts in which one link joins the other, in which the life of one body is born from the death of the preceding, older one.[5]

Finally, let us point out that the grotesque body is cosmic and universal. It stresses elements common to the entire cosmos: earth, water, fire, air; it is directly related to the sun, to the stars. It contains the signs of the zodiac. It reflects the cosmic hierarchy. This body can merge with various natural phenomena, with mountains, rivers, seas, islands, and continents. It can fill the entire universe.

The grotesque mode of representing the body and bodily life prevailed in art and creative forms of speech over thousands of years. From the point of view of extensive use, this mode of representation still exists today; grotesque forms of the body not only predominate in the art of European peoples but also in their folklore, especially in the comic genre. Moreover, these images predominate in the extra-official life of the people. For example, the theme of mockery and abuse is almost entirely bodily and grotesque. The body that

[5] This description of a continuous bodily chain is very similar to the more recurrent idea of the continuous dialogic chain of utterances or of texts.

figures in all the expressions of the unofficial speech of the people is the body that fecundates and is fecundated, that gives birth and is born, devours and is devoured, drinks, defecates, is sick and dying. In all languages there is a great number of expressions related to the genital organs, the anus and buttocks, the belly, the mouth and nose. But there are few expressions for the other parts of the body: arms and legs, face, and eyes. Even these comparatively few forms of speech have, in most cases, a narrow, practical character; they are related to the nearby area, determine, distance, dimensions, or number. They have no broader, symbolic meaning, nor are they especially expressive. They do not participate in abuse and mockery.

Wherever men laugh and curse, particularly in a familiar environment, their speech is filled with bodily images. The body copulates, defecates, overeats, and men's speech is flooded with genitals, bellies, defecations, urine, disease, noses, mouths, and dismembered parts. Even when the flood is contained by norms of speech, there is still an eruption of these images into literature, especially if the literature is gay or abusive in character. The common human fund of familiar and abusive gesticulations is also based on these sharply defined images.

This boundless ocean of grotesque bodily imagery within time and space extends to all languages, all literatures, and the entire system of gesticulation; in the midst of it the bodily canon of art, belles lettres, and polite conversation of modern times is a tiny island. This limited canon never prevailed in antique literature. In the official literature of European peoples it has existed only for the last four hundred years.

We shall give a brief characterization of the new canon, concerning ourselves less with the pictorial arts than with literature. We shall build this characterization by comparing it to the grotesque conception and bringing out the differences.

The new bodily canon, in all its historic variations and different genres, presents an entirely finished, completed, strictly limited body, which is shown from the outside as something individual. That which protrudes, bulges, sprouts, or branches off (when a body transgresses its limits and a new one begins) is eliminated, hidden, or moderated. All orifices of the body are closed. The basis of the image is the individual, strictly limited mass, the impenetrable façade. The opaque surface and the body's 'valleys' acquire an essential meaning as the border of a closed individuality that does not merge with other bodies and with the world. All attributes of the unfinished world are carefully removed, as well as all the signs of its inner life. The verbal norms of official and literary language, determined by the canon, prohibit all that is linked with fecundation, pregnancy, childbirth. There is a sharp line of division between familiar speech and 'correct' language.

The fifteenth century was an age of considerable freedom in France. In the sixteenth century the norms of language became more strict, and the borderline between the different norms grew more evident. This process intensified at the end of the century, when the canon of polite speech that was to prevail in the seventeenth century was definitely formed. At the end of the century Montaigne[6] protested hi his 'Essays' against these prohibitions.

[6] Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533–92), French moralist and essayist.

> What harm has the genital act, so natural, so necessary, and so lawful, done to humanity, that we dare not speak of it without shame, and exclude it from serious and orderly conversation? We boldly utter the words, *kill, rob, betray*: and the other we only dare utter under our breath. Does this mean that the less of it we breathe in words, the more are we at liberty to swell our thoughts with it? For it is amusing that the words which are least used, least written, and most hushed up should be the best known and the most generally understood. There is no person of any age or morals but knows them as well as he knows the word *bread*. They are impressed upon each of us, without being expressed, without voice and without form. (And the sex that does it most is charged to hush it up.)[7]

In the new canon, such parts of the body as the genital organs, the buttocks, belly, nose and mouth cease to play the leading role. Moreover, instead of their original meaning they acquire an exclusiveness; in other words, they convey a merely individual meaning of the life of one single, limited body. The belly, nose, and mouth, are of course retained in the image and cannot be hidden, but in an individual, completed body they either fulfill purely expressive functions (this is true of the mouth only) or the functions of characterization and individualization. There is no symbolic, broad meaning whatever in the organs of this body. If they are not interpreted as a characterization and an expressive feature, they are referred to on the merely practical level in brief explanatory comments. Generally speaking, all that does not contain an element of characterization in the literary image is reduced to a simple bodily remark added to speech or action.

In the modern image of the individual body, sexual life, eating, drinking, and defecation have radically changed their meaning: they have been transferred to the private and psychological level where their connotation becomes narrow and specific, torn away from the direct relation to the life of society and to the cosmic whole. In this new connotation they can no longer carry on their former philosophical functions.

In the new bodily canon the leading role is attributed to the individually characteristic and expressive parts of the body: the head, face, eyes, lips, to the muscular system, and to the place of the body in the external world. The exact position and movements of this finished body in the finished outside world are brought out, so that the limits between them are not weakened.

The body of the new canon is merely one body; no signs of duality have been left. It is self-sufficient and speaks in its name alone. All that happens within it concerns it alone, that is, only the individual, closed sphere. Therefore, all the events taking place within it acquire one single meaning: death is only death, it never coincides with birth; old age is torn away from youth; blows merely hurt, without assisting an act of birth. All actions and events are interpreted on the level of a single, individual life. They are enclosed within the limits of the same body, limits that are the absolute beginning and end and can never meet.

In the grotesque body, on the contrary, death brings nothing to an end, for it does not concern the ancestral body, which is renewed in the next generation. The events of the grotesque sphere are always developed on the boundary dividing one body from the other and, as it were, at their points of intersection. One body

[7] *Essays*, iii, Chapter 5 (trans. G. B. Ivez). Copyright Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1925. Reproduced by permission.

offers its death, the other its birth, but they are merged in a two-bodied image.

In the new canon the duality of the body is preserved only in one theme, a pale reflection of its former dual nature. This is the theme of nursing a child. But the image of the mother and the child is strictly individualized and closed, the line of demarcation cannot be removed. This is a completely new phase of the artistic conception of bodily interaction.

Finally, the new canon is completely alien to hyperbolization. The individualized image has no place for it. All that is permitted is a certain accentuation of expressive and characterized features. The severance of the organs from the body or their independent existence is no longer permitted.

We have roughly sketched the basic outlines of the modern canon, as they generally appear in the norms of literature and speech.[8]

The comic conception, inherited from folk culture of humor, from grotesque realism and from elements of familiar speech, culminates in Rabelais' novel. In all the episodes that we have analyzed, and in their separate images, we have seen the grotesque body. Its mighty torrent flows through the entire novel: the dismembered parts, the separate organs (as in Panurge's wall),[9] the gaping mouths devouring, swallowing, drinking, the defecation, urine, death, birth, childhood, and old age. The bodies are merged with each other or with objects (as in the image of *carême-prenant*) and with the world. A tendency toward duality can be glimpsed everywhere. Everywhere the cosmic, ancestral element of the body is stressed....

We must take into consideration the importance of cosmic terror, the fear of the immeasurable, the infinitely powerful. The starry sky, the gigantic material masses of the mountains, the sea, the cosmic upheavals, elemental catastrophes – these constitute the terror that pervades ancient mythologies, philosophies, the systems of images, and language itself with its semantics. An obscure memory of cosmic perturbations in the distant past and the dim terror of future catastrophes form the very basis of human thought, speech, and images. This cosmic terror is not mystic in the strict sense of the word; rather it is the fear of that which is materially huge and cannot be overcome by force. It is used by all religious systems to oppress man and his consciousness. Even the most ancient images of folklore express the struggle against fear, against the memories of the past, and the apprehension of future calamities, but folk images relating to this struggle helped develop true human fearlessness. The struggle against cosmic terror in all its forms[10] and

[8] An authorial note here points out that the classical canon of the body produces a new canon of behaviour. Good behaviour entails not placing the elbows on the table, holding in the abdomen, chewing silently, not panting or snorting: 'in other words, to close up and limit the body's confines and to smooth the bulges. It is interesting to trace the struggle of the grotesque and classical concept in the history of dress and fashion. Even more interesting is this struggle in the history of dance.'

[9] This refers to Panurge's suggestion that since women are cheap, city wall could be built with their genitals. This is one of the several points where women readers may not share Bakhtin's enthusiasm for Rabelais.

[10] In an authorial note Bakhtin stresses that cosmic fear is deeper, more essential and stronger than individual bodily fear of destruction although both fears often mingle in folklore and literature. Cosmic terror derives from human beings' ancient impotence in the presence of nature. Official culture often used and even cultivated this fear to humiliate and oppress.

manifestations did not rely on abstract hope or on the eternal spirit, but on the material principle in man himself. Man assimilated the cosmic elements: earth, water, air, and fire; he discovered them and became vividly conscious of them in his own body. He became aware of the cosmos within himself.

This assimilation of cosmic elements within the body was most acutely felt at the time of the Renaissance. It found its theoretical expression in the idea of the microcosm, which was used by Rabelais.... We must here stress that it was in the material acts and eliminations of the body – eating, drinking, defecation, sexual life – that man found and retraced within himself the earth, sea, air, fire, and all the cosmic matter and its manifestations, and was thus able to assimilate them. Indeed, the images of the material bodily lower stratum have a prevailingly cosmic connotation.

In the sphere of imagery cosmic fear (as any other fear) is defeated by laughter.[11] Therefore dung and urine, as comic matter that can be interpreted bodily, play an important part in these images. They appear in hyperbolic quantities and cosmic dimensions. Cosmic catastrophe represented in the material bodily lower stratum is degraded, humanized, and transformed into grotesque monsters. Terror is conquered by laughter....

The mighty thrust downward into the bowels of the earth, into the depths of the human body, is reflected in Rabelais' entire world from beginning to end. This downward movement animates all his images, all the leading episodes, all the metaphors and comparisons. Rabelais' world in its entirety, as in every detail, is directed toward the underworld, both earthly and bodily.... [In] Rabelais' initial plan the novel's central topic was to be the search for the underworld and Pantagruel's descent into hell (Dante's topic presented on the comic level). Moreover, we must admit that although the novel was written over a period of twenty years and with considerable interruptions, Rabelais did not digress from his original plan and indeed almost fulfilled it. Thus, the journey into the underground was in the novel from its conception and was elaborated in every detail.

This downward movement is also inherent in all forms of popular-festive merriment and grotesque realism. Down, inside out, vice versa, upside down, such is the direction of all these movements. All of them thrust down, turn over, push headfirst, transfer top to bottom, and bottom to top, both in the literal sense of space, and in the metaphorical meaning of the image.

We also see the downward movement in fights, beatings, and blows; they throw the adversary to the ground, trample him into the earth. They bury their victim. But at the same time they are creative; they sow and harvest (let us recall the bridal cuffing in Lord Basché's house, the transformation of the battle into the harvest or a banquet).

The downward movement is also expressed in curses and abuses. They, too, dig a grave, but this is a bodily, creative grave.

Debasement and interment are reflected in carnival uncrownings, related to blows and abuse. The king's attributes are turned upside down in the

[11] Bakhtin points out elsewhere that Rabelais wrote during calamities of severe drought and wars in France which revived cosmic terror; his book is 'a merry answer to these fears and pious moods' (p. 339).

clown; he is king of a world 'turned inside out'.

Finally, debasement is the fundamental artistic principle of grotesque realism; all that is sacred and exalted is rethought on the level of the material bodily stratum or else combined and mixed with its images. We spoke of the grotesque swing, which brings together heaven and earth. But the accent is placed not on the upward movement but on the descent.

The downward movements, scattered throughout the forms and images of popular-festive merriment and grotesque realism, are reassembled by Rabelais; they are understood anew and merged in one single movement directed into the depths of the earth, the depths of the body, in which 'the treasures and most wonderful things lie hidden' (never described by the ancient philosophers)....

Let us ... turn to the episode of Epistemon's resurrection and of his visions in the underworld (Book 2, Chapter 30).

This is one of the boldest episodes of Rabelais' novel. Abel Lefranc[12] has proved convincingly enough that this chapter is a travesty of the main Gospel miracles: the resurrection of Lazarus and of the daughter of Jairus. Some features are borrowed from one of these two stories and some from the other. Moreover, Lefranc found in this chapter some elements of the Gospel stories about the cure of the deaf and dumb and of the blind.

This parody is constructed by mixing the corresponding Gospel texts with images of the material bodily stratum. Panurge warms Epistemon's head by placing it on his codpiece; this is an obvious material debasement but at the same time a curative contact with the genital organs. Further, Epistemon's body is brought to the place where the banquet is held and where the resurrection takes place. His neck and head are washed with 'good white wine'. There follows an anatomizing image (*veine contre veine*). Panurge's oath must be especially stressed: he is ready to lose his own head if he does not succeed in resurrecting Epistemon. Let us note that the theme of this oath ('I hope to lose my own head') coincides with the actual decapitation of Epistemon. Such a coincidence is typical for Rabelais' entire system of images; the theme of curses, abuses, oaths, often repeats the incidents described in the story (rending and dismemberment of bodies, thrusts into the bodily lower stratum, drenching in urine). Let us note yet another trait: Panurge declares that the loss of the head is the wager of a fool. But the 'fool (*fol, sot*) in the context of Rabelais and of all the Renaissance never had the purely negative meaning of common stupidity. 'Fool' is an ambivalent abuse; moreover, it is closely related to the image of festive fools of the *soties* and popular marketplace humor. The loss of a head is a minor loss for a fool, but this is said by the fool himself, and the loss is as ambivalent as his foolishness (the inverse side, the lower part of official wisdom). This theme of a fool's play is inherent in the entire episode. To lose his head is a purely comic act, and all the incidents that follow, the resurrection and the ghostly visions, are presented in the aspect of carnival or of a show in a marketplace booth.

Here is the scene of Epistemon's awakening:

[12] Abel Lefranc (b. 1863), a scholar of Rabelais.

> Epistemon began to breathe, then he opened his eyes, yawned, sneezed.... Finally he led to a great household fart.
> 'He's healed now all right!' Panurge exclaimed, giving him a glass of strong white wine with a slice of sugared toast. And healed he was, though for the next three weeks very hoarse and sorely afflicted with a dry cough he could dispel only by drinking (Book 2, Chapter 30)

All the symptoms of return to life are here described in succession from the top downward. First, there is breath from the mouth and opening of the eyes. Then comes debasement: yawning (a lower sign of life), sneezing (still lower, a kind of elimination), and finally, breaking wind (the bodily lower stratum, the anus). The last symptom is decisive: *A ceste heure est il guery*, Panurge declares.[13] Thus we have here a complete turnabout, the replacement of the higher by the lower level: it is not the breath of the mouth, but the flatus that appears as the symbol of life and the true sign of resurrection....

In the concluding part of this excerpt, wine becomes the leading image (a banquet's symbol); it confirms the victory of life over death and further helps Epistemon to cure his dry cough.

Such is the first part of the resurrection episode. As we see, all the images that reflect the thrust downward. Let us also note the accompanying banquet images. The second part of the episode is devoted to Epistemon's ghostly visions, that is, to the underworld. This part is also accompanied by banquet images. Here is the beginning of his story:

> Epistemon started to speak. He had seen the devils, he told them, he had spoken familiarly with Lucifer, he had a rolicking time in hell and in the Elysian Fields. The devils, he testified, were such excellent fellows and jovial company that he regretted Panurge's recalling him back to life so soon.
> 'I enjoyed seeing them immensely.'
> 'How so?' Pantagruel asked.
> 'They are not so badly treated as you suppose,' Epistemon explained. 'The only thing is that their conditions are changed very curiously. I saw Alexander the Great, for instance ... he earns the barest living by darning old hose. Xerxes is a crier of mustard, Romulus a saltmaker; Numa Pompilius, the royal Roman lawgiver, is a nailsmith; Tarquin a porter; Piso, the successor of Galba, a peasant clod ...' (*Ibid.*)

The image of the underworld is related from its very beginning with that of a banquet; Epistemon feasts in hell and in the Elysian fields. Further, the underworld offers Epistemon an amusing picture of the ghostly life of the doomed. This life is organized as a typical carnival. Everything here is inverted in relation to the outside world. All who are highest are debased, all who are lowest are crowned. The enumeration offered by Rabelais is nothing but a carnivalesque travesty of antique and medieval heroes. The position and profession of each of the doomed inmates is a debasement in the topographical sense of the word; for instance, Alexander the Great is darning old hose. Sometimes the situation of the doomed hero is pictured by a physical trait, as by referring to Achilles as 'scrofulous'....

The image of the underworld offered in this episode has a sharply defined

[13] An authorial note states that Panurge's words are a travestying allusion to the resurrection of Jarius's daughter in the Gospels.

popular festive character. Hell is a banquet and a gay carnival. We find here all the familiar debasing ambivalent images of drenching in urine, beating, travesty, abuse. The downward thrust, inherent in all Rabelaisian images, brings us to the underworld, but the underworld also symbolizes this descent.

In the Rabelaisian system of images the underworld is the junction where the main lines of this system cross each other: carnivals, banquets, fights, beatings, abuses, and curses.

How can one explain this 'crossroads' character of hell, and what is its philosophic meaning?

It is, of course, impossible to answer this question by means of abstract argument. It is first of all necessary to turn to Rabelais' sources and to the traditional representation of hell which existed throughout the Middle Ages and culminated in Renaissance literature. Second, we must disclose the popular elements of this tradition. Finally, we must seek to understand its meaning and that of the image itself, in the light of the major problems of Rabelais' times....

For thousands of years folk culture strove at every stage of its development to overcome by laughter, render sober, and express in the language of the material bodily lower stratum (in an ambivalent sense) all the central ideas, images, and symbols of official cultures.... Cosmic fear and the images of world catastrophes and eschatological theories, cultivated in official philosophies, found their comic equivalents. The carnivalesque disasters and parodical prophecies freed man from fear, brought the world closer to him, lightened the burden of time, and turned it into a sequence of gay transformations and renewals.

The image of the underworld was also developed. We have seen that the process of carnivalization of the official conceptions of hell and purgatory took place throughout the Middle Ages. The elements of this process were contained even in the official 'visions' of hell. At the conclusion of the medieval period the underworld became a central theme, the crossroads of two cultures: the official and the popular tradition. This theme disclosed most clearly the difference between these two cultures. The underworld is a peculiar balance sheet, the end of individual lives and destinies and at the same time the judgment dealt out to the separate life of man as a whole, based on the highest criteria of Christian philosophy (religious, metaphysical, ethical, social, and political). This synthesis revealed the fundamental medieval conception of good and evil, not in abstract form but in a strikingly intensified pictorial and emotional form. This is why the image of hell was a powerful instrument of ecclesiastical propaganda.

The basic traits of official medieval culture reached their extreme limit in the images of the underworld, an ultimate concentration of gloom, fear, and intimidation. The nonhistoric appreciation of the individual and his destiny was here most consistently exemplified. The vertical line of ascent and fall prevailed, while the horizontal line of historic time was obliterated. The concept of time in official medieval culture was here most strikingly revealed.

Folk culture strove to defeat through laughter this extreme projection of gloomy seriousness and to transform it into a gay carnival monster. Folk culture organized the inferno according to its own fashion, opposing sterile

eternity by pregnant and birth-giving death; preserving the past by giving birth to a new, better future. If the Christian hell devalued earth and drew men away from it, the carnivalesque hell affirmed earth and its lower stratum as the fertile womb, where death meets birth and a new life springs forth. This is why the images of the material bodily lower stratum pervade the carnivalized underworld.

The image of the netherworld in folk tradition becomes the symbol of the defeat of fear by laughter. The fear is dual: the mystic terror inspired by hell and death and the terror of the authority and truth of the past, still prevailing but dying, which has been hurled into the underworld....

In the [official] medieval picture of the world, the top and bottom, the higher and the lower, have an absolute meaning both in the sense of space and of values. Therefore, the images of the upward movement, the way of ascent, or the symbols of descent and fall played in this system an exceptional role, as they did in the sphere of art and literature. Every important movement was seen and interpreted only as upward and downward, along a vertical line. All metaphors of movement in medieval thought and art have this sharply defined, surprisingly consistent vertical character. All that was best was highest, all that was worst was lowest. The horizontal line of movement, forward or backward, is absent; it was nonessential, since it brought no change to objects in the scale of values or in their true destiny. It was understood as static, or as a senseless rotation within a closed circuit. Even the medieval accounts of voyages and pilgrimages were devoid of the special pathos of advance along the world's horizontal; in these medieval tales the line of advance was distorted and replaced by the vertical concept of world-space. The concrete, visible model of the earth on which medieval thought was based was essentially vertical.

This hierarchical movement also determined the idea of time, which was conceived as horizontal. Therefore, the hierarchy was considered outside of time, and time was not essential for hierarchical ascent. There was no conception of progress, of moving forward in time. It was possible to be instantly reborn in the highest spheres, even before 'Mahomet's pitcher' would have time to spill. Medieval eschatology devalued time.

Dante's picture of the world is characteristic. In his world a considerable role is attributed to time, but all Dante's metaphors of spatial values have a purely vertical tendency of ascent and fall. He knows only the upward and the downward, not the forward movement. But he develops his system of vertical images with extraordinary depth and richness. His entire world is shown along the vertical line, from the lowest level, Satan's jaws, to the extreme heights that are the abodes of God and of beatified souls. The only movement that changes the position and the destiny of the soul is the upward or downward movement. We scarcely find any outstanding images of near or remote objects in time and space. Both in the *Divina Commedia* and in the *Vita Nuova* Beatrice's image is projected in the hierarchical light. The fall makes this image remote, while the soul that is raised draws it nearer. The infinite distance separating the poet from the beloved can be instantly overcome or can be made to last forever. Time and space seem to be entirely excluded from the story of this love; they exist only in their symbolic aspect. How different from popular folk lyrics, where remoteness from the object of

love, the long and difficult roads leading to it, and the concrete time of expectation play such an essential role. Time is devalued in Dante's world. In the hierarchical order every moment contains the extreme low degree and the high degree of perfection; real historic time can change nothing.

But the medieval picture of the world as it appears in Dante is already in a state of crisis and stands at the breaking point. In spite of his ideological intentions, individuality and variety appear in his work on a single hierarchical plane. Such images as Farinata, Ugolino, Paolo and Francesca[14] are important and are differentiated but not according to their hierarchical position on the scale of the ascending souls. Dante's world is extremely complex. His exceptional artistic force is revealed in the powerful tension of opposed elements that pervades all his images. The mighty impact of the upward vertical movement is opposed by the no less mighty impulse to break through toward the horizontal of real space and historic time, the tendency to understand and form destiny outside the hierarchical norms and values of the Middle Ages. Hence the extraordinary tension of the balance created in his world by Dante's titanic power.

At the time of Rabelais the hierarchical world of the Middle Ages was crumbling. The narrow, vertical, extratemporal model of the world, with its absolute top and bottom, its system of ascents and descents, was in the process of reconstruction. A new model was being constructed in which the leading role was transferred to the horizontal lines, to the movement forward in real space and in historic time. Philosophy, scientific knowledge, human practice and art, as well as literature, all worked on this new model.

In the struggle for a new conception of the world and for the destruction of the medieval hierarchy, Rabelais continually used the traditional folklore method of contrast, the 'inside out', the 'positive negation'. He made the top and the bottom change places, intentionally mixed the hierarchical levels in order to discover the core of the object's concrete reality, to free it from its shell and to show its material bodily aspect – the real being outside all hierarchical norms and values.

The mighty thrust of all folk images into the absolute lower stratum, the element of time they contain, and the ambivalent nature of the underworld are opposed in Rabelais to the abstract hierarchical tendency to ascend. Rabelais sought the real world and real historic time, not on the upper level but in the lower depths. In the words of the priestess of the Holy Bottle, 'The greatest treasures are hidden underground, and the wisest of all is time, since it will reveal all riches and all secrets'.

The material bodily principle, earth, and real time become the relative center of the new picture of the world. Not the ascent of the individual soul into the higher sphere but the movement forward of all mankind, along the horizontal of historic time, becomes the basic criterion of all evaluations. Having done its part upon earth, the individual soul fades and dies together with the individual body; but the body of the people and of mankind, fertilized by the dead, is eternally renewed and moves forever forward along the historic path of progress....

[14] All four are strongly individualized characters who tell their own stories in Dante's *Inferno*.

We have examined all the aspects of Rabelais' work which are essential in our mind. We have tried to show that the exceptional originality of his work was determined by the ancient folk culture of humor, powerfully reflected in Rabelaisian imagery....

Literary studies and aesthetics are usually based on the narrowed and diminished manifestations of humor in the writings of the three last centuries, in spite of the fact that these conceptions are inadequate even for the understanding of Molière. Rabelais inherited and brought to fulfillment thousands of years of folk humor. His work is the unique key for the understanding of this culture in its most powerful, deep, and original manifestations.

Our study is only a first step in the vast task of examining ancient folk humor and even as a first step possibly may not be sufficiently firm and correct. But we are profoundly convinced of the importance of this task. We cannot understand cultural and literary life and the struggle of mankind's historic past if we ignore that peculiar folk humor that always existed and was never merged with the official culture of the ruling classes. While analyzing past ages we are too often obliged to 'take each epoch at its word', that is, to believe its official ideologists. We do not hear the voice of the people and cannot find and decipher its pure unmixed expression.

All the acts of the drama of world history were performed before a chorus of the laughing people. Without hearing this chorus we cannot understand the drama as a whole. Let us imagine Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*[15] without the scenes involving the massed people; such a conception of Pushkin's drama would be not only incomplete but distorted. Each character in the play expresses a limited point of view. The authentic meaning of the epoch and its events is disclosed in these crowd scenes, where Pushkin lets the people have the last word.

Our example is not merely a metaphoric comparison. In all periods of the past there was the marketplace with its laughing people, that very marketplace that in Pushkin's drama appeared in the pretender's nightmare:

> The people swarmed on the public square
> And pointed laughingly at me,
> And I was filled with shame and fear.

We repeat, every act of world history was accompanied by a laughing chorus. But not every period of history had Rabelais for coryphaeus. Though he led the popular chorus of only one time, the Renaissance, he so fully and clearly revealed the peculiar and difficult language of the laughing people that his work sheds its light on the folk culture of humor belonging to other ages.

[15] Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837), *Boris Godunov* (1825), a blank verse historical drama.

A Glossary of Key Terms

This is not the first glossary of key terms in Bakhtin's thought and neither, undoubtedly, will it be the last (see Note at the end of the glossary). Like those which it follows, and those which will surely come after it, this glossary will inevitably contain what Bakhtin himself referred to as 'loopholes'. This is so for a number of reasons. First, as has been well documented, Bakhtin's terminology could at times be vague, or ambiguous, while his recourse to neologisms and his tendency to exploit semantic ambiguity in a particular term also present problems to anyone seeking to interpret his thought. Second, his oeuvre, and therefore the thought that lay behind his oeuvre, developed over many decades. Third, some of the works which are generally included in the Bakhtin canon may not have been written by him, or at least him alone (see Introduction). Fourth and finally if, as Bakhtin argued, there can be no final word (except, perhaps, the Word embodied in the Christian God), since every utterance, every word, inevitably enters into a dialogue which stretches unendingly into the past and the future, these definitions must one day be modified, changed as part of that dialogic process.

It should also be pointed out that the use of the name 'Bakhtin' throughout this glossary also implies, where appropriate, the names of Medvedev and Voloshinov.

Act ***akt/postupok***
Any act or deed which I perform constitutes an 'answer' to the world. An act is both a response to previous acts, and an anticipation of future acts. Just as there can be no last word, so there can be no final act.

addressivity ***adressivnost'/obrashchennost'***
This is my unavoidable state as a human being; as such I have 'no alibi for my existence', I must engage in a constant dialogue with the world as it is given (q.v.) to me; only in this way can I give my own life meaning (q.v.) and value (q.v.). In 'Author and Hero', Bakhtin suggests that only through such a dialogue can I hope to complete myself in what he calles the 'absolute future of meaning' (*'smyslovoe, absolyutnoe budushchee'*). As a consciousness addressed by the world beyond my borders I must answer, for I have the *'otvetstvennost'* ('responsibility') to do so (the Russian word carries the same capacity for double meaning as the English term, being formed from the word *'otvet'*, meaning 'an answer'). My answer, furthermore, will always have an 'addressee' ('adresat').

aesthetic ***esteticheskii***
An aesthetic event (or 'co-being', *see* 'being') implies the dialogic interaction of two autonomous, non-coinciding consciousnesses. When the consciousnesses involved coincide (when, for example, my self enters the conscious-

ness of the other without subsequently retreating back into my own consciousness again), Bakhtin calls this an ethical ('*eticheskii*') 'co-being'. In an 'ethical' event there can be no 'dialogue' as Bakhtin understands the term.

alien (*see* 'one's own)

answerability (*see* 'addressivity')

architectonics ***arkhitektonika***
The science of relations, of how parts relate together to form a (dynamic) whole. Bakhtin named his first set of essays (much of which has been lost) *The Architectonics of Answerability*, as he was primarily interested in how 'self' and 'other' come together in social intercourse.

author ***avtor***
The term 'author' as used by Bakhtin can refer to a flesh-and-blood person, such as Rabelais or Dostoevsky. As well as these real historical figures, however, Bakhtin sees the author as a cognitive construct 'aesthetically' interacting with the consciousness of his or her characters. Bakhtin draws an analogy between the 'author-hero' relationship and the 'self-other' relationship. 'Author' and 'hero' are, ultimately, relative terms; we are all authors and heroes, we are all both selves and others. In his early writing Bakhtin at times makes his paradigm gender-specific; the author must be 'masculinely' active, while the hero must be 'femininely' passive if the hero's consciousness is to be 'penetrated' by the author's.

becoming ***stanovienie***
Being must be a process of becoming, a discovery and generation of meaning to be attained only in the absolute future.

being ***bytie***
Being is always 'co-being', '*sobytie*' (Bakhtin talks of the 'co-being of being', '*sobytie bytiya*'). To the extent that it always implies self-other interaction, being is always an 'event' (the first meaning of '*sobytie*' in Russian), an act, a process, since my self needs the other, to become an I-for-the-other, to assimilate temporarily the other's point of view, in order to be an I-for-myself (and vice-versa). To underline the 'eventness' of being is to emphasize the fact that being implies both (spatially) community and (temporally) continuity. To my self, my own being is an open-ended process, since I am not consciously present either at my birth or at my death; to the other my being is closed, because for the other my birth and death exist as givens (q.v.) in space and time.

belief system (*see* 'purview')

carnival(-ized) (*see* 'novel(-ness)')

chronotope ***khronotop***
This is the spatio-temporal matrix which shapes any narrative text. Specific chronotopes correspond to particular genres (q.v.), which themselves represent particular world-views. To this extent, chronotope is a cognitive concept as much as a narrative feature of texts.

cognition ***poznanie***
Cognition is one of the ways in which I as a self shape my response to the world, actively bring my consciousness into play with the world, and change that world. The cognition of reality is achieved primarily in the form of 'utterances' (q.v.).

(un)complete (*see* '(un)consummated')

conceived (*see* 'given')

consciousness ***soznanie***
There can be no consciousness without 'utterances' (q.v.). Consciousness is always consciousness from a particular (concrete) situation, addressed to a particular situation. Consciousness transforms the world, by answering it, from a position of outsidedness.

(un)consummated(-ness) ***(ne)zavershenn-yi(-ost')***
The act of consummation needs at least two autonomous consciousnesses, a 'self' and an 'other' (in this respect it is always an 'aesthetic' act [q.v.]). Consummation, or 'completedness', is another of Bakhtin's relative terms. My self appears to me as unconsummated, uncomplete, because I am not able to perceive from outside (q.v.) my spatial and temporal limits (my bodily extremities and my birth/death respectively). By the same token, the other appears consummated, complete from my own perspective. For the other, of course, the situation is reversed. I must appropriate the other's perception of me in order to consummate my perception of myself as a subject; but not to consummate or finalize the meaning of that subject. There is a certain ambiguity surrounding the question of consummation; the other's gaze seeks to finalize me, yet I must remain unfinalized if I am to continue to take part in the endless dialogue between my self and the outside world.

deed (*see* 'act')

dialogue ***dialog***
Dialogue is perhaps the basic trope in all of Bakhtin's thought. There is no existence, no meaning (q.v.), no word (q.v.) or thought that does not enter into dialogue or 'dialogic' ('*dialogichekii*') relations with the other, that does not exhibit intertextuality in both time and space. 'Monologue' and 'monologic' ('*monolog*' and '*monologicheskii*') refer to any discourse which seeks to deny the dialogic nature of existence, which refuses to recognize its responsibility as addressee, and pretends to be the 'last word'. Such discourse is typical of authoritarian regimes.

discourse (*see* 'word')

environment (*see* 'purview')

ethical (*see* 'aesthetic')

event (*see* 'being')

everyday genres (*see* 'genre')

extralocality (*see* 'outsidedness')

(un)finished (*see* '[un]consummated')

genre ***zhanr***
A 'genre' is a particular way by which consciousness models experience. In one sense, Bakhtin's use of the term 'genre' broadly corresponds to what we would term artistic genres. Moreover, Bakhtin's examples of 'genre' suggest that for him the term was reasonably fluid. He talks, for example, of 'serious' genres like epic and tragedy, 'serio-comical' genres like Menippean satire and the Socratic dialogue, and even 'inserted' genres such as letters and found manuscripts. Bakhtin also draws a basic distinction between 'pure' genres and 'carnivalized' (q.v.) genres. Among the various genres, a special place is reserved for the 'novel' (q.v.), since it is the genre which most forcefully resists canonization. Indeed, the other genres can themselves be 'novelized', a process by which they acquire 'novelness' (q.v.)

Bakhtin also talks of 'speech genres' ('*rechevye zhanry*'). This is a more specific Bakhtinian term, and is used to describe the broad set of linguistic conventions which speakers more or less tacitly agree upon as operative for any particular discursive context (written or spoken). Bakhtin talks about 'primary' ('*pervichnye*') speech genres, also known as 'everyday genres' ('*bytovye zhanry*', from '*byt*', meaning '[everyday] life'). 'Primary' speech genres include talking about the weather, or ordering a round of drinks. The 'secondary' ('*vtorichnye*') speech genres are generally more complex genres, and include literary genres, as well as other forms of artistic, scientific and political discourse, for example.

given(-ness) ***dann-yi(-ost')***
The distinction between the world as 'given' ('*dannyi*', or the abstract noun '*dannost'*', 'that-which-is-given') and as 'posited', 'conceived', or 'set-as-a-task' ('*zadannyi*', or '*zadannost'*') goes back to Kant. Like that between consummated/unconsummated, this distinction is to a certain extent a relative one, and depends on point of view. For me, 'given' is all that lies beyond my boundaries as an individual, all which I can contemplate while remaining an 'I-for-myself'. '*Dannost'*' is frequently synonymous in Bakhtin's writing with '*nalichnost'*', meaning 'that-which-is-present-at-hand'. 'Posited', on the other hand, designates all that which is thought, conceived, most importantly my 'I-for-myself', which I have an obligation to contemplate complete by becoming an 'I-for-others'

heteroglossia ***raznorechie/raznorechivost'; raznoyazychie***
For Bakhtin, discourse always articulates a particular view of the world. According to Bakhtin, earliest societies were characterized by 'monoglossia' ('*odnoyazychie*'), or a stable, unified language. 'Polyglossia' ('*mnogoyazychie*') refers to the simultaneity of two or more national languages in the same society, a phenomenon which developed, as Bakhtin points out, in ancient Rome and during the Renaissance. 'Heteroglossia' (the Russian 'raznorechie' literally means 'different-speech-ness'), refers to the conflict between 'centripetal' and 'centrifugal', 'official' and 'unofficial' discourses within the same national language. 'Heteroglossia' is also present, however,

at the (q.v.) micro-linguistic scale; every utterance contains within it the trace of other utterances, both in the past and in the future. The discursive site in which the conflict between different voices is at its most concentrated is the modern novel (q.v.). One way of representing heteroglossia in the novel is by a hybrid construction (*'gibrid'*), which contains within it the trace of two or more discourses, either those of the narrator and character(s), or of different characters (q.v. 'quasi-direct discourse'). 'Heteroglossia' should not be confused with 'polyphony' (*'polifoniya'*). The latter term is used by Bakhtin primarily to describe Dostoevsky's 'multi-voiced' novels, whereby author's and heroes' discourses interact on equal terms. 'Heteroglossia', on the other hand, foregrounds the clash of antagonistic social forces.

horizon (*see* 'purview')

hybrid (*see* 'heteroglossia')

ideology ***ideologiya***

The Russian *'ideologiya'* is less politically coloured than the English word 'ideology'. In other words, it is not necessarily a consciously held political belief system; rather it can refer in a more general sense to the way in which members of a given social group view the world. It is in this broader sense that Bakhtin uses the term. For Bakhtin, any utterance is shot through with *'ideologiya'*, any speaker is automatically an *'ideolog'*.

language (*see* 'word')

meaning ***znachimost'/ znachenie/ smysl***

To mean is to respond constantly and open-endedly to one's addressivity in the world, as all human beings must. Meaning is always a becoming, an absolute potential in an absolute future. Bakhtin is fundamentally opposed to any notion of meaning as fixed in time or space; he therefore rejects both formalist views of meaning as totally text-bound, and the vulgar Marxist view of meaning as the product of exclusively extratextual factors. Meaning is the result of the dialogic give-and-take between the two, between the inside and the outside, the self and the other. The words which Bakhtin uses, and which can all be translated as 'meaning' are broadly synonymous. However, it should be pointed out that *'smysl'* is cognate with the word *'mysl''*, meaning 'thought'. The use of *'smysl'* may therefore imply a link between meaning and intention, whereas the use of *'znachenie'* or its stylistically elevated form *'znachimost''*, lays greater emphasis on meaning as the result of semiotic interaction between addresser and addressee (both words come from *'znak'*, the Russian for 'sign'). Bakhtin at times distinguishes between the 'theme' ('tema') of an utterance (q.v.) and its 'meaning' ('znachenie'). The former designates all that is contextually unique to the utterance, while the latter refers to those elements of the utterance-semantic, syntactic and so on-which are not context-specific.

monoglossia (*see* 'heteroglossia')

novel(-ness) ***roman(-nost')***

The novel is that discursive site where heteroglossia (q.v.), the struggle

between 'centrifugal' and 'centripetal' forces is most clearly rehearsed. In as much as the (heteroglottic) novel (re)presents the relativization and usurpation of a society's dominant sociolect, it is the archetype of what Bakhtin calls 'carnivalized' literature. Carnivalized literature takes from medieval carnival the inversion of power structures, the parodic debunking of all that a particular society takes seriously (including and in particular all that which it fears). The novel, by the 'carnivalesque' way in which it revitalizes stability, inverts hierarchies (however temporarily), and leaves unresolved the dialogue between author and hero is an 'open' genre, extending into the absolute future of meaning (q.v.). Bakhtin contrasts this feature of the novel with the epic, which portrays heroes whose meaning is fixed for ever in the past, whose existence is not a 'open' becoming, but a 'closed' finality.

one's own ***svoi***
'*Svoi*' is the adjective referring to the self, as in 'one's own'. '*Drugoi*' is the standard word in Russian for 'other', or 'the other'; my self co-participates with '*drugoi*' in the event of becoming by generating meaning (q.v.). The word '*drugoi*' comes from the same root as '*drug*', meaning friend; the standard Russian for 'to each other', as in the phrase 'they called to each other from across the street', is literally 'friend to friend'. The close semantic link between 'other' and 'friend' in Russian may help to account for the generally benign, altruistic and problem-free relationship between 'self' and 'author' (and between 'author' and 'hero') as described by Bakhtin in his early work. '*Chuzhoi*', on the other hand, is the adjective used by Bakhtin to emphasize the alien nature of the other.

other/the other's (*see* 'one's own')

outsidedness ***vnenakhodimost'***
Outsidedness is that quality which I as a 'self' bring to my perception of the 'other', and which enables me to complete the other as an existence, by completing the other's perception of his or her 'self'. It is precisely by being a consciousness (q.v.) outside the text that the author (q.v.) can give the 'gift' of self-perception to his or her hero. Similarly, I must transcend the limits of my own self, and enter, albeit temporarily, the cognitive space of the other if I am to achieve full knowledge of my self as a subject (in this respect, argues Bakhtin, 'I am not the hero of my own being' [q.v.]).

polyglossia (*see* 'heteroglossia')

polyphony (*see* 'heteroglossia')

posited (*see* 'given')

purview ***krugozor***
'*Krugozor*' (literally in Russian 'circle of vision') is the necessarily limited extent of my vision (literally and figuratively) as an individual consciousness (q.v.), or as the member of a social group, existing in a specific time and space. My 'environment' ('*okruzhenie*'), on the other hand, constitutes my situation in its entirety, both my '*krugozor*' and, in addition, elements inaccessible to my perception which the other gives to me as a gift.

responsibility (*see* 'addressivity')

speech ***rech'***
Forms of speech discussed by Bakhtin include '*pryamaya*' ('direct') speech, '*kosvennaya*' ('indirect') speech and '*nesobstvenno-pryamaya*' ('quasi-direct'); this latter is a transitional, explicitly 'double-voiced' speech type, since it contains linguistic and cognitive features taken both from the narrator's and from the character's speech (q.v. 'hybrid'). Bakhtin draws a distinction between poetry, as the realm of 'single-voiced' discourse, and the novel (q.v.), with its capacity for 'double-voiced' discourse. Bakhtin's interest in speech, and particularly in novelistic speech, stems from the fact that speech patterns give a clear indication as to the state of the author/hero relationship. Analysing character and author speech in this way enables Bakhtin to follow the give-and-take of the respective consciousnesses of author and hero as it is enacted discursively in the text.

speech genre (*see* 'genre')

surplus (of vision) ***izbytok***
Another relative term; I can see elements both of the other as body and consciousness, and of the other's situation in space and time which are inaccessible to the other's vision. It is this surplus of seeing in relation to the other which enables me to consummate the other, to complete the other's sense of 'I-for-myself'

utterance ***vyskazyvanie***
On a basic level, an utterance is any unit of language, from a single word to an entire 'text'. More importantly, however, an utterance for Bakhtin is not so much a purely linguistic concept, as the locus of encounter between my self-consciousness, my mind and the world with all its socio-historical meaning (q.v.); the utterance is always an answer to a previous utterance, and always expects an answer in the future.

value/evaluation ***tsennost'/otsenka***
There is a good deal of slippage between these two terms as used by Bakhtin. Thus, the 'value orientation' ('*tsennostnoe napravlenie*') of an utterance is equal to its 'evaluating gesture' ('*otsennivayushchii zhest'*'). Like the English word 'evaluation', however, '*otsenka*' implies an evaluating subject, whereas '*tsennost'*' shifts the emphasis more on the object itself. The fact that these words appear to a certain degree interchangeable in Bakhtin's writing may be said to underline the dialogic nature of meaning, the fact that meaning involves a real exchange of values. Moreover, Bakhtin talks specifically about 'social evaluation' ('*sotsial'naya otsenka*'). The 'social evaluation' of an utterance is that which makes it socially and historically specific. It is 'social evaluation' which 'unites the material presence of the word with its meaning' (q.v.).

voice ***golos***
A voice will always have a particular 'intonation' ('*intonatsiya*') or 'accentuation' ('*aktsentuatsiya*'), which reflects the values (q.v.) behind the consciousness (q.v.) which speaks. It should be noted that accentuation is much more important in Russian than in English, since every Russian word

has its own particular accentuation or stress; in some cases, two words with the same spelling but different accentuation will have radically different meanings. To listen to the other's voice means to subject that voice to a 'refraction' ('*perelom*'), in such a way that what is produced constitutes a 'reaccentuation' ('*pereaktsentuatsiya*') of the original voice.

word ***slovo***

The word, by nature always already resonant with a multitude of conflicting voices seeks an answer from other words 'embodied' in other voices. The word is living, dialogic discourse.

Note

Other glossaries, produced in different contexts, can be found in *Bakhtin School Papers (Russian Poetics in Translation)*, ed. A. Shukman, Oxford, RPT Publications, 1983, pp. 153–55; M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. M. Holquist, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist Austin, Tex., Texas University Press, pp. 422–34; and K. Hirschkop, 'Glossary: Alternative Translations of Key Terms', in *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, ed. K. Hirschkop and D. Shepherd, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1989, pp. 190–94 (this latter contains a full list of English translations of Bakhtin's terms, of which only the main variants are given here).

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