

# Bakhtin and the Hegelian Tradition

Erik Dop

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Bakhtin Centre, Humanities Research Institute  
The University of Sheffield

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# Summary

'Bakhtin and the Hegelian Tradition' explores the influence of Georg Hegel and Hegelianism in the philosophy of Mikhail Bakhtin. The thesis demonstrates that, either directly or indirectly (through neo-Kantianism, *Lebensphilosophie*, and phenomenology), Hegelian philosophy made a fundamental contribution to Bakhtin's thought throughout his career. To this end, the thesis maintains a close connection between the historical analysis of philosophy and contemporary philosophical thought.

Historically, the thesis discusses Bakhtin's work with reference to, among other, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and the important works of Bakhtin's contemporaries—especially the *Lebensphilosophen* Wilhelm Dilthey and Georg Simmel, the neo-Kantians Hermann Cohen and Ernst Cassirer, and the phenomenologists Edmund Husserl and Max Scheler.

Philosophically, the thesis critically analyses Bakhtin's key concepts and theories in order to disclose their philosophical character. In particular the thesis evaluates the origin and evolution of Bakhtin's concepts of the *subject*, the *object*, the *ought*, *culture* and *knowledge*, and looks at his theories of *being-as-event*, *intersubjectivity*, *language*, *genre*, and *world-view*. By applying both analytic philosophy and Michael Kosok's formalised dialectical logic, the thesis demonstrates that many of Bakhtin's key concepts and theories have an indubitable Hegelian nature, or indeed origin.

One of the most fundamental issues this thesis reveals is Bakhtin's desire to redefine and develop the nature of the Hegelian methodology, and in particular the nature of dialectics. As such, this investigation into Bakhtin's Hegelianism is valuable for the fact that it presents a new perspective on Bakhtin's philosophical concepts and theories, as well as a new viewpoint on Hegelian philosophy.

For Sarah, Mieke, Karel

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# Abbreviations

In referring to works by Bakhtin, I use the following abbreviations:

AH	‘Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity’
DN	‘Discourse in the Novel’
EN	‘Epic and Novel’
FTC	‘Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel’
MHS	‘Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences’
N70	‘From Notes Made in 1970-71’
PCMF	‘The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Creative Art’
PDP	<i>Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics</i>
PND	‘From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse’
PT	‘The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences’
RW	<i>Rabelais and his World</i>
SG	‘The Problem of Speech Genres’
SN	‘Max Scheler: <i>Wesen und Formen der Sympathie.</i> ’
TPA	‘Toward a Philosophy of the Act’
TRDB	‘Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book’

The following abbreviations are used for works by other authors:

CPR	Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>
Enc. I	Hegel, <i>Encyclopaedia of Philosophy</i> Vol. I
Enc. II	Hegel, <i>Encyclopaedia of Philosophy</i> Vol. II
Enc. III	Hegel, <i>Encyclopaedia of Philosophy</i> Vol. III.
GMM	Kant, <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i>
ILA	Hegel, <i>Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics</i>
IPH	Hegel, <i>Introduction to The Philosophy of History</i>
Logic	Hegel, <i>Science of Logic</i>
PS	Hegel, <i>Phenomenology of Spirit</i>
PSF1	Cassirer <i>Philosophy Of Symbolic Forms. Volume One: Language</i>
PSF2	Cassirer <i>Philosophy Of Symbolic Forms. Volume Two: Mythical Thought</i>
PSF3	Cassirer <i>Philosophy Of Symbolic Forms. Volume Three: Phenomenology of Knowledge</i>



# Introduction

*[It] is by no means unusual, upon comparing the thoughts which an author has expressed in regard to his subject, whether in ordinary conversation or in writing, to find that we understand him better than he has understood himself.*

(CPR, A314/B370, p. 310)

This thesis explores the importance of the affiliations of the philosophy of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) to the works of Georg Hegel (1770-1831) and Hegelian philosophy. This study has grown out of the conviction that a fuller understanding and appreciation of many of Bakhtin's key concepts and theories can only be gained once we consider their relationship to Hegel and Hegelian thought. I have long been fascinated by the apparent relationship between Bakhtin's concept of dialogic and Hegel's concept of dialectic, believing that there is an integral relationship between the two. My investigations into this issue have led to the realisation that the *whole* of Bakhtin's thought needs to be systematically examined for potential links with Hegel and Hegelian thought. In doing so the thesis brings together the two, as yet unrelated, academic fields of Bakhtin studies and Continental philosophy.

Hitherto, research into Bakhtin's philosophical concepts and doctrines has generally been informed by the belief that his philosophical *oeuvre* can be read against the background of a single dominant philosophical tradition of thought. Consequently, there has not been sufficient consideration given to the various traditions that make up Bakhtin's philosophical views. Thus, although many studies have acknowledged and examined Bakhtin's connection with Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and neo-Kantianism,<sup>1</sup> exploration into Bakhtin's relationship with Hegel has been quite marginal. One reason for this is that neo-Kantianism—at its inception—was opposed to Hegel's idealism, and consequently some scholars have assumed that Bakhtin's relationship with Hegel was an almost entirely negative one. Subsequently, as Jean-François Côté writes:

It would seem that an examination of Bakhtin's relationship to Hegel could be a rather short enterprise, if not simply a dead-end, if one subscribed to the well-known views of some major commentators.

(Côté 2000, p. 21).

These 'well-known views'<sup>2</sup> are supported, moreover, by several critical remarks made by Bakhtin of Hegel's philosophy.<sup>3</sup> However, one of the problems with these remarks is that Bakhtin does not support them with an extended discussion or exploration of Hegel's

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<sup>1</sup> On Bakhtin, Kant and neo-Kantianism see Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, 'The influence of Kant in the Early Work of M. M. Bakhtin' 1984; Craig Brandist, 'Bakhtin, Cassirer and Symbolic Forms', 1997; Galin Tihanov, 'Culture, Form, Life: The Early Lukács and the Early Bakhtin', 2000 [A], *The Master and the Slave: Lukács, Bakhtin, and the Ideas of their Time*, 2000 [B]; Brian Poole, 'Bakhtin and Cassirer: The Philosophical Origins of Bakhtin's Carnival Messianism', 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Côté is referring to Holquist who states that Bakhtin's philosophical background and horizon is 'militantly anti-Hegelian' (Holquist, 1990, p. 16), but we can add to this the views of Garry Morson and Carol Emerson, who argue that Bakhtin attacks the entire tradition of 'dialectics (Hegelian and Marxist)' (Morson & Emerson 1990, p. 235).

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, *The Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, pp. 26, 27; 'From Notes Made in 1970-71', p. 147; and 'Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences', p. 162.

philosophy, and another is that they are at times ambiguous and inconsistent—as we shall see.

Nevertheless, it is clear from the various remarks made by Bakhtin that he knew the works of Hegel, above all the important *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, 1807).<sup>4</sup> However, at least as important are Bakhtin's encounters with Hegelian thought as mediated through various forms of late neo-Kantianism, *Lebensphilosophie*, and, in particular, through the works of thinkers such as Georg Simmel, Wilhelm Dilthey and Ernst Cassirer. This has been demonstrated by the recent work of scholars, such as Peter Zima, Craig Brandist, Galin Tihanov and Côté.<sup>5</sup> In 'Culture, Form, Life' Tihanov states that:

Bakhtin's understanding of culture was shaped not only by the neo-Kantian thinking or philosophy-of-life, but also by Hegelian ideas, and especially by the relativisation of the boundaries separating the domains of objective and absolute Spirit in favour of a totalising idea of human culture. Indeed [...] Bakhtin moved from an early preoccupation with neo-Kantianism and philosophy-of-life towards a stronger respect for and commitment to Hegel.

(Tihanov 2000 [A], p. 45).

Throughout the thesis I have sought to emphasise Bakhtin's Hegelianism as a growing and ultimately major theme in his philosophical 'system', and have attempted to communicate the depth and importance of the appropriation of Hegelianism for Bakhtin. As a consequence, I have avoided making too much of Bakhtin's minor inconsistencies, and overlooked the implausibility of some of his arguments, aiming instead at highlighting the whole (developing) picture of Bakhtin's philosophical vision. The thesis, therefore, is in no way an attempt to disprove Bakhtin, nor is it an attempt to condone him either; it is merely an attempt to understand him, and to do justice to his philosophy.

## Hegel in Russia

The widespread and profound influence of Hegelianism in Russia, especially in the 1840s, was unlike that of any other European country. In his memoirs *My Past and Thoughts*, the Russian philosopher Alexander Herzen (1812-70) fondly recollects when Hegel's texts

were discussed [...] incessantly; there was not a paragraph in the three parts of the *Logic*, in the two parts of the *Aesthetics*, in the *Encyclopaedia*, etc. that had not been the subject of desperate disputes for several nights running. People who loved each other avoided each other for weeks at a time because they disagreed about the definition of 'all-embracing spirit', or had taken as a personal insult an opinion on the 'absolute personality and its experience in itself'. Every significant pamphlet of German philosophy published in Berlin or even a provincial district town was ordered and read to tatters and smudges; the leaves fell out in a few days if only there was a mention of Hegel in it.

(Herzen 1968, p. 115)

In *A History of Russian Thought* Andrzej Walicki writes that although the interest in Hegel's speculative idealism was 'in many instances [...] only a superficial intellectual fashion', nevertheless 'as a whole, it was a phenomenon with far reaching consequences' (Walicki 1979, p. 115). Walicki identifies three main factors behind the popularity of

<sup>4</sup> Bakhtin refers to Hegel and or *The Phenomenology of Spirit* throughout his career; cf. AH, p. 62; EN, p. 10; FTC, pp. 234, 241, PDP, 26-27; RW, p. 44; N70, p. 147; and MHS, p. 162.

<sup>5</sup> On Bakhtin, Hegel and (neo-) Hegelianism see Zima 'Bakhtin's Young Hegelian Aesthetics' 1989; Brandist, 1997; Tihanov 2000 [A, B]; Côté 'Bakhtin's Dialogism Reconsidered through Hegel's "Monologism"', 2000.

Hegelianism in Russia. First, Hegelianism was seen as the antithesis to the influential romanticism of Schiller and Byron, and later it was seen to provide the necessary tools to combat the irrationalism and conservatism of the Slavophiles: ‘in this context Hegelianism was largely interpreted as a philosophy of “reconciliation with reality”’ (*ibid.* p. 116). Second, following the bitter failure of the Decembrist uprising (14 December 1825), many Russian intelligentsia were disillusioned with the effectiveness of political action. As a result, many intellectuals occupied themselves with philosophical questions, in particular with the notion of historical becoming and universal cultural structures: ‘In Russia, as in Germany, philosophical speculation had a compensatory function for men of intellectual vigor living in a society where public life was almost totally paralyzed’ (*ibid.* p. 116). Karl Marx’s comment on the reversal of order of the political and the philosophical revolutions in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century captures the attraction many Russians felt for German thought:

German philosophy is the ideal extension of German history. What in the advanced nations takes the form of practical conflict with the conditions of the modern state, in Germany, where these conditions themselves do not yet exist, primarily takes the form of a critical conflict with the philosophical reflection of these conditions [...] In politics, the Germans have thought what the other nations have done.

(Marx cited in Schnädelbach 1984, p. 18)<sup>6</sup>

Third, with reference to the above, Hegelianism was seen by Russian intellectuals as a philosophy of ‘reintegration, of overcoming one’s alienation either through a conscious adaptation to existing reality or through efforts to change it’, (Walicki 1979, p. 116).<sup>7</sup> However, with the inexorable advance of scientific materialism, causal determinism and Darwinism, metaphysical philosophy, and especially Hegelianism, in Germany and Russia became discredited and ceased to exert the dominance it once enjoyed.

Nevertheless, a resurgence of interest in Hegelian philosophy occurred in Germany and Russia in the mid 1920s. In Russia the ‘Hegel renaissance’ was initiated following Georg Lukács’s *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (*History & Class Consciousness*, 1923) and Lenin’s ‘Philosophical Notebooks’ (1929). Lenin’s publication, in particular, emphasised the importance for every Marxist to study Hegel. Moreover, 1929 saw the Marx-Engels Institute commence with the speedy translation and publication of Hegel’s works. This monumental endeavour, comprising of thirteen volumes, was completed after the Second World War, so that by the 1950s the Russian public had at its disposal an impressive body of Hegel’s works. However, some of the intentions and motives behind the rediscovery of Hegel in Stalinist Russia can be complex, as Tihanov writes:

On the one hand, the Hegel boom was designed to and controlled to endow the ruling Marxist-Leninist ideology with the grandeur of a long-reaching intellectual tradition. On the other hand, however, the preoccupation with Hegel allowed many intellectuals

<sup>6</sup> The citation is taken from Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*, in his *Die Frühschriften*, ed. S. Landshut (Stuttgart, 1953) pp. 213, 216. Translated as *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, in Karl Marx, *Early Writings*.

<sup>7</sup> Most notable among the early Russian Hegelians are Nikolai Stankevich (1813-40) (who founded the chief centre of Russian Hegelianism, the Stankevich Circle, in the 1830s), Mikhail Bakunin (1814-76), Vassarion Belinsky (1811-48), and Alexander Herzen (1812-70). Common to all these disparate thinkers was the shared Left-Hegelian view that to be a Hegelian one had to transcend Hegel’s system—Belinsky, for instance, became increasingly influenced by Frederick Engels’s materialist dialectic (cf. Walicki 1979, pp. 125-6). The history of Russian Hegelianism has been well documented, and I refer the reader, in particular, to the collection *Hegel bei den Slaven* (ed. D. Tschizewskij, Reichenberg, 1934); one of the most comprehensive monographs on Stankevich and the Stankevich Circle in English is Edward J. Brown’s *Stankevich and His Moscow Circle* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966); on Belinsky’s and Bakunin’s roles in Russian Hegelianism see J. Billig, *Der Zusammenbruch des Deutschen Idealismus bei den Russen* (Berlin, 1930).

to find a *modus vivendi* with Marxism: without accepting it entirely, they were able to live with its domination. For them, the study of Hegel was an emblem of a departure from the parochial postulates of Stalinized Marxism. Hegel was, above all, a serious philosopher, which meant that paying attention to him was a gesture of reconciliation with the inescapable centrality of Marxism in the ideological atmosphere without burdening one's conscience with too many and too heavy a compromise. of the 1930s

(Tihanov 2000 [B], p. 270)

Bakhtin's interest in Hegelianism during this period, however, was purely philosophical, and carried with it little or no ulterior political motive(s). For Bakhtin Hegel and Hegelian thought is, on the one hand, an essential part of the platform on which he constructs his philosophical investigations, and, on the other hand, one of the primary foils for his philosophical investigations, as this thesis shall demonstrate.

### General plan and Methodology

To date most Anglophone Bakhtin scholars have tended to choose one period of Bakhtin's career or one particular text and treat it as definitive, a practice which has produced a variety of divergent versions of 'Bakhtinian' thought. This is partly due to the non-chronological and uneven publication of Bakhtin's works, a situation further exacerbated by the fact that the texts have been translated by as many as ten scholars who render key terms and concepts in a variety of ways. This thesis hopes to break with this trend and present a study that covers Bakhtin's entire career and most of his major texts—with the exception of *Rabelais and His World*, which is not discussed at any great length.

My reasons for this are various. *Rabelais* is one of Bakhtin's few texts that can be said to be self-contained and self-sufficient, and although it enriches Bakhtin's *oeuvre* as a whole, it stands somewhat apart from what I consider to be the continuing philosophical problems that pervade the majority of Bakhtin's works. Another consideration is range: the inclusion of *Rabelais* would have taken the thesis beyond the scope both of its philosophical objective(s) and of its word limit. This does not mean that I consider *Rabelais* unimportant, but simply that it is possible to discuss Bakhtin's Hegelianism without thoroughly examining the text. My decision is, furthermore, motivated by the fact that excellent research into the Hegelianism of *Rabelais* has already been done by scholars such as Tihanov (see Tihanov 2000[B]).

The thesis does not actively engage with texts by members of the Bakhtin Circle other than Bakhtin himself. Again, my reasons are various. To start with, I do not <sup>propose that</sup> ~~to maintain the view that~~ Bakhtin was the author of the so called 'disputed texts', but support instead the belief that these texts were authored by the scholars to whom the original publications were attributed (i.e. Valentin Voloshinov and Pavel Medvedev), my reason being that the arguments asserting Bakhtin's authorship of these texts are neither convincing nor supportable. However, the principle reason for my decision lies in one of the overall objectives of the thesis: to disclose the connection between Bakhtin and Hegelian thought as it was understood and evolved within *Bakhtin's* work and how this is related to the contemporaneous understanding and development of Hegelianism in (German) idealist and phenomenological philosophy. As such, an investigation into the Nevel School period would have required an extended synchronic analysis that would have run counter to this objective. In many cases this decision can be justified by the fact that most of the pertinent ideas and concepts passed on to Bakhtin by his colleagues Matvei Kagan, Medvedev and Voloshinov during this period are second-hand, originating from philosophers such as Hermann Cohen, Cassirer, Simmel and Dilthey. Consequently, as this thesis is a philosophical investigation, I

chose to look at the relationship between Bakhtin and Hegelianism <sup>with</sup> ~~in~~ reference to its primary sources. This does not mean that I am unaware of the influence of mediation, but that I opted not to pay it close attention.

The problem of any study of concepts and theories of a philosopher of an earlier period is that, in order to be both historically and philosophically relevant, it must assume a peculiar Janus-faced character: it must look both at the present and the past. It is committed, on the one hand, to examining the philosophical concepts and theories on their own merit, with due attention given to their particular character and circumstances in which they arose. While on the other, in order to obtain an intelligible and relevant analysis, it is necessary that I clarify and situate them within a contemporary standpoint.

I believe that the close connection between the historical analysis of philosophy and contemporary philosophical thought is substantiated by the fact that any attempt to explicate earlier philosophical concepts and theories is *ipso facto* an attempt to address contemporary issues in philosophy and *necessarily* to think in the current philosophical medium. As such, it follows that philosophical concepts and theories need to be studied on the basis of what preceded them as well as what occurred afterwards in the history of philosophy. Accordingly, I have included discussions of Hegelian, neo-Kantian and other philosophical doctrines along with my account of Bakhtin's philosophical concepts.

I have, furthermore, remarked on the views held by contemporary philosophers/scholars with respect to Bakhtin and other philosophical systems. For instance, my understanding of the Hegelian tradition (the key thematic concept of this thesis) assumes the contemporary view that Hegel's philosophy does not propound any form of monism or historical determinism.<sup>8</sup> In the Introduction's first appendix I show that Hegel is a holist who assumes a realist ontology, and whose historicism argues only for the historical character of thought. Philosophy, for Hegel, is always and necessarily a retrospective social enterprise and can never claim to have any non-contextual knowledge or knowledge of the future. However, this does not mean that the prevailing view on Hegel held by late nineteenth and early twentieth century German idealists—who accuse Hegel of advancing monism and historical determinism—is ignored.<sup>9</sup> Bakhtin certainly levels both accusations at Hegel's philosophy, and I consider these objections in depth in chapters 3 and 4.

What I gain by maintaining the contemporary understanding of Hegel's philosophy is a heuristic with which I can demonstrate instances where Bakhtin's rejection and criticism of Hegel is only ostensible, and that at times Bakhtin, in fact, assumes a position that is fundamentally in agreement with Hegel and the essence of Hegelianism. As Michel Foucault writes in 'Orders of Discourse' (1971):

We have to determine the exact extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us.

(Foucault, cited in Pefanis 1991, p. 11)

That is, one of the fundamental difficulties with studying Hegel is the almost endemic influence his thought exerts on both his followers and opponents. Many philosophers who assert a conscious opposition to Hegel, essentially and necessarily depend on a contrast with Hegel—who supposedly maintains the contrary.<sup>10</sup> However, in doing so many anti-Hegelian philosophers often absorb Hegel's ideas in the process of opposing him. It is, therefore, not

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Inwood 1992, Stern 1991, Kosok 1966, Pinkard 1994, Rockmore 1993, Sedgwick 2000, Williams 1992, 1997, and Harris 1993.

<sup>9</sup> Nor do I ignore Hegelians who clearly are monists and/or historical determinists.

<sup>10</sup> A point in case is Martin Heidegger, who <sup>of</sup> although adopting the Heraclitian/Hegelian concept of becoming rejected Hegel's teleology of spirit in favour ~~for~~ his non-teleological concept of being. Nevertheless, Heidegger's history of being owes much to—indeed is inconceivable without—Hegel's history of spirit.

surprising that we should find among Bakhtin's most Hegelian passages of thought many that are consciously critical of Hegel.

This thesis demonstrates Bakhtin's adherence to Hegelianism by identifying on the one hand specifically Hegelian propositions, and on the other hand by explicating Hegelian methodology in Bakhtin work; (It must, however, be made clear that because the nature of Hegelianism is essentially holistic it is not possible to establish an analytic differentiation between content and method.)<sup>11</sup>

Key propositions that identify Bakhtin's adherence to Hegelianism include (1) the historical nature of values and moral absolutes; (2) breaking with the Parmenidian tradition of Western thought that champions *being* by adopting the Heraclitian notion of *becoming* and thereby shifting from the Aristotelian logic of identity and truth to a Hegelian dialectical logic of identity and truth; (3) the positing of becoming in the social domain of history through the adoption of the <sup>Philosophy of Life</sup> *Lebensphilosophisches* theory of the co-determinate opposition (or 'dialectic') between life and culture resulting in spirit; (4) the belief that self-consciousness and self-determination is established through the co-determinate reciprocal relationship between self and other; (5) the concept that self-consciousness, knowledge and culture are *ab initio* social and historically becoming.

The principal method by which I demonstrate Bakhtin's Hegelian methodology is by analysing the logical structure of his theses. The view being that, as Lawrence Stepelevich writes, '[t]o philosophize, as a Hegelian, is to take up, develop, and apply the dialectical methodology of Hegel to a point that would extend beyond the limits found in Hegel himself' (Stepelevich 1983, p. ix). As such I analyse Bakhtin's philosophical concepts and arguments by applying both standard formal logic and Michael Kosok's formalisation of Hegel's dialectical logic to elucidate their Hegelian or non-Hegelian character. I furthermore apply, when appropriate, the dialectical logic to the doctrines of philosophers who influenced Bakhtin.

In the chapters that follow I examine Bakhtin's philosophy according to a strategy that follows the thematic and schematic development of the issues discussed by Bakhtin through his career. Thus chapter 1 is a lengthy examination of the central issues and concepts of *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*—Bakhtin's earliest extended work of philosophy. Bakhtin's essay is principally concerned with the concept of the unity of being-as-event, and the ensuing problems of the unity of the object of knowledge and the unity of the experiencing subject. It furthermore raises the problem of ethical obligation and the formation of culture. However, these issues are not fully resolved by Bakhtin in TPA, and he returns to them in later works. For instance one of Bakhtin's most extensive discussions of the problem of the unity of the subject is found in his later work *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, such that it is necessary for me to discuss this work in conjunction with his early work in order to fully disclose his view. Consequently, I found that a purely chronological examination of Bakhtin's philosophy was not conducive to exploring the development of Bakhtin's key concepts.

At times it is not within the scope of a chapter to fully pick up and follow an important philosophical issue. In such cases I suspend the topic until the next chapter, where it is (re-)introduced and fully investigated. The issue suspended, however, is not randomly selected, but is chosen according to its logical place within the schema of Bakhtin's philosophy and my exposition. For instance, the question of intersubjectivity and its relationship to moral obligation is first introduced in chapter 1 but forms the central issue of chapter 2.

The second chapter, like the first, is principally concerned with Bakhtin's early work on intersubjectivity as it is discussed in the essay 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity'. But again like chapter 1, it moves to discuss Bakhtin's later comments on intersubjectivity found

<sup>11</sup> The same would be the case if we were to maintain a monist view.

in 'Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book' and other texts.

Chapter 3 discusses Bakhtin's philosophy of language. The main material upon which I draw to investigate Bakhtin's philosophy of language are the essays on the novel, with particular reference to 'Discourse in the Novel'. However, in order to isolate the topic of language in itself, I had to 'suspend' the topic of the novel, and how it relates to his theory of language until the next chapter. Again it was important to consider some of Bakhtin's later works in order to fully disclose his conception of language.

The fourth and final chapter discusses Bakhtin's theory of genre and its relationship to a historical world-view. This discussion required that I return to the essays on the novel, and focus on the issues not covered in the previous chapter. I did this because, although the subject matter in the two chapters do not follow each other chronologically, they do follow logically.

What follows are three appendices designed to provide the reader with a <sup>concise</sup> ~~brief but terse~~ introduction to some of the background material needed for reading this thesis. The first is a general explanation (via the fundamental problem of the unity of the object and the subject) of Kantian and Hegelian idealism—without which neither neo-Kantianism, *Lebensphilosophie*, nor phenomenology (and therefore Bakhtin) can be understood. The second appendix introduces and explains Hegel's dialectical logic, and the formalised structure of dialectical logic applied in the thesis. The third appendix provides a brief but critical summation of the philosophical environment of late neo-Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie*—an essential antecedent to my argument in chapters 1 and 2.

## **Appendix I                    Kant and Hegel: Pure versus Historical Reason**

The key thematic concept of this thesis, Hegelianism or the Hegelian tradition, is not so much a philosophical doctrine as a way of thinking 'inaugurated' by Hegel. As a philosophical 'doctrine' Hegelianism, like Kantianism, is part of the German idealist tradition. All the great German idealist philosophers share the claim that the subject is not passive but always active with respect to what it experiences. They differ in their conception of what a system is, and the foundation of that system. Although both Kant and Hegel give absolute primacy to reason, their idealist systems differ because they hold opposing conceptions of reason. Whereas Hegel emphasises the historical character of reason, Kant presents an ahistorical conception of reason. Kant's conception that reason is pure leads to the normative idea of thought as unlimited in any manner at all. Hegel, however, insists on the relation of thought to its context, convinced that philosophy is ultimately a form of social activity that emerges in a social context with which it conserves a necessary link:

Hegel [...] insists on the idea that reason in all its forms is already caught up in the world at every moment and on all its levels. His thought presents a wholly conscious effort to bring together philosophical theory and real life to a point where it is not possible to make an absolute separation between these two domains.

(Rockmore 1993, p. 47)

Hegel is, perhaps, the first philosopher to see the indissociable link between history and philosophy and to impart a fundamentally historical dimension to his theory of system. Consequently, he rejects the very idea of the atemporal awareness of truth as well as the idea of atemporal truth—both of which are fundamental to Kant's 'Copernican Revolution'. In order to demonstrate the key differences between Kantian and Hegelian idealism I shall discuss their respective accounts of the structure and unity of the object—'a pivotal issue', as Robert Stern writes, 'in any metaphysical account of the nature and realization of things', and one that is fundamentally important for our understanding of Bakhtin's philosophy (Stern

1991, p. 121).

Kant's *Kritik des Reinen Vernunft* (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781, 1787) proposed a complete conceptual switch to the way we attain knowledge of objects. Whereas rationalist epistemology holds that our representations must conform to an object independent of the mind in order to constitute knowledge, Kant proposes the reverse, namely that any possible object has to conform to conditions of our knowledge, before it can become an object for us. Kant, thus, can investigate the constitution of the object from *within* the subject, rather than the object itself. Consequently, Kant is able to investigate the object as a structure whose constitution is brought about purely by the *cognitive faculties of the subject*.

According to Kant the subject establishes the constitution of the object by virtue of a *priori* transcendental framework<sup>12</sup> of concepts and judgements. Much simplified, the framework model functions as follows: for an object to become an object of experience for the subject, it must be 'lit up'<sup>13</sup> by being placed within the transcendental<sup>14</sup> framework of sensibility, understanding and imagination. As this framework is transcendental and *a priori*, it is brought to the object by the subject, and it is thus the framework that makes the experience of the object possible for the subject. Moreover, as the transcendental categories of the framework are *a priori*, it follows that the truths we establish about the object as established by the framework will also be *a priori* (cf. CPR, A87-9/B120-2, pp. 122-3).

Thus, Kant's doctrine concerning the unity of the object states that the plurality of our intuitions of the object<sup>15</sup> finds its unity in the synthesising subject, who experiences the object as unified by virtue of the *a priori* framework of categories. Kant's approach is revolutionary because he replaces his predecessors' first-order talk of objects in themselves, and replaces it with second-order talk of what it is to be an object of experience for the cognising subject (cf. CPR A77-7/B102-5).

Therefore, rather than postulating a substratum such as *substance* (as *prima materia*) which is in the world, Kant argues that it is the formal unity of consciousness, transcendental apperception or the *transcendental subject* wherein the plurality of our intuitions of the object is unified:

There can be in us no modes of knowledge, no connection or unity of one mode of knowledge with another, without that unity of consciousness which precedes all data of intuitions, and by relation to which representation of objects is alone possible. This pure original unchangeable consciousness I shall name *transcendental apperception*.

(CPR, A107, p. 136)

Kant overcomes the *prima facie* possibility that the subject may experience a confused plurality of sensible intuitions, by arguing that the relational unity of the categories generates the relational unity of the subject's representations by virtue of the transcendental subject. Thus, the unity of the object is constituted by the formal unity of the transcendental subject. Furthermore, this relational unity is necessary if the subject's representations are to be part of a single self-consciousness, which is aware of his/her identity as a subject with distinct perceptions. However, it is important to stress that for Kant the transcendental subject is *only* a formal unity, and as such it must be considered a wholly non-empirical *a priori* unity. As

<sup>12</sup> This term is borrowed from Robert Stern 1991.

<sup>13</sup> This term comes from Gert Buchdahl 1982.

<sup>14</sup> 'Transcendental' is distinguished from 'transcendent'; a term that for Kant indicates whatever 'goes beyond or surpasses the limits of experience'. In simplest terms, a transcendental philosophy is intended to determine the conditions of knowledge from a perspective prior to, hence isolated from, all experience. A philosophy is said to be transcendental if it examines the conditions of possibility in general (German, *überhaupt*, 'above the head', or whatsoever), without taking into account what is really possible. It is, hence, necessary to understand Kant's view of metaphysics as a theory of epistemology.

<sup>15</sup> Kant, following John Locke and David Hume, is a pluralist.



such it should be rigorously distinguished from any conception that equates it with either a Cartesian *cogito* or a *soul*.

However, because the object is nothing more than the synthesised plurality of intuitions *within* the experiencing subject, and the material out of which the object (in itself) is composed is assumed to be an intrinsically unrelated plurality it follows that the world of objects has no 'transcendental' reality. Consequentially, the thing-in-itself (*das Ding an sich*) is essentially unknowable:

What, then, is to be understood when we speak of an object corresponding to, and consequently also distinct from, our knowledge? It is easily seen that this object must be thought only as something in general =  $x$ , since outside our knowledge we have nothing which we could set over against this knowledge as corresponding to it.

(CPR, A104, p. 134)

Instead Kant argues that the 'transcendental object' (the substratum that grounds the unity of the thing-in-itself) is an analogue of the transcendental subject. In doing so, Kant merely reaffirms that the *real* ground for the unity of the object is in the transcendental subject (cf. CPR, A250-1, p. 268). In this way Kant is able to overcome the epistemological difficulties inherent in the realist account of the object (which would have a *substratum* such as substance unifying the thing-in-itself) by substituting his transcendental subject for the ontologically problematic notion of substance. It is because Kant locates the *real* ground for the unity of the thing-in-itself in the transcendental subject that his idealism is called *subjective idealism*.

Hegel, however, sees no need for Kant's 'Copernican Revolution', as he rejects the latter's theory of the transcendental subject and notion that the object in itself (*das Ding an sich*) is essentially unknowable. Furthermore, Hegel denies that the synthesised unity constitutes a unity at all. Because, firstly, it is an *external* unity as it is *in* the *subject* and not the object itself, and, secondly, as the unity is a *synthesis* the conception that it is a mere *combination of intrinsically separate entities* is not overcome (cf. *Logic*, p. 389).

Kant's central error, according to Hegel, is in his assumption that anything given to the subject in experience is compounded from a plurality of intuitions. Reality, suggests Hegel, has an intrinsic unity of itself, which is free and independent of any synthesis imparted upon it by a Kantian transcendental subject. Rather, as Robert Stern points out, Hegel 'argues that the proper religious and philosophical standpoint must be one that sees an inherent unity in things, and accepts this as a fundamental feature of reality' (Stern 1991, p. 40).

Taking up Kant's position, Hegel argues that the perceiving subject is conscious of two related and incompatible conceptions of the object: as also (*Auch*) and as one (*Eins*).<sup>16</sup> *Perception*, to Hegel, is a mediated awareness of individual objects having general properties or universals; for instance, a salt grain is white, cubical, and tart. The salt grain as an also is treated as an 'abstract universal medium', a 'pure essence', or a simple substratum which is 'nothing else than what Here and Now have proved to themselves to be, viz. a *simple togetherness* of a plurality; but the many are, *in their determinateness*, simple universals themselves':

The whiteness does not affect the cubical shape, and neither affects the tart taste, etc.; on the contrary, since each is itself a simple relating of itself to self it leaves the others alone, and is connected with them only by the indifferent Also. This Also is thus the pure universal itself, or the medium, the 'thinghood', which holds them together in this way.

(PS § 113, pp. 68-9)

<sup>16</sup> German capitalises nouns, and many translators maintain the capitalisation of important terms such as Spirit (*Geist*). I have chosen, however, not to capitalise in order to avoid any ambiguities that may occur when we apply, for instance, 'spirit' to the Russian term *dukh* and 'Spirit' to the German *Geist*.

However, if the properties of a thing are to be determinate; that is, if they are to form an object, they must be *contrasted* with the properties of other things. This is necessary for the differentiation between the substratum of universals that grounds the object and the other substrata of universals that ground other objects. In other words, there needs to be a moment wherein the subject can determine the one in contrast to other ones—this moment being dialectical:

[...] the differentiation of the properties, in so far as it is not an indifferent differentiation but is exclusive, each property negating the others, thus falls outside of this simple medium; and the medium, therefore, is not merely an Also, an indifferent unity, but a *one* as well, a unity which *excludes* an other. The one is the *moment of negation*; it is itself quite simply a relation of self to self and it excludes an other; and it is that by which 'thinghood' is determined as a Thing. Negation is inherent in a property as a *determinateness* which is immediately one with the immediacy of being, an immediacy which, through this unity with negation, is universality. As a one, however, the determinateness is set free from this unity with its opposite, and exists in and for itself.

(PS § 114, p. 69)

The *moment of negation* is possible because Hegel's conception of the thing as an also and a one gives rise to a contradiction: when the subject perceives the object as a one, in opposition to other ones, he/she becomes aware that the object has universal properties that it shares with the other ones. This results in the subject's perceiving the object as a collection of universal properties, an also. However, the properties that the object has *are* exclusive of other properties; it follows, therefore, that the object cannot be a plurality of unrelated universal properties that connect in an indifferent medium, and the object must be a one. However, not *all* the properties of the object affect one another, so perhaps the object is an also anyway; but, if the object is an also, then the properties appear to be unrelated to the substratum, and, therefore, are not properties at all, because properties *de facto* have to 'belong' to some thing. It thus becomes clear to the subject that there is a contradiction in his/her perceptive understanding of the object (cf. Stern 1991).

The perceptive consciousness, however, does not yet find fault with its *conception* of the object; rather it blames *itself* for the problems encountered. While, on the one hand, the perceptive consciousness is willing to take full responsibility for the distortions of the object, on the other hand, to try to overcome these difficulties it also claims to be able to see the object in truth—that is *in itself*, or as one. Thus the independent properties that it perceives (the object as also) are the product of the perceiving consciousness.

However, whereas Kant argues that the transcendental subject should be the one wherein the independent and unrelated properties of the thing as also comes to form a unity, Hegel adopts the metaphysical conception that an object is an intrinsically unified individual, and because the individual is of such and such a kind (be it a salt grain, a cat, or a human) it cannot be reduced to a plurality of more basic property universals.<sup>17</sup> Thus the conception of a

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<sup>17</sup> Recent Hegel scholarship has successfully demonstrated that Hegel's conception of the individual object as a unity that exemplifies a substance-kind, demonstrates that his philosophy is fundamentally holistic and realistic (cf. Stern 1991, Inwood 1998, Williams 1992). According to Hegel both dualism and monism are undesirable. Dualism, which accepts that there are two types of entities that are opposites (e.g. mind-body, form-matter, subject-object, etc.), is both intellectually untidy and epistemologically unstable, in that the philosopher must assume the primacy of one over the other, or posit him/herself as a third type of entity over and above the other two. Monism, which argues that one opposite is reducible to the other, or that some third entity grounds both, postulates a single unity that is wholly indeterminate, since determinacy, according to Hegel, involves negation: '[...] oppositions, on his view, are not simply to be dissolved in a blank unity: opposition is an essential

thing as a one and an also is a fault of the perceiving consciousness, not the thing in itself, and it is the task of consciousness to overcome this fault and develop a new and better relationship with the object.

The *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, 1807), Hegel's most influential work, is in essence an account of the dialectical development of consciousness from its lowest and simplest level of awareness to what Hegel calls 'absolute knowing' (*das absolute Wissen*). In the *Phenomenology* Hegel gives a brief account of how this dialectical relationship manifests itself between a subject and a thing, or object. Consciousness tests itself and compares itself with its own object, such that consciousness itself constantly changes its view of the object. Consequently, what the object *was* intrinsically (*an sich*) becomes merely what it is for consciousness, thus developing a new *An-sich*:

[...] consciousness must alter its knowledge to make it conform to the object. But, in fact, in the alteration of the knowledge the object itself alters for it too, for the knowledge that was present was essentially a knowledge of the object: as the knowledge changes, so too does the object, for it essentially belongs to this knowledge. Hence it comes to pass for consciousness that what it previously took to be the *in-itself* is not an *in-itself*, or that it was only an *in-itself* for consciousness.

(PS § 85, p. 54)

This adjustment, or negation, of what consciousness first took to be absolutely objective, leading to the realisation that this absolute truth was a mere *in-itself-for*, or *truth-for-consciousness*, is for consciousness to have lived through an experience (*Erfahrung*) in the phenomenological sense. Phenomenological *Erfahrung*, as such, always involves the *intentional act of self-transcendence*:

*Inasmuch as the new true object issues from it*, this *dialectical* movement which consciousness exercises on itself and which affects both its knowledge and its object, is precisely what is called *experience* [*Erfahrung*]. [...] Consciousness knows *something*; this object is the essence or the *in-itself*; but it is also for consciousness the *in-itself*. This is where the ambiguity of this truth enters. We see that consciousness now has two objects: one is the first *in-itself*, the second is the *being-for-consciousness of this in-itself*. The latter appears at first sight to be merely the reflection of consciousness into itself, i.e. what consciousness has in mind is not an object, but only its knowledge of that object. But, as was shown previously, the first object, in being known, is altered for consciousness; it ceases to be the *in-itself*, and becomes something that is the *in-itself* only for *consciousness*. And this then is the True: the *being-for-consciousness of this in-self*. Or, in other words, this is the *essence*, or the *object* of consciousness. This new object contains the nothingness of the first, it is what experience has made of it.

(PS § 86, p. 55)

Consciousness, therefore, like truth, is not a static unchanging 'is' (i.e. simply in a state of being (*Sein*)) but is constantly changing or becoming (*Werden*). Hegel's concept of becoming is groundbreaking for two significant reasons: first, it *rejects* Parmenides' principle that denies the possibility of becoming ('what is, is, hence, does not change, and for that reason can be thought') that lies at the foundation of the concept of truth, self and identity in much of Western philosophy prior to Hegel. Secondly, in presenting a philosophy of becoming, Hegel establishes a new logic of identity that *exemplifies* the Heraclitean principle

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factor in life and must be preserved and sublated in the totality that emerges from it. Thus Hegel is neither a monist nor a dualist (Inwood 1998, p. 296)'. Consequently, we should reject any conception that treats Hegel's philosophy as monistic—one of the main accusations levelled against Hegel ~~namely~~ by post-Hegel idealists.

that everything is in a constant state of change, and that there would be no unity if there were no opposites to combine (cf. Heraclitus 1962, Frag. 51). Hegel's concept of the becoming consciousness is revolutionary in that it inaugurates the entire tradition of German speculative philosophy, as Friedrich Nietzsche points out in *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (*The Gay Science*, 1882):

We Germans are Hegelians even if there had never been any Hegel, insofar that we [...] instinctively attribute a deeper meaning and greater value to becoming and development than to what 'is'; we hardly believe in the justification of the concept of 'being'.

(Nietzsche 1974, p. 306)

Moreover, the consciousness in question is not just the consciousness of the single individual self, but also that of humanity in general as *Geist* ('mind' or 'spirit'). This movement or evolution goes through various necessary stages, which are mapped out in the *Phenomenology*. At each stage, consciousness has a particular conception of itself and/or the world, and when this conception turns out to be inadequate or incoherent, a higher conception evolves:

What still lies ahead for consciousness is the experience of what Spirit is—this absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousnesses which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: 'I' that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I'.<sup>18</sup>

(PS § 177, p. 110)

Terry Pinkard's text *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason* gives the following succinct explanation of Hegel's concept of Spirit;

Spirit—*Geist*—is a *self-conscious* form of life—that is, it is a form of life that has developed various social practices for reflecting on what it takes to be authoritative for itself in terms of whether these practices live up to their own claims and achieve the aims that they set for themselves.[...] spirit is a form of 'social space' reflecting on itself as to whether it is satisfactory within its own terms (with what it takes to be the 'essence' of things, in Hegel's terms). 'Spirit' therefore denotes for Hegel not a metaphysical entity but a fundamental *relation* among persons that mediates their *self-consciousness*, a way in which people reflect on what they have come to take as authoritative for themselves.

(Pinkard 1994, pp. 8-9).

Hegel, therefore, speaks of science (*Wissenschaft*) as an organised and self-certifying 'ground' of some circumscribed domain of knowledge that people, as objective spirit (*Objektiver Geist*), take as authoritative for themselves. Hegel refers to the set of 'grounds' that objective spirit takes as authoritative as the essences (*Wesen*) of a formation (*Gestaltung*) of consciousness or spirit. It follows, therefore, that a science is an objectified and theoretically structured formation of consciousness as spirit. As such, Hegel stresses that science is itself only an *appearance* (*Erscheinung*), a historical phenomenon among other (contemporary and/or future) claims of knowledge, and that, as an 'appearance', it cannot make any intrinsic claim to being true or better than others.

Therefore, if we distinguish between Kant's abstract or pure reason and spirit, then the

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<sup>18</sup> The word *Geist* does not translate into English well and we need to be careful to distinguish the overtly political and religious from the more philosophical and epistemological uses of the same term. We should reject, in particular, any reading of the *Phenomenology* that attempts to associate *Geist* with anything *extra-human* or *divine*, as Hegel states quite clearly that spirit is nothing more than the collective human consciousness (cf. Stern 1991, p. 130 n4).

latter, Tom Rockmore observes, 'is a term designating Hegel's rival view of reason as not pure, but necessarily impure, or situated, namely as emerging within and limited by the social, political, and historical context' (Rockmore 1993, p. 85).<sup>19</sup> Thus for Hegel, unlike Kant, knowledge is not the result of pure reason. Philosophy can only take place *after* the event, or, to use Hegel's famous comparison to the owl of Minerva in the *Philosophy of Right*, knowledge can only take wing after the fact. The point is that for Hegel knowledge, and in particular philosophical knowledge, is not and cannot be *a priori*; on the contrary, knowledge emerges in and is the product of the *collective* effort of human beings through the course of history to come to terms with themselves and with their world. Hegel once stated that 'we can be Platonist no longer', and the same is true with respect to Hegelians; 'we can be Hegelians no longer'. Therefore, we have to go beyond Hegel, sublimate his philosophy and form a new world-view. What this means is that although we may disagree with Hegel's philosophy, we can nevertheless still be Hegelians in that we adhere to the logic of the historical character of thought.

## Appendix II      The Historical Nature of Thought and Hegelian Logic

Hegelian dialectical logic is a logic designed to be optimally appropriate to philosophy, in that, as Howard Kainz states in *Hegel's Phenomenology: Part 1 Analysis and Commentary*, it is a '[...] logic of non-identity, which would not necessarily contravene the ordinary sentential calculi, but would merely go beyond identity to the movement which identity was unable to effectively encompass or denote—the movements of subjects and objects meeting in and through time' (Kainz 1988, pp. 32-3). Hegel's logic is specifically constructed to take into account and to allow for 'shifts' that the static and fixed structures and rules of formal logic will not allow. Most importantly, perhaps, it is Hegel's contention that dialectical logic better reflects the conscious experience (*Erfahrung*) of our understanding.

In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel criticises what is generally considered as the first law of logic, the law of identity ( $A = A$ ):

This proposition in its positive expression  $A = A$  is, in the first instance, nothing more than the expression of an empty *tautology*. It has therefore been rightly remarked that this law of thought had *no content* and leads no further. It is thus the empty identity that is rightly adhered to by those who take it, as such, to be something true and are given to saying that identity is not difference, but that identity and difference are different.

(Logic, p. 413)

The point that Hegel is making is that the two concepts of identity and difference are mutually implicative. Because identity, whether of an object or a concept is constituted by its relation to what it differs from, so that to ascertain identity is simultaneously to ascertain difference. In recognition that nothing can be identified without difference, Hegel attacks the law of identity on the basis that it has excluded all difference, i.e. that the statement 'A is A' expresses pure identity without any difference at all.

The Law of Identity is taken by formal logicians to express a self-evident truth, that is to say that it is based on the experience of consciousness: 'for anyone to whom this proposition  $A = A$ , *a tree is a tree*, is made, immediately admits it and is satisfied that the proposition as immediately self-evident requires no further proof' (Logic, p. 414). This, argues Hegel, is simply not the case:  $A = A$ , or *a tree is a tree*, does not express the

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<sup>19</sup> We must, therefore, be careful when we apply the term historicism (*Historismus*) to Hegelian philosophy that it refers to the historical character of thought *without* the Popperian association of 'laws of historical destiny' (cf. Popper 1977, Vol. 2).

experience of consciousness at all, because if we were asked of any given object, event, or concept 'A' what *is* it?, the answer we give *would* start with 'A =', but (to avoid being vacuous) *must* go beyond that immediately given entity we designated 'A'. Thus, in order for our answer to be meaningful we must appeal to terms of non-A, that is, properties or aspects that are outside of the originally given 'A'; hence, we must establish 'A' through the principle of identity-in-difference.

The principle of identity-in-difference can be described using Michael Kosok's formalisation of Hegel's dialectical logic, as presented in his essay 'The Formalization of Hegel's Dialectical Logic' (1966). Kosok represents identity-in-difference or the principle of non-identity with recursive matrix (R)e:  $+e \leftrightarrow -e$  that establishes that conscious reflection R by the subject (R)e of the object e constitutes the identity of the object e' on the *boundary* of the *limits*  $+e$  and  $-e$ . That is, reflection upon e transforms e into two modes: e becomes transformed through the self-relation of *itself* Ae (the affirmation  $+e$ ) and its *other* Ne (the negation  $-e$ ), which produces  $+e$ , that is, something which is *neither*  $+e$  *nor*  $-e$  as such, *neither* 'in-itself' *nor* 'for-itself', but their *mutual boundary*.<sup>20</sup> This shows that  $+e$  is a *function of itself through*  $-e$ , and that  $+e$  becomes *self-mediated* or self-negated by virtue of  $-e$  (cf. Kosok 1966, p. 600).<sup>21</sup> Thus Se (the synthesis  $+e$ ) expresses the co-relation between Ae and Ne, or between *itself* and *other* as a relation that is *in-and-for-itself*.

Reflection, thus, takes the immediately given entity e, and 'places' it in context with its *other* Ne or o, which is 'implicitly present within itself as the entity's potentiality for being questioned or reflected', so that the product of reflection is neither e nor o, but 'the transcending and unifying movement or relationship eo', which is called e' (Kosok 1966, p. 609). Such that (R)e =  $(e \rightarrow o : eo)$  being called e'. To reflect on e', that is, to repeat the operation R on e' so that we have (R)(R)e or (R)e' we obtain nine phases of reflection. The nine modes of interrelation we obtain from (R)e' are *qualitatively* different from the initial three we obtained from (R)e. Hence, the essential nature of dialectical logic is *open* as it is an *infinite matrix* with an *infinite* number of possible reflections. The reason for this lies in the temporal nature of reflection.

The structure of identity-in-difference exemplifies Hegel's concept of becoming, which is the essence of his phenomenological ontology and philosophy in general:

*Pure being* and *pure nothing* are [...] the same. What is the truth is neither being nor nothing, but that being—does not pass over but has passed over—into nothing, and

<sup>20</sup> Limit (*Schranke*) can more easily be understood in geometric terms: for example, the sum of all the divisions of X (let X be a rectangle with an area of 1) according to  $X/2^{n+1}$  where n is all the natural numbers starting with 0; hence,  $(1/2 + 1/4 + 1/8 + 1/16 \dots n) = 1$ . Although the area of the rectangle X can be divided through this formula to infinity, the sum total of every division can never exceed or be less than X (i.e. 1). Thus, X is the limit of the exponential  $X/2^{n+1}$ . The boundary (*Grenze*) of X (again let X be a rectangle) is the perimeter of the area X and the area outside of X (i.e. the area within which X has a determinate extension), such that the boundary of X is neither X nor not X. Hence, the concept of X's boundary implies that there must be something beyond the limits of X. Formally put,  $(X \vee \neg X)$  represents the limit and  $\neg(X \vee \neg X)$  the boundary, or, to use dialectical logic,  $e \vee o$  is the limit and  $\neg(e \vee o)$  is the boundary, namely e'. (See the glossary for an explanation of the notation used by formal logic.)

<sup>21</sup> In Formal logic the truth function of  $X \leftrightarrow Y$  would be  $(X \& Y)$ . Kosok's Concept of Non-Identity  $(e) \leftrightarrow (\neg e)$  would entail  $(e) \& (\neg e)$ . The rules of Formal logic allow us to remove the parenthesis to obtain  $e \& \neg e$ , which is contrary to the Law of Excluded Middle  $(A \vee \neg A)$ , and the Law of Contradiction  $\neg(A \& \neg A)$ . Likewise, to assert that e' is the product of  $(e) \leftrightarrow (\neg e)$  is, in Formal Logic, tantamount to asserting  $A' = A \& \neg A$ , which violates all three laws—the aforementioned and the Law of Identity  $A = A$ . Hence Kosok's insistence that in dialectical logic we cannot remove the parenthesis. If we keep the parenthesis intact, or work with the variant operators  $+e$  and  $-e$ , dialectical logic does not necessarily violate the rules of Formal Logic. More importantly, however, because the parenthesis signify the act of reflection R, removing them from  $(e)$  and  $(\neg e)$  would render the two forms meaningless to the reflective-consciousness.

nothing into being. But it is equally true that they are not undistinguished from each other, that, on the contrary, they are not the same, that they are absolutely distinct, and yet that they are unseparated and inseparable and that each immediately *vanishes in its opposite*. Their truth is, therefore, this movement of the immediate vanishing of the one in the other: *becoming* [...]. Since the unity of being and nothing as the primary truth now forms once and for all the basis and element of all that follows, besides *becoming* itself, all further logical determinations: determinate being, quality, and generally all philosophical Notions, are examples of this unity.

(Logic, pp. 83, 85)

The germ of Hegel's doctrine of becoming is Heraclitus' doctrine that everything is in a state of flux: 'You cannot step twice into the same river; for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you', but cf. 'We step and do not step into the same rivers: we are and are not' (Russell 1975, p. 63). Since Plato and Aristotle, most philosophers agree that Heraclitus taught that 'nothing ever is, everything is becoming' (Plato), and that 'nothing steadfastly is' (Aristotle) (*ibid.*, p. 63). Thus, looking at Hegel's analysis of becoming, using Kosok's formalised method, we start with the zero state of pure being which is *unreflected* being, which, given its persisting *presence*, contains the potential contradiction of being both itself and its negating object. The first reflection on being generates two forms: being 'in-itself' B (affirmation), and being 'for-itself' or Nothingness N (negation). becoming is the moment of synthesis BN, where being reveals itself through its co-referential opposite Nothingness to be in a state of becoming. Hence, using a simplified version of Kosok's matrix we get:  $B \rightarrow N: BN = B'$  or becoming.

Hegel's concept of becoming as the 'synthesis' or sublation (*Aufheben*) of being and nothing can be regarded as a singular boundary zone. This boundary zone is determined (again using e) by the line that distinguishes and connects the two mutually opposite yet co-determinate regions of +e and -e. Thus within the sublation of becoming there is a determinate relationship and differentiation of the limits (*Schranke*) of +e and -e and the boundary (*Grenze*) e' in that as limits the concepts +e and -e do not, indeed cannot, express what is beyond themselves as 'regions', but as 'synthesis', +e implies that there is a boundary which it has to go beyond, namely e'. A boundary, therefore, implies that there is a possibility of *self-transcendence*.

The asymmetrical nature of dialectical logic entails that all previous states are retained and serve as a perspective of orientation; hence in dialectical logic we can neither go 'back', nor can we through the process of 'synthesis' actually negate the previous reflection. Thus an absolute negation would be tantamount to a total loss of memory; furthermore, it is impossible for consciousness to reflect backwards through time, since that would be equivalent to 'un-thinking' or eradicating both memory and the past—all of this is *impossible* within the memory structure. Moreover, because the nature of reflection is temporal and asymmetrical, the three elements that entail the process of reflecting (R)e, namely, +e  $\rightarrow$  -e : +e cannot at any stage all be present at the same time. As such the process of reflecting is not in a state of *being* but is continually *becoming*. This means that, within the Hegelian dialectic, we are not dealing with 'an already formed and determined universe of discourse but with one that is in the process of *being formed*, and therefore the system is intrinsically incomplete and must exhibit the incompleteness through the indeterminacy of its variables' (Kosok 1966, p. 606).

Reflection or thought about a conceptual object or event *de facto* changes the way that object or event appears to the consciousness, just as a subject's contemplation of an emotion he or she may be in actively changes that emotion from an immediate given to a conscious reflection, which may reveal implicit associated feelings and beliefs which that subject may hold in determinate relation to the emotion. Similarly, in perception the subject does not

merely *see* the object as a given; rather he or she actively discriminates through reflection the *limit* and *boundary* of that object, changing the frame of reference of the object through the subject's reflection so that the subject can ascertain what information is essential for the perceived object to be determined consciously.

### Appendix III Hegelianism and German Philosophy at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

Neo-Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie* came to influence, at times dominate, European philosophy from England to Russia. However, although the period (circa 1870-1920) was marked by immense philosophical creativity, it was, nevertheless, a period of philosophical crisis—not a crisis of any one philosophical doctrine or principle, but of philosophy itself. The crisis was due to an attack at the very heart of the tradition of philosophy: metaphysics, the science of being and of first principles. In Germany, the principal factor behind the breakdown of the metaphysical systems during this period was philosophical historicism and relativism, and the expeditious advance of scientific materialism, causal determinism and Darwinism.

The resulting conflict in philosophical thought was (principally) between two very different approaches. The neo-Kantians sought, through a re-application of Kant's transcendental idealism, to establish new metaphysical systems. Whereas, the *Lebensphilosophen* hoped to establish historicist and anti-metaphysical<sup>22</sup> systems—for which they leaned heavily on aspects of Hegelian thought, especially his logic. Nevertheless both Neo-Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie* sought to establish appropriate and distinct methodologies for the *Naturwissenschaften* (natural sciences) and *Geisteswissenschaften* (the human sciences), to determine human autonomy against the claims of scientific determinism, and to overcome the relativistic implications of historicism (cf. Willey 1978, p. 24).

The link between *Lebensphilosophie* and Hegelianism is fairly clear and unproblematic, and has been well documented. For instance in *A Hegel Dictionary*, Michael Inwood points out that Dilthey was 'a Hegel scholar who was also described as the "greatest cultural historian since Hegel", made potent use of Hegel's notion of "objective spirit" in his account of cultural products, and shared the Hegelian belief that "man finds out what he is only through history"' (Inwood 1998, p. 23).<sup>23</sup>

The fundamental notion of *Lebensphilosophie* is the relationship between life and *Geist* (spirit), and the subsequent distinction it draws between life and cultural forms or forms of understanding. In Hegel's early philosophy 'life' is a fundamental category; 'it stood', writes Herbert Schnädelbach, 'for what was dynamic, for process, for the organic, for what affirmed itself in contradictions—as opposed to what was fixed, abstract, mechanical, dead' (Schnädelbach 1984, p. 141). Thus, Hegel's initial view of life is very close to the Romantics, for whom life was a concept used in opposition to the extreme rationalism of the Enlightenment and the mechanistic determinism in the conception of nature that was equated with it. Later, however, Hegel came to regard life as the precursor to spirit, and consequently argued that life is a deficient mode of spirit. The *Lebensphilosophen*, however, defined the relation between life and spirit in exactly the opposite way. Spirit should be seen as the objectification of life, such that spirit is always and necessarily embraced by life. In doing so, *Lebensphilosophie* did not just reiterate the Romantic non-rationalist notion of life, but took it

<sup>22</sup> With anti-metaphysical I mean non-*a priori* approaches, such as Hegelian historicism. As Kant states 'the exposition is *metaphysical* when it contains that which exhibits the concept *as given a priori*' (CPR, B38, 68).

<sup>23</sup> Inwood's second quotation is from Dilthey's *Jugendgeschichte Hegels* (*History of the Young Hegel*, 1905). On *Lebensphilosophie* and Hegel see Herbert Schnädelbach 1984.



a step further to make life a concept that was opposed to the fundamental principle of idealism: the secular primacy of reason. Dilthey argues in *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften* (*The Construction of the Historical World in the Sciences of Spirit*) that the notion upon which Hegel based his concept of 'Objective Spirit' can no longer be accepted:

[Hegel] constructed communities on the basis of the general rational will. Today, we have to start from the reality of life: in life, the totality of mental connections is a work. Hegel engaged in metaphysical construction: we analyse what is given. And present-day analysis of human existence fills us all with the feeling of frailty, of the power of dark instincts, of the passion for darkness and illusion, of the finiteness which resides in everything we do with life, even where the highest forms of communal life arise from it.

(Dilthey quoted in Schnäbelbach 1984, p.142)

Thus, although the *Lebensphilosophen* were indebted to Hegel for crucial aspects of their thought, it is important to point out that they were not full-blooded Hegelians, as we shall see in chapter 1.

Neo-Kantianism was, as I have stated, at the outset anti-Hegelian. Nevertheless as the period developed many of its most important representatives drifted, inexorably, towards Hegel and Hegelianism. The reason why Neo-Kantianism became 'Hegelianised' is two-fold: the most oft cited reason is that some neo-Kantians were influenced by *Lebensphilosophie*; the second reason, and perhaps the most important one, is that many aspects of Hegel's system are the logical, if not the natural consequence of Kant's idealism, and thus many neo-Kantians would almost certainly have to confront and deal with facets of Hegelianism.

The reason for this was that Kant does not provide an adequate system to go with his philosophy. All neo-Kantians, as Lewis Beck points out, shared the 'conviction that philosophy could be a "science" only if it returned to the method and spirit of Kant' (Beck quoted in Köhnke 1991, p. ix). However, establishing philosophy as a 'science' simply by returning to 'the method and spirit of Kant' is not clear cut. Tom Rockmore indicates that for Kant '[a] systematic unity is the condition *sine qua non* of a science' (Rockmore 1993, p. 18). Yet, the problem is that 'nothing is less clear than Kant's concept of system and the systematic status of his philosophy. Although he is interested in this concept from the beginning, Kant is never able to make up his mind' (Rockmore 1993, p. 14).

The problem of system, or lack thereof, predominated the immediate reception of Kant's 'critical philosophy' and formed the entire German idealist tradition of Johann Fichte (1762-1814), Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854) and Hegel. These philosophers quickly realised that if they were to distinguish between the spirit and the letter of Kant's philosophy, then the best way to remain faithful to the spirit of critical philosophy is to be unfaithful to the letter. This led them to recast and revise Kant's philosophy and provide it with the system it was lacking. This need created an open debate of immense philosophical richness and creativity, and led to the period that can be said to be the pinnacle and the most formative moment of the German idealist tradition.

Thus the neo-Kantians were faced with the following situation: any recourse to Kant *de facto* entails a response to the post-Kantian systems of Schelling, Fichte, and especially Hegel (the most important of the three). It is, therefore, not surprising that the neo-idealist Hermann Glockner is moved to say, at the beginning of the twentieth-century, that '[in] Germany today the problem of Hegel is primarily a problem of Kant' (Glockner, quoted in Lukács 1975, p. xi). A similar dilemma is voiced by the Baden neo-Kantian Heinrich Rickert, whose acute awareness of Hegel's enduring involvement in neo-Kantian idealism leads him to discard the word *Geist* from his philosophy: 'If one rejects the significance which Hegel gives

to the word *Geist* (spirit), one is bound to eliminate from the theory of science also the term *Geisteswissenschaften* [...]' (Rickert, quoted in Schnädelbach 1984, p. 129). Needless to say, most neo-Kantians did not abandon the term *Geist*, and Hegel (re)gained or indeed maintained a significant grip on neo-Kantian thought. For instance, Heinrich Levy's *Die Hegel-Renaissance (The Hegel Renaissance 1927)* points out that Windelband's<sup>24</sup> endeavour to bring together neo-Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie* brought about a keen interest in Hegel's thought, and accredits both the Marburg neo-Kantians, Cohen and his colleague Paul Natorp, with the Hegelian renaissance of the early twentieth century (cf. Willey 1978, p. 117).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Wilhelm Windelband was Rickert's mentor, and the most important representative of Baden neo-Kantianism.

<sup>25</sup> Moreover, according to Thomas Willey, Natorp was an 'heir' of Fichte, Kant and Hegel: 'as a logician of the sciences [Natorp] was an unstinting adherent of Kant and Cohen, insisting on the limits of thought, but as a neo-Hegelian he was impelled towards metaphysics by his interest in the mythological expressions of the historical spirit' (Willey 1978, p. 118). There were neo-Kantians who were not Kantians—Beck, for instance, questions the Kantian credentials of two of the most prominent neo-Kantians of their time: Cohen and Windelband (cf. Beck in Köhnke 1991, p. x); and Claus Köhnke's *The Rise of neo-Kantianism* argues that Windelband should be referred to with just the prefix 'neo' rather than the definition 'Kantian' (cf. Köhnke 1991, p. 251).

# 1

## From Transcendentalism to Intentionality:

### Bakhtin's Early Philosophical Inheritance and Tradition

*'Most men will not swim before they are able to' [...] Naturally they won't swim! They are made for the solid earth, not for the water. And naturally they won't think. They are made for life, not for thought. Yes, and he who thinks, what is more, he who makes thought his business, he may go far in it, but he has bartered the solid earth for the water all the same, and one day he will drown*

(Hermann Hesse 1979, pp. 17-18)

Although many Bakhtin scholars have marked Bakhtin as a neo-Kantian, and have thus read his work in relation to this movement, few have noted what an 'amorphous and ill-defined' movement neo-Kantianism was (Beck in Köhnke 1991, p. xi).<sup>1</sup> As Lewis White Beck points out, its common denominator 'was at most an alleged recourse to Kant, but which never represented an individual, definable philosophical tendency' (*ibid.* p. 207). While it is certainly the case that at the inception of neo-Kantianism many neo-Kantians were hostile to the absolute idealism of Hegel, this hostility waned in the second half of the neo-Kantian period (ca. 1895-1920), when it became evident that Hegel's philosophy should be re-addressed and re-applied. It is, as Tihanov points out, in the adoption and application of Hegel's and Hegelian philosophy that neo-Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie* 'most evidently meet' (Tihanov 2000, p. 45). Bakhtin's commitment to neo-Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie* is firmly located in the second half of the period, and it is his preoccupation with these two philosophical movements that eventually lead him to address and appropriate Hegel's and Hegelian thought. In his essay 'Culture, Form, Life', Galin Tihanov writes that Bakhtin's ideas of culture '[...] are Hegelian to the extent that neo-Kantianism and philosophy-of-life themselves were "infected" with and developing-towards Hegelianism' (Tihanov 2000 [A], p. 45), but stresses that:

Bakhtin remained untouched by Hegel's thought in his early works. In Bakhtin's case, Hegel came onto the stage only in the late 1920s and the early 1930s when he made a perceptible contribution to Bakhtin's understanding of the novel, culture and society in the essays on the novel, *Rabelais* and, in an often elusive but nonetheless effective way, in the notes of the 1970s.

(Tihanov 2000 [A], p. 53)

However, although it may indeed be the case that Bakhtin did not engage with Hegel's thought until the late 1920s and early 1930s, the fact that his early works drew on the tradition of *Lebensphilosophie* meant that Bakhtin was engaging with tenets of Hegelianism in his early works. This is because *Lebensphilosophie* (in particular that of Georg Simmel, and especially Wilhelm Dilthey) has a fundamental Hegelian core—as I shall show.

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<sup>1</sup> On Bakhtin, Kant and neo-Kantianism see Clark and Holquist 1984; Brandist 1997; Tihanov 2000 (A/B); Brian Poole 1998.

This chapter principally discusses the diffuse and difficult ‘essay’ *K filosofii postupka* (*Toward an Philosophy of the Act* (TPA), 1919-21). The essay represents what is believed to be Bakhtin’s first sustained work of philosophy, written during a period when Russian ‘intellectuals and artists were given a field day’ with respect to intellectual freedom and access to resources (Liapunov in TPA, p. viii). This is revealed by Bakhtin’s wide and dispersed philosophical exploration—the essay cites, among others, Immanuel Kant, Hermann Cohen, Heinrich Rickert, Thomas Hobbes, Edmund Husserl, Friedrich Nietzsche, Arthur Schopenhauer, and suggests that Bakhtin has read and been informed by the work of Georg Simmel, Wilhelm Windelband, Rudolf Lotze, Wilhelm Dilthey and possibly Max Scheler.<sup>2</sup> The text contains many of the key issues that were to engage Bakhtin throughout his career in their embryonic form: a theory of culture and society, and the ethical/social dimension of the relationship between the self and the other. Because the note-book that makes up the essay TPA was never intended for publication, it is not surprising that the essay lacks structure and is fragmentary. It has to be pointed out that polemically the essay takes on too many issues at once without establishing either a system or a heuristic in which to operate. As a result the text is, at times, not clear in its method or its objective(s). Nonetheless the essay is philosophically insightful, and gives us an important view of the concerns that motivate Bakhtin’s subsequent philosophical investigations.

The central issue of TPA is to explore and describe our living experience of being in contra-position to our moral and cultural understanding of the world on the one hand, and our theoretical and scientific understanding of the world on the other. This contra-position assumes the distinction both neo-Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie* (and Husserl’s early phenomenology) drew between the *Naturwissenschaften* (the natural sciences) and the *Geisteswissenschaften* (the human sciences). However, Bakhtin’s discussion of these issues in TPA is complicated, as the issues regarding the *Naturwissenschaften* embroil themselves with issues regarding the *Geisteswissenschaften*, and *vice versa*. This is problematic, because Bakhtin, like the neo-Kantians and the *Lebensphilosophen*, seeks to understand (as I shall demonstrate) the two ‘spheres of knowledge’ as autonomous and independent of each other. The natural sciences, according to Bakhtin, have a theoretically ideal content that is given *a priori*, and in this he seems to follow the standard neo-Kantian line. However, with respect to the human sciences Bakhtin assumes two separate (and at times conflicting) approaches. He splits the human sciences into the fields of ethics and culture. His discussion of ethics principally concerns the Kantian notion of the ought (*das Sollen*) and the neo-Kantian theory of value (*Wert*), whereas his view regarding culture is based on *Lebensphilosophie*, and the opposition they drew between life and (cultural) form (cf. Tihanov 2000 [A]). The situation is further complicated by the growing presence of early Husserlian phenomenology in Bakhtin’s thought. Thus the entanglement that ensues is not just between the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften*, but also within the *Geisteswissenschaften* themselves.

In order for us to appreciate the concerns of TPA, therefore, we need to have a clear understanding of the various issues addressed in the essay. As such, it will be necessary to delineate the concerns of neo-Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie* with respect to the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften*. The second part of this section (1.1B), moreover, will demonstrate the inherent (neo-) Hegelianism of the *Lebensphilosophen* Dilthey and Simmel.

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<sup>2</sup> Bakhtin’s relationship with the *Lebensphilosophen* Simmel and Dilthey is discussed in Brandist 1997, and extensively in Tihanov 2000 (A/B). Archival research conducted by Brain Poole revealed that references to Dilthey have been omitted by publishers from Bakhtin’s important essays on the novel (cf. Poole 1998, p. 573 n.36). More recently Poole has suggested, in conjunction with the discovery of Bakhtin’s notebook filled with extensive citations from Scheler’s *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (1912), that Scheler’s phenomenology has had a formative influence on Bakhtin’s early philosophy (cf. Poole 2001, Bakhtin 2000).

## 1.1 The *Geisteswissenschaften* and the *Naturwissenschaften*

What is apparent in TPA, as Holquist quite astutely notes, is that ‘Bakhtin’s obsession [is] not so much with Hermann Cohen and his followers as with Kant himself’ (Holquist in TPA p. ix). This is particularly evident when Bakhtin addresses the difference between the concerns of the *Naturwissenschaften* and the concerns of the *Geisteswissenschaften* by responding *not* to any particular neo-Kantian school or *Lebensphilosoph*, but by approaching Kant directly and (neo-) Kantianism and *Lebensphilosophie* generally.

The neo-Kantians and *Lebensphilosophen* sought to develop distinct methodologies for the *Geisteswissenschaften* and the *Naturwissenschaften* that would escape the consequences of nineteenth-century historicism with its insistence on the historical and conditional character of all truths and values on the one hand, and material determinism with its denial of freedom on the other. Kant’s transcendental method, with its dualism of pure and practical reason, seemed to offer the neo-Kantians and *Lebensphilosophen* the framework necessary for their endeavour: the subject supplies the transcendental forms of knowledge by virtue of pure reason (establishing the *Naturwissenschaften*), and the norms of values of morality and culture by virtue of practical reason (establishing the *Geisteswissenschaften*).

For Kant there is a fundamental difference between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. According to Kant theoretical knowledge is concerned with ‘what is’ according to the causality of the natural laws, and as such, it is interested in determining the formal and material aspects of nature (cf. Caygill 1995, p. 275). Practical knowledge, on the other hand, is concerned with ‘what ought to be’ according to the causality of the laws of freedom, and as such, is interested in the conception of judgements such as ‘ought’, ‘duty’, ‘good’, and ‘bad’.<sup>3</sup>

Theoretical Laws, according to Kant, express the relationship between empirical laws of nature (as discovered by the natural sciences) and the pure or *a priori* laws of understanding. Although empirical laws, writes Kant, ‘can never derive their origin from pure understanding’ in that they stem from experience, nevertheless, ‘all empirical laws are only special determinations of the pure laws of understanding, under which, and according to the norm of which, they first become possible’ (CPR, A127-8, p. 148). This is because, although an empirical law expresses the formal relationship between things in nature, the unity of these things or objects is determined by the synthesising activity of the transcendental subject, by virtue of the *a priori* categories of understanding. Hence, natural laws ‘stand under higher principles of understanding’ in that they are determined from ‘grounds which are valid *a priori* and antecedently to all experience’, and therefore, they ‘carry with them an expression of necessity’ (CPR, A159/B198, pp. 194-5). Thus natural laws are both applied to nature by the subject and are universally and necessarily valid.

Practical laws express the conditions under which pure reason as free will can be antecedently autonomous *and* causally efficacious. That is, freedom, must, if it is not to be self-contradictory, conform to ‘immutable laws’ (GMM 98, p. 114). These laws, unlike natural necessity, are self-imposed. A practical law, according to Kant, is an objective principle that ‘would also serve subjectively as a practical principle for all rational beings if

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<sup>3</sup> For Kant the concept of freedom is key to explaining the autonomy of the will. According to Kant the will is a *kind of* causality that belongs to all rational beings. However, unlike natural causality, the will is independent of antecedents. Freedom, therefore, is the propensity of the *will* to be *independently* efficacious; that is, freedom is the property of the will to be causally determinate without being caused to do so by something other than itself (GMM 98, p. 114). Moreover, free will acts in accordance with laws, but unlike natural necessity, these laws are self-imposed (through the conception of the ‘ought’), otherwise these would merely be laws of natural necessity.

reason had full control over the faculty of desire' (GMM 15n, p. 69). That is, a practical law expresses a formal maxim upon which an agent 'ought' to act, because it is objectively and universally valid for all human beings (i.e. it is valid *a priori*). This principle is expressed by Kant's law or categorical imperative that 'I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law' (GMM 17, p. 70).

However, unlike theoretical reason, practical reason is not *limited* to any *a priori* categories and judgement that determine the conditions of its experience and operation, in that practical reason is free and undetermined. This explains why Kant does not postulate any *a priori* categories of practical reason, as to do so would undermine humankind's moral freedom and autonomy. As David Bidney writes:

Nature, for him, was the sphere of necessity and required the postulation of equally predetermined categories of the understanding, but moral and religious culture was the product of human freedom and creativity, and did not, therefore, require or necessitate any fixed categories. Man does not create the order of nature of which he is part, although the human understanding through its categories does predetermine the general modes or perspectives through which it is perceived. Man does, however, create his own moral laws and freely sets up universal moral standards for all mankind. In short, *natural phenomena are given in experience; moral phenomena are not given, but have to be willed into existence in accordance with dictates of practical reason and the human conscience.*

(Bidney 1947, p. 487)

#### (A) Neo-Kantianism: The Ought and Value

Both the Baden School and the Marburg School upheld the priority of the ethical ought over the phenomenal is, and it is principally in this regard that they can be called 'Kantian' philosophies. Equally, both the neo-Kantian schools are concerned with overcoming the inherent dualism of Kant's idealism. The principle way in which they sought to 'bridge' the gap between pure and practical reason, between 'what is' and 'what ought to be', and thereby establish a notion of moral law that can be mapped onto a judicial framework that is scientifically apodeictic and a-historical was through their notion of value (*Wert*).

Perhaps the most influential *Wertphilosophie* was that of the (Kantian) idealist Lotze (1817-81). For Lotze every ought (*Sollen*) refers to and is determined by a value, but it is not the case that conversely every value is the foundation for an ought. According to Lotze's philosophy, *Wert* refers to the unconditional standard of that which is holy, good, or beautiful: a transcendent value unaffected through history: 'apart from ethical values [good], for which this is the case, "there are" also theoretical values (truth) and aesthetic ones (beauty)' (Schnädelbach 1984, p.164). Furthermore, Lotze marks one of the most important departures away from Kantian *a priori* ethics and towards an axiological ethics grounded in values wherein the subject's emotional/volitional attitude plays a fundamental role:

Lotze's philosophy of value underlay his ethics; he was a eudaemonist, deriving his value theory from feeling rather than from Kant's unconditional moral law. Even the pursuit of truth, he held, emerges originally from the feeling that truth is good.

(Willey 1978, p. 50)

Lotze argues that the subject's perception of an object is accompanied by the *reception* of *Wert*, which is based not on the principles of our *a priori* understanding (*Verstand*), but is endowed upon a thing by 'a reason receptive to values' (*Wertempfindende Vernunft*) according to a criterion which cannot be justified by *Verstand* (Rose 1981, pp. 6-7). Lotze's *Microcosmos* endeavours to defend the metaphysical notion 'that the world of values is at the

same time the key to the world of Forms’—Platonic forms, or the objects that correspond to the ideal (Hamilton in Lotze 1888, p. xiv). Lotze, however, sets himself apart from pure Platonism with his claim that the subject attains the ‘world of Forms’ by pure categorical analysis, and by the assertion that values are a necessary presupposition of knowledge of reality itself. Consequently, Lotze’s *Logik (Logic)* argues that the formal distinction between *validity* and *fact* and *value* (here translated as ‘*worth*’) is the natural and necessary conclusion of the subject’s thought about the world:

All our analysis of the cosmic order ends in leading our thought back to a consciousness of necessarily valid *truths*, our perceptions to the intuition of immediately given *facts* of reality, our conscience to the recognition of an absolute standard of all *determinations of worth [value]*.

(Lotze 1899, II ix 1, p. 575)

The Baden School, principally represented by Windelband (1848-1915)—a pupil of Lotze—and his follower Rickert (1863-1936), had as his main interest the critical philosophy of values for the understanding of history. Moral questions were important to the Baden neo-Kantians only in the theoretical sense, and their interest in social problems and practical politics, compared to that of the Marburg School, was negligible.

Windelband felt that in Kant’s philosophy the synthesising transcendental subject came at the cost of the ego. Although Kant posited an ego of a sort, in the notion of *inner sense*, or *empirical apperception* (cf. CPR, A106-7 pp. 135-6), neo-Kantianism sought to re-define the role of empirical apperception. Although Windelband believed that contemporary psycho-genetic research had demonstrated that the categories of thought were conceived not apriorically, but through ‘empirical association’, he was unwilling to jettison apriorism entirely. Instead he sought to maintain the *normative* necessity of the laws of logic, as he saw this as the only possible way in which norms and maxims could claim validity in logic as they did in ethics (cf. Köhnke 1991, p. 236).

Windelband’s solution is to distinguish between *judgements* and *valuations*. Judgements are ontological in nature, in that they relate predicates to the subject, and, as such, consciousness adopts a purely theoretical attitude to the object of judgement. Valuations, however, are axiological, in that consciousness adopts an evaluative position that is not only cognitive but also emotional and volitional. It is, furthermore, only through axiological valuation that the subject can elucidate values:

In the first place, every value signifies something which satisfies a need or occasions a feeling of pleasure. It follows that valuableness (naturally, in the negative sense of a dis-value as well as in the positive sense of value) never belongs to objects in themselves alone, as a property, but always and only in relation to an evaluating consciousness which in willing satisfies its needs or in feeling reacts to the influences of the environment. If willing and feeling were removed, there would no longer be any values.

(Windelband quoted in Schnädelbach 1984, p. 181)

Furthermore, Windelband argues that, except for the value of pure theoretical truths, consciousness of values is attached to single, individual things and as such only the single or unique has intrinsic worth (Willey 1978, p. 137). This view helped the *Geisteswissenschaften* to liberate themselves further from the theoretical methodology of the *Naturwissenschaften*.

Windelband was an opponent of historicism and relativism, and sought to establish the universal nature of values. However, Windelband realises that the pure objectivity of values is untenable, he seeks to establish the objectivity of valuation, or the universal validity of values. Applying the philosophy of Lotze, Windelband knows he cannot establish the validation of values through *facts* (subjective facts or cultural facts). He therefore, like Lotze, looks at the

philosophy of Fichte, and postulates a universal normative consciousness—a direct descendant of Fichte’s absolute ego—from which all knowledge and culture flow.<sup>4</sup> The universal normative consciousness is a transcendental axiology, according to which normal consciousness can make theoretical judgements and valuations, and serves as the foundation of Windelband’s epistemology:

It is important in this context that ‘truth’ was also thought of as a value-concept; truth was thus seen as a *theoretical* value, and accordingly the traditional division of philosophy into logic, ethics and aesthetics was then given a foundation in value theory: these disciplines concerned themselves with the true, the good and the beautiful and thus followed the ‘division of the universally valid values’.

(Schnädelbach 1984, p. 182)

The synthesis of these values into a *Weltanschauung* leads normal consciousness to postulate a philosophy of religion, according to which God is conceived as the universal normative consciousness.

Hermann Cohen’s approach to Kant typifies the neo-Kantianism that was to come from the Marburg School. With respect to the *Naturwissenschaften*, Cohen pressed for the primacy of *a priori* certainty and consequently rejected Kant’s thing-in-itself (which marks the limit of our knowledge), postulating instead metaphysical monism, wherein pure reason is limited only by what it has itself constructed. However, Cohen’s principal concern was to establish a logic of jurisprudence and ethics that could emulate the certainty of, what he saw as, the synthetic *a priori* propositions of mathematics. Cohen’s argument that objective reality is an *a priori* construction, lies at the foundation of his notion of universal culture, and it is from this conception that he hopes to draw the universality of the moral law and its validity and value for all rational human beings.

Freedom to Cohen is a noumenal idea that exemplifies the entelechy of humankind’s development in moral society. Furthermore, like the *a priori* forms of time and space, freedom ‘produces’ its own realities, namely moral and ethical realities that possess being, but does not constitute phenomenal (and historical) existence. That is, according to Cohen freedom possesses being ‘insofar as it commands a purpose’—that purpose being the development of rational humanity, both morally and culturally, according to what ought to be as opposed to what phenomenally is (cf. Willey 1978, p. 113):

Cohen’s contribution to democratic socialism created an ethics in which individual freedom is meaningful and purposeful only in a community of free individuals. His theory of freedom was derived from Kant’s distinction between causal determinism in the world of appearance [phenomenal] and autonomy in the intelligible world of moral freedom [noumenal]. But he tried to conquer the practical difficulties in Kant’s dualism by converting the categorical imperative, the law of the self-legislating individual, into the social imperative, the law of self-legislating society.

(Willey 1978, p. 112, square brackets added)

Because the ethical reality is noumenal, it affects empirical or phenomenal reality only insofar as it directs purpose. It does *not* affect causality or re-direct phenomenal events. Thus, Cohen upholds Kant’s dualism between humankind’s nature and intellect, and places the teleological *ought*, the sphere of purpose and moral choice, outside the realm of the natural world and history. Cohen recasts Kant’s categorical imperative, however, from a law for individual moral agency to one of moral socialism:

According to Cohen, the moral law has two meanings: ‘The idea of humanity and the idea of socialism’. These two ideas have no determinate content. They possess the

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<sup>4</sup> The absolute ego—Fichte’s *prima principii*—is an analogue of God, whom Fichte regards as the human kind’s universal normative consciousness (cf. Fichte 1970).



character of 'purpose'. Humanity and socialism belong to the Ought, the world of ethical objectives; they exist as a mission for man's moral will.

(Willey 1978, p. 117)

Thus, Kant's categorical imperative becomes in Cohen's *Ethik des Reinen Willens* (*Ethics of Pure Will*), the law that one should 'act as though the element of humanity in one's own person, as well as in the person of every other individual, is treated at all times as a purpose, never merely as a means' (Cohen, quoted in Willey 1978, p. 112).

However, the very fact that Cohen and other neo-Kantians (such as Paul Natorp, Windelband and Rickert) speak of 'being' as a concept and an (de)ontological category demonstrates that their 'return to Kant' did not—indeed could not—efface the influence of post-Kantian idealism (i.e. Fichtianism and Hegelianism), in that Kant's philosophy does not discuss being as such, as he does not recognise it as a concepts of an ontology in the way that post-Kant philosophy does.<sup>5</sup> 'Being', writes Kant, 'is obviously not a real concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. [...] Logically, it is merely the copula of a judgement' (CPR, A598-9/B626-7, pp. 504-5).

## (B) *Lebensphilosophie: Culture and History*

Many German idealists at the beginning of the twentieth century, who had accepted Kantian idealism felt that (following Hegel) his philosophy had to be expanded to provide a logical and epistemological analysis of the conditions of historical and cultural thought. Dilthey felt that this could be achieved if we differentiated sharply between the sphere of the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften*. As such Dilthey proposes that a 'Critique of Historical Reason' is needed alongside the three *Critiques* of Kant. Dilthey writes:

Mankind, if apprehended only by perception and perceptual knowledge, would be for us a physical fact, and as such it would be accessible only to natural-scientific knowledge. It becomes an object for the human studies only in so far as human states are consciously lived [*Erlebt*], insofar as they are expressed in living utterances, and in so far as these expression are understood. [...] In short, it is through the process of understanding (*verstehen*) that life in its depths is made clear to itself, and on the other hand we understand ourselves and others only when we transfer our own lived experience [*Erlebnis*] into every kind of expression of our own and other people's life. Thus everywhere the relationship between lived experience [*Erlebnis*], expression, and understanding is the proper procedure by which mankind as an object in the human studies exists for us. The human studies are thus founded on this relation between lived experience [*Erlebnis*], expression and understanding.

(Dilthey, quoted in Hodges 1944, p.142)

That is according to Dilthey, the *Geisteswissenschaften* ('the human studies') have for their object of enquiry life-forms—the expressed *Erlebnisen* of human beings—which 'are to be adequately understood in their dynamic relationships through the inner, lived experience of the concrete expressions and symbolic meanings which constitute these forms' (Bidney 1949, p. 489). The *Naturwissenschaften* in contrast, is said to deal with the abstract and value-free objects as we experience and know them directly through observation and explain them causally.

Thus, the distinction Dilthey draws between *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften* is based on the discrimination between the laws of the physical world on the one hand and *Erlebnis* or 'lived experience' on the other. In *Kritik der Historischen*

<sup>5</sup> cf. Schnädelbach 1984, Köhnke 1991.

## Chapter 1

*Vernunft* (*Critique of Historical Reason*, 1927) Dilthey writes:

The life of the mind is based on the physical and represents the highest evolutionary stage on earth. Science, by discovering the laws of physical phenomena, unravels the conditions under which mind occurs. Among observable bodies we find that of man: experience is related to man in a way which cannot be further explained. But with experience we step from the world of physical phenomena into the realm of mental reality. This is the subject matter of the human studies on which we must reflect: the value of knowledge in them is quite independent of the study of their physical conditions.

(Dilthey 1997, p. 151)

Life, according to Dilthey, consists of *Erlebnissen* (lived experiences) which are inwardly related to each other, through interconnectedness. This interconnectedness is a category originating from life, and is experienced by the subject by virtue of the unity of consciousness, which is the condition of apprehension. However, unlike Kant, Dilthey argues that

connectedness clearly does not follow from the fact of a manifold of experiences being presented to a unitary consciousness. Only because life is itself a structural connection of experiences—i.e. experience-able relations—is the connectedness of life given.

(Dilthey 1997, p. 151)

Dilthey's notion that the structural connectedness of life is the product of *Erlebnissen* and that the 'categorical characterization of life is temporality which forms the basis for all others', such that 'time is there for us through the synthesizing unity of consciousness', clearly reveals his debt to Hegel for whom time is the 'product' of the phenomenon of *Erfahrung* and the development of concepts (Enc. III § 258A). However, whereas Hegel uses the noun *Erfahrung*, Dilthey uses the noun *Erlebnis*. Both translate as 'to experience', the difference being that, unlike *Erfahrung*, *Erlebnis* has as its root the noun *Leben* (life)—which is crucial to Dilthey.<sup>6</sup> Whereas Hegel holds that life is *Geist* in the state of Nature, and that *Erfahrung* is the dialectical movement consciousness exercises as a *Geist*, Dilthey switches the relationship around: *Erlebnis* is the synthesising movement consciousness experiences as a living thing, and it is the objectification of life that gives rise to the notion of *Geist*. Therefore, for Dilthey, as opposed to Hegel, *Geist* exemplifies life and not *vice versa*.

The neo-Hegelian nature of Dilthey's *Lebensphilosophie* is clearly demonstrated in the following paragraph:

We can try to envisage the flow of life in terms of the changing environment or see it, with Heraclitus [sic.], as seeming, but not being, the same, as seeming both many and one. But, however much we try—by some special effort—to experience the flow and strengthen our awareness of it, we are subject to the law of life itself according to which every observed moment of life is a remembered moment and not a flow; *it is fixed by attention which arrests what is essentially flow*. So we cannot grasp the essence of this life. What the youth of Sais unveils [the statue of truth] is form and not life. We must be aware of this if we are to grasp the categories which emerge in life itself.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Erfahrung*: to hear, to learn; to experience; to come to know; to find out. 'Produkt der Sinne und des Verstandes' (Kant, CPR) 'The product of the Senses and the Understanding' (Stockhammer 1980, p. 94).

*Erlebnis*: to live; to see; to witness; (*Erfahrung*) to experience. '*Leben ist für das Subjekt ein Erleben*' (H. Schmidt) 'Life is for the Subject a Living-experience'. *Erleben* is seen as subjectively important *Erfahrung* (Stockhammer 1980, p. 100).

<sup>7</sup> The reference is to a famous poem by Schiller about a youth of the city Sais, in ancient Egypt, who unveiled

(Dilthey 1997, p. 151, square brackets added)

Dilthey demonstrates his neo-Hegelianism in this passage not only through his adoption of Heraclitus' philosophy and the Hegelian logic that it engendered, but also, and principally, for the distinction he draws between life and form, a distinction that exemplifies Hegel's dynamic between spirit (*Geist*) and the formations of spirit (*Gestaltungen*).<sup>8</sup>

Dilthey, as we have seen, argues that life consists of *Erlebnissen* (lived experiences) which are inwardly related to each other, through interconnectedness in time. He argues in the essay 'Das Verstehen anderer Personen und ihrer Lebensäußerungen' ('The Understanding of Other Persons and their Life-expressions', 1900) that our understanding of another's life-expression is developed through experience (*Erlebnis*), self-understanding and the interaction between I and Thou. Below Dilthey discusses how our understanding of another person's 'life-expressions' depends upon the autonomous 'forms of understanding'—which have various classes:

Concepts, judgements and larger thought-structures form the first of these classes. As constituent parts of knowledge, separated from the experience in which they occurred, what they have in common is conformity to logic. They retain their identity, therefore, independently of their position in the context of thought. Judgement asserts the validity of a thought independently of the varied situations in which it occurs, the difference of time and people involved. This is the meaning of the law of identity. Thus the judgement is the same for the man who makes it and the one who understands it; it passes, as if transported, from the speaker to the one who understands it. This determines how we understand any logically perfect system of thought. Understanding, focusing entirely on the content which remains identical in every context, is, here, more complete than in relation to any other life-expression.

(Dilthey 1997, p. 153)

However, while the 'forms of understanding' allow persons to establish a logically consistent mode of understanding, they *de facto* cannot communicate the understanding of the individual and unique person as a living/experiencing mind. This is because the Law of Identity ensures that the concept or judgement  $x$  is consistent and unvarying as a 'form of understanding' in that its content/sense and validity always remains the same (i.e. it is *a priori* and ideal) with every instance of ascription (i.e.  $x = x$ ). However, the actual *Erlebnis*  $E$  or 'lived-experience' of the concept or judgement  $x$  differs with the various situations in which it occurs, and with the time and person involved, so that the life-experiences of person  $S$  of the concept  $x$  would consist of the moments  $E_1(x)$ ,  $E_2(x)$ ,  $E_3(x)$ ,...  $E_n(x)$  where  $E_1(x) \neq E_2(x)$ . Furthermore, it follows that although individual  $O$  can understand individual  $S$ 's expression, by virtue of the expression exemplifying the 'form of understanding'  $x$ , the expression cannot convey  $S$ 's *Erlebnis* ( $ES$ ) of  $x$ , i.e.  $ES(x)$ . Because  $ES(x) \neq EO(x)$ .<sup>9</sup> That is:

At the same time such an expression does not reveal to the one who understands it anything about its relation to the obscure and rich life of the mind. There is no hint of the particular life from which it arose; it follows from its nature that it does not require

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the statue of truth (Dilthey 1997, p. 152—translator's note).

<sup>8</sup> In the early philosophy of Hegel life is the fundamental category of the dialectic. Life is understood in the Heraclitean sense, as that which is dynamic for the process and the organic. Life stands opposed to that which is fixed, abstract, mechanical and dead. In PS Hegel goes on to develop the view that life exemplifies *Geist*; that life is *Geist* in the state of nature. Dilthey, however, redefines the relation between life and *Geist* in exactly the opposite way to Hegel. He denies that life is a deficient mode of *Geist* and claims instead that *Geist* is simply the objectification of life. Consequently, for Dilthey the dialectic is simply a dynamic of life as opposed to the rational will.

<sup>9</sup> Here is illustrated the crucial difference between Kantian idealism and Hegelian idealism, in that Hegel's dialectical or Heraclitean logic does not maintain the law of identity  $A = A$ . Therefore, we cannot differentiate between the 'judgement or concept'  $x$  and the experience ' $E_n(x)$ '.

us to go back to its psychological context.

(Dilthey 1997, p. 153)

Thus, 'forms of understanding' *cannot* express the living-experience (*Erlebnis*) of one individual to another, as they do not express any psychological context.

The significance of Dilthey's theory is that it separates cultural values and ends as the expression of historical reason from the value-free facts and laws provided by the natural sciences. Moreover, because cultural values and ends are the free expression and creation of historical reason, they are historically relative to their time and society. Therefore, Dilthey concluded, there is not and cannot be any universal criterion (including, naturally, Kant's *a priori* categorical imperative) by which the values and ends could be measured or evaluated in relation to one another:

The knives of historical relativism which have cut to pieces all metaphysics and religion, must also bring healing. We only need to be thorough. We must make philosophy itself an object of study. There is need of a science which will apply evolutionary concepts and comparative methods to the study of the systems themselves. [...] Every solution of the philosophical problem belongs from an historical point of view to a particular date and a particular situation at that date; man, the creature of time, so long as he works in time, finds the security of his existence in the fact that he lifts his creations out of the stream of time as something lasting: this illusion gives to his creative work a greater joy and power. [...] Philosophy cannot comprehend the world in its essence by means of a metaphysical system, and set forth this knowledge in a way that is universally valid. [...] thus from all the enormous labour of the metaphysical mind there remains the historical consciousness, which repeats that labour in itself and so experiences in it the inscrutable depths of the world. The last word of the mind which has run through all the outlooks is not the relativity of them all, but the sovereignty of the mind in the face of each one of them, and at the same time the positive consciousness of the way in which, in the various attitudes of the mind, the one reality of the world exists for us.

(Dilthey quoted in Hodges 1944, p. 154n)

Thus Dilthey affirms the historical relativity of all philosophical systems, and the in-validity of metaphysics. Instead, Dilthey argues, we need to find solace in the fact of the mind's inherent sovereignty and freedom in the creation of its own cultural forms, values and perspectives. Thus Dilthey follows Hegel by arguing that historical relativism is linked, not to determinism, but to human freedom and self-expression. Thus the fact that humans are free to conceive their own world of values and to construct the world in terms of their *Erlebnissen* is not only the ground for the historical relativity of humankind's achievements, but is also the ground for humankind's continuing development.

A similar argument is put forward by Simmel, who writes of humankind's unceasing dynamic of *self-transcendence*—which is Simmel's conception on the dialectical relationship between life and cultural forms. Like Dilthey's, Simmel's work clearly shows the reluctance of *Lebensphilosophie* to abandon Hegel's logic and worldview in its entirety.

In his essay 'The Transcendent Character of Life', Simmel presents a critique of the Kantian and neo-Kantian concept of the object; a concept that he feels lacks the dynamic of the actual experience of the object as a phenomenon in life. Nor does the neo-Kantian concept of the object, Simmel argues, adequately address humankind's realisation that their conception of the object changes through history—a view that is quintessentially Hegelian. He writes that:

If we assume that the ascertainment of fact depends on *a priori* categories of knowledge which transform the given material of the world into objects, what is 'given' must nevertheless be susceptible to being informed by these categories. Now it

is either the case that the human mind is so set up that nothing at all can be 'given' to it which does not fit these categories, or else they may determine from the outset the way in which a 'givenness' can take place. Whether this determination of fact takes place one way or another, there exists no guarantee that the given (be it given in the sensible or the metaphysical manner) will actually enter completely into the forms of our cognition. Just as little of everything that is given us from the world enters into the forms of art, just as little as religion can possess itself of every content of life, so little perhaps is the totality of the given accommodation by these forms or categories of cognition.

(Simmel 1971, p. 357)

Simmel notes, however, that humankind's very ability to conceive the idea that the world might not be able to 'wholly enter the forms of our cognition' is indicative of humankind's capacity for self-transcendence. That is:

The fact that even in a purely problematical way we can think something given in the world which we just cannot think of—this represents a movement of the mental life over itself. *It is a breaking through and attaining the beyond, not only of a single boundary, but of mind's limit's altogether; an act of self-transcendence, which alone sets the immanent limits of cognition, no matter whether these limits are actual or only possible.*

(Simmel 1971, p. 357, emphasis added)

The fact that we as humankind are aware of our *knowing* and of our *not knowing* is, according to Simmel, the 'real infinity of vital movement on the level of the intellect', and this movement is only possible because there are boundaries, that is, there exists things to transcend—namely, forms of understanding. Hence, Simmel surmises that:

It is only with this self-transcending movement that the mind shows itself to be something vital. This carries over into the realm of ethics in the idea, arising ever again in numerous forms, that the moral task of man is to overcome himself.

(Simmel 1971, p. 358)

Simmel notes, however, that, logically considered, self-transcendence is a contradiction. And yet, he writes:

the contradiction only arises when one hardens the two aspects of this unity into opposed, mutually exclusive conceptions. It is precisely the fully unified process of the moral life which surpasses every state through a higher one, and again this latter state through a still higher. That man overcomes himself means that he reaches out beyond the bounds which the moment sets for him. There must be something at hand to be overcome, but this it is only there for the purpose of being overcome. So also as an ethical agent, man is the limited being that has no limit.

(Simmel 1971, pp. 358-9)

Simmel's moment of self-transcendence clearly resembles Hegel's phenomenological *Erfahrung* and the notion of *boundary relation* where consciousness becomes aware that it has to overcome the contradiction between the *limit* of its conception of a thing and the reality of the thing (cf. PS § 86, p. 55).<sup>10</sup>

Simmel's essay 'Social Forms and Inner Needs' discusses the necessity of and the manner in which human kind overcomes the 'bounds' culture and society set for it. Simmel notices that there is a 'basic dualism' between the fluctuating and 'constantly developing life-process' of social relations and the 'relatively stable external form' they exhibit:

The sociological forms of reciprocal behaviour, of unification, of presentation towards the outside, cannot follow, with any precise adaptation, the changes of their inside,

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<sup>10</sup> On the dialectical notion of *limit*, *boundary* and *self-transcendence* see Appendices I and II.

that is, of the processes that occur in the individual in regard to the other. These two layers, relation and form, have different tempi of development; or it is the nature of the external from not to develop properly at all.

(Simmel 1971, p. 351)

According to Simmel ‘the strongest external measure for fixing internally variable relations is law’—by which he means judicial and social laws. Form as such ‘comes to constitute a more or less rigid handicap for the relation in its further course, while the form itself is incapable of adapting to the vibrating life and the more or less profound changes of this concrete, reciprocal relation’ (Simmel 1971, pp. 351-2). Nevertheless, the existence and construction of forms is essential in that the constantly developing life-process of our inner life:

becomes crystallized, even for ourselves, in formulas and fixed directions often merely by the fact that we verbalize this life. Even if this leads only rarely to specific inadequacies; even if, in fortunate cases, the fixed external form from constitutes the center of gravity or indifference above and below which our lives evenly oscillates; there still remains the fundamental, formal contrast between the essential flux and movement of the subjective psychic life and the limitations of its forms. These forms, after all, do not express or shape an ideal, a contrast with life’s reality, but this life itself.

(Simmel 1971, p. 352)

Simmel’s contention that cultural forms enable us to comprehend and create a stable conception of (essentially social) life, simply recasts Hegel’s notion of the necessity of *Gestaltungen* to establish a stable ‘social space’ for spirit (cf. Appendix I).

Forms, argues Simmel, do not flow in the manner that our inner life does, rather they *always* remain fixed for a certain period of time—much like Hegel’s notion that *Gestaltungen* are historical *Erscheinungen*. As such, it is their nature to either sometimes lag behind or be ahead of life’s ‘inner reality’: ‘More specifically, when the life, which pulsates beneath outlived forms, breaks these forms, it swings into the opposite extreme, so to speak, and creates forms ahead of itself, forms which are not yet completely filled out by it’ (Simmel 1971, p. 352).

The logic of Simmel’s dynamic of self-transcendence is essentially the dynamic of Hegel’s dialectic. However, like Dilthey, Simmel locates the dialectical force behind humankind’s self-transcendence not within objective spirit as does Hegel, but within the struggle between life and cultural forms. He writes:

If now life—as a cosmic, generic, singular phenomenon—is such a continuous stream, there is good reason for its profound opposition against form. This opposition appears as the unceasing, usually unnoticed (but often revolutionary) battle of ongoing life against the historical pattern and formal inflexibility of any given cultural content, thereby becoming the innermost impulse toward culture change.

(Simmel 1971, p. 366)

Thus, Simmel, like Dilthey, recasts Hegel’s dialectic of spirit into a dialectic of life, replacing Hegel’s abstract notions of *Geist* and *Gestaltungen* with life and cultural forms. This is important, because it is on this premise that I shall argue that Bakhtin’s early philosophical works (principally TPA) already adhere to and maintain facets of Hegelian thought as mediated through thinkers such as Dilthey and Simmel.

However, prior to discussing Bakhtin’s adherence to important tenets of *Lebensphilosophie*, I shall examine his views regarding the *Naturwissenschaften* followed by his ethical philosophy in relation to (neo-) Kantianism—although not exclusively, as I shall demonstrate the influence of *Lebensphilosophie* and the growing presence of early Husserlian phenomenology in Bakhtin’s thought. It is, furthermore, important to (re-) stress that TPA does not discuss these issues in isolation, and that the demarcated approach I have taken is to

enhance the clarity of the issues discussed by Bakhtin. Therefore, I shall consistently attempt to demonstrate how the various issues interrelate in Bakhtin's philosophy of the act.

## 1.2 Bakhtin: The Ideality of the *Naturwissenschaften*

Like Kant, Bakhtin maintains that theoretical knowledge (including laws) has an 'autonomous truth [*istina*]' (TPA, p. 49) whose validity is 'sufficient unto itself, absolute, and eternal' (TPA, p. 10). That is to say, the validity of theoretical propositions are true *a priori*.<sup>11</sup>

The validity of a theoretical positing does not depend on whether it has been cognized by someone or not. Newton's laws were valid in themselves even before Newton discovered them, and it was not this discovery that made them valid for the first time. But these truths did not exist as *cognized* truths [*istina*]*—*as moments participating in once-occurrent being-as-event, and this is of essential importance, for this is what constitutes the sense of the deed that cognizes them. It would be a crude mistake to think that these eternal truths-in-themselves *existed* earlier, before Newton discovered them.<sup>12</sup>

(TPA, p. 10, second emphasis added)

Thus, laws of nature, such as Newton's laws of motion, have a validity that is true *a priori in itself*—indeed, Bakhtin maintains that truth-in-itself must be true *a priori* (cf. TPA, p. 10).<sup>13</sup> However, these *a priori* truths do not *exist* in themselves; they require to be cognized *for themselves* by a subject. That is to say that Bakhtin, like Kant, considers the *a priori* truths ideal, and as such they are concepts of reason, which means that there are no empirical objects that correspond to them that are *given* to the subject in experience. Hence, whereas the validity of *a priori* truths is autonomous of the subject, the *existence* of such truths is *a posteriori* in that it is dependent on the cognition or judgement of the subject. This is to say that, although the *a priori* truth X is justifiable independently of the judgement (J)X, it is brought into existence by the subject through his/her formation of the judgement (J)X.

We would be mistaken, therefore, if we were to read Bakhtin's statement that the *a priori* ideas are eternal as suggesting that they possess some kind of existential quality. Because, Bakhtin argues, existence or being is posited within *real* time, and the concept of *eternity* (as a quality of *a priori* truth and theoretical knowledge) should not be confused with the notion of 'our temporality of duration without end' (TPA, p. 10). That is, eternity is similar in kind to infinity, in that both are purely formal concepts which are necessary *a priori* for theoretical knowledge such as mathematics and natural science. And as such, they are ideal.

Bakhtin's distinction between *eternity* and *duration without end* is suggestive of the philosophical doctrines of the French *Lebensphilosoph* Henri-Louis Bergson (1859-1941) and the Austrian religious/'existentialist' philosopher Martin Buber (1878-1965).<sup>14</sup> Like Bergson, Bakhtin understands duration or 'historical temporality' as the *phenomenal time* experienced by a conscious subject. As such, it is heterogeneous, it moves from the open future to the actual present to the closed past; it is ever changing without repeating itself, and it cannot be divided into discrete instants. In mathematics and natural science time is *noumenal*, it is a

<sup>11</sup> We should define any truth that is eternal, absolute and in itself (*An sich*) as *a priori*.

<sup>12</sup> It seems peculiar that Bakhtin should support the *a priori* status of Newtonian physics in light of the fact that recent theories with the inception of both relativity and quantum physics supplanted Newton's *absolute* truths.

<sup>13</sup> Some thing or quality of the thing is said to be 'in itself' if it is self-sufficient and autonomous, and 'for itself' when the thing or quality of the thing needs to be determined by a consciously experiencing subject. Although Bakhtin does not use the concepts 'truth-in-itself' or 'truth-for-itself' in TPA, the logic of his argument points to these concepts.

<sup>14</sup> Bakhtin refers to Bergson on several occasions; TPA, pp. 13, 21 and AH, pp. 43, 62.

homogeneous medium which can be divided into any direction and into discrete instants of equal length and of identical tensed quality *ad infinitum*.

Bakhtin's position, furthermore, reflects the growing debate *against* the Kantian notion of the transcendental status of space and time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For instance, the famous French psychologist Marcel Guyau argued at the beginning of the twentieth century in his influential essay *La Genèse de l'idée du temps* (1910), that the Kantian notion of time was unsatisfactory from a psychological standpoint. Guyau argued that time should not be understood 'as a prior condition, but as a consequence of, our experience of the world'—a view that resembles that of Dilthey and Hegel as I have shown (Whitrow 1975, p. 26).<sup>15</sup>

Phenomenal time becomes, in Bakhtin's philosophy, the temporality of historical cognition, and noumenal time becomes the theoretical 'extra-temporal'. Thus, argues Bakhtin, the extra-temporal validity of *a priori* truth (*istina*) is an ideal moment, brought into existence by historical cognition (a concept that is clearly in agreement with Dilthey's and Simmel's *Lebensphilosophie*):<sup>16</sup>

The abstract moment of truth's extra-temporal validity can be contraposed to the equally abstract moment constituted by the temporality of the object of historical cognition. But this entire contraposition does not go beyond the bounds of the theoretical world, and it possesses sense and validity only within that world, whereas the extra-temporal validity of the whole theoretical world of truth fits, in its entirety, within the actual historicity of Being-as-event. Fits within it not temporally or spatially, of course (for these are all abstract moments), but as a moment that enriches Being-as-event. [...] The actual act of cognition—not from within its theoretical-abstract product (i.e., from within a universally valid judgement), but as an answerable act or deed—brings any extra-temporal validity into communion with once-occurrent Being-as-event.

(TPA, pp. 10-11)

It is clear, therefore, that Bakhtin does not support Kant's transcendental aesthetic that renders time and space as pure or *a priori* intuitions (cf. CPR, A19-21/B34-35, pp. 65-7). Only in the noumenal realm, or 'the theoretical world', argues Bakhtin, can they be treated as such. The reason for this is that, although Bakhtin believes that the *a priori* forms are Ideal, he does not treat the objects corresponding to them as being *transcendental*, i.e. *prior* to experience, but rather as being *transcendent*, i.e. *outside* of experience in the Platonic sense—that is, Bakhtin is concerned with the *experience* of the *a priori*, *not* the *possibility* of the *a priori* like Kant.

Kant, I have shown, argues that the transcendental objects corresponding to our *a priori* ideas or forms of understanding cannot be deduced by theoretical reason; only practical reason can *confirm their existence* as *a priori* necessary for rationality-in-itself. That is, Kantian transcendental idealism argues that the *transcendental subject* brings the *a priori* categories of synthesis *to* the intuitable object X *prior* to the subject's judgement (J)X. Bakhtin, however, argues that the *a priori* element of the subject's judgement (J)X comes into being *with* the judgement (J)X as a formal 'transcendent' moment of the judgement. Thus, whereas, Kant argues that the *a priori* ideas are transcendental, and their existence is *confirmed* or 'lit up' through practical reason when the subject forms the judgement (J)X, Bakhtin argues that *a priori* ideas or forms of understanding are 'brought into existence'

<sup>15</sup> In his later essay 'Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel' Bakhtin argues that the subject's experience of time is a 'given' phenomenon of 'immediate reality' (FTC p. 85, n.2). For a good analysis and critique of Bakhtin's notion of time, space and the chronotope and their relation to Kant and Kantianism see Bernhard Scholtz's 'Bakhtin's Concept of "Chronotope": the Kantian Connection' (Scholtz, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> See in particular Simmel's *The Problems of the Philosophy of History* (1892, 1905), 'Chapter Two: On Historical Laws' (Simmel 1977, pp. 103-46).



*transcendently* through the theoretical objectification by the subject of the judgement *x*. The consequence of Bakhtin's view of the *a priori* ideas with regard to the transcendental subject is dramatic, as we shall see.

**(A) *Pravda-Istina, Postupok-Akt: Truth and the Act***

In order to distinguish between the temporal and historical conditions of truth, on the one hand, and the extra-temporal conditions of truth, on the other, Bakhtin uses two different terms for *truth*: *pravda* and *istina*. The Russian *pravda* is derived from *right, just*, and is used in the conditional mode of 'true to someone'. Bakhtin's use of the term *pravda* closely follows this meaning. *Istina* refers to what is *genuinely* true, or the precise realisation of something; it is the conscious realisation or perception of what exists *objectively*.<sup>17</sup> Bakhtin generally uses *istina* to refer to what is *a priori* or theoretically true, and as such, he denies the independent or objective existence of *istina*. That is to say, *istina* is never given (*dana*) but is always posited (*zadana*) within the conscious judgement or act of the subject. Therefore, as the individual act or judgement of a truth necessarily constitutes a truth *for* someone, making the truth *pravda*, it follows that *istina* is necessarily posited *in pravda*.

Bakhtin, as I have shown, maintains that theoretical knowledge has an 'autonomous truth [*istina*]' whose validity is 'sufficient unto itself, absolute, and eternal'; i.e., the truths of theoretical knowledge are true *a priori* (TPA, pp. 49, 10). However, as *a priori* truths are ideal, they do not exist in themselves as they are extra-temporal, and as such they require to be cognised by a subject in order to exist. Hence, although the *a priori* truth *x* is justifiable independently of the judgement (J)*x*, it is brought into *existence* or *posited* by the subject through his/her formation of the judgement (J)*x*. As such, argues Bakhtin, the *judgement* or *act* (J)*x* *embodies* the truth as *istina* (by virtue of *x*'s *a priori* validity) *for* the subject as *pravda* (by virtue of the particular *act*). Therefore, we could state that Bakhtin's *pravda* is similar in kind to a *propositional attitude*. Propositional attitudes are predications of certain mental states (e.g. 'William believes that *x*') that express a relation between a person (William) and a proposition (that *x*).

In this respect, Bakhtin's distinction between *istina* and *pravda* is similar to Dilthey's distinction between a 'form of understanding' and our 'lived experience' (*Erfahrung*) of that form. Such that the form of understanding *x* is true-in-itself (*istina*), but that our lived experience *E* of *x* is true for us *EX* (*pravda*). Moreover, both Bakhtin and Dilthey agree that a 'form of understanding' can only enter life, and become part of reality once it is experienced by a subject.

Furthermore, the distinction between truth-in-itself (*istina*) and truth-for-itself (*pravda*) demonstrates the phenomenological nature of Bakhtin's argument regarding the nature of the act or judgement. For instance let us consider the act of judging an object  $\alpha$ . A given object  $\alpha$  may have the properties *x*, *y*, and *z* and will always present these properties as they are *in themselves* and define the object's *unity*: e.g., a lemon is yellow, oval and sour *in itself*, and will continue to have these properties while it remains a lemon. However, an object-*for-itself* is *its* co-determinate context or *space*, existing '*for*' the object, defining the object's *difference*. This co-determinate space is determined by the perceiving subject. It is *determined* and is thus an *act*; as such object  $\alpha$ 's properties *for itself* may at *time*  $T_1$  be  $x_1$ ,  $y_1$  and  $z_1$ , and at *time*  $T_2$  be  $x_2$ ,  $y_2$  and  $z_2$ . The point being that although the properties of object  $\alpha$  *in itself* are *x*, *y*, and *z*, they are not identical with the properties of object  $\alpha$  *for itself*,  $x_1$ ,  $y_1$  and  $z_1$  at  $T_1$ , or  $x_2$ ,  $y_2$  and  $z_2$  at  $T_2$ . Furthermore,  $x_1$  is not identical to  $x_2$  in that their co-

<sup>17</sup> Cf. P. Falla, M. Wheeler, and B. Unbegaun 1995, pp. 179, 392.

determinate contexts are different.

To take the distinction a step further: the properties that an object has *in itself* exemplify *universals*, whereas the properties an object has *for itself* exemplify *particulars*. Accordingly, the subject's relationship to an object is always a relationship to a *particular for itself*, and secondly, this *particular in itself* exemplifies, or is an *instance* of, a *universal*. It is only once the subject 'apprehends' the *particular* and the *universal* to form an *individual* that he or she can come to perceive the object. To illustrate, let us consider two red books—let us call them  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ . The red colour of  $\alpha$  is said to be located in the space where  $\alpha$  is; and similarly, the red colour of  $\beta$  is said to be located in the space where  $\beta$  is. As such, the colour of  $\alpha$  is not identical to that of  $\beta$ , since they are located at two different places. Although we attribute the quality of *redness* to both  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , the red of  $\alpha$  and the red of  $\beta$  are said to be different *colour instances* of red. Yet both these instances are instances of the same colour, namely red. There exists, therefore, the abstract colour shade of which the instances or *particulars*  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are instances. This abstract colour is known as the universal redness, or the *universal essence* red. Hence, when we perceive some object and judge it to be red, we are not only directly aware of the object's instance of redness as a *particular*, but are also directly perceptive of the object's exemplifying the universal red. The same example would work equally well if there were only one object  $\alpha$ , but two subjects A and B. Because A and B are located in different spaces their direct perceptions of  $\alpha$ 's redness are different *colour instances*, and are, hence, *different particulars*. However, both A and B directly apperceive that  $\alpha$  exemplifies the same *universal essence* red.

It is much the same case for our perception of truth as *pravda*, and its relation to *istina*. Bakhtin believes that the relativism inherent in the view that each individual perceives a different 'shade' of truth (*pravda*) is overcome in that each individual necessarily apprehends that his/her *pravda* exemplifies the same universal (*a priori*) *istina*:

There is no relativism here whatsoever: the truth [*pravda*] of Being-as-event contains within itself totally the whole extra-temporal absoluteness of theoretical truth [*istina*].<sup>18</sup>

(TPA, p. 71)

Thus, if the theoretical proposition X is true, it follows that X is true *not* because person A believes it to be true, nor even if all persons believe it to be true, but because X is true *a priori*. However, although it is unproblematic to argue that, for instance, different red objects can exemplify different *colour instances* or *shades* of the same universal essence red, it seems problematic to argue that different judgements or *instances* of the truth X (as *pravda*) can exemplify different 'shades' of the *universal* truth X (*istina*). To say that there are different 'shades' of a particular truth leads, unavoidably, either to contradiction and or relativism. We must ask, therefore, if X is true *a priori*, what then is the difference in truth *content* and truth *form* between X as *pravda* and X as *istina*?

Here we touch upon Bakhtin's two distinct concepts for a subject's act or deed: *postupok* and *akt*. The noun *postupok* means 'a step taken' or 'the taking of a step', and Bakhtin distinguishes this from the more general *akt*, which is the Russian equivalent of the Latin *actus* and *actum* (cf. Liapunov in TPA, p. xix). A subject's act of judging a truth as *pravda*, i.e. his/her *individual* judgement of the truth—exemplifying the unity of the universal and particular—represents the subject's individually answerable deed or *postupok*. Whereas the abstract theoretical, or *a priori*, element of the judgement—wherein the subject conceives, through abstraction, the universal truth (*istina*)—represents the subject's non-answerable deed

<sup>18</sup> Here Bakhtin demonstrates himself to be in accordance with Bergson's *Lebensphilosophie*, 'which', Bakhtin writes, 'endeavours to include the theoretical world within the unity of life-in-process-of-becoming' (TPA, p. 13).

or *akt* of judging. As such, every individually answerable act as *postupok* must exemplify a non-answerable (as it is necessary) act as *akt*. In this, Bakhtin's notions of *akt* and *postupok* are clearly similar to Dilthey's distinction between our *judgement* according to the 'forms of understanding' and our *Erlebnis* of that judgement in life (cf. 1.1B). This, in turn, is linked, in Bakhtin's TPA to Husserl's notion of the *real* and *ideal* content of the act (as, indeed, it is in Husserl's work *itself*).<sup>19</sup>

Husserl's *Logical Investigations*<sup>20</sup> developed an ontology that distinguishes between a 'whole' event or object and the 'parts' or 'moments' that make up that event or object. According to Husserl a *whole* may have two kinds of parts. A part that can exist independently of the whole is called a *piece*, and a part that cannot exist independently of the whole is called a *moment*. A moment, therefore, can only be abstracted from the whole conceptually, as the moment is a dependent part of a whole or event (cf. Smith 1996, p. 388).

The *Investigations* argues that an event that happens to an individual is a moment of the individual. Conversely, it follows that individual is a part of, or partakes in, the event. The *Investigations* identified several types of events, but the ones that concern us come under the category of (lived-) experiences (*Erlebnisse*). The most prominent *Erlebnisse* are those that are said, by Husserl, to be *intentional* experiences, where the individual is conscious of something.<sup>21</sup> As such, every intentional experience, or 'act', has a 'content', which identified according to 'act-species'. 'Species', writes David Smith, 'are "ideal", not in space or time, as opposed to "real", i.e., in space and/or time; however, the instance of the act-species exists in the act and thus in time (if not in space)' (Smith 1996, p. 328). As such the 'real' content of an act is a temporal and/or spatial part or moment of the act, and the 'ideal' content is the corresponding species outside of space and time.<sup>22</sup>

The realm of the 'ideal entities' or 'essences' (much simplified) consist of 'material individuals' ('table', 'cat', 'person', etc.), 'material essences' (extension, colour, weight, etc.), 'non-material essences' (relation, cause, identity) and 'consciousness' (i.e. 'my mind'). The realm of the 'real entities' includes concrete empirical individuals, such as trees, dogs, houses, and concrete empirical events and states of affairs (*Sachverhalte*). State of affairs are 'syntactically' or 'categorically' formed from real or concrete individuals (also known as 'substrata') and ideal instances of essences in individuals:

The state of affairs that this table is brown, for example, is formed from the table and its brownness, which is an instance of the essence Brown and is a 'moment' of the table (not the universal Brown, sharable by other brown objects, but a particular element of the table). Among individuals are both independent individuals, e.g., tables, and moments of individuals, e.g., instances of colors in tables.

(Smith 1996, p. 329).

The *Investigations* defines a *moment*, therefore, as a dependent part, one which cannot exist unless the whole of which it is part exists (cf. Husserl 1970, III § 17).

Husserl argues that the realm of the 'real' and that of the 'ideal'—of 'fact' and

<sup>19</sup> Although some Bakhtin scholars (e.g. Brian Poole 2001) caution against over-emphasising the influence of Husserl on Bakhtin, the similarity between Bakhtin's TPA and some of the key issues discussed by Husserl in his *Logical Investigations* (1900-01) is too persuasive to pass off. Bakhtin, it has been shown, had a good knowledge of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* and some knowledge of Husserl's *Ideas I* (1913) (cf. Liapunov, in TPA, p. 78 n.1, Averintsev, in TPA, p. 83 n.16).

<sup>20</sup> Henceforth *Investigations*.

<sup>21</sup> For Husserl, as for Bakhtin, *acts* of consciousness include perception, judgement, fantasy, desire, emotion, volition, etc. Furthermore, an act of consciousness is compound; that is, we do not necessarily experience various acts or objects in individual separated units. Thus both the act and the object of consciousness can be complicated, and can be divided into constituent acts and objects.

<sup>22</sup> In *Ideas I* Husserl departs from the *Investigation's* distinction between 'real' and 'ideal' to talk about the realm of 'sense or meaning' (*Sinn*) i.e. intentional content (c.f. Husserl 1980, § 1-16).

'essence'—are inseparable. In this the *Investigations* postulates a Platonic ontology, such that concrete individuals and states of affairs are real and thus exist in space and time, while essences are ideal, or non-real, and thus do not exist in space or time. Furthermore, whereas the being of concrete empirical objects and states of affairs is contingent, that of essences is necessary (cf. Husserl 1970, III § 16-17). Therefore, early Husserlian phenomenology has a realist ontology, by which is meant that Husserl (along with other phenomenologists, such as Alexis Meinong and Scheler) believes in the real existence of universals. As such, Husserl argues, the universal essence red is something that *necessarily* belongs to red objects.<sup>23</sup>

Returning to Bakhtin, we see how the act of judging something to be true is a complex act that has both a 'real' and an 'ideal' content. The 'real' content is exemplified by the subject judging (*postupok*) the truth as *pravda*, whereas the 'ideal' content is exemplified by judging (*akt*) the truth as *istina*. Hence Bakhtin's notion of truth: the *a priori* truth (*istina*) is a dependent part of someone's individual mental act (*postupok*), and cannot exist unless the whole of which it is part exists. The *whole* truth, *pravda*, is an intentional act (*postupok*) (i.e. the propositional attitude 'William believes that X'). The *a priori* truth, *istina*, is a necessary (ideal) *moment* of the whole truth, *pravda*, and can be abstracted from the *whole* through a conceptual act (*akt*). The conceptual act (*akt*) that establishes the truth as *istina*, although *intentional*, is *not* a propositional attitude, in that through the act (*akt*) of abstraction, the subject (e.g. William) abstracts *himself* from the judgement such that he is left with just the proposition ('that X'). In this respect, Bakhtin would argue, William is *not responsible* for the *a priori* truth (*istina*) of the proposition 'that X' even though *he* conceives it through *his akt*. Sergei Averintsev writes:

[...] the entire course of Bakhtin's thought as a whole is essentially close to Husserl's approach. Husserl's phenomenology is orientated toward the indivisible unity of 'lived-experience' (*Erlebnis*) and the 'intention' contained therein. Bakhtin's key-concepts ('event', 'event-ness', 'a performed action': *postupok*) are similar in this respect to Husserl's *Erlebnis*, in the sense of which, as we know, is by no means psychological; these key concepts are different in that they distinctly accentuate the problem of responsibility, which does not appear in this form in Husserl's thought.

(Averintsev, in TPA, p. 83 n16)

However, if truth is necessarily *a priori* (i.e. *istina*), as Bakhtin argues, then the *form* of and *content* of *pravda* is *necessarily* determined by *istina*—that is, there is no difference in either *form* or *content* between *pravda* and *istina* with respect to truth. This being the case, there is nothing in the *truth* of a judgement (*postupok*) of *pravda* for which the subject can be deemed responsible. Thus, if Bakhtin wants to maintain the differentiation between a judgement as *pravda* and *istina*, the difference *cannot* be with regard to either the judgement's truth *content* or *form*. He therefore argues that the differentiation between *pravda* and *istina* is conditioned not by its *content* or *form*, but by its correlation to its unique and once-occurrent moment wherein it was judged by the subject. As such, the only difference between *istina* and *pravda* is that *pravda* has the conditional predicate of 'for-someone' (i.e. it exemplifies *Erlebnis*), whereas *istina* does not.

Thus we can take a truth (*pravda*) and through objectification render it as *istina*. That is, we 'bracket out' the conditional predicate 'for-someone', and establish the truth as 'in

<sup>23</sup> Whereas Husserl's *Investigations* advocates an ontology that is explicitly realist, the *Ideas I* radically revises this position to establish a Kantian form of 'transcendental idealism'. This 'Kantian turn' came about following a series of lectures Husserl gave on Kant and post-Kantian philosophy in 1907/08, together with an ongoing correspondence with Paul Natorp and his reading of Heinrich Rickert's *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis* (*The Object of Knowledge*, 1892) (cf. Kern 1964). This is important, because it shows that Husserl (along with other German phenomenologists) engaged with, and in some respect was part of, the neo-Kantian movement.

itself'. This *somehow* changes the nature of the truth for Bakhtin. However, as neither the *content* nor the *form* of truth changes whether it is 'for someone' or 'in itself', the change cannot occur with respect to truth, but must be something with respect to our *act of judging* outside of the truth content or truth form of that act. Therefore, there must be something in the act of judging some *pravda* that has nothing to do with truth (either *istina* or *pravda*).

According to Bakhtin, *pravda* differs from *istina* not just in that *pravda* is *istina*-for-someone, but that, in being for someone, it expresses both a *volition* (an *ought*) and *value* for someone. Both volition and value are 'moments' of the subject's conscious act of judging (*postupok*) some truth (*pravda*), although *neither* affects the truth content or form.

In this Bakhtin's 'epistemology' not only agrees with that of Husserl's *Investigations* which defends the objectivity of mathematics, logic and other domains of knowledge against subjectivism by arguing that they *must* presuppose certain objective norms of reason, and these norms themselves presuppose certain theoretical truths about knowledge by exemplifying value or 'the constitutive content of the standard-setting predicate "good"' (Husserl 1970, I § 16). But, furthermore, Bakhtin demonstrates a concurrence with Lotze<sup>24</sup> and the Baden neo-Kantians, who maintain that our pursuit of truth emerges from the feeling that truth is intrinsically good (cf. Willey 1978, p. 50, Schnädelbach 1984, p. 181). As such, for Bakhtin, Husserl, Lotze and the Baden neo-Kantians our reception of what has value or is 'good' leads us to the realm of the ideal.

In the previous section I demonstrated that, like Kant's, Bakhtin's conception of the ideal is non-Platonic to the extent that Plato maintains that the noumenal realm of the ideal exists autonomously of the cognising subject, whereas both Kant and Bakhtin maintain that the existence of the ideal is dependent on the cognising subject. However, unlike Kant, who posits the ideal in the *transcendental subject*, Bakhtin, like Plato and Husserl, argues that the ideal belong to and are necessary moments of reality. Bakhtin maintains this 'realist' position because he rejects the Kantian transcendental subject as first philosophy.<sup>25</sup>

## (B) Rejecting the Transcendental Subject as *Prima Principia*

Bakhtin, like the Baden neo-Kantian Windelband and his pupil Rickert, believes that in Kant's philosophy the synthesising transcendental subject comes at the cost of the ego, or the 'I' (cf. 1.1A). Bakhtin, therefore, does not ground either the ego or 'I', or the given object, in the transcendental subject. Moreover, like the Baden neo-Kantians, Bakhtin does not jettison *apriorism*, but maintains the normative and axiological necessity of the *a priori* laws of theoretical thought. As such Bakhtin's contention that the extra-temporal realm of the ideal is accessible to the subject only when it comes into 'communion with once-occurrent Being-as-event', is crucial, because it follows that he restricts the transcendental subject to a purely formal-theoretical construct:

The discovery of an *a priori* element in our cognition did not open a way out from within cognition, i.e., from within its content/sense aspect, into the historically individual, actual cognitional act; it did not surmount their dissociation and mutual imperviousness, and hence one was compelled to think up a purely theoretical *subiectum* for this transcendent self-activity, a historical non-actual *subiectum*—a universal consciousness, a scientific consciousness, an epistemological *subiectum*.

<sup>24</sup> Lotze had a great influence on Husserl's thinking, especially in directing him towards the Platonism of the *Investigations* (cf. Smith & Smith 1996, p. 5).

<sup>25</sup> This destabilises Bakhtin's metaphysic, because it logically leads to the position that reality in itself is dependent on the subject, which is a form of metaphysical monism. However, we shall not explore this any further.

(TPA p. 6)

That is, Bakhtin rejects Kant's and the neo-Kantians' transcendental subject as a ground for the unity of the 'given' object, and limits it to something 'one was compelled to think up' in order to establish the *a priori* element of theoretical cognition, and ground our *understanding* of the world.

However, to view our *experience* of the world, and to view our *being* in the world, as purely derivative of and constructed by *a priori* components of experience by virtue of the transcendental subject, is to understand the world and being purely within a theoretical context—which is, according to Bakhtin, tantamount to putting the cart before the horse. To do so, argues Bakhtin, estranges us from the essence of the world and being:

Content/sense abstracted from the act/deed can be formed into a certain open and unitary Being, but this, of course, it not that unique Being in which we live and die, in which our answerable act or deeds are performed; it is essentially and fundamentally alien to living historicity. I cannot include my actual self and my life (*qua* moment) in the world constituted by the construction of theoretical consciousness in abstraction from the answerable and individual historical act. And yet such an inclusion is necessary if that world is the *whole* world, *all* of Being [...].

(TPA, pp. 8-9)

From this position Bakhtin presents his famous, although mostly misunderstood and misrepresented, attack on 'theoretism'. Theoretism, the noumenal or 'extra-temporal' *a priori* sphere of theoretical knowledge, is 'governed by its own immanent laws, according to which it then develops as if it had a will of its own' (TPA, p. 7). The lack of *participation* by the subject as a *living historical individual* within theoretism is what establishes the dualism between cognition and life, 'the dualism of thought and once-occurrent concrete actuality' (TPA, p. 7). Any attempt, argues Bakhtin, to 'surmount' this dualism from within theoretism itself is 'utterly hopeless', because:

Inasmuch as we have entered that content, i.e., performed an act of abstraction, we are now controlled by its autonomous laws, or to be exact, we are simply no longer present in it as individually and answerably active beings.

(TPA, p.7)

These 'autonomous laws', being *a priori*, are necessarily true independently of cognition, and as such are true independently of any particular subject. Thus, theoretical cognition *de facto* dismisses, as a formal requirement, the presence of the subject as a living, historical individual. It is here that Bakhtin locates the deficiency and the danger of theoretism. The theoretical disciplines (such as logic, formal ethics, mathematics, metaphysics, physics, chemistry, biology, etc.) are governed by their own immanent *a priori* laws, and they conform to these laws in their—as Bakhtin puts it—'impetuous and unrestrained development, in spite of the fact that [they have] long evaded the task of understanding the cultural purpose of that development' (TPA, p. 7). The danger, Bakhtin argues, is that, although these disciplines may enjoy a development that is theoretically perfect, the fact that they have to be separated, or bracketed out, from the cultural and historical sphere as a formal requirement can cause them to give rise to unacceptable consequences. A theoretical activity, particularly a technological one, Bakhtin warns, 'when divorced from the once-occurrent unity of life and surrendered to the will of the law immanent to its development, is frightening, it may from time to time irrupt into this once-occurrent unity as an irresponsibly destructive and terrifying force' (TPA, p. 7).

Bakhtin's conviction regarding the disunity between life and theoretical activity is not unique: it echoes the work of previous philosophers, notably Lotze, who viewed it as an 'incoherence' that not only 'hinders our knowledge from becoming complete', but also

produces the 'doubts which oppress life' (Lotze 1899, II ix 1, p. 575). But Bakhtin is also strongly influenced, as I shall demonstrate, by the *Lebensphilosophie* of Dilthey and Simmel, who express the disunity between life and theoretical activity as the dynamic duality between life and theoretical/cultural forms (cf. 1.1B).

Nevertheless, it is categorically not the case that Bakhtin is an 'anti-theoretist' philosopher, in the sense that he is against *theoretical thought* and against *methodological practice* as some scholars have been wont to say.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Bakhtin states quite clearly, that 'Insofar as the abstractly theoretical self-regulated world (a world fundamentally and essentially alien to once-occurrent, living historicalness) remains within its own bounds, its autonomy is justified and inviolable' (TPA, p. 7).

However, like the *Lebensphilosophie* of Dilthey and Simmel, Bakhtin objects to any philosophy that seeks to construct its first principles, or *prima principia*, on purely formal theoretical (i.e. *a priori*) grounds—which, he believes, is the error made by all idealist philosophers, especially Kant and the neo-Kantians. In so doing, they commit the mistake of 'theoretism'—divorcing concrete actual being from a philosophy that endeavours to ground the conditions of being:

Historical actual once-occurrent Being is greater and heavier than the unitary Being of theoretical science, but the difference in weight, which is self-evident for a living and experiencing consciousness, cannot be determined in theoretical categories.

(TPA, p. 8)

Bakhtin thus rejects the Kantian and the neo-Kantian transcendental subject as *prima principia*. Because, as a purely formal-theoretical construct rather than as a actual *living* construct, the transcendent(al) subject does not take part in the actual concrete once-occurrent phenomenal existence of the subject as being-as-event, nor in the actual concrete once-occurrent phenomenal object of experience. That is to say, whether the subject or ego is transcendental or transcendent, neither is *experienced* by the subject—Kant's transcendental subject is necessarily *prior* to experience and Husserl's transcendent ego—which appears for the first time in *Ideas I*—is 'bracketed out of' or is 'beyond' *experience* (cf. Husserl 1980).

Bakhtin, however, only fully and clearly discloses his position later, in the third chapter of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 'The Idea in Dostoevsky' (1929, 1963).<sup>27</sup> Here Bakhtin argues that *all* the various forms of idealism (Plato, Kant, Hegel, and neo-Kantianism), in their endeavour to define the boundary between the realm of the *mundus sensibilis* and the realm of the *mundus intelligibilis*—moving from a concrete *prima materia* to the purely rational *prima principia*—have all resulted in monism:

The monist principle, that is, the affirmation of the unity of *existence*, is, in idealism, transformed into the unity of the *consciousness*.

[...]

The unity of consciousness, replacing the unity of existence is, inevitably transformed into the unity of a *single* consciousness; when this occurs it makes absolutely no

<sup>26</sup> For instance, Holquist characterises Bakhtin's philosophy as being 'not a systematic philosophy', and tells us that 'the specific way in which it refuses to be systematic can only be gauged against the failure of all nineteenth-century metaphysical systems to cope with new challenges raised by the natural and mathematical sciences' (Holquist 1990, p.16). Morson and Emerson maintain that Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* it is 'a metaphilosophical work that challenges all of theoretism [...] by proposing a non-monologic, antisystematic conception of truth' (Morson and Emerson 1990, p. 234). Morson and Emerson (and to a marginal degree Holquist) apply this polemic to defend their own messy, unsystematic and non-theoretical approach to Bakhtin studies (cf. Hirschkop 1990, Dop 2000).

<sup>27</sup> The chapter 'The Idea in Dostoevsky' first appeared in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* (1929), of which *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1963) is a much expanded and re-worked edition. We know that Bakhtin had been working on a study of Dostoevsky since at least 1921 (cf. Emerson, in PDP, p. xxix).

difference what metaphysical form the unity takes: ‘consciousness in general’ (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*), ‘the absolute I’, ‘the absolute spirit’, ‘the normative consciousness’, and so forth.

(PDP, pp. 80-1)

It is quite clear which idealist ‘schools’ Bakhtin picks out and levels the accusation of monism at: ‘consciousness in general’ (*Bewusstsein überhaupt*) refers to the Kantian and the Marburg neo-Kantian transcendental subject; ‘the absolute I’ refers to Husserl’s *ego* of *Ideas I*; ‘the absolute spirit’ refers to Hegel’s ‘final’ dialectical unity of spirit *in-and-for-itself*; and the ‘the normative consciousness’ refers to Lotze and the Baden neo-Kantians.

Bakhtin, however, restricts his discussion of the monism ‘inherent’ in idealism largely to Kantianism, and only partially in relation to Hegelianism (I shall discuss Bakhtin’s critique of Hegel’s absolute spirit in later chapters). Regarding Kant’s transcendental subject, Bakhtin writes:

Alongside this unified and inevitably *single* consciousness can be found a multitude of empirical consciousnesses. From the point of view of ‘consciousness in general’ [the] plurality of consciousnesses is accidental and, so to speak, superfluous. Everything that is essential and true is incorporated into the unified context of ‘consciousness in general’ and deprived of its individuality. That which is individual, that which distinguished one consciousness from another and from others, is cognitively not essential and belongs to the realm of an individual human being’s psychical organization and limitations.

(PDP, p. 81)

The Kantian and neo-Kantian transcendental subject, being *a priori*, is necessarily identical in and for every subject. Although Bakhtin is incorrect in stating that, for the Kantian subject, other subjects are ‘accidental’ (in that the other is the *apex* of the ‘ought’ for the subject), he is correct in claiming that other consciousnesses are ‘superfluous’ or not necessary for the subject to *establish* either the *a priori* moment of the ought or (self-) consciousness. This is because, for the Kantian subject, the transcendental and empirical *apperception* of self (‘self-consciousness’), and the *perception* of the object and truth, are *wholly* grounded in the unity of the transcendental subject.

Thus, Bakhtin concludes, any *individuality* that we find in the self and in others must not and cannot be grounded in the transcendental subject, but must be deemed to belong to psychological imperfections and limitations of the *particular* individual. This is especially apparent with regard to the Kantian notion of truth—the logical principle from which the unity of consciousness and thought is derived:

From the point of view of truth, there are no individual consciousnesses. Idealism recognizes only one principle of cognitive individualization: *error*. True judgements are not attached to a personality, but correspond to some unified, systematically monological context. Only error individualizes. Everything that is true finds a place for itself within the boundaries of a single consciousness, and if it does not actually find for itself such a place, this is so for reasons incidental and extraneous to the truth itself. In the ideal a single consciousness and a single mouth are absolutely sufficient for maximally full cognition; there is no need for a multitude of consciousnesses, and no basis for it.

(PDP, p. 81)

Again, because Kantian cognition is grounded in the unity of the transcendental subject—the *substratum* of the framework of *a priori* concepts and judgements—true judgements are true *a priori*. As such, which particular individual subject ‘thinks’ the truth is *inconsequential*; nor are other subjects necessary either to establish or to confirm the truth, in that *all* subjects will necessarily perceive the same *universal* truth by virtue of the transcendental subject—the



'unified, systematically monological context'. Again, Bakhtin concludes with respect to truth, any *individuality* we find in the self and in others must not and cannot be grounded in the transcendental subject, and as such must be *error*.

Bakhtin, therefore, *rejects* the Kantian notion that the unity of life is established by the unity of consciousness, and that the unity of consciousness is established by the unity of truth (by virtue of the unity of the transcendental subject):

It should be pointed out that the single and unified consciousness is by no means an inevitable consequence of the concept of a unified truth. It is quite possible to imagine and postulate a unified truth that requires a plurality of consciousnesses, one that cannot in principle be fitted into the bounds of a single consciousness, one that is, so to speak, by its very nature *full of event potential* and *is born at a point of contact among various consciousnesses*.

(PDP, p. 81, second emphasis added)

As such, we need to understand that a unified truth is the product of a plurality of *different* consciousnesses, and that no *single* consciousness can perceive, encompass or comprehend this truth in its entirety. Although Bakhtin—erroneously—believes that Hegel's absolute spirit (*Absolute Geister*) expresses the unification of truth in a unified *single* consciousness (PDP, pp. 26-7), he, nevertheless, quite clearly *appropriates* not just the Hegelian conception of truth (where truth is not *a priori* but is socially posited by spirit), but with it, and necessarily, the Hegelian notion that self-consciousness and knowledge is *ab initio* social. That is to say, self-consciousness requires the distinction, recognition, and responsibility between self and others—i.e. spirit. (However, in so doing Bakhtin contradicts his earlier thesis in TPA that truth has a necessary ideal content whose validity is *a priori* true (cf. 1.2B).)

Returning to TPA, it follows that our understanding of the unity of consciousness, therefore, must not and cannot start with some purely rational *prima principia*, in that the phenomenon of being is necessarily *theoretically ineffable*:

Insofar as I think of my uniqueness or singularity as a moment of my being that is shared in common with *all* Being, I have already stepped outside my once-occurrent uniqueness, I have assumed a position outside its bounds, and think Being theoretically, i.e. I am not in communion with the content of my thought; uniqueness as a concept can be localized in the world of universal or general concept and, by doing so, one would set up a series of logically necessary correlations.

(TPA, p.41)

The rational objectification of being, the thinking of being-in-itself, places the thinking subject outside of his/her unique and once-occurrent being. Moreover, as a result of the objectification of being, the object of thought, which is essentially and necessarily unique and once-occurrent, ceases to express its individuality; it is stripped of its uniqueness and 'once-occurrentness', and comes to be conceptualised in general and universal terms, which, naturally, leads to the assertion that there are logically necessary *prima principia* that ground the unity of consciousness and being.

That is, Bakhtin's position is in agreement with the central claim of Husserl's *Investigations* that there is no ego (*prima principia*) that performs that act: the unity of consciousness consists simply in the unity of the stream of lived experiences (*Erlebnissen*), without a 'synthesising' ego that has the experiences. The same thesis is put forward by Dilthey who, as we have seen, argues that the connectedness we experience in life does not follow from a unitary consciousness, but from the structural connection of our *Erlebnissen* (cf. Dilthey 1997, p. 151). Indeed, Husserl's use of the term *Erlebnis* is related to the philosophy of Dilthey (cf. Husserl 1970). However, unlike Husserl, Dilthey's notion of *Erlebnis* and the unity of life, has a pronounced (neo-) Hegelian dimension, as I have shown

in 1.1B. This is important, because it is through the appropriation of Husserlian phenomenology on the one hand, and the *Lebensphilosophie* of Dilthey and Simmel, on the other, that Bakhtin becomes interested in and influenced by Hegelian phenomenology—as I shall show in the following chapter.

### (C) The Problem of Ontology and the Unity of Life

All forms of German idealism share the claim that the subject is not passive but always active with respect to what it experiences. Bakhtin follows the German idealist lineage, in that he treats the object of knowledge as reducible to a plurality of sensible attributes and intuitions, whose unity is established by a synthesising supervening subject: '[...] it is *we* who produce the categories of synthesis' and in 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity' he writes '[...] it is our relationship that determines an object and its structure, not conversely' (TPA, p. 6 and AH, p. 5). However, the nature of the synthesis, according to Bakhtin, is phenomenological, rather than purely transcendental, as this fits better the concrete living moment of the act (*postupok*) of perceiving the object.

Although Bakhtin maintains that it is the subject who synthesises the plurality of the given intuitions into the object of intuition (*Gegenstand*), he denies Kant's crucial hypotheses that the subject does so by virtue of (a) the *a priori* intuitions of space and time, and (b) that the *thing-in-itself* is ultimately an analogue of the *transcendental subject*. Rather, Bakhtin maintains that (c) *space* and *time* are forms of immediate or given reality; (d) the *transcendental subject* is merely a formal-theoretical construct; and (e) the *thing-in-itself* is a constituent of the necessary unity of the world-in-and-for-itself. Thus Bakhtin maintains that there is nothing of the world that is knowable to the subject *transcendentally*, or *before experience*, which makes experience *in general* possible. Bakhtin, therefore, denies the *a priori* certainty of the subject's knowledge as it is established by Kant's *transcendental* idealism.

According to Bakhtin the realm of the *a priori* ideas or forms, as I have demonstrated, exists, but only *transcendentally*—as a necessary *moment* of experience. It follows that Bakhtin must hold the following two views: first, the subject's experience of the phenomenal 'object' is *not* given by virtue of the *a priori* categories grounded in the synthesising activity of the *transcendental* subject, as for Bakhtin the transcendent(al) subject is merely a formal-theoretical construct; and second, the *a priori* component of the subject's judgement of the 'object' is noumenal, in that it constitutes a purely formal-theoretical act by virtue of the formal-theoretical transcendent subject. Therefore, the object of intuition must have a unity that is both in itself and knowable. Furthermore, this being the case, the qualities of the object of intuition must belong to it.

But by virtue of what does the phenomenal object have a unity-in-itself, and what is the causal origin of our experiences? Bakhtin, it seems, hopes to establish the unity of the object by welding together two distinct, and at times opposed, philosophies: the *Lebensphilosophie* of Dilthey and Simmel, and the early phenomenology of Husserl. Whereas Simmel and Dilthey adhere to psychologism in that they consider logical laws (*a priori*) to derive from psychological laws, Husserl's *Investigations* rejects psychologism, arguing for the formal *a priori* status of the analytical laws of logic, and the *a priori* status of apodeictic material essences (*universal essences*), qualities and values of objects. However, all—Dilthey, Simmel and Husserl—locate the unity of the object of experience in the irreducible unity of the stream of *Erlebnissen*. Let us start by looking at Husserl's phenomenology of perception.

In the *Investigations* Husserl treats perception as *intentional*, and his phenomenology is designed to avoid the contrast between 'seeming-to-be' and what 'really-exists'. The

intentional act therefore precludes all questions of existence, which are ‘bracketed’ (*Einklammernung*). In doing so, Husserl makes questions of what ‘really’ exists ‘irrelevant’, in that the real object is said, by him, to *transcend* intentional experience. Thus, he is interested *not* in things ‘in’ (immanent to) the mind, but in objects simply *as experienced* without any theories about *what* we are experiencing. Nevertheless, Husserl argues, when perceiving a physical object it is certainly the genuine object that we see; it is *not* a sense impression, because physical objects are *given* perceptively—and in this respect Husserl is a *realist*.

When we perceive an object  $\alpha$ , Husserl argues, it is only one of infinitely many perspectives from which object  $\alpha$  can be perceived. Hence, object  $\alpha$  cannot as a *whole* be identified with a single perspective. That is, object  $\alpha$  *transcends* any one perspective, and no single act of perceiving can exhaust the possibilities (or ‘horizon’) of the object  $\alpha$ .

Husserl explains how we can grasp the three-dimensional object  $\alpha$  (the spatial dimensionality of  $\alpha$ ) through his distinction between *perception* and *apprehension*: when a given physical object  $\alpha$  (a cube) presents itself to us, although we *apprehends* a six-sided spatially extended object  $\alpha$ , we actually *perceive* only part of  $\alpha$ ; i.e. at most two or three sides of object  $\alpha$  are perceivable to us at any moment of time. Nevertheless, unless we make an attentive act of introspection (what Husserl calls phenomenological reflection or induction), we do not notice that what we apprehend is not what we perceive.<sup>28</sup>

That is, our conscious experience of  $\alpha$  is as a six-sided cube—a *transcendent* object which can never be *seen* from all perspectives *simultaneously*—is an *intentional act* of our *intentionales Erlebnis*. The *Investigations* argue that consciousness is said to be phenomenologically *intentional* in the sense that it is *directed towards an object*; consciousness is consciousness *of* something as we experience or intend it (cf. Smith 1996, p. 11).

Husserl explains that our apprehension of  $\alpha$  as *transcendent object* is the *synthesis* of many perceptions. That is, we experience an infinitely overlapping and continuous series of perceptions of  $\alpha$ , each of which ‘dissolves’ into the next. Moreover, our perceptions carry with them the belief and expectation (what Husserl calls *protention*) that as a six-sided cube  $\alpha$  has a back and sides. Consequently, we *expect* that when we to move around  $\alpha$  and change our perspective, we would see the back and sides of  $\alpha$ . The series of overlapping perceptions that occur when we move our perspective in space around  $\alpha$ , each perception has as its horizon expectations of future perceptions (what Husserl calls ‘future horizon’).

However, if we do not experience the expected perceptions, or future experiences do not conform to present expectations, then we experience a *rupture* (*Enttäuschung*) between perceptions. Consequently, every intentional act has a corresponding horizon of *possible* further experiences of the same object. As such, the object of experience can never, to use a Bakhtinian term, become wholly ‘consummated’ by the subject. The horizon of an act, therefore, determines that there is an *openness* to our acts, a certain *indeterminacy* that corresponds to the *future*. Thus, by virtue of the horizon of an intentional act, *every* intentional act implies one flowing intentional life and the ‘horizon of the living-streaming present’ (cf. Mohanty 1996, p. 68). The horizon therefore explicates our lived experience (*Erlebnis*) in *time* itself.<sup>29</sup> The influence of Dilthey on Husserl’s *Investigations* is clear here.

<sup>28</sup> To be aware of this *without* the necessary act of introspection would lead to a *rupture* in the form of a contradiction for consciousness; consciousness would both be aware that it is perceiving a partial object and apprehend a whole object—this contradiction exemplifies Hegel’s *Erlebnis* of the object as a *one* and an *also* (cf. Appendix I).

<sup>29</sup> Husserl’s notion of our experience of time is very similar to Dilthey’s and Hegel’s: whereas Husserl, like Dilthey, argues that our awareness of time comes from the flow of intentional life (*Erlebnis*), Hegel argues that it

By comparing Bakhtin's phenomenology of the act to Husserl's phenomenology of perception outlined above we come to see the *similarity* and the *dissimilarity* between the two thinkers. Husserl's distinction between *perception* and *apprehension* maps fairly accurately on to Bakhtin's notion of *postupok* and the unity of the world. Like Husserl, Bakhtin argues that the *unity* of the world is a *moment* for our perception of the world. Unity is an intentional act of 'apprehension',<sup>30</sup> which, although a necessary condition for thought, is to be distinguished from our *perception* of the world as an ongoing living event:

The world's *unity* is a moment in its concrete *uniqueness* and a necessary condition for our thought, taken from the aspect of its content, that is, our thought as a judgement. But for actual thought as a performed act [*postupok*], unity alone is not enough.

(TPA, p. 71)

That is, although we necessarily form judgements of the world by conceptually abstracting the world into a unity, the unity—in being only a *moment* of the *whole* of which it is a *part*—does not adequately explain the act (*postupok*) as such. Our act as *postupok* wherein we conceive the *unity* of our world *must* include our awareness of the act's horizon. The horizon, to Bakhtin, does not merely posit within the unity the *possibility* of further experiences of the unity, but it is also the *actual* awareness of consciousness that what it apprehends (form) and what it perceives (life) are two different, and conflicting, things. That is, life as an ongoing, unique and once-occurrent event is profoundly opposed to form.

Whereas for Husserl consciousness cannot be aware (on pain of contradiction) that what it perceives is not the same as what it apprehends, it follows that consciousness can only form a judgement of the apprehended object  $\alpha$ . Bakhtin, however, argues that consciousness is *always already* aware of the fact that what it *perceives* and what it *apprehends* are not the same. Bakhtin believes that there is an ever-present 'rupture' between what consciousness perceives and what it apprehends, determined by the living experience of his/her horizon. In this Bakhtin demonstrates the influence of Dilthey, who, as we have seen, argues that '[...] every observed moment of life is a remembered moment and not a flow; *it is fixed by attention which arrests what is essentially flow*. So we cannot grasp the essence of this life' (Dilthey 1997, p. 153)

Bakhtin, furthermore, demonstrates a view that is also clearly derivative of Simmel's notion of the transcendent quality of life—the dialectical relationship between life and cultural forms. Like Simmel, Bakhtin argues that the fact that humankind is aware that the world does not wholly enter the forms of our cognition (which transform the given material of the world into objects or judgements) is indicative of our capacity for self-transcendence.<sup>31</sup> Simmel argues that this awareness of *knowing* and *not knowing* is the vital dynamic of the intellect itself, in that the boundary between the two is what consciousness *has* to transcend; 'the moral task of man is to overcome himself' (Simmel 1997, p. 358).

Bakhtin's act as *postupok*, therefore, entails a notion of self-transcendence; the subject's living and answerable act (*postupok*), wherein he/she establishes the unity of his/her world (through an *akt*), necessarily incorporates the subject's *acknowledgement* of the ineffable essence of the ongoing eventness of being-as-event. Consequently, it follows that TPA advocates the primacy of life over reason, of the experienced or given object over the object of knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, the view that the transcendent *a priori* ideas or forms merely 'enrich' (TPA, p. 8), rather than establish, being-as-event shows that Bakhtin is not only concerned with establishing a *Lebensphilosophie*; we should also note in

is by virtue of our dialectical experience (*Erfahrung*).

<sup>30</sup> Bakhtin does not use the Husserlian term 'apprehension', but the logic of his argument quite clearly suggests the intentional act of apprehension.

<sup>31</sup> In this, as we have shown, Simmel demonstrates a clear allegiance to Hegelian idealism, and it is possible that it is initially through Simmel and Dilthey that Bakhtin starts to appropriate Hegelianism himself.

the statement the strong resonance of Schopenhauer's theory of the instrumental character of reason in the service of life (cf. Schopenhauer 1969).

Two questions, however, still remain. First, by virtue of what does the phenomenal object have a unity-in-itself; and second, what is the causal origin of our experiences? I have shown that, on the one hand, Bakhtin upholds the formal *a priori* status of the analytical laws of logic, and the *a priori* status of apodictic material essences (*universal essences*) that form the given materials of the world into objects, while on the other hand he follows *Lebensphilosophie* and defends the irreducibility of life into a form.

Bakhtin approaches each issue individually. Like Dilthey, he argues that knowledge of the world of objects is apprehended in perception and perceptible knowledge. The apprehension of objects is concerned with physical facts, and falls under the domain of the *Naturwissenschaften*. The *Naturwissenschaften* deal with abstract and value-free objects as the subject experiences and knows them directly through observation and explains them causally. Hence, the knowledge of the object is concerned with the subject's *akt* wherein he/she establishes the *a priori* moments of apprehension. As these *a priori* moments are ideal, and are determined by the subject *transcendently* as noumenal *moments* (i.e. not by virtue of a *transcendental subject*) it seems most likely that Bakhtin maintains a holist or realist ontology. However, he fails to address the issue.

Given that an *akt* of transcendent abstraction, wherein the subject determines the *a priori* moments of his/her knowledge of the object, is couched within an act (*postupok*) that is not ideal, but is actually consciously lived by an 'I', it follows that there is a 'second' ontological *substratum*, that of 'mental reality', namely life. Mental reality for Bakhtin, as for Dilthey, consists of the living experience of being-as-event. Bakhtin, as we have seen, denies that time and space are pure or *a priori* intuitions; he also maintains that they are not phenomenal qualities of physical reality. Time is the categorical characterisation of life, and forms the basis of all others. It is through time that the subject establishes the interconnectedness of all his/her various moments of the world's unity, constituting the once occurrent and unique event of being-as-event. However, this summation is speculative, in that Bakhtin simply does not adequately address the issue.

That is, although Bakhtin *approaches* a concurrence with Husserl regarding the *a priori* 'categories' and their realist ontological status, and with *Lebensphilosophie* by stating that life is opposed to form, he actually avoids the ontological question of the object and of being entirely. Unlike Husserl, who 'brackets' the issue, Bakhtin simply *suspends* the ontological question. Later, in AH he makes his indecision regarding ontology explicit:

To avoid misunderstanding, let me stress once more that we are not dealing here with moments of cognition, such as the relationship of body and soul, consciousness and matter, idealism and realism, and other problems associated with these moments. Our concern here is only concrete lived experience, its purely aesthetic<sup>32</sup> convincingness. We could say the idealism is intuitively convincing from the standpoint of self-experience, whereas, from the standpoint of my experience of the other human being materialism is intuitively convincing.

(AH, pp. 39-40)

That is, Bakhtin is not interested in *what* is actually perceived or experienced, but *how* it is experienced. Although this severely limits, not to say weakens, his philosophy, it also explains his inexorable move towards Hegelianism, as I shall demonstrate in the following chapters.

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<sup>32</sup> Aesthetic acts are concerned with seeing or perceiving the given or intuitable phenomena and the formation of a unified whole object or other (cf. AH, p. 24). In this Bakhtin's notion of aesthetic activity is clearly derivative of Kant's transcendental aesthetic and Husserl's aesthesiology.

### 1.3 Bakhtin's critique of the Kantian *Ought*

We have seen that according to Bakhtin the transcendent(al) subject, as a purely formal-theoretical construct, is irrelevant on the inter-subjective level, because as an *a priori* construct is it necessarily the same for all subjects. Therefore, although the transcendent(al) subject may be formally necessary and sufficient for establishing the objective domains of the *Naturwissenschaften*, it cannot, Bakhtin contends, establish either a moral philosophy or a philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*):

Life can be consciously comprehended only in concrete answerability. A philosophy of life can only be only a moral philosophy. Life can be consciously comprehended only as an ongoing event, and not as Being *qua* a given. A life that has fallen away from answerability cannot have a philosophy: it is, in its very principle, fortuitous and incapable of being rooted.

(TPA p. 56)

Instead, Bakhtin argues, we must seek the unity of consciousness and being in the phenomenon of being-as-event itself. The unity of consciousness as the affirmation of the individual being-as-event is confirmed and expressed *only* in the individual's recognition of the ought:

What underlies the unity of an answerable consciousness is not a principle as a starting point, but the fact of an actual acknowledgement of one's own participation in unitary Being-as-event, and this fact cannot be adequately expressed in theoretical terms, but can only be described and participatively experienced. Here lies the point of origin of the answerable deed and all the categories of the concrete, once-occurrent, and compelling ought. I, too, *exist* [*et ego sum*] actually—in the whole and assume the obligation to say *this* word. I, too, participate in Being in a once-occurrent and never-repeatable manner: I occupy a place in once-occurrent Being that is unique and never-repeatable, a place that cannot be taken by anyone else and is impenetrable for anyone else.

(TPA, p. 40)

However, Bakhtin's ought does *not* correspond to the Kantian *a priori* ought, but is the individual's responsibility for the *freedom* expressed in his/her actions. In life all our actions are, to some extent, determined by our freedom, and as such we have to acknowledge our responsibility for our actions. Furthermore, as our being is unique, once-occurrent, and purely subjective, so too are our actions and the responsibility we carry for them. Our understanding of the ought—*of how 'I' ought to act*—therefore, cannot be a noumenal or an objectified judgement; it cannot be thought of outside of the act itself, which, Bakhtin argues, is what Kant requires us to do. Instead, the ought, for Bakhtin, is the personal and subjective acknowledgement by the subject (the 'I') that he/she is *responsible* for his/her actions in his/her ineffable, unique and once-occurrent being-as-event:

This fact of *my non-alibi in Being*, which underlies the concrete and once-occurrent ought of the answerably performed act, is not something I come to know of and cognize but is something I acknowledge and affirm in a unique or once-occurrent manner. [...]

This acknowledgement of the uniqueness of my participation in Being is the actual and effectual foundation of my life and my performed deed.

(TPA, pp. 40-1)

By arguing that the ought is 'concrete and once-occurrent', grounded in the individuals 'non-alibi in being', Bakhtin breaks with the Kantian tradition of deontological ethics.

As we have seen, Kantian ethics rigorously distinguishes between what ought to be,

the content of ethics, from being, the object of philosophy of nature. That is, to the (neo-) Kantians the ought is independent not only of sensible being, but of being in general—indeed, being is the *opposite* of what ought to be. Kantian ethics argues that moral judgements are expressions of practical as distinct from theoretical reason. That is, practical reason, or the ‘rational will’, does not derive its principles of actions from examples given by intuition or theoretical reason; it finds its principles within its own rational nature. The ability to use practical reason to generate principles of conduct rests on the Kantian notion of the autonomy of the will (or freedom) from being (cf. GMM 98, p. 114).

The correctness, or the validity of the ought, is given to reason *a priori*, and must be sought by the subject solely in the concepts of pure reason. Kantians, therefore, stress the absolute objectivity or *a priori* validity of moral standards, and the categorical imperative represents an act as objectively necessary, as an *ought*. As such, the Kantians regard the subject’s conception of ‘the ought’, ‘the good’, and ‘duty’ as purely *a priori* judgements—the empirical consideration of the judgement is necessary only insofar as it determines what *particular* duty we have to each other. It follows that an act has moral *value* (*Wert*) solely by virtue of its volition to the ought, irrespective of its desired result or accomplished end—in that a good will is good *not* by virtue of what it affects or accomplishes, but because it is good in itself and acts solely for the sake of duty (cf. GMM 65-6, pp. 95-6). That is, Kantian ethics locates the moral *value* of an act within the objective domain of the formal requirements of the ought.

However, although Kantian ethics argues that it can ensure the *a priori* validity of moral judgements, and therefore provide a purely objective moral theory, it says nothing about the specific historical inter-subjective considerations of the practical/moral act, and discloses *nothing* of the persons involved in the (moral) act. This problem is succinctly set out by Franz Brentano in *Grundlage und Aufbau der Ethik (The Foundation and Construction of Ethics, 1876-94)*, where he argues that Kant’s ethics are practically useless because it cannot tell us in any definite terms what we ought to do. According to Brentano, the categorical imperative leads to no ethical conclusions:

[...] Kant’s categorical imperative is not only a fiction; it is also of no use in ethics. No ethical law can be deduced from it [...].

(Brentano 1973, p. 34)

One reason among others for this is that the categorical imperative is a purely formal-theoretical principle and presents no guidance for the perplexing nature of real interactions between persons.

Bakhtin’s position, similar to Brentano’s, maintains that to view an act solely from within its purely formal-theoretical moment—that is, as a moment constituted purely by the transcendental subject—is to rob the agent of his/her individuality within the act, and therefore of his/her responsibility. In his critique of content-ethics (utilitarianism) and formal ethics (Kantianism), Bakhtin writes:

The [...] flaw of content-ethics is its universality—the assumption that the ought can be extended, can apply to everyone. [...] Since the content of norms is adopted from a scientifically valid judgement, and the form is illegitimately appropriated from law or from commandments, the universality of norms is completely inevitable. The universality of the ought is a defect which is peculiar to formal ethics as well. [...]

[...] Formal ethics starts out from the perfectly correct insight that the ought is a category of consciousness, a form that cannot be derived from some particular ‘material’ content. But formal ethics (which developed exclusively within the bounds of Kantianism) further conceives the category of the ought as a category of theoretical consciousness, i.e., it theoretizes the ought, and as a result, loses the individual act or deed. [...]

The categorical imperative determines the performed act as a universally valid law, but as a law that is devoid of a particular, positive content [...].  
(TPA, p. 25)

This is because, Bakhtin argues, the judgement or 'self-activity' of the ought by the subject is *not* grounded in his/her transcendent categories of judgement. He fully realises that in the Kantian architectonic this proposition leads to the fallacy of denying the consequence.<sup>33</sup> According to the Kantian architectonic framework (a) 'If the capacity to make a judgement (*Urteil*) is grounded in reason (*Vernunft*)', and (b) 'If reason *in-itself* is made possible by virtue of the transcendent(al) categories of understanding (*Verstand*)', then it follows that (c) 'Any judgement—be it theoretical or practical—must *de facto* be made possible by the transcendent(al) categories of understanding'. Bakhtin, however, maintains that if this is the case, then the subject cannot be responsible for his/her actions:

That my answerable self-activity does not penetrate inside the content/sense aspect of a judgement seems to be contradicted by the fact that it is the *form* of a judgement (the transcendent moment in the makeup of a judgement) which constitutes the moment of our reason's self-activity, i.e., that it is *we* who produce the categories of synthesis. We shall be told that we have forgotten Kant's Copernican achievement. Yet is it really the case that the transcendent self-activity is the historical and individual self-activity of my performed act [*postupok*], the self-activity for which I am individually answerable? No one, of course, will claim something like that.

(TPA p. 6)

It is important to note that in these passages Bakhtin is not merely presenting a critique of Kantian ethics (let us ignore his critique of utilitarianism); he is also addressing—whether intentionally or not—the phenomenological theory of values of (early) Husserl, Meinong, and Scheler. By stating that the ought cannot be derived from some particular "material" content' (TPA, p. 25), Bakhtin's position rejects the phenomenology of Husserl, Meinong and Scheler, according to whom values are qualities inherent to things in the world—that is, there is a correspondence between the content of the subject's mind and the phenomena of reality. This means that when we talk of the quality of goodness, we are in fact stating that object X is endowed with a *quality* which we call goodness. Furthermore, taking a Platonic view, Husserl and Meinong argue that qualities are inherent to things; they belong to the external world, and therefore a value judgement is essentially a statement of *fact*. Thus, the judgement 'X is good' corresponds to the fact that X is 'good'; goodness being a real *quality* of X, just in the same way as, for instance, having extension or being red may be qualities of X. Thus the goodness or badness of X, like extension and colour, are qualities that have a mind-independent mode of being. They are *ideal* objects in the Platonic sense. Thus Husserl and Meinong propound a realist ontology of values.

Scheler extends Husserl's and Meinong's ontological position by postulating two distinct types of values: on the one hand there are social valuations regarding 'goodness' and 'badness', which (following Brentano),<sup>34</sup> are the product of the social *depositum* in the subject and consist of certain habits of action and thought according to custom and ideology. As such, these values have no mind-independent reality. On the other hand there are the mind-independent qualities of 'goodness' and 'badness' inherent in an object as real objective entities (*echte Gegenstände*), which Scheler calls 'value-matter' (*Wertmaterie*), and as such

<sup>33</sup> Denying the consequence is a fallacy generated when one denies the logical product of a conditional proposition: e.g. 'If A then B', is a fallacy to infer from fact that 'A' 'not B'.

<sup>34</sup> cf. Stark in Scheler 1954, pp. vii-xlii.



he too is a realist. Scheler, like Meinong,<sup>35</sup> argues that the objective values are clear, sensible (*fühlbare*) phenomena, which are given to us through feeling:

There is a mode of perception whose objects are totally beyond the grasp of the intellect, and for which the intellect is as blind as the ear and the sense of hearing are for colour—a mode of perception non-the-less, which presents to us real objects (*echte objektive* [sic] *Gegenstände*) and an eternal order among them—namely the values and their hierarchy.

(Scheler, cited by Stark in Scheler 1954, p. xv)

The two types of values, according to Scheler, are *non-reciprocally dependent*,<sup>36</sup> in that behind every social *valuation* arising in humankind's mind there stands an independent and objective *value-fact* to which it 'corresponds'. Thus, Scheler hopes to ground the historically determined valuations of the social mind in the historically independent ontology of *Wertmaterie* that constitute objective facts (*Tatsachenkreis*) (cf. Stark, in Scheler 1954, pp. xiv-xv).

While Bakhtin may reject the phenomenologists' view that the ought and the determination of values can be derived from some 'value-matter' (*Wertmaterie*), he nevertheless follows the phenomenologists and the Baden neo-Kantians when he argues that our disposition to think veridically is determined by our feeling that it is 'good' or 'of value' to do so—as I have shown in the previous section (TPA, p. 4, cf. 1.2A). In the 'Prolegomena' to the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl argues that:

Every normative proposition of e.g., the form 'An A should be B' implies the theoretical proposition 'Only an A which is B has the properties C,' in which 'C' serves to indicate the constitutive content of the standard-setting predicate 'good' (e.g., pleasure, knowledge, whatever, in short, is distinguished as good by the valuation fundamental to our given sphere).

(Husserl 1970, I § 16)

Similarly Bakhtin maintains that thinking veridically implies the 'standard-setting predicate' of the ought, so that the 'ought' is the 'norm' of thinking. Thus, Husserl's proposition that 'An A should be B', may according to Bakhtin express a theoretical validity, but does so by virtue of the fact that it is joined by an ought, which is 'instrumental' or *conditional* on its validity:

[...] It is pointless to speak of some sort of special *theoretical* ought; insofar as I am thinking, I must think veridically; veridicality or being-true is the ought of thinking.

(TPA p. 4)

However, although the validity of the given proposition is conditional, and hence, *dependent* on the ought, the relation is *non-reciprocal*. The relation of *dependence* entails that 'if A is dependent on B, then A is as a matter of necessity such that it cannot exist unless B exists', whereas *reciprocal dependence* entails that 'if A is reciprocally dependent on B, then A is as a matter of necessity such that it cannot exist unless B exists, and B is as a matter of necessity such that it cannot exist unless A exists' (cf. Husserl 1980, § 7a). Thus, Bakhtin argues, whereas the ought determines that we think 'veridically', conversely, thinking 'veridically' does not necessarily determine the ought:

That a proposition is valid in itself [*a priori*] and that I have the psychological ability

<sup>35</sup> Meinong, furthermore, argues that the emotions, by virtue of their 'presentative function', play an important part in the process whereby cognition makes value judgements (Stark in Scheler 1954, p. xiv).

<sup>36</sup> Reciprocal dependence entails that 'if A is reciprocally dependent on B, then A is as a matter of necessity such that it cannot exist unless B exists, and B is as a matter of necessity such that it cannot exist unless A exists' (cf. Husserl 1970, III, § 7a). We shall further extrapolate the nature of dependence later in this section.

to understand [it] is not enough, even for the very fact of my actual *ex cathedra* agreement with the validity of the given proposition—as my performed act. What is needed in addition to that is something issuing from within myself, namely, the morally ought-to-be attitude of my consciousness toward the theoretical valid-in-itself proposition. [...] No theoretical proposition can ground a performed act immediately, not even a thought-act, in its actual performedness. In fact, theoretical thinking does not have to know any norms whatever.

(TPA, p. 23-4)

Consequently, Bakhtin argues,

[...] There is no aesthetic ought, scientific ought, and—besides them—an ethical ought; there is only that which is aesthetically, theoretically, socially valid, and *these validities may be joined by the ought, for which all of them are instrumental*. These positings gain their validity [*znachimost'*] within an aesthetic, a scientific, or a sociological unity: the ought gains its validity within the unity of my once-occurrent answerable life.

(TPA, p. 5, emphasis added)

To understand the *dependence* between validity and the ought as *reciprocal*, therefore, would entail that either the ought is posited in the a-temporal theoretical unity of *a priori* science, making the validity (*znachimost'*) of the ought an *a priori* judgement (*akt*), or conversely that the validity of a given judgement is posited in the individual's once-occurrent act (*postupok*), thereby denying the theoretical validity its *a priori* status. Both these consequences are undesirable, and Bakhtin, therefore, argues for the non-reciprocal dependence between the ought and the *a priori* validity of theoretical truth.

To clarify Bakhtin's position with regard to phenomenology, let us consider the following examples. *Colour* and *extension* are *reciprocally* dependent on each other, in that something cannot have *colour* and not have *extension*, and something cannot have *extension* and not have *colour*—this is clearly a case of reciprocal dependence. However, although it is the case that something that is *red* must necessarily have *extension*, it is not the case that, conversely, something that has *extension* is necessarily *red*—this is a case of non-reciprocal dependence. The reason for this is that both *colour* and *extension* are necessary qualities or essences of things in *general*, whereas red as a *colour instance* of the essence Red, is a quality of a thing in *particular*, making it an *individual* (which is *non-reciprocally dependent*).

It follows that, although every *particular* is necessarily dependent on a *universal*, no *universal* is dependent on a *particular*. In the case of the relation between theoretical validity and the ought, Bakhtin seems to be saying the same thing, namely that the ought is a *particular* that is non-reciprocally dependent on *universal* theoretical truth (*istina*):

The ought arises only in the correlation of truth (valid in itself) with our actual act of cognition, and this moment of being correlated is historically a unique moment: it is always an individual act or deed [*postupok*] that does not affect in the least the objective theoretical validity of a judgement, an individual act or deed that is evaluated and imputed within the unitary context of a *subiectum's* once-occurrent actual life.

(TPA, p. 5)

Thus the ought is a 'moment' that is cognitively correlated to truth (*istina*) as a *moment* of it. That is, the *ought* cannot exist independently of the whole of which it is part. Moreover, it is by virtue of the 'ought' as a moment of the subject's act (*postupok*) that the act is determined as an *individual act*—or, as Bakhtin terms it, an *answerable act*.

Bakhtin, therefore, maintains not only that the ought is *dependent* on sensible being, but that the ought is *constituted* by being in general. For Bakhtin—in stark contrast to Kantianism—being-as-event is the same as what ought-to-be. As such, he insists that the subject's volitional and emotional considerations are an integral part of his/her 'answerable

self-activity', and are, thus, part of the axiological nature of the act (*postupok*), and its social-cultural validity or truth (*pravda*). Bakhtin thus denies the *a priori* nature of the ought, and places it firmly and directly within the historical reality of being-as-event.

Thus, although the ought is dependent on theoretical validity, the relation of dependence is one that is *necessary* but *not sufficient* for the ought. '[T]he ought', writes Bakhtin 'is capable of grounding the actual presence of a *given* judgement in *my* consciousness under given conditions, i.e., the historical concreteness of the individual fact' (TPA, p. 4) in that 'thinking veridically' is the 'ought of thinking'. However, the ought does not ground 'the theoretical veridicality-in-itself of the judgement' (TPA, p. 4). The theoretical validity of a judgement is posited *a priori* in the 'appropriate theoretical domain, and its place in this unity exhaustively determines its validity' (TPA, p. 4). As such 'I myself—as the one who is actually thinking and who is answerable for his act [*akt*] of thinking—I am not present in the theoretically valid judgement' (TPA, p. 4). Furthermore, whereas the validity of theoretical truths is grounded wholly in their respective *a priori* domains, the '*moment of theoretical veridicality is necessary, but not sufficient*, in order to make a judgement an *ought-to-be* judgement for me; that a judgement is true is not sufficient to make it a an *ought-to-be* act [*postupok*] of thinking' (TPA, p. 4, first emphasis added).

Indeed, Bakhtin maintains that the ought has 'no determinate content; it does not have a theoretically specific content':

The ought may descend upon everything that is valid in its content, but no theoretical proposition contains in its content the moment of the ought, nor is it grounded by the ought.

(TPA, p. 7)

Bakhtin thus posits the ought wholly outside of theoretical thought. No valid proposition can exemplify the ought (i.e. it is not the case that something is 'good' because it is 'true'); nor is any valid proposition valid by virtue of the ought (i.e. it is not the case that something is 'true' because it is 'good'):

The irreproachable technical correctness of a performed act does not yet decide the matter of its moral value. [...] If the ought were a formal moment of a judgement, there would be no rupture between life and culture as creation, between the act of judgement as a performed deed (a moment in the unity of the context of my once-occurrent life) and the content/sense of a judgement (a moment in some objective theoretical unity of science).

(TPA, pp. 4, 5)

Furthermore, by denying that the ought has 'determinate content' Bakhtin rejects Kant's theory that the ought expresses an *apodeictic* imperative that necessitates that 'the subject 'ought' to act in such and such a way. It is, thus, *prima facie* difficult to see what 'function' the ought may have for Bakhtin, as Kant's conception of the ought, and, indeed, the very meaning of the word itself, implies a 'determinate' content. Bakhtin uses the word 'ought' in an most un-Kantian manner, and speaks of it as something that hitherto has had no adequate philosophical explanation:

There is no scientific, aesthetic, and other ought, but neither is there a specifically ethical ought in the sense of a totality of norms with determinate content. Everything that possesses validity, taken from the aspect of its validity, provides the ground for various disciplines, and there is nothing left for ethics (what one calls 'ethical norms' are in the main social positings, and, when appropriate social sciences have been founded, they will be incorporated into those sciences).

(TPA, pp. 5-6)

## (A) Moral Subjectum and 'Historical Mankind'

In 1.2A we saw that truth as *istina* is fully capable of being conceived or thought of independently or *transcendently* of particulars—*once* it has been 'lit up' or confirmed by the conception of the *same* truth as *pravda*. I have also shown that the sole distinction between *istina* and *pravda* is the *extra-truth* content of the act (*postupok*) determining *pravda*. That is, *pravda* expresses the *Erlebnis* (emotional, volitional, axiological disposition) of the subject's act of determining some X to be true. Thus, in rendering a truth as *pravda* into a truth as *istina*, Bakhtin argues, the subject strips the truth of its *particularity*, reducing it to just the *universal*; the ought or the value of the truth is lost.

Thus Bakhtin does not wholly follow either Lotze or the Baden neo-Kantian distinction between fact and value. As we have seen, Windelband argues that, except for the value of pure theoretical truths, consciousness of values is attached to single, individual things and as such only the single or unique has intrinsic worth (cf. Willey 1978, p. 137). Bakhtin concurs with Windelband that *only* single and individual things have value, but *denies* that theoretical truth (*istina*) has any intrinsic value. That is, although there are truths-in-themselves, *a priori*, there are no values-in-themselves. In this *pravda* is inextricably linked to *value*, in that only a true judgement or act (*postupok*) can have value:

The truth [*pravda*] of the event is not the truth that is self-identical and self-equivalent in its content [*istina*], but is the rightful and unique position of every participant—the truth [*pravda*] of each participant's actual concrete *ought*.

(TPA, p. 46)

This is because *values*, and the *ought*, are the product of the inter-subjective relationship between *actual* individuals. Bakhtin uses the example of love to illustrate what he means:

I love an other, but cannot love myself; the other loves me, but does not love himself. Each one is right in his own place, and he is right answerably, not subjectively. From my own unique place only I-for-myself constitute *I*, whereas all others are *others* for me (in the emotional-volitional sense of this word). For, after all, my performed act (and my feeling—as performed act) orients itself precisely with reference to that which is conditioned by my uniqueness and unrepeatability of my own place. In my emotional-volitional consciousness the other is in his *own* place, insofar as I love him as *another*, and not as myself. The other's love of me sounds emotionally in an entirely different way to me—in my own personal context—than the same love of me sounds to him, and it obliges him and me to entirely different things.

(TPA, p. 49)

Therefore, to consider values as somehow derivative of non-intersubjective relations, i.e., to consider them as objective in any ideal and *a priori* sense, would lead, Bakhtin argues, to a contradiction:

A contradiction would arise for some third party, namely, for a non-incarnated, detached (non-participating) consciousness. For that consciousness, there would be self-equivalent values-in-themselves—human beings, and not *I* and the *other*, which sound in a fundamental and essentially different way from the valuative standpoint.

[...]

There *is* no acknowledged self-equivalent and universally valid value, for its acknowledged validity is conditioned *not* by its content, taken in abstraction, but by its being *correlated* with the unique place of a participant. It is from this unique place that all values and any other human being with all his values can be acknowledged, but he must be actually *acknowledged*.

(TPA, pp. 46-7, 48)

However, Bakhtin denies the relativity of values by arguing that there is an 'affirmed context

of values', which means

the totality of values which are valuable not for one or another individual and in one or another historical period, but for all historical mankind. But I, the unique I, must assume a particular emotional-volitional attitude toward all historical mankind: *I must affirm it as really valuable for me, and when I do so everything valued by historical mankind will become valuable for me as well.* What does it mean to assert that historical mankind recognizes in its history or in its culture certain things as values? It is an assertion of an empty *possibility* of content, no more.

(TPA, p. 47, emphasis added)

Bakhtin here almost reiterates Kant's categorical imperative: 'I ought never to act except in such a way *that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law*', with the exception that whereas Kant qualifies the maxim as *universal law* Bakhtin qualifies it as *historical value* (GMM 17, p. 70). The empty possibility reminds us of Kant's notion that freedom is no more than a *possibility*—which as we shall see in the next chapter is equally empty. However, as Bakhtin qualifies the valuation 'for all historical mankind', as opposed to an a-historical *a priori* valuation, it is clear that Bakhtin intends a *speculative* idealism with regard to value and the ought, reminiscent of Hegelianism rather than Kantianism. But it is doubtful whether he can overcome either the implicit contradiction, the explicit inconsistency or the impending relativism of his position.

There is an implicit contradiction in Bakhtin's position when he argues that values are valuable *a priori* and in-themselves *only* to a 'non-incarnated', non-actual subject. True, Bakhtin understands that there would be a contradiction if we stated that the ought and value of an act (*postupok*) are posited solely in its once-occurrent event *and* stated that there are universal and absolute values-in-themselves. However, this does not inhibit him from making the inherently self-contradictory statement that *if there was* a 'non-incarnated' consciousness then there *would* be universal and absolute values-in-themselves: if this is true, how is it that *Bakhtin* knows it to be the case?

The explicit inconsistency in his argument follows from the contradiction: on the one hand, Bakhtin argues that a subject's *individual* unique and once-occurrent judgement of a truth as *pravda* exemplifies the universal and absolute truth-in-itself as *istina*, that the subject can come to know through theoretical objectification; whereas, on the other hand, he argues that a subject's *individual* unique and once-occurrent judgement of a value does not exemplify any absolute and universal value-in-itself, even though there would be *a priori* 'values-in-themselves' for a 'non-incarnated' subject, but that we, as actual living persons, cannot have access to them. Surely we must ask the question 'why is it that we *can* theoretically abstract ourselves from judgements concerning truth, whereas we cannot do so from judgements concerning an ought or value?'

To avoid the contradiction and inconsistency, Bakhtin must either argue that values are universal and absolute (i.e., *a priori*), in which case—because we as actual living participating consciousnesses have no knowledge of them—*none* of our acts can be deemed to exhibit value or an ought, or if we *did* have access to them Bakhtin would have to argue—following his critique of the Kantian transcendental subject—that we cannot be responsible for our acts as they are determined *a priori*, which is *contra hypothesis*. However, if values are (inter-) subjective and determined within a social historical context, such that for any 'non-incarnated' subject there would be *no a priori* values-in-themselves, then all our judgements of value are purely (inter-) subjective and historically relative. Thus, whereas the first position leads to the acknowledgement that we cannot have any *knowledge* of, or do not have any *responsibility* for, the ought or values, the latter position renders the ought and values relative to the (inter-) subjective relationship and social historical context wherein they are conceived.

Bakhtin, however, seems to want his cake and eat it: on the one hand he denies that there are *a priori* values-in-themselves, while on the other hand he argues that there are 'affirmed contexts of values' that ensures 'an empty possibility' that values have a historical absoluteness for all humankind. As such it is difficult to see how he intends to resolve the contradiction and inconsistency.

What Bakhtin does is to posit a transcendent moral *subiectum* whose 'determinate structure' will 'light up' that which is marked by the moral ought:

The Ought is a distinctive category of the ongoing performance of acts or deeds [*postuplenie*] or of the actual performed act (and everything is an act or deed that I perform—even thought and feeling); it is a certain attitude of consciousness, the structure of which we intend to disclose phenomenologically. There *are* no moral norms that are determinate and valid in themselves as *moral* norms, but there *is* a moral *subiectum* with a determinate structure (not a psychological or physical structure, of course), and it is upon him that we have to rely: he will know what is marked by the moral ought and when, or to be exact: by the ought as such (for there *is* no specifically moral ought).

(TPA p. 6)

Now Bakhtin rigorously denies both the universality (or the *apriority*) of the ought *and* the *apodeictic* nature of the ought. Furthermore, he denies that the ought is posited within a physical phenomenon. Hence it is not an objective quality that is mind-independent: there is no ought-in-itself (*Sollen an sich*). It is also not a psychological phenomenon—hence it is not a subjective quality of an object that is mind-dependent, such as Lotze's *Wertempfindnede Vernunft* ('reason receptive of value') (cf. Lotze 1899). Rather, the ought is a 'certain attitude of consciousness' determined phenomenologically by virtue of a moral *subiectum*. Noting that Bakhtin uses the word *subiectum* and the fact that he intends neither a physical nor psychological structure, the moral *subiectum* must be a *transcendent* subject.<sup>37</sup>

However, what is the nature of the moral *subiectum*? Is it *a priori* a-historical, or non-*a priori* and historical? Bakhtin, we have seen, states that when I determine a valuative act for me (an ought-to-be act for me) I 'must assume a particular emotional-volitional attitude toward all historical mankind [...] so everything valued by historical mankind will become valuable for me as well' (TPA, p. 47). In order to assume the particular 'emotional-volitional attitude' I must attain an objective, or self-abstracted, vantage point from which I can see what is *marked* by the moral ought, and this vantage point must be the *analogue* of the moral *subiectum*. Moreover, the emotional-volitional attitude does not resemble Kant's concept of *duty*, in that Bakhtin denies both the *apriority* of the ought *and* the *apodeictic* nature of the ought. Thus, the normative imperative or ought, marked out by the moral *subiectum*, is a non-*a priori* historical absolute, whose empty possibility renders it similar to Hegel's notion of absolute spirit (*der Absolute Geist*).<sup>38</sup> As such the ought is necessarily socially posited through the intersubjective relationship between *I and other* as spirits.

<sup>37</sup> *Subiectum* is a(ny) transcendent and ideal ground from which the subject objectifies; as such Bakhtin talks of an 'aesthetic *subiectum*', a 'moral *subiectum*', a 'theoretical *subiectum*', 'cognitive *subiectum*', etc. However, he also talks of just *the subiectum*, in which case whether the other *subiectum* 'forms' or 'modes' are specific instances or sub-categories of the one *subiectum* is not clear.

<sup>38</sup> Absolute spirit (*der Absolute Geist*) is absolute, and therefore infinite, because its object of reflection is spirit itself, or the self-consciousness of spirit as spirit-in-and-for-itself (cf. Enc. III). World-spirit (*Weltgeist*) refers to spirit as it manifests itself in history, and is responsible for the development of absolute spirit (cf. Inwood 1998, pp. 274-7). The various forms of spirit are intrinsically and systematically related through the activity of spirit itself. Spirit, therefore, is not a thing but an activity, which cannot be distinguished from the finite or the infinite. Therefore spirit is the absolute, by which Hegel means that the unified system of thought and rational structures that form and ground the phenomenon of *subjective spirit* (single consciousness) and *objective spirit* (collective consciousness) are immanent in nature and in development of spirit-in-and-for-itself as the absolute.

Thus Bakhtin maintains the dualism between the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften* derivative of neo-Kantianism, *Lebensphilosophie*, and phenomenology. Following these traditions, Bakhtin maintains that the truths and facts of the natural world are determined by autonomous *a priori* laws of causality and relation, and that we attain knowledge of the natural world through abstract theoretical (i.e. *a priori*) objectification. The facts and values of the spiritual world, however, are determined by our intersubjective emotional volitional *actions* which are determined through the inter-relationship between I and another. We attain knowledge of the spiritual facts and values through assuming that there is a normative *historical* absolute against which we 'measure' our actions.

In the next chapter we shall see that Bakhtin's notion that the ought is mediated through the inter-subjective relationship between self and other(s) leads him to adopt some of his most profound Hegelian views.

#### 1.4 Life versus Culture: The Latent Hegelianism in Bakhtin's Early Philosophy

Bakhtin, as we have seen, seeks to guarantee the *a priori* status of the *Naturwissenschaften* by arguing for the ideality of their theoretical truths. Consequently, the *Naturwissenschaften*, by virtue of their *a priori* laws, have a metaphysical autonomy that allows them to be separated and objectified from the concrete actuality of being and unity of life. Here we are reminded of Bakhtin's criticism of the theoretical sciences, or 'theoretism': that when theoretical knowledge is divorced from 'the once-occurrent unity of life and surrendered to the will of the law immanent to its development' it can lead to frightening, irresponsible and destructive consequences (TPA, p. 7). The lack of *participation* by the subject as a *living historical individual* within theoretism is what establishes the dualism between cognition and life, 'the dualism of thought and once-occurrent concrete actuality' (TPA, p. 7).

In this the *Naturwissenschaften* are categorically different from the *Geisteswissenschaften*. The *Geisteswissenschaften* do not and cannot have their own immanent laws independent of the concrete actuality of being and unity of life, nor do they or can they develop autonomously of the concrete actuality of being-as-event and the unity of life. Bakhtin, moreover, draws our attention to the fact that, as being-as-event and life are primary to knowing, the *Naturwissenschaften* must, therefore, take being-as-event in life as their *first principle*:

Man-in-general does not exist; *I* exist and a particular concrete *other* exists—my intimate, my contemporary (social mankind), the past and future of actual human beings (of actual historical mankind). All these are valuative moments of Being which are valid individually and do not universalize or generalize once-occurrent Being, and they are revealed [?] to me from my unique place in Being as the foundations of my non-alibi in Being. The totality of universal or general knowledge, on the other hand, defines man in general (as *Homo sapiens*).

(TPA, pp. 47-8)

Through his two concepts of truth, we can come to see how Bakhtin establishes the differentiation between the domains of the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften*: the former are interested in *theoretical* truth (*istina*) and 'Man-in-general', whereas the latter are concerned with the non-theoretical *moment* of truth (*pravda*) and *I* and *others* as concrete individuals. As we have seen in the previous sections, although there is no difference between *istina* and *pravda* with respect to truth content or form, there is

a difference in that *pravda*, unlike *istina*, maintains a propositional attitude, in that it is necessarily a truth *for* someone and as such has *value*.

The act (*postupok*) of judging some *x* to be true (*pravda*) is a compound act that involves *extra-truth* content: *the consciously lived experience of the act*, consisting of the subject's emotional-volitional and axiological attitude—what Dilthey calls the life-forms of the subject's *Erlebnis*. The subject of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, therefore, is the study of these life-forms, which are the expressed lived experiences of human beings as spirit. In 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity' *spirit (dukh)* refers to 'the totality of everything that has the validity of meaning—a totality of all the forms of my life's directedness from within itself, of all my acts of proceeding from within myself (without detachment from the *I*)' (AH, p. 112). Spirit, moreover, leads to the general compulsion of humans to understand each other as individuals and the drive to transfer their own lived experience into every kind of expression. The domain of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, therefore, is the realm of *spirit*.

Dilthey, as I have shown, argues that the understanding of other persons and their 'life-expressions' is developed through lived experience (*Erlebnis*), self-understanding and the interaction between I and thou. Furthermore, the understanding of 'life-expressions' depends upon the autonomous 'forms of understanding'—what Bakhtin calls the forms of 'sense and meaning'. These 'forms of understanding' or 'thought structures' (i.e. *a priori* concepts and judgements) are separated from experience and conform to logic or other formal constructs—through which they attain the autonomous identity necessary for the validity 'of a thought independently of the varied situations in which it occurs' (Dilthey 1997, p. 153). This ensures that the judgement is the same for the one who makes it as for the one who understands it, and determines how we can understand a logically perfect system of thought.

However, while the 'forms of understanding' allow persons to establish a logically consistent mode of understanding (i.e. they convey knowledge in a purely *propositional* mode), they cannot convey the thought's 'relation to the obscure and rich life of the mind' from which it arose (Dilthey 1997, p. 153). That is, the 'forms of understanding' cannot convey the individual's mind activity as *postupok*—the historically once-occurrent answerable deed—but only as a formal-theoretical *akt*.

Bakhtin, likewise, argues that the 'forms of understanding' fail to take possession of the real and living process of the subject's living experience. Thus the image of the formal-theoretical object of understanding—*expressed* by the subject by virtue of the *a priori* 'forms of understanding' in accordance with the various sciences (mathematics, physics, logic, etc.)—can never do more than represent an abstracted and objectified construction of the object of subjective experience.

Scientific activity, therefore, is essentially outside of and separated from the actual process of the unique historical moment of being-as-event wherein the given object is experienced (*Erlebt*) by the experiencing subject. However, it is not just the objects of the *Naturwissenschaften*, Bakhtin contends, that fail to capture the essential living moment of being-as-event wherein it is experienced as being:

[...] Aesthetic activity as well is powerless to take possession of that moment of Being which is constituted by the transitivity and open event-ness of Being.

(TPA, p. 1)

Throughout TPA, AH, and 'The Problem of Content Material and Form' (PCMF) Bakhtin applies two distinct and *conflicting* meanings to the term *aesthetic*. While on the one hand it refers to artistic actions and the philosophy of art (AH is ostensibly concerned with literary authorship), on the other hand it refers to a type of Kantian *aesthetics* (the science of our *a priori* sensibility of time and space), and Husserl's *aesthesiology* (the phenomenology of our consciousness of others and objects in (historical) time and space).

In TPA, aesthetics is principally linked to either 'seeing' or 'perceiving' and



'empathising' (the means by which we come to 'present' another's point of view) (cf. TPA, pp. 1-2, 14-16, 67-9, 72-4). In AH, Bakhtin's explicitly states that aesthetic acts are concerned with seeing or perceiving the given or intuitable phenomena (*moments*) of an object/other and the formation of a *whole* object/other. As such, when we receive the various moments or plurality of intuitions of a given object or an other human being, our aesthetic actions 'unify and order that given. And it is these actions of contemplation, issuing from the access of my outer and inner seeing of the [object or] other human being, that constitute the purely *aesthetic* actions' (AH, p. 24).

Thus, although the meaning of the term 'aesthetic' in the passage from TPA cited above is ambiguous, the point Bakhtin wishes to raise is clear: aesthetic activity, or the configuration of spatio-temporal images, cannot capture the phenomenon of being-as-event. That is, aesthetic activity, like the *Naturwissenschaften*, is a mode of 'theoretism', in that its images are divorced from the actual living experience of being-as-event through objectification:

Aesthetic intuition is unable to apprehend the actual event-ness of the once-occurred event, for its images or configurations are objectified, that is, with respect to their content, they are placed outside actual once-occurred becoming—they do not partake in it (they partake in it only as a constituent moment in the alive and living consciousness of a contemplator).

(TPA, p. 1)

As such, Bakhtin argues, the product of aesthetic activity, the aesthetic image (*obraz*) of being, is not actual being. Rather the aesthetic act 'enters into communion with being through a historical act of effective aesthetic intuiting', intuiting being the process whereby the sensory intuitions of the 'given' object are synthesised by the perceiving subject (TPA p. 1). Thus, the image we produce—as an object of understanding—*does not*, as Bakhtin words it, 'take possession of' the whole event we endeavour to capture, in that it does not convey the moment/event wherein the object was experienced (what Dilthey terms *Erlebt*). Indeed, although the 'objective domains' of 'sense and meaning' (science, art, history, etc.), are brought by the subject into 'communion' with being, they are not 'realities with respect to their sense and meaning' (TPA p. 2).

Bakhtin, therefore, argues that there is a clear opposition or tension between our living experience of being and the images or forms we produce of being. Consequently, his position corresponds closely to both Dilthey's and Simmel's *Lebensphilosophie*. This is most evident when Bakhtin adopts the Simmelian opposition between life and culture:

[...] two worlds confront each other, two worlds that have absolutely no communication with each other and are mutually impervious: the world of culture and the world of life, the only world in which we create, cognize, contemplate, live our lives and die or—the world in which the acts of our activity are objectified and the world in which these acts actually proceed and are actually accomplished once and only once.

(TPA, p. 2)

Simmel, we may remember, argues that because the world is not able to 'wholly enter the forms of our cognition' little of what is given us from the world enters into the various cultural forms (art, religion, etc.). Consequently, there is a 'basic dualism' between the 'constantly developing life-process' of social relations and the 'relatively stable external form' they exhibit by virtue of cultural forms (cf. Simmel, 1971). Similarly, Dilthey argues that our desire to experience the flow of life is frustrated by the fact that every observed moment of life is simply a remembered moment or image and not a flow. Consequently, 'we cannot grasp the essence of this life' by fixing our attention on it, or by placing life into the categories (theoretical, ethical, religious, etc.) we form in life itself' (Dilthey 1997, p. 151).

Bakhtin's notion of the world of 'culture' should be understood in the same way as Dilthey and Simmel's conception of it, namely as the product of objectified meaning and understanding. Bakhtin calls these the 'objective domains' of 'sense or meaning': science, aesthetics, philosophy, politics, and religion, etc. The products of objectified sense and meaning exemplify Dilthey's and Simmel's notions of the cultural or social forms, which are the forms of the 'domains of sense and meaning' (cf. Dilthey 1997, Simmel 1971).

Furthermore, Bakhtin, like Dilthey and Simmel, denies that the two worlds of life and culture can *mutually* determine each other in relation to a single unique unity (a synthesis) of formation (as is essentially the case for Kant's transcendental subject, and particularly for the monistic-idealism of the Marburg School):

There is no unitary and unique plane where both [life and culture] would mutually determine each other in relation to a single unique unity. It is only the once-occurrent event of Being in the process of actualisation that can constitute this unique unity; all that is theoretical or aesthetic must be determined as a constituent moment in the once-occurrent event of Being, although no longer, of course, in theoretical or aesthetic terms.

(TPA, p. 2)

The 'act', however, continues Bakhtin, must acquire a single unitary plane if it 'is to reflect itself in both directions'—life and culture. That is, the act must constitute both being-as-event and the objective domains of sense/meaning. As such, the *formative* act of the subject's actual experiencing-in-life is like 'a two-faced Janus'. This is a double metaphor: Janus, is the two faced god of doors and gates, and as such, Bakhtin is suggesting not only that the act has to reflect both 'faces', but that one face provides the doorway to the other.

Therefore, the act simultaneously looks in two opposite directions: 'it looks at the objective unity of a domain of culture and at the never-repeatable uniqueness of actually lived and experienced life' (TPA, p. 2). Bakhtin calls this the 'unity of two-sided answerability'; 'special answerability' (relating to the act's sense and meaning, as *akt*); and 'moral answerability' (relating to the act's actual, historical, and once-occurred event, as *postupok*). On this unitary plane the two forms of answerability 'must be brought into communion' with each other. This communion, being the dynamic that houses being-as-event carries with it the germ of Bakhtin's impending Hegelian turn in the middle of his career.

However, it is important to point out that there is already an implicit and latent Hegelianism in Bakhtin's early works. I have shown that the origin of Dilthey's and Simmel's distinction between life and cultural/social form is Hegel's dynamic between spirit (*Geist*) and the formations of spirit (*Gestaltungen*). Forms, argue Dilthey and Simmel, do not flow in the manner that our inner life does, rather they *always* remain fixed for a certain period of time. According to the *Lebensphilosophen* life is that which transcends (cultural) forms and force them to be 'overcome' or 'sublated' in much the same manner that Hegel argues that formations of spirit (*Gestaltungen*) are merely historical appearances (*Erscheinungen*) that are sublated by *spirit*. Thus, the logic of Dilthey's and Simmel's dynamic between life and historical forms is essentially the dynamic of Hegel's dialectic, with the exception that both Dilthey and Simmel locate the telos not within objective spirit as does Hegel, but the within the ongoing event of life. Simmel and Dilthey, therefore, adopt Hegel's Heraclitian conception of the becoming of life and spirit, but recast Hegel's dialectic of spirit into a dialectic of life, replacing Hegel's abstract notions of *Geist* and *Gestaltungen* with life and cultural forms—as I have demonstrated in 1.1B. *Philosophy of Life*

Bakhtin, as we have seen, adopts the ~~Lebensphilosophisches~~ opposition of life and culture, and similarly argues for the Heraclitian notion of the irreducibility and primacy of being-as-event (i.e. becoming). The implication of this is that, although Bakhtin may not have engaged with Hegel until the late 1920s and early 1930s, his adherence to these central

notions of *Lebensphilosophie* strongly suggests that he was engaged with Hegelian thought prior to that period.

In the most general sense, philosophy concerns truth and knowledge, and we can grasp Bakhtin's early relationship to Hegel's philosophy, and to the Hegelian tradition in their respective ideas of truth and knowledge. Bakhtin opposes the concept of truth that runs throughout the Western philosophical tradition since Plato. According to this concept philosophy must strive to know a sole and unique truth; a truth that can be known from a subjectively neutral perspective. That is, like Hegel, Bakhtin is little concerned with defending a notion of absolute objectivity, maintaining instead the perspective that acknowledges no neutral attitude—what Bakhtin calls the 'non-alibi of being'. Consequently, Bakhtin rejects the notion of truth that, in the traditional sense, excludes multiple interpretations and or determinations—i.e. there cannot be a single a-historical a-social truth. Moreover, following Hegel, among others, Bakhtin denies that reason can criticise itself, and he rejects the general late nineteenth and early twentieth-century (especially neo-Kantian) notion that scientific method is the criterion philosophy must seek to emulate, as science cannot tell us how to act.

# 2

## I and Other:

### Bakhtin's Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity

*The dialectical process of the Phänomenologie des Geistes is determined by nothing so much as by the problem of the recognition of the 'Thou'. To mention only a few stages of this history: our own self-consciousness, for Hegel, attains to the truth of its self-consciousness only through achieving its recognition by the other person. The intimate relationship between a man and a woman is the natural knowledge of mutual recognition. Beyond this, conscience represents the mental element of being recognized, and mutual self recognition, in which the mind is absolute, can be attained only via confession and forgiveness. It cannot be denied that the objections of Feuerbach and Kierkegaard are already taken care of in these forms of spirit described by Hegel.*

(Hans-Georg Gadamer 1975 pp. 307-8)

I have shown in the previous chapter that for Bakhtin the ought is not given to the subject *a priori*—as (neo-) Kantianism argues—instead, the 'origin of the answerable deed and all the categories of the concrete, once-occurrent, and compellent ought' is grounded in the subject's 'actual acknowledgement of one's own participation in unitary Being-as-event' (TPA, 40, 1.3). I also demonstrated that Bakhtin understands the ought to be a *moment* of the phenomenological event of being-as-event: 'The Ought', Bakhtin writes, 'is certain attitude of consciousness, the structure of which we intend to disclose phenomenologically' (TPA, p. 6). As a moment is a *dependent* part of a whole, it follows that, it cannot exist unless the whole of which it is part exists (cf. Husserl, 1970, III § 17). Thus, the ought is dependent upon my once-occurrent being-as-event. Consequently, as the ought is a once-occurrent phenomenal moment of being-as-event, it follows, Bakhtin argues, that '*are* no moral norms that are determinate and valid in themselves as *moral* norms' (TPA, p. 6). That is, Bakhtin rejects that there could be a moral law that has determinate content and is valid in itself, and an ought that exists outside of or is prior to the event of being of a determinate individual.

The task of moral philosophy, Bakhtin argues, is *not* to describe the 'abstract scheme' of a moral act. Rather, it is to describe the 'concrete architectonic of the actual world of the performed act' (*mir postupka*): 'The world in which a performed act orients itself on the basis of the once-occurrent participation in Being—that is the specific subject of moral philosophy' (TPA, p. 53). Furthermore, the constituent moments of the performed act (*postupok*) that Bakhtin wants to describe do not exemplify any ideal *a priori* moments; rather they are comprised solely of particular concrete moments, performed by an actual subject, and directed towards a particular object/subject:

But these concretely individual and never-repeatable worlds of actual act-performing consciousness (of which, *qua* real components, unitary and once-occurrent Being-as-event comes to be composed) include common moments—*not* in the sense of universal concepts or laws, but in the sense of common moments or constituents in

their various concrete architectonics.

(TPA, p. 54)

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the ought is given, *not* by virtue of some ‘ought-in-itself’ (*Sollen an sich*), but through the interaction between persons, in that each and every person has an inherent *value* in him/herself. According to Bakhtin the architectonic of this interaction is the contraposition between *I* and *other*:

The highest architectonic principle of the actual world of the performed act or deed is the concrete and architectonically valid or operative contraposition of *I* and *other*. Life knows two value-centres that are fundamentally and essentially different, yet are correlated with each other: myself and the other; and it is around these centres that all of the concrete moments of Being are distributed and arranged. [...] This valuative architectonic division of the world into *I* and those who are all *others* for me is not passive and fortuitous, but is an active and ought-to-be division. This architectonic is something-*given* as well as something-*to-be-accomplished*, for it is the architectonic of an event. It is not given as a finished and rigidified architectonic, into which I am placed passively. It is the yet-to-be-realized plane of my orientation in Being-as-event or an architectonic that is incessantly and actively realized through my answerable deed, upbuild by my deed and possessing stability only in the answerability of my deed. The concrete ought is an architectonic ought: the ought to actualise one’s unique place in the once-occurrent Being-as-event. And it is determined first and foremost as a contraposition of *I* and *other*.

(TPA pp. 74, 75)

Thus it is within the relationship of *I* and *other*, as co-determining poles or value centres, that Bakhtin locates the *ought*. Neither the value centre of *I* nor the value centre of the *other* are sufficient in themselves to establish the ought. That is, the *ought* can only be determined through the intersubjective mediation between the self and the other. This mediation is both ‘something-*given*’, but also as ‘something-*to-be-accomplished*’; that is, it is *phenomenologically* both *perceived* and *apprehended*, and represents the ‘to-be-realized’ goal of being-as-event.

The two constituent moments, perception and apprehension, form the dynamic behind the architectonic of the actual act (*postupok*), and as such the phenomenological contraposition of *I* and other is, for Bakhtin, the fundamental principle of being-as-event. Therefore, *being* for Bakhtin is not an ‘is’ as it is for Kant—the subject of theoretical philosophy. Being, rather, must be understood as a living event (*Erlebnis*), hence the concept being-as-event (*sobytie bytiia*). As such, the notion of being-as-event, constituted by the distinction between *I* and other, entails that being, freedom and the ought are *ab initio* social. That is, Bakhtin changes Kant’s first-order talk of the ought-in-itself (knowledge of which is given to the subject *a priori*), and replaces it with second-order talk of how the ought is determined by the phenomenological contraposition of *I* and the other.

In ‘Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity’ Bakhtin argues that the ought is determined by the subject through sympathetically co-experiencing life with another. Sympathetic co-experiencing, which Bakhtin judges to be a form of ‘love’, ‘introduces values into the co-experienced life that are transgredient to this life; it transposes this life from the very outset into a new value-and-meaning context’ (AH, p. 83). However, in order to understand why Bakhtin argues that the ought is determined intersubjectivity, we need to look at Kant’s notion of freedom, the ought and the subsequent problem of the other.

## 2.1 The Problem of the Other

The problem of the other stems from Kant's delineation of the possibility of self-knowledge and the self-consciousness of freedom. Kant sees freedom is key to explaining the autonomy of the will. According to Kant the will is a *kind of* causality that belongs to all rational beings. However, unlike natural causality, the will is independent of antecedents. Freedom, therefore, is the propensity of the *will to be independently efficacious*; that is, freedom is the property of the will to be causally determinate without being caused to do so by something other than itself (cf. GMM 98, p. 114).

However, Kant argues that freedom—the ability of the self to be autonomously causally efficacious—is merely *possible*. That is, it is sufficient for Kant's purpose that 'freedom is presupposed merely *as an idea* by all rational beings in their actions'; Kant proposes the ideal nature of freedom to 'avoid the obligation of having to prove freedom from a theoretical point of view' (GMM 100n, p. 116). The reasons for this are as follows: the transcendental subject, as the condition of possible knowledge, cannot itself be an object of experience and as such cannot be an object of knowledge; it follows, therefore, that the free self cannot know itself, and hence, cannot know that it is free. Moreover, it is logically impossible to have knowledge of freedom, because to know means to objectify and impose conditions, including phenomenal necessity. Knowledge of freedom, therefore, would actually nullify it and turn it into its opposite, *determinism*. Thus, according to Kant, freedom is theoretically unknowable, on the one hand, and a necessary practical condition, on the other. Robert Williams writes:

Self-consciousness of freedom is not given; rather freedom is something that must be discovered, and it is discovered through a consciousness of obligation, the unconditional command of the moral law. Ought implies freedom. This is the formal structure of autonomy. Kant's formulation is noncognitive, formal, and individualistic in that moral self-consciousness does not require intersubjective mediation, but only the consciousness of the moral law.

(Williams 1997, p. 32)

As such, Kant argues that the moral law is the *rational cognition* of freedom, and freedom is the *rational essence* of the moral law. There is, therefore, a clear relationship between self-consciousness, freedom and the ought, one that, in Kantian idealism, is theoretically and philosophically ambiguous. Again Williams words the problem succinctly:

We begin with a paradox: Idealism asserts the primacy of the subject and the corollary primacy of freedom. The rule is, no subject, no object. For the object is transcendently constituted by the subject. Thus Fichte says, 'All being, whether of the ego or the non-ego, is a determinate modification of consciousness; and without consciousness there is no being.' But Fichte also makes the claim that appears to contradict this axiom of idealism: It is impossible, he says, to begin with freedom, because the self depends on the recognition of the other for the consciousness of its freedom.

(Williams 1997, p. 31)

Therefore, although the post-Kantian German idealists philosophers such as Fichte and Hegel follow Kant in maintaining the primacy of freedom, they both deny Kant's claim that consciousness of freedom is immediate. Instead they come to understand—unlike Kant—that consciousness of freedom, and therefore self-consciousness, requires intersubjective mediation between the self and another. Thus, the notion that freedom and self-consciousness requires intersubjective mediation is fundamentally post-, indeed, non-Kantian.

This is essential to highlight, because it illustrates the extent to which certain neo-

Kantians are *not* Kantian, in that the problem of the reality of other selves, and the question of the possibility and limits of our understanding of them, was seen by many neo-Kantians (along with phenomenologists and *Lebensphilosophen*) as *the* problem for any theory of knowledge for the social and historical sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*).<sup>1</sup> The *Lebensphilosoph* Ernst Troeltsch expresses this emphatically in his *Die Logik des historischen Entwicklungsbegriffes* (*The Logic of Historical Development-Concepts*, 1911):

The main problem here is the question of our knowledge of other minds; for this is the peculiar presupposition of history, and in general a central issue for all philosophy, since the possibilities and difficulties of any common thought and philosophizing all depend on it.

(Troeltsch, quoted in Scheler 1954, p. xlix)

It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that the Marburg neo-Kantian Hermann Cohen sought to address the problem of the other and ground his ethics in a metaphysical system that owed more to Fichtian than to Kantian philosophy. This is important to point out with regard to Bakhtin, as Cohen was the main neo-Kantian writer on intersubjectivity for whom we know Bakhtin had regard.<sup>2</sup> For instance, Nikolai Nikolaev writes in his essay ‘The Nevel School of Philosophy’ that:

In Bakhtin’s early work and that of other members of the Nevel School Cohen’s terminology is treated as something universally accepted and requiring no clarification. This applies to concepts such as ‘givenness and positedness’, ‘unconsummatedness’ (of cognition), [...] ‘*the relations of I and the Other*’, and so on.

(Nikolaev 1998, p. 31, emphasis added)

But Nikolaev astutely points out that in *all* of his early works ‘Bakhtin’s philosophical enquiries indisputably outgrow the limits of Cohen’s system and change the meaning of the Cohenist terminology used’ (*ibid.* p. 31). The most obvious changes, as I shall show, affect the nature of the ‘ought’ and ‘the relations of I and Other’. However, before I can address the difference between Bakhtin’s concepts and Cohen’s we must first look at Fichte’s and Cohen’s theory of the other.

### (A) From Fichte to Cohen: Self-Consciousness as an Ethical Act

For Fichte the problem of the other is a prior question for first philosophy. Now it should be borne in mind that Fichte’s account of intersubjectivity is not a full blown theory of intersubjectivity, but is part of his ethical and legal theory. The influence of Fichte on Cohen is significant, in that for both Fichte and Cohen the problem of the other is, in its most fundamental aspects, the problem of *value* (*Wert*)—an ethical as well as a judicial concern. In the *Grundlage des Naturrechts* (*Foundations of Natural Law*, 1796)<sup>3</sup> Fichte argues that the Pure Ego (an analogue of the Kantian transcendental subject) consists in a *primordial consciousness of duty*, which is equivalent to a pure consciousness of obligation or ought. The consciousness of duty necessarily entails that there must also be other conscious subjects

<sup>1</sup> Scheler, for instance, cites—not including himself—‘Theodor Lipps, Hans Driesch, Benno Erdmann, Erich Becher, Arthur Kronfeld, Ernst Troeltsch, Joannes Volkelt, Edmund Husserl and Eduard Spranger’ as ‘bearing witness to’ the fact that the problem of the other is *the* fundamental question for the philosophy ethics and society (Scheler 1954, p. xlix). We can add to this list, Cohen, Edith Stein, Simmel, Dilthey, and Bakhtin.

<sup>2</sup> Bakhtin was, perhaps, most influenced by Cohen’s philosophy through his close friend and ‘mentor’ Matvei Kagan, during his ‘Nevel School’ period (ca. 1918-25). Kagan was a student of Marburg neo-Kantianism, and studied under Cohen (cf. Clark and Holquist 1984; Ruth Coates 1998; Nikolai Nikolaev 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Henceforth *Grundlage*.

towards whom the self can have duties of some kind. Thus the subject's knowledge of the existence of other subjects is dependent on the practical evidence of the subject's consciousness of duty, which is prior to any theoretical ascription of the other's existence (cf. Fichte 1971).

The problem of the other, as I have stated, is integrally linked to the problem of freedom, and freedom is problematic because consciousness of freedom is not given within the sphere of immediate or ordinary consciousness. In his *Erste Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre (First Introduction in the Science of Knowledge 1794–5)*<sup>4</sup> Fichte argues that consciousness of freedom is the result of intersubjective mediation in and through a historical career (cf. Williams 1997, pp. 49–51). Thus consciousness of freedom can only come about once the self has attained self-consciousness, and self-consciousness can only be attained through the other.

In Fichte's *Grundlage* intersubjectivity concerns the concepts *summons (Aufforderung)* and *recognition (Anerkennung)*, which establish the mediation of the self to itself by the other (cf. Fichte 1971, p. 33, Williams 1997, pp. 55–7). The relation between summons and recognition is necessarily reciprocal: the other *summons* the self to freedom and responsibility, and in doing so prompts the self to *recognise* the other. As such the summons has an ethical dimension, whose telos is the self's acknowledgement of the claim by the other for responsible freedom.

However, whereas Fichte is arguing that because there are others the self is free, the argument also runs the other way: because the self is free there must be others, reducing the other to a condition of *possibility*, rather than *necessity*. As such Fichte argues that the summons is not an *a priori* transcendental condition, but a given fact that refers to the prior *action* of the other. Nevertheless, the notion of summons logically presupposes the existence of the other prior to knowledge of the other—a similar position is maintained by Cohen's theory that knowledge of the existence of others is grounded in our *a priori* juridical personality—as shall be shown.

Recognition, unlike summons, is a unifying principle with a concrete ontology, in that it requires specific interaction between individuals. Moreover, the interactive nature of recognition is symmetrical, and as such neither individual can claim absolute primacy over the other:

The relation of free beings to one another is a relation of reciprocity through intelligence and freedom. Neither can recognize the other if both do not mutually recognize each other. And neither can treat the other as a free being if both do not do so mutually and reciprocally.

(Fichte 1971, p. 44 quoted and trans. in Williams 1997, p. 61)

With freedom comes responsibility, and individuals acknowledge their responsibility through the recognition that they *must* place restrictions on their freedom. That is, Fichte understands that community necessitates that individuals restrict their own freedom. 'This is', Williams notes, 'a negative concept of both intersubjectivity and/or community, that construes the other as a limitation of freedom, rather than as its enhancement or ethical evaluation' (Williams 1997, p. 64). Mutual restriction of freedom, argues Fichte, establishes not only the concept of right or law (*Recht*), but also the individual as a reciprocal concept that can only be conceived in relation to other individuals in social reality:

Der Mensch wird nur unter Menschen ein Mensch; und da er nichts Anders sein kann, denn ein Mensch, und gar nicht sein würde, wenn er dies nicht wäre—sollen

<sup>4</sup> Henceforth *Wissenschaftslehre*.



überhaupt Menschen sein, so müssen mehrere sein.

(Fichte 1971, p. 39 in Williams 1997, p. 59)<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, Fichte understands that recognition is not a theoretical or conceptual matter, but an *action (Handlung)*—but not just any action, but ethical action. Thus, according to the Fichtian model, individuality is an *ab initio* socially conditioned and mediated concept arising out of the intersubjective relationship of mutual recognition.

Cohen's theory of our knowledge of other subjects in his *Ethik des reinen Willens (Ethics of pure Will, 1904)*<sup>6</sup> is not far removed from that of Fichte. For Cohen, like Fichte, the problem of the other it is part of ethical and legal theory, such that knowledge of the other essentially concerns knowledge of moral law. Cohen's initial point is to establish the existence of personality in general (*überhaupt*) from the recognition that humankind has an *a priori* juridical personality grounded in the transcendental subject. That is, the subject has an *a priori* awareness of *duty* that entails the correlate awareness that there must be another to whom the subject can be obliged.

The ideal moral subject can be constructed, argues Cohen, through an analysis of the transcendental conditions of the notion of the legal person (*der Rechtsperson*)—which is a non-naturalistic and *a priori* construct of reason. The *Ethik* argues that the ontic basis of the moral duty (the ought) and its relation to reality is found in law (*Recht*; the science of legality).<sup>7</sup> And the relation between law and ethics in reality is grounded in the legal person. It follows therefore, explains Reinier Munk, that for Cohen the moral act is an analogue of the legal act, and that the concept of the self is presented as a legal person (cf. Munk, p. 172). Consequently Cohen states that:

It would be a basic mistake to equate a person with a human being. [...] The individual may be given as a particular being; the person, however, is an abstraction of the law.

(Cohen cited in Linden 1988, p. 210).

A characteristic of the legal act, Cohen argues, is that it is based on a *contract* and that *more than one subject is involved in it*. These subjects *correlate* with each other by virtue of the nature of a contract. This contract is defined by Cohen as the unification of the will (*die Willensvereinigung*)—which is the unification of the will of the subjects involved in the contract. The unification of the will establishes that the contract is the foundation of the moral act.

However, although the relationship between the partners in contract is correlative, Cohen argues that 'knowledge of the other is not dependent upon perception, but is of an *apriori* nature instead' (Munk 1997, p. 172). The correlative *a priori* nature of the relationship between the self and the other means that neither of the two can be reduced or sublated to the other (as Hegel argues):

The relatedness of the self and the other is of a correlative nature: selfconsciousness is the correlative union of the self and the other. The correlation of the self and the other is inherent in the foundation of the self in the contract. In the contract, the self and the other are united while remaining 'isolated' from each other.

<sup>5</sup> 'The human being becomes genuinely human only among human beings; and since he neither can nor would be anything else, a human being should be humanity, and exist only in the plural' (Fichte 1971, p. 39 quoted and trans. in Williams 1997, p. 59).

<sup>6</sup> Henceforth *Ethik*.

<sup>7</sup> The science of legality concerns hypothetical constructs, based on synthetic *a priori* truths and values. This is essentially non-Kantian, as the possibility of such as science denies Kant's distinction between legality and morality.

Therefore, both Fichte and Cohen argue that the self has a primordial (Fichte) or non-naturalistic (Cohen) transcendental *consciousness of duty* that is equivalent to a pure consciousness of the ought. The concept of duty, they argue, necessarily entails that there must also be *other* conscious subjects towards whom the self can have duties of some kind. It follows that our initial consciousness of the other is an analogue of our *duty*, which subsequently reduces (our knowledge of) the other, and the our correlative self-consciousness, to nothing more than a legal and formal construct.

Because both Fichte and Cohen maintain a transcendental idealism that maintains that our knowledge of the other is given to us by pure consciousness, their theory of intersubjectivity is inherently solipsistic. This is particularly clear in Cohen's theory, which furthermore, maintains that the self and the other are fundamentally 'isolated' to ensure that neither of the two can sublimate the other. However, the consequence of this is that neither of the two can directly *act* upon the other, and consequently neither can actually *know* and *recognise* the other.

It is thus clear that Bakhtin's theory of the ought and the problem of the other are fundamentally different from Cohen's. Firstly, Bakhtin rejects that there could be a moral law or, indeed, an ought that has determinate content and is valid in-itself (cf. TPA, p. 25). The ought for Bakhtin is a 'certain attitude of consciousness' both given and posited by being-as-event, through the point of real once-occurrent 'contact' between the self and another—rather than given by virtue of a primordial or pure consciousness of duty (Fichte/Cohen). Thus, for Bakhtin, the ought is a moment of being-as-event, and cannot be prior to, or exist outside of the whole phenomenological event of which it is part.

Secondly, whereas Cohen argues that our knowledge of the other is not dependent upon any phenomenological criteria (i.e. intuition or perception), but is determined by our *a priori* consciousness of *duty*, Bakhtin argues the opposite, namely that our knowledge of the other and our *subsequent* understanding that we have an obligation to them ('answerability') is *wholly* determined phenomenologically. Thus, although Bakhtin's early works may employ many concepts derivative of Cohen's idealism Bakhtin's theory of the ought and knowledge of other self is, as Nikolaev suggests, fundamentally different from Cohen's (cf. Nikolaev 1998, p. 31).

Thus, although Cohen, without a doubt, greatly informed Bakhtin regarding the necessity of intersubjectivity to establish the ought, the origin of Bakhtin's theory of intersubjectivity does not lie with the Marburg neo-Kantian. Instead we have to look at the profound influence of the phenomenological tradition, and in particular at two of its most influential figures for Bakhtin: Scheler and Husserl.

## 2.2 The Phenomenology of Empathy: Bakhtin, Scheler and Husserl

I have shown that Bakhtin argues that the ought is posited through the interaction of the *values* of subjects established by the intersubjective mediation between I and other. Given that the ought and the responsibility of the subject's autonomous act (*postupok*) is established through the subject's co-determinate relation to another, Bakhtin's free subject is in fact not entirely self-standing. That is, if my act (*moi postupok*), for which I am responsible, must necessarily be directed towards an other for it to be *responsible*, then I can only perform my act on the presupposition that there actually exists rational beings outside of me. There is, therefore, a prior philosophical question that must be answered regarding the

autonomous/answerable subject, and his/her act as *postupok*: how does the subject come to realise and recognise that there are other rational beings similar in kind to it, as these *others* are not immediately given to or are present in the subject's consciousness?

Bakhtin argues that in *contemplating* the other towards whom the ethical act (*postupok*) will be directed, the subject (the 'I') does not imagine or form some 'universal' or 'general' *other*, according to which the subject can determine an equally 'general' or 'universal' *ought*. Rather the subject has to contemplate the *whole*, actually historically living *other*. In order for this to come about, Bakhtin argues, the subject must establish the other consciousness through an act of *empathy* (*Einfühlung*) (cf. AH, p. 23).

Thus it is only *following* the act of empathy within the aesthetic act (i.e. the act of perceiving intuitable phenomena and the formation of a unified whole object or other) that one is *prompted* or *summoned* to perform an ethical act, such that the *ought* is a post-empathetic determination:

The life situation of a suffering human being that is really experienced from within may prompt me to perform an ethical action, such as providing assistance, consolation, or cognitive reflection. But in any event my projection of myself into him must be followed by a *return* into myself, a *return* to my own place outside the suffering person, for only from this place can the material derived from my projecting myself into the other be rendered meaningful ethically, cognitively, or aesthetically.

(AH, p. 26)

Moreover, it follows that an ethical act, even when objectified and held to be universally valid, must follow a subjective act of *empathising* with the other. By advancing the theory that we obtain knowledge of other minds through an act of empathy, Bakhtin demonstrates that he is immersed in the contemporary debate regarding the phenomenology of empathy (*Einfühlung*). This is furthermore shown through his frequent references to the debate's principal participants, Lipps<sup>8</sup> and Husserl, in his early works TPA and AH.

However, before we can consider the importance of these two phenomenologists, we have to consider the influence of Scheler's phenomenology of sympathy on Bakhtin—a topic that has, justifiably, raised a lot of interest in Bakhtin studies. In particular I wish to discuss Brian Poole's recent article 'From Phenomenology to Dialogue', which maintains that the phenomenology of Scheler 'provides the interpretive key' to Bakhtin's phenomenology of intersubjectivity (Poole 2001, p. 110).

Poole's thesis is principally supported by the fact that Bakhtin had taken copious notes from Scheler's text *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (*The Nature of Sympathy*, 1912).<sup>9</sup> One of the article's main claims is that:

Bakhtin's 'early works' [TPA, AH, and his first study of Dostoevsky] contain close application of the tradition of phenomenology inspired by Max Scheler; they thus remain critical of Husserl's transcendentalism and are not related to his egological intersubjectivity. The systematic correspondences with Scheler are overwhelming: but they are largely overlooked.

(Poole 2001, p. 112)

Poole suggests that some of the reasons why the correspondence between Scheler and Bakhtin have been overlooked are that 'Bakhtin never cites Scheler in "Toward a Philosophy of the Act" and "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity"', and that in TPA Bakhtin 'combines a broad spectrum of concerns under an allusive, yet limited, philosophical framework and vocabulary'—making the correspondence between Bakhtin's and Scheler's philosophical

<sup>8</sup> Lipps is mentioned no less than eight times in AH: pp. 11, 62, 64, 67, 69, 74, and 80.

<sup>9</sup> cf. Bakhtin 2000, pp. 576-80. Henceforth SN.

positions difficult to demonstrate (Poole 2001, pp. 112-13). Poole goes on to argue that:

Bakhtin's criticism of Husserl's egological phenomenology is clearly expressed in a remark in 'Author and Hero': 'idealism is a phenomenology of my experience of myself, but not of my experience of the other' (p. 110). Bakhtin's 'Author and hero in aesthetic activity' is, of course, a treatise against idealism *and* Husserl's transcendental phenomenology.

(Poole 2001, p. 117)

My first concern with Poole's position here is that he may have misinterpreted Bakhtin's statement: Bakhtin argues that *idealism* (i.e. *not* transcendental phenomenology) does not address the question of the other. The passage cited does not mention Husserl, but is directed, I believe, at (Kantian) transcendental idealism which—as Bakhtin rightly points out—either does not address the issue of the other, or is essentially solipsistic (cf. AH, p. 110). Furthermore, Poole's argument does not discriminate between Husserl's *Investigations I-II* (1900-01) and *Ideas I* (1913)—the principal works of Husserl that Bakhtin seems to have been familiar with. The *Investigations* maintains neither transcendentalism nor egologicalism, but advocates a realist ontology and agrees with David Hume<sup>10</sup> that there is no *self* or *ego* that unifies consciousness: the unity of consciousness consists simply in the unity of the stream of *Erlebnissen*, without a substantial self or ego that has the experiences (cf. Smith 1996, p. 328). However, in the *Ideas I-II* Husserl revises his position to advocate a form of Kantian transcendentalism, but *without* stressing the strong egological (and I suspect solipsistic) position Poole suggests. In the *Ideas I-II* the ego should not be considered to be solipsistic, but one amongst many, and this consequently leads Husserl to the problem of the other and intersubjectivity—as we shall see (cf. Husserl 1988, 1989). Husserl's (solipsistic) egological phenomenology only came to be fully expounded in his *Cartesian Meditations* (1931), which was written and published after Bakhtin had composed his early works (ca. 1927). Thus Poole's assessment that Bakhtin wished to dismiss Husserl's transcendental and egological phenomenology may be off target.

My second concern is that Poole's endeavour to validate Scheler's influence on Bakhtin and dismiss Husserl's, leads him to ignore instances where Bakhtin's phenomenology of intersubjectivity is at variance with Scheler's, and examples where it is in agreement with Husserl's. This is not to say that Scheler did not have a formative influence on Bakhtin's moral philosophy, but that Scheler is not the 'interpretative key' to Bakhtin's theory of our knowledge of the existence of other selves, and the limits of our understanding of them. However, in order to demonstrate why Bakhtin's phenomenology of intersubjectivity is closer to that of Husserl (and Lipps), than that of Scheler, I must explain Scheler's and Husserl's very different approaches to the problem of the other.

### (A) Scheler's Critique of Empathy

The concept of *Einfühlung* is of nineteenth-century origin, and was widely used by and chiefly associated with Lipps's *Das Wissen von fremdem Ichen* (*Knowledge of Other Is*, 1905), until it was adopted by Husserl and other phenomenologists as the name for acts or deeds that establish knowledge of other consciousnesses constituted on the basis of the

<sup>10</sup> Hume derides the concept of the *Self*, stating that the whole of humankind are 'nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions' (Hume 1978, I iv 6, p. 252). What is meant by this (partly) is that human beings are not composed of something called the self *plus* some other, less permanent, items, but *only* of these latter items.

perception by the subject of the other's body. Lipps's theory of empathy is often termed *aesthetic empathy*, and relies on the notion that it is possible to make an analogical inference between behaviour and mental states. The so-called 'theory of inference by analogy' proposes that the observed physical behaviour of the other (e.g. 'wincing') corresponds to an analogous mental state of the other (e.g. 'pain'). Accordingly we come to gain knowledge of other minds through an act of mimesis, based on the premise that there is a correspondence between behaviour and mental states.

Now Scheler's *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* rejects the 'theory of projective empathy [...] in all its forms', and it is by examining Scheler's arguments against projective empathy and his alternative theory of intersubjectivity that we can see the extent of his influence on Bakhtin's theory of intersubjectivity (Scheler 1954, p. xlviii). Scheler identifies two forms of aesthetic empathy in Lipps's theory; *idiopathic*, where the other is subsumed by the self, such that the self imagines and identifies the other *as* itself in the form 'the other is me', denying the other autonomy; and *heteropathic*, where the self is subsumed by the other, such that the self *projects* and identifies itself *as* the other in the form 'I am the other', denying the self autonomy. The problem with Lipps's theory of aesthetic empathy, Scheler points out, is that, whether *idiopathic* or *heteropathic*, the self cannot distinguish what it imaginatively projects the other mind to be from what the other mind actually is (cf. Scheler 1954, p. 18).<sup>11</sup> The principle of the analogical inference from behaviour to mental states is equally mistaken, argues Scheler, as it necessarily presupposes that the subject *always already* has knowledge of a behavioural act and its corresponding mental states *prior* to his/her experience of it—i.e. it assumes knowledge before knowing (cf. Scheler 1954 pp. 8-9). Moreover, if the self understands the other by virtue of the analogical inference it necessarily renders the other as merely an *analogue* of the self, and as such the problem of Cartesian dualism and solipsism is not resolved—this is a problem that besets Husserl, as I shall demonstrate.

Scheler, therefore, sees no alternative than to reject projective empathy and argue that our perception of other selves is as direct and as immediate as our perception of our own selves. When we see another person grimacing, Scheler argues, we do not take the physical behaviour (X) and infer from it the corresponding or analogical mental state (Y) that the person is in distress (i.e. 'if X then Y'). Rather, we see immediately the person's distress *in* the grimace (i.e. 'X and Y'). We cannot, Scheler concludes, see the other's body in isolation, but we see a complex whole (*einheitliche Ganzheit*) consisting of the other's expression and what is expressed:

That we cannot be aware of an experience without being aware of a self is something which is directly based upon the intuitable intrinsic connection between individual and experience; there is no need of empathy on the part of the percipient. [...] that experiences occur [in the other] is given for us in expressive phenomena—again, not by inference, but directly, as a sort of primary 'perception'.

(Scheler 1954, pp. 10-11)<sup>12</sup>

As such, Scheler's theory maintains that when we see an other we perceive both form and content, body and mind. The relationship that the self experiences between form and content of the other's expressive phenomena is *symbolic*:

For the relation here referred to is a symbolic, not a causal one. We can thus have

<sup>11</sup> The Munich phenomenologist, of whom Scheler was one, were initially indebted to Lipps's phenomenology of immediate empathetic communion with the other, which made them to some extent independent of Husserl's phenomenology.

<sup>12</sup> This section is not present in SN.

insight into others, in so far as we treat their bodies as a field of expression for their experiences.

(Scheler 1954, p. 10)

In a footnote Scheler qualifies the nature of the symbolic function:

We might also say that it is not the mere relation of a 'sign' to the presence of 'something', whereby the latter is subsequently inferred; it refers to a genuine, irreducible property of the sign itself.

(Scheler 1954, p. 10n)

Scheler's notion of the sign, therefore, identifies the signified as a property of the signifier, and assumes a holistic function that is reminiscent of Hegel's claim that form and content, rather than absolutely opposed, are in fact 'originally identical' elements of a synthetic unity or totality (cf. Hegel 1977, p. 71). Scheler, Herbert Spielberg writes, identifies the synthetic unity or totality (the '*einheitliche Ganzheit*') as the neutral primordial stream of social consciousness:

With his rejection of the traditional theories of our knowledge of other minds Scheler combined the thesis that originally our social consciousness contains only a neutral stream of experiences, not yet assigned to either ourselves or to others; furthermore, that our immediate tendency is to ascribe these to others rather than to ourselves, since we live more in others than in ourselves. In any case, according to this theory the self and the other are discovered only as a result of a process of differentiation in the neutral primordial stream. I submit that much of this theory exceeds considerably the scope of direct phenomenological verification.

(Spielberg 1984, p. 297)

The reason why Scheler's theory exceeds direct phenomenological explanation (or *reduction*) is that he has jettisoned transcendental phenomenology with its Cartesian ontology, and adopted a form of Hegelian phenomenology with a monistic or holistic ontology.<sup>13</sup> However, Scheler is not consistent, as he reduces the neutral 'primordial' stream to an analogue of *a priori* intentionality, as I will now show (cf. Scheler 1954, p. 114).

Like Hegel, Scheler assumes that humans stand over against life and its manifestations by virtue of spirit (*Geist*). Spirit, for Scheler as for Lotze, includes not only the capacity of reason, but also the capacity to intuit and perceive essences, values and emotional-volitional acts (such as love, responsibility, duty, hate, pity, etc.). Scheler terms the centre of activity, correlating to spirit, 'Person', and it is distinguished from the physically living and psychic centre of the individual—here we also see a clear resonance of Simmel's *Lebensphilosophie*. With reference to Scheler's texts *Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (*The Place of Man in the Cosmos*) and *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und materiale Wertethik* (*Formalism in Ethics and Material Value-Ethics*), Alfred Schutz circumscribes Scheler's concept of spirit, and its correlative, Person, as follows:

The realm of the [Spirit] is the realm of freedom: freedom from dependence on the

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<sup>13</sup> In *The Nature of Sympathy* Scheler cites Hegel as one of the principal metaphysicians behind his phenomenology of sympathy: 'The best-known type of metaphysical theory of fellow-feeling is that of *metaphysical monism*. Throughout history it has had a comprehensive array of defenders. [...] we may mention among the modern philosophers, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Eduard von Hartmann and Wilhelm Wundt' (Scheler 1954, p. 56). For Scheler, Hegel's '*monistic metaphysics*' is, on the one hand, an essential part of the platform on which he constructs his phenomenology of sympathy, and, on the other hand, one of the primary foils for his theory of immediate sympathetic communion: ' [...] only scattered attempts have so far been made to develop a purely *concrete meta-sociology*, and here we are still largely dependent on relics inherited from religious and metaphysical systems of the past (e.g. the Leibnizian metaphysics of monadic and spiritual individualism, or the systems of Hegel and von Hartmann)' (Scheler 1954, p. 215).

organic life, freedom from the bondage of impulses, freedom also from an environment in which the animal is immersed. Whereas the animal experiences its environment as a system of centres of resistance and reactions whose structure it carries along as the snail does its shell wherever it moves, the [Spirit] and therefore the Person has the faculty of transforming those environmental centres of resistance into 'objects' and the closed environment itself into the open world. Unlike the animal, man may also objectify his own physical and psychical experiences. The animal hears and sees but without knowing that it does so and it experiences even its impulses but just as attractions and repulsions emanating from things in its environment. Thus, the animal has consciousness, but not self-consciousness; it is not a master of itself. Man, however, is the only being which is able to be a Self and to place itself not only above the world but even above itself.

(Schutz 1973, p. 152)

Moreover, Schutz argues, Scheler associates spirit and its correlative centre, Person, with Kant's notion of transcendental apperception and *its* correlative centre, the transcendental subject.<sup>14</sup> As such, neither spirit nor its correlative, Person, can be objectified, and it is, therefore, difficult to see how Scheler intends to support his claim that the 'realm of the [Spirit] is the realm of freedom'. For, as I have shown, the transcendental subject, as the condition of possible knowledge, cannot itself be an object of experience and as such cannot be an object of knowledge. Therefore, the free self cannot know itself, and hence, cannot know that it is free.

According to Schutz, Scheler argues that a Person, the correlative centre of the acts of spirit, is accessible *only* to another Person through his/her 'co-achieving these acts, by thinking with, feeling with, willing with the Other' through an act of *fellow-feeling* (*Mitfühlung*) (Schutz 1973, p. 153). (Although Schutz does not identify the circularity of Scheler's position here, he does note that there are several inconsistencies in his thesis of Person overall.) Thus to Scheler, the 'I' of self-consciousness is established through the interrelationship between Persons, such that the term 'I' necessary implies two co-determinate and opposite spheres: the outer world and the other.

We are aware of others by virtue of spirit, which endows us with the perceptive intuitions of love, responsibility, duty, fellowship, sympathy, pity, etc. that are 'essentially social acts' (*Wesensoziale Akte*). Moreover, these 'essentially social acts' are not in the service of life. That is, Scheler rejects Simmel's view that spirit is a category of life (e.g., the social act of love is in the service of procreation), arguing instead that spirit stands over and above life (Scheler 1954, p. 114). He, furthermore, dismisses the Hegelian notion that spirit and life dialectically co-operate and interpenetrate.<sup>15</sup> Instead Scheler argues for the autonomy of spirit over life and conceives spirit as an *a priori* 'primordial' (rather than transcendental) principle. That is to say, although self-consciousness and, therefore, Personhood is established through the interrelationship between persons, Scheler argues that an *actual* other is not *necessary*, in that the *a priori possibility* of the other and community in *general* (*überhaupt*) is

<sup>14</sup> This view illustrates that Scheler, like many post-Kantian philosophers of his time, erroneously identifies the transcendental subject as something *more* than just the formal category of the transcendental synthesis (cf. Appendix I).

<sup>15</sup> In "'Spirit" and "Life"', Cassirer criticises Scheler for placing spirit and life in an un-resolvable opposition to each other. He rhetorically argues that, if they 'belong to entirely disparate worlds [...] how is it possible that they nevertheless can accomplish a perfectly homogeneous piece of work, that they co-operate and interpenetrate in constructing the specifically human world, the world of "meaning"? Is this interpenetration [...] nothing more than a "happy accident"?' (Cassirer 1949, p. 864). Cassirer, like Hegel, maintains that spirit and life to be co-operating and interpenetrating.

sufficient. As such a solipsist's

evidence of the existence of a Thou in general ['Du' überhaupt] and of his own membership of the community is not merely a contingent, observational, inductive 'experience', but is a certainty a priori in both an objective and a subjective sense and has a definite intuitive basis, namely a specific and well-defined consciousness of emptiness or absence (as compared with the presence of some genuine entity already there), in respect of emotional acts as represented, for instance, by the authentic types of love for other people. In the case of cognitive acts one might also refer to the consciousness of 'something lacking' or of 'non-fulfilment' which would invariably and necessarily be felt by our [solipsist] when engaged in intellectual or emotional acts which can only constitute an objective unity of meaning in conjunction with the possibility of a social response. From these necessarily specific and unmistakable blanks, as it were, where his intentional actions miss their mark, he would, in our opinion, derive a most positive intuition and idea of something present to him as the sphere of the Thou, of which he is merely unacquainted with any particular instance.

(Scheler 1954, p. 235 / SN, p. 677)

In other words, the Thou is not *transcendentally*, but *intentionally* given to the self as a synthetic *a priori* moment of its *Wesensoziale Akte*. It follows, moreover, that Scheler's theory of the other does not dismiss solipsism, in that the '*Du*' überhaupt is nothing more than an analogue of the self.

The above passage is cited verbatim by Bakhtin in his notes of Scheler's *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (cf. SN, p. 677) and this is important for the following reason: Bakhtin, as I said at the start of this section, argues that the self does *not* imagine or form some 'universal' or 'general' *other* towards which it directs its act (*postupok*). Rather the self has to contemplate the *whole*, actually historically living *other* (cf. AH, pp. 4-5, 23-4). This being the case, Bakhtin must reject Scheler's notion of the existence of a "Thou" in general ('*Du*' überhaupt) as an *a priori* condition of our act (*postupok*). This illustrates that, although Bakhtin copied extensive passages from Scheler's *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, he did not necessarily agree with all of Scheler's arguments, nor actually adopt the thesis's most important principle of *immediate sympathetic communion*.

Although Scheler's critique of empathy may have informed Bakhtin of some of the technical difficulties inherent in the theory, Bakhtin does not follow Scheler and reject the theory of projective empathy. Poole, however, argues the contrary, maintaining that Bakhtin adopts Scheler's critique of Lipps's and Edith Stein's theories of *Einführung* 'minutely' (cf. Poole 2001, p. 116). Poole correctly points out that Bakhtin shares Scheler's critique that moral action does not necessarily follow from our empathetic experience of another. That is, empathetic experience of another is not an ethical act in itself; nor does my empathetic experience of another necessarily cause me to have a sympathetic feeling for him/her, and therefore, does not decide my ethical disposition or 'answerability' towards him/her (cf. Poole 2001, p. 113). However, this does not lead Bakhtin to discard the theory of projective empathy. Bakhtin resolves this problem by categorically distinguishing between the aesthetic act of empathy (determining another) and the ethical act (determining an *ought*); i.e. I can only enter into an ethical (loving and sympathetic) interrelationship with another once I have empathetically determined the *whole* concrete and living actuality of the other (cf. AH, p. 26):

What then, is sympathetic co-experiencing? Sympathetic co-experiencing, 'akin to love' (Cohen), is no longer pure co-experiencing, or an empathizing of oneself into an object or into an [other]. [...] And it is true that that the feeling of love penetrates, as it were, into an object and alters its whole aspect for us. Nevertheless, the penetrating is entirely different in character from 'introjecting' or empathizing another experience



into and object as *its own* inner state [...]. These empathized or 'introjected' experiences vivify an *external* object from within by creating an inner life that gives meaning to its exterior, whereas love permeates, as it were, *both* its outer *and* its empathized inner life; that is, it colors and transforms for us the *full* object as already alive, already consisting of a body and a soul.

(AH, p. 81-2)

That is, whereas Scheler's text makes it a primary objective to dismiss the notion of aesthetic *empathy* as a viable theory for our knowledge of other minds, Bakhtin's AH is, unmistakably, a treatise of aesthetic empathy. This is not clear in Poole's paper because he regularly equates sympathy with empathy, as is shown when he writes that Bakhtin consistently applies 'Scheler's categories ("sympathetic feeling", "distance", "the category of the other") to form an ethically and aesthetically relevant intersubjective theory of perception'. To illustrate, Poole quotes Bakhtin:

Thus my sympathetic 'projection of myself' into another who is suffering 'must be followed by a return to my place outside the suffering person, for only from this place can the material derived from my projecting myself into the other be rendered meaningful ethically, cognitively, or aesthetically'.

(Poole 2001, p. 122, citing AH, p. 26)

Bakhtin, however, expressly applies the concept 'empathy' and '*Einfühlung*' when discussing 'projection' into another, and *never* uses the term sympathy or *Mitfühlung* in this context (AH, pp. 11, 26). The concept of sympathy maintains that the self assumes the same *kind* of feeling experienced by another, whereas empathy maintains that the self 'adopts' or 'assumes' the *actual* feeling of another. It is, therefore, clear that when Bakhtin is talking of 'projecting myself into' another, so that I am 'experiencing his life from within him', he is talking of *empathetic* projection not *sympathetic* projection (whatever that may be) (AH, pp. 25, 26).<sup>16</sup> This is further demonstrated by Bakhtin's proposition that 'If this return into myself did not actually take place, the pathological phenomenon of *experiencing another's suffering as one's own* would result—an infection with another's suffering, nothing more'—such a phenomenon is simply beyond the scope of sympathy and exemplifies *heteropathic* empathy (AH, p. 26, emphasis added).

To understand Bakhtin's phenomenology of intersubjectivity, therefore, we must look elsewhere, and as this section suggests, we need to look at the phenomenology of empathy. Although Bakhtin's theory of empathy shares many characteristics of Lipps's aesthetic empathy, it is in fact very similar to Husserlian phenomenology of intersubjectivity as I shall demonstrate once I have explained Husserl's theory of our knowledge of the other.

## (B) Husserl's Theory of Empathy and Appresentation

Although it is true that Husserl's most extensive critical discussion of empathy and intersubjectivity is found in his late works *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929) and *Cartesian Meditations* (1931), the issue of empathy and the problem of the other occupied Husserl from the very inception of his phenomenology, and he worked extensively on the problem from as early as 1905, and from 1910-11. In 1926-7 he gave a series of course lectures on the phenomenology of intersubjectivity and the nature of empathy (cf. Bernet

<sup>16</sup> For a very clear definition of the difference and relationship between empathy (*Einfühlung*) and sympathy (*Mitfühlung*) see Peter Smith's *The Philosophy of Mind* (1986); and Robert Gordon 'Folk Psychology as Simulation' (1986).

1989, pp. 154-5). Moreover, one of the principal tasks of Husserl's *Ideas II* (written in 1912 but only published posthumously) was to disclose a phenomenology of intersubjectivity.

Husserl's phenomenology of intersubjectivity and conception of empathy influenced, directly or indirectly, some of the most important phenomenologists of the 1910s and 1920s. In particular Edith Stein—Husserl's assistant and collaborator—whose dissertation *Neues zum Problem der Einfühlung* (*On the Problem of Empathy*, 1917)<sup>17</sup> expanded Husserl's theory of empathy to considerable acclaim (cf. Stein, 1989 pp. ix-xxiv). Stein, furthermore, prepared two manuscripts of Husserl's *Ideas II*, one in 1916 and another in 1918. She continued to publish on the subject, and was one of the principal critics of Scheler's *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (cf. Scheler 1954, p. xlix). Poole, furthermore, suggests the possibility that Bakhtin was familiar with Stein's work by pointing to the fact that in SN Bakhtin 'noted the title of Edith Stein's dissertation *Neues über Einfühlung* (Freiburg, 1917)'<sup>18</sup> and tells us that the text was available in Russia at the time (Poole 2000, p. 130, n22).

Thus it is clear that, although Husserl did not publish any papers exclusively devoted to the subject of empathy and intersubjectivity until 1931, his views regarding knowledge of the other were both well known and represented within the German and, no doubt, Russian academic community in the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>19</sup> Indication of this is given by Scheler, who in his preface to the second edition of *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (1922) writes:

Many workers in this field have now recognized that the [...] question of our ground for assuming the reality of other selves, and the possibility and limits of our understanding of them, is virtually the problem for any theory of knowledge in the social sciences. Theodor Lipps, [...] Edmund Husserl and Eduard Spranger, all bear witness to this.

(Scheler 1954, p. xlix)

According to Husserl, we must understand a human being (*Mensch*) as having a body (*Körper*), a living body (*Leib*), a soul (*Seile*), and a spirit (*Geist*). Husserl first distinguished between the physical human body, *Körper* (from Latin *corpus*), and the living human body of our immediate experience, *Leib* (from *Leben* or 'life') in his essay 'Ding und Raum' ('Thing and Space', 1907). The distinction, writes Jitendra Mohanty, has to do with the duality between material reality and mental life:

Mental life is not real in the sense of material reality, though it acquires a sense of 'reality' by its connection to the body of the experiencing human or animal. In this sense 'mental reality' is constituted through the lived body [*Leib*].

(Mohanty 1996, p. 65)

The *Körper*, therefore, refers solely to the material reality of the body, as special kind of object (*Gegenstand*). Husserl distinguishes between soul and spirit as two aspects or *moments* of the human being or person. The soul is the psychic *I* that animates and moves the physical body, and the spirit is the human *I*, which is a member of his/her surrounding social world of everyday life—this surrounding world would later be called the *Lebenswelt* (life-world) (cf. Smith 1996, p. 353). The spiritual world is a region of humanity that pertains to personhood,

<sup>17</sup> This is the title given to the text by its translator Waltraut Stein, 1989.

<sup>18</sup> The titles *Neues über Einfühlung* and *Neues zum Problem der Einfühlung* refer to the same text.

<sup>19</sup> A clear source of Husserlian thought in Russia is the work of Gustav Shpet (1879-1937), professor of philosophy at the University of Moscow, who introduced Husserlian phenomenology to Russia. In 1913 Shpet produced the first book-length study of Husserl's *Ideas I*, and continued to produce and edit articles on Husserl's and his own phenomenology for the philosophical yearbook *Mysl'i slovo* until 1929.

values, and the belonging to a community of persons which is both factual and moral.

The distinction between the soul and the spirit is one of Husserl's principal ways of differentiating between the natural world (the domain of the *Naturwissenschaften*) and the spiritual world (the domain of the *Geisteswissenschaften*). The differentiation is determined, argues Husserl, through the *order of connection* in each domain: whereas *causation* connects events in the natural material world, *motivation* connects events in the human or spiritual sphere. (In this Husserl extends Dilthey's conception of the *Geisteswissenschaften* as distinct from the *Naturwissenschaften*.)<sup>20</sup> Motivation, according to Husserl, is the fundamental law of the spiritual world:

Motivation includes not only the motivation of behaviour by emotion, but also the motivation of one belief by others in inductive reasoning and association. Moreover, Husserl characterizes empathy (*Einführung*) with other persons as understanding their motives, both emotional and rational [...]. Accordingly, the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*] concern empathy.

(Smith 1996, p. 354)

Empathy, according to Husserl, is the way in which we come to understand the actions, lived-experiences (*Erlebnissen*) and motivations of other human beings in the spiritual or social world of everyday life.

Husserl's initial point of departure for his analysis of our intentional consciousness of the other is Lipps's theory of empathy. Husserl takes the term empathy over from Lipps but rejects Lipps's theory of analogical inference, and the 'instinctive projection of the one's own immanent experiences into the bodies outside of oneself' (Bernet 1989, p.155). Unlike both Lipps and Scheler, Husserl rejects the notion that we gain knowledge of the other through the *immediate perception* of their movements of expression (of joy, pain, etc.). Instead, Rudolf Bernet writes, Husserl argues that:

[...] no fields of sensation whatsoever can be empathized immediately in an externally perceived body, but that such empathy is possible only by means of presenting the other's 'point of view', a point of view from which the organism [*Leib*] proper to it is not a merely externally perceived body [*Körper*].

(Bernet 1989, p. 155)

Unlike Lipps and Scheler, Husserl is not attempting to achieve an understanding of the expressions of another's spirit; rather he is interested in the prior stratum of our actual experience of the other, what Husserl calls the 'aesthesiological layer' of the alter ego. According to Husserl empathy is constitutive of our experience of the alter ego. Mohanty describes Husserl's position as follows:

[...] although I remain in my phenomenological field of experience, this field extends, through empathy, to a sphere of plurality of closed spheres of consciousness which are connected to mine through 'motivational structures'—not through real connection, but through a most peculiar sort of connection made possible by emphatic positing. Consciousnesses which are separated [...] remain under the possibility of communication, and communication depends upon perception of the other's lived body [*Leib*] as well as on motivations radiating from it.

(Mohanty 1996, p. 71)

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<sup>20</sup> Dilthey argues, as I have shown in 1.1B, that the *Geisteswissenschaften* have for their object of enquiry life-forms—the expressed *Erlebnissen* of human beings—whereas the *Naturwissenschaften*, in contrast, are said to deal with the abstract and value-free objects as we experience and know them directly through observation and explain them *causally*.

That is, Husserl proposes a weak form of solipsism that denies only *immediate* access to, or *immediate* presence of, the other. As such, the body (*Körper*) of the other is directly present in our experience, and the alter ego is *indirectly* present, or *appresented* (*Appräsentation*) by his/her body (*Leib*). *Appresentation*, first applied in ‘Ding und Raum’, refers to the *indirect* perceptual presentation to consciousness of an object mediated through the *direct* presentation of another. For example, although consciousness may only perceive three faces of the cube,  $\alpha$ , it *appresents* the three other faces not present in its perceptual field, and consequently *apprehends* the cube. The act of apprehension, Husserl argues, is *intentional*, in that consciousness spontaneously *fills in* what is meant, but not directly present in perception. However, whereas we can walk around the cube  $\alpha$ , and perceive *all* its faces (although naturally not at the same time), we can never perceive the *interior* of the cube  $\alpha$ . Thus, although only the surface of the cube  $\alpha$  can be directly present to consciousness, the *appresentation* of the cube  $\alpha$  necessarily includes an interior. That is, the intentional or meant object,  $\alpha$ , includes both the surface and the interior of some sort—which is said to belong *a priori* to the object  $\alpha$ . In like manner, Husserl argues that the alter ego, although not directly *presented* to consciousness, is *appresented* by its body (*Körper*), such that the other is presented as a body (*Körper*) and given as a living organism (*Leib*). Similarly, the consciousness or ego of the other belongs *a priori* to the self’s *appresentation* of its body (*Körper*) as *Leib* by virtue of the other’s transcendental ego as *a priori* necessary.

The question remains, however, what is *appresentation*? Clearly, *appresentation* signifies for Husserl a peculiar form of empathy, one that denies the Lippsonian analogical inference, but consists of the genuine, if mediate, apprehension of the other. It is, nevertheless, that case that the alter ego, constitutive of our act of *appresentation*, remains merely an *analogue* of the self, and as such there is no direct access to the alter ego or ownness sphere of the other. Thus, although the other is more than an analogical inference, it is less than immediate and original presence (cf. Williams 1996, p. 289). Husserl, in fact, brackets the issue of ontology, thereby deferring the issue, but nevertheless rendering the alter ego as something that is essentially unknowable. As a consequence, Husserl is unable to give an adequate account of reciprocity between self and other, in that his theory of intersubjectivity, as a first-person account, is an asymmetrical, non-reciprocal relation between the originary transcendental ego and the alter ego.

However, the relationship remains asymmetrical because Husserl, from the inception of the phenomenological consciousness of the other, focuses merely on the *correspondence* between the self’s lived body (*Leib*) and the perceived body (*Körper*) of the other. As such, there is only one ego that is originally present, that of the self, and the alter ego is only *indirectly* present, or *appresented*. The alter ego, therefore, is intentionally *mediated* by the ego of the self, and in this respect Husserl’s theory of intersubjectivity remains Cartesian.

This is important because the asymmetry and Cartesianism of Husserl’s theory of intersubjectivity is present in Bakhtin’s early theory of intersubjectivity, as I now shall demonstrate.

### 2.3 Bakhtin’s Aesthetic Empathy

It would be a crude mistake to think that the phenomenologists and neo-Kantians—bearing in mind their strong reservations and objections to Hegelianism—developed a theory of intersubjectivity independent of or in isolation from Hegel’s philosophy. Hegel’s phenomenology of spirit is perhaps the most important and influential of all German idealist philosophies of intersubjectivity, and as such it simply cannot be ignored. It is not surprising,

therefore, that Husserl's phenomenology of intersubjectivity should apply Hegel's revolutionary principle of doubling of consciousnesses, which argues that our experience of ourselves is mediated through our experience of the other. For instance Paul Ricoeur's text *Husserl: An Analysis of his Phenomenology* notes that Husserl's pairing between ego and alter ego, leading to the discovery that the other is a condition of my existence as unique and my own, is indicative of Hegel's principle of doubling of consciousness:

[O]ne cannot fail to think of the Hegelian problem of the doubling of consciousness, for in myself there is every sign of an encroachment in the direction of an other ego. The entire Fifth Meditation consists in tracing the lines of senses by which the experience of oneness refers to the alien other.

(Ricoeur 1967, pp. 119-20)<sup>21</sup>

More to the point, *Bakhtin* applies the Hegelian principle of doubling of consciousness in TPA—as we shall see.

Hegel's concept of the doubling of self-consciousness argues that that consciousness is constituted by two distinguishable, yet inseparable elements—exemplifying a *boundary* relation. First, consciousness is *being-in-itself* (*Ansichsein*), which is not novel but reflects the idealist and modern emphasis on subjectivity. But Hegel's radical contribution lies in his uncovering a second component, namely that consciousness is for another (*Füreinandersein*). For Hegel consciousness, Williams argues, is *both* at once:

Its self-relations is not simply immanent or purely reflective; the self's relation to itself is mediated by its relation to other. Moreover, self-relation conditions relation to other. Self-consciousness thus has a paradoxical structure that explodes the view that it is mere subjectivity exclusive of other.

(Williams 1997, p. 150)

Consequently, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* argues that determinate being or 'being-for-itself' (*Fürsichsein*) is the product of the dialectical relationship between 'being-in-itself' (*Ansichsein*) and 'being-for-another' (*Füreinanderssein*). Inwood writes that:

For Hegel, unlike Kant, *an sich* is not equivalent to *für sich*: *für sich* contrast with *an sich*. But *Fürsichsein* ('being-for-(it)self') is a complex notion, in part because it contrast not only with *Ansichsein* ('being-in-itself'), but also with *Sein-für-Anderes* ('being-for-another').

(Inwood 1997, p. 134)

The special application of the *sich*-expressions, in which *an sich* (in it) and *für sich* (for it) contrast with each other, and the notion that something can be *an und für sich*, first attained their reinterpretation and stable classification in Hegel's philosophy (cf. Inwood 1997, p. 134 Williams 1997, pp. 149-51). Moreover, the formulation that self-consciousness is 'in and for itself in and through the fact that it exists in and for itself for an other' contains the quintessential Hegelian view that being and becoming are *ab initio* inter-human and *ipso facto* social.

Bakhtin applies the Hegelian principle of the doubling of consciousness, and like Hegel, he understands that the doubling of consciousnesses establishes *boundary relations*; the 'fundamental moments in the architectonic of the actual world of the performed act or

<sup>21</sup> Although there are patent affiliations between some of the key concepts and theories applied by phenomenologists such as Husserl and Scheler and Hegel's philosophy, the phenomenologists sought to establish their philosophy within a categorically different metaphysic. Phenomenologists, like Husserl, maintain a dualist ontology and the solipsism constitutional to it—their reason being that the monism they believe to be inherent to Hegel's spirit is just as repugnant to them as the idea of a deterministic material causality. Moreover, they are sceptical about the implications of historical relativism.

deed [*postupka*]*—*the world actually experienced, and not merely the thinkable world' are the *boundary* relations 'I-for-myself' ('*ia-dlia-sebia*'), 'the other-for-me' ('*drugoi-dlia-menia*'), and 'I-for-the-other' ('*ia-dlia-drugogo*') (TPA, p. 54). It is clear that these *boundary* relations closely resemble Hegel's moments of self-consciousness: 'being-for-itself' (*Fürsichsein*), 'being-in-itself' (*Ansichsein*) and 'being-for-another' (*Füreinanderssein*). However, whereas Hegel's moments of self-consciousness are essentially the product of an essentially reciprocal relation between two spirits, Bakhtin's moments of self-consciousness (in TPA and AH) involve the relationship between a spirit (*dukh*) and a soul (*dusha*), and thereby appropriates a Husserlian asymmetrical relation—as I shall demonstrate.

One of the principal problems with disclosing Bakhtin's philosophy is that he uses a limited philosophical framework and vocabulary in which to couch a broad range of concerns and—sometimes disparate—issues. As such it becomes necessary, at times, to apply more than one term to unpack the different meanings Bakhtin loads into a single term; for instance, when Bakhtin refers to the other's 'body', he sometimes refers to, what Husserl would term, the *Leib*, and at other times the *Körper*. It must, therefore, be pointed out immediately that Bakhtin himself does not use the phenomenological terms *Leib*, *Körper*, *Seele*, *Erlebnis*, appresentation, or protention, as technical terms of his philosophy. He does, however, use terms, such as body, *dusha*, *dukh*, lived experience, fill in, horizon, etc., which are, if not derivative of,<sup>22</sup> very similar to the phenomenological terms and which will suffice to justify our exposition of Bakhtin's philosophy of empathy and knowledge of the other by means of the terminology of Husserlian phenomenology.

### (A) *Dukh* and *Dusha*: The Realms of the Spirit and the Soul

In the previous chapter we have seen that, like Dilthey, Simmel and Husserl, Bakhtin distinguishes between the realm of the natural world (the domain of the *Naturwissenschaften*) and the spiritual world (the domain of the *Geisteswissenschaften*). The *Naturwissenschaften* have for their object of enquiry material reality which we experience *directly* and know through *causal* connection. The *Geisteswissenschaften* have as their object of enquiry mental life—what Dilthey and Husserl call the expressed *Erlebnissen* of human beings—which we experience *indirectly* and know through *motivational* connections. As we experience and know the other as soul, therefore, *both* realms come into play. That is, the self both experiences and knows the other as an object of material reality and as an object of mental life. However, the two realms are not mutually implicative as they are ontologically distinct: i.e., the view subscribes to a form of Cartesian dualism.

Like Husserl, Bakhtin distinguishes between a person's *soul* and *spirit*,<sup>23</sup> as two aspects or *moments* (i.e. constitutive parts of the *whole*) of the human being or person. By *spirit* (*dukh*) Bakhtin means the general compulsion of humans to generate *meaning* (or *intention*), to understand each other as individuals and the drive to transfer their own lived experiences (*Erlebnissen*) into every kind of expression, whereas the soul (*dusha*) designates the living actuality of any particular person situated in a particular historical time and space. Bakhtin argues that whereas I *directly* experience myself as spirit, I experience the other as soul:

I experience the inner life of another as his *soul*: within myself I live in the *spirit*. The soul is an image of the totality of everything that has been actually experienced—of everything that is present-on-hand in the soul in the dimension of time; the spirit is the totality of everything that has the validity of meaning—a totality of all the forms of my life's directedness from within itself, of all my acts of proceeding from within

<sup>22</sup> The terms *dukh* and *dusha* most probably stem from Bakhtin's early Russian theological studies.

myself (without detachment from the *I*). What is intuitively convincing from the standpoint of my *self*-experiencing is the spirit's immortality as an immortality of meaning; what becomes convincing from the standpoint of my experience of another is the postulate of the immortality of the soul, that is, the inner determinateness of the other—of his inner countenance (memory)—which is loved independently from meaning [...].

The soul experienced from within is spirit, and the spirit is extra-aesthetic (just as the body experienced from within is extra-aesthetic). [...] The soul is spirit-that-has-not-yet-actualized-itself as it is reflected in the loving consciousness of another (another human being, God); it is that which I myself can do nothing with, that in which I am passive [...].

(AH, p. 110-11)

That is, the *spirit* is the *immediate* inner awareness of the self as an *intentional* (i.e. *meaning* generating) consciousness, whereas the *soul* is the 'appresentation' of the other's *mental life* in historical time and space.

Therefore, Bakhtin's category of *dusha* (*soul*) corresponds closely to Husserl's category of *Seele*, in that it is mental life as it is exhibited by an other's living body (what Husserl calls a *Leib*). A soul, therefore, is materially constituted by the body, and represents what Bakhtin calls our *aesthetic*<sup>23</sup> contemplation of the other. Thus, when we aesthetically contemplate another, we do so as a *soul* (*dusha*), not as a spirit (*dukh*). It follows, therefore, that Bakhtin, like Husserl, is committed to a weak form of solipsism that denies the *immediate* access to, or presence of, the other as *spirit* (unlike both Lipps and Scheler). Therefore, for Bakhtin the body (*Körper*) of the other is *directly* present in our experience, and the alter ego is *indirectly* present, or 'appresented' by the other's body (*Leib*).

Because Bakhtin, like Husserl, starts from the position that there is only one ego, the self, that is originally *present*, and that the alter ego, the other, is only *indirectly* present, it follows that the relationship between the self and the other is asymmetrical. The alter ego, or other, therefore, is intentionally mediated by the ego of the self, and in this respect Bakhtin's theory of intersubjectivity is *ab initio* Cartesian. What Bakhtin's aesthetic empathy determines, therefore, is not an understanding of the other as *spirit*, but the prior stratum of our actual experience of the other as *soul*. In other words, Bakhtin is concerned with establishing what Husserl terms the 'aesthesiological layer' of the alter ego. It follows, therefore, that Bakhtin, like Husserl, understands that the other as *soul* is less than the *immediate* or *original* presence of the alter ego as it constitutes 'spirit-that-has-not-yet-actualized-itself'.

However, Bakhtin understands that, in order to avoid solipsism, self-consciousness and self-determination necessarily imply reciprocal intersubjectivity between I and other. That is, the self can be a free and answerable agent if and only if it is *determined* to be *another* for someone else:

Inner determinateness—the embodiment of meaning in mortal flesh—is born and dies *in* the world and *for* the world; it is given totally in the world and can be totally consummated in the world; the whole of it is gathered and consolidated into a finite

<sup>23</sup> As stated in the previous chapter Bakhtin ascribes two distinct and *conflicting* meanings to the term *aesthetic*. On the one hand 'aesthetic' refers both to the Kantian science of our *a priori* sensibility of time and space, and to Husserl's *aesthesiology* of the phenomenology of our consciousness of things in time and space, while on the other hand it refers to the philosophy of art. As this chapter is concerned with aesthetics as the philosophy of our perception and consciousness of objects and others in time and space, we will not concern ourselves with artistic aesthetics here.

object. As such, inner determinateness *can* have the significance of a plot or story, it *can* be [an other].

Just as the plot or story of my own personal life is created by other people—the [others] of my life,<sup>P</sup> so the aesthetic vision of the world, its image, is created only by the consummated or consummable lives of other people who are the [others] of this world.

<sup>P</sup> It is only when my life is set forth for another that I myself become its [other]—in the eyes of the other and in his emotional-volitional tones.

(AH, p. 111 & 111n)<sup>24</sup>

However, Bakhtin's ostensibly insurmountable ontological distinction between *soul* and *spirit* makes it difficult to see how Bakhtin hopes to disclose a reciprocal relationship. Therefore, we must examine the various phenomenological moments that make up the architectonic structure of the self's relationship with the other.

### (B) The Perception of the Other's Living Body

Like Lipps and Husserl, Bakhtin argues that our knowledge of the other starts with our intuitive perception of the other's material body (*Körper*). Given that each subject occupies a unique time and place from which he/she perceives the world, it follows that each subject has his/her own individual and unique 'perceptual horizon' that determines his/her perception of him/herself *and* of the other:

When I contemplate a whole human being who is situated outside and over against me, our concrete, actually experienced horizons do not coincide. For at each given moment, regardless of the position and the proximity to me of 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 expressions), the world behind his back, and a whole series of objects and relations, which in any of our mutual relations are accessible to me but not to him.

(AH, p. 23)

Bakhtin calls this the unique 'excess of seeing' of an individual:

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. For only I—the one-and-only-I—occupy in a given set of circumstances this particular place at this particular time; all other human beings are situated outside me.

(AH, p. 23)

The problem of the 'excess of seeing' is that although I can see the external unity of the other's body (*Körper*), I cannot see the external unity of *my* body (*Körper*). Conversely, although the other can see the external unity of my body, he/she cannot see the external unity of his/her body. Nor can this difference in perceptual horizon be bridged, as I cannot realise the other's perceptual horizon wherein he/she sees me. The consequence of this is that, although I can perceive the other's living external unity (*Leib*)—through which I can come to apprehend the other as a soul—I cannot see *myself* as a living external unity (*Leib*), and therefore cannot apprehend *myself* as a soul.

<sup>24</sup> Throughout this chapter I have replaced the categories 'author' and 'hero' with '[self]' or '[I]' and '[other]' in citations taken from AH. This is in response to Bakhtin's—at times indiscriminate—shifting between the two sets of categories, and our desire to highlight the philosophical issues in the text.



Bakhtin argues that the intuitive or physical apprehension of the other as an external unity/object (*Körper*) is an act of cognition, determined by *a priori* laws, by virtue of the transcendent(al) *subiectum*. However, this act of cognition does not disclose to the self the other as an *individual* living, thinking and feeling human being. That is, although *my* cognitive act can unify the intuitive material actuality of myself and others as given living bodies (*Leiber*), it does so by rendering them into *beings in general*, according to their universal constituents, rather than as *individual* living beings such as *you* and *I*:

*Cognition* surmounts this concrete outsideness of me myself and the outsideness-of-me of all other human beings, as well as the excess of seeing in relation to each one of them, which is founded in that position of outsideness. Cognition constructs a unitary and universally valid world, a world independent in every respect from that concrete and unique position which is occupied by this or that individual.

(AH, p. 23)

Thus, the cognitive act overcomes the inherent dis-unity or un-wholeness to which my excess of seeing gives rise. However, because the cognitive *subiectum* is a transcendent(al) and abstracted ground from which the self, or I, objectifies the world, it follows that it comes at the cost of the uniqueness and irreplaceability of my and the other's place and being *in* the world:

For cognition, there is no absolutely inconvertible relationship of *I* and *all others*; for cognition, '*I* and the *other*,' inasmuch as they are being thought, constitute a relationship that is relative and convertible, since the cognitive *subiectum* as such does not occupy any determinate, concrete place in being.

(AH, p. 23)

A particular concrete material object, such as a book or a body, can be directly *perceived* by cognition, which intentionally unifies it into a *whole* object by virtue of *a priori* causal laws. However, like Dilthey, Bakhtin argues that the act of cognising *itself*—i.e. *my* inner lived experience (what Dilthey calls *Erlebnis*) of thinking, feeling, etc. as spirit, and the other's inner lived experience of thinking, feeling, etc. as soul—cannot be *perceived* in this manner. That is to say, neither my mental life, nor another's mental life, is *directly* perceptible as an intuitive concrete actuality either by myself or by another:

However, this unitary world of cognition cannot be *perceived* as a unique concrete whole, charged with the manifold qualities of being, the way that we perceive a particular landscape, dramatic scene, *this* particular object, etc. For what the actual perception of the concrete whole presupposes is that the contemplator occupies a perfectly determinate place, and that he is unitary and *embodied*. The world of cognition and every constituent in it are capable of being thought, but they are not capable of actually being perceived. Similarly, a given inner lived experience and inner whole can be experienced concretely—can be inwardly perceived—either in the category of *I-for-myself* or in the category of the *other-for-me*, i.e., either as *my own* lived experience or as the lived experience of *this* particular and unique *other* human being.

(AH, pp. 23-4)

Thus, my own inner lived experience (*Erlebnis*) can only be 'perceived' *internally* by myself—and constitutes the category of *I-for-myself*. Likewise, the inner lived experience (*Erlebnis*) of the other can only be apprehended *internally* by me, because it is determined by *my* act of *appresentation*—and constitutes the category of the *other-for-me*. That is, the other's inner lived experience (*Erlebnis*) apprehended by me is *in me*, and as such it is constitutive of the category of *I-for-myself*. Moreover, because my apprehension of the other's inner lived experience (*Erlebnis*) lacks the *immediate* presence of the other, the category of

the *other-for-me* is an analogue of *I-for-myself*. Such that the other is always *bracketed* in the self.

### (C) Presentation of the Other's Soul through Empathy

To Bakhtin 'empathy (*Einfühlung*)' is a 'form-and-content principle in the aesthetic relationship of a [self]/contemplator to an object in general and [an other] in particular': i.e., as empathy is a determinate principle of both the form and the content of objects in general, and the other in particular, it follows that it corresponds directly to *appresentation* (AH, p. 11). Bakhtin locates empathy within the aesthetic act, which he distinguishes from the ethical act. Ethical acts (*postupki*) are *outward*, involving 'myself' and 'others' within the unique and unitary being-as-event, and affect the concrete world and relationship(s) between 'I' and the 'other', whereas aesthetic acts (*postupki*) on the other hand, are actions of *contemplation*—Bakhtin considers acts of contemplation to be 'active and productive'. Aesthetic acts are concerned with seeing or perceiving the given or intuitable phenomena and the formation of a *whole* object/other. As such, when we aesthetically contemplate the *other*, our actions

do not go beyond the bounds of the other as a given; they merely unify and order that given. And it is these actions of contemplation, issuing from the access of my outer and inner seeing of the other human being, that constitute the purely *aesthetic* actions.

(AH, p. 24)

Therefore, Bakhtin locates the act of empathy *in* aesthetic contemplation: 'An essential moment (though not the only one) in aesthetic contemplation is empathizing *into* an individual object of seeing—seeing it from inside in its own essence' (TPA, p. 14, emphasis added). In this respect, Bakhtin's theory of aesthetic contemplation reflects the influence of Lipps, but more importantly, and perhaps surprisingly, it corresponds closely with Husserl's phenomenology of intersubjectivity.

In the previous sections I demonstrated that, according to Bakhtin, my apprehension of the other, as a living experiencing human being, starts with my *immediate* intuitive *perception* of his/her living body. It follows, therefore, that when I apprehend his/her inner lived experience (*Erlebnis*), I 'appresent' the other as *soul* (R. *dusha*, G. *Seele*). We 'appresent' the other as soul, according to Bakhtin, through empathising with him/her. However, we do not empathise the other *immediately* in his/her externally perceived body (*Leib*); rather, empathy is possible only by means of presenting the other's 'point of view'. In this Bakhtin's concept of empathy and the appresentation of the other strongly resembles Husserl's theory:

[...] the excess of seeing must 'fill in' the horizon of the other human being who is being contemplated, must render his horizon complete, without at the same time forgetting his distinctiveness. I must empathize or project myself into this other human being, see his world axiologically from within him as *he sees* this world; I must put myself in his place and then, after returning to my own place, 'fill in' his horizon through that excess of seeing which opens out from this, my own, place outside him. I must enframe him, create a consummating environment for him out of the excess of my seeing, knowing, desiring, and feeling.

(AH, pp. 24-5)

Similar to Husserl, Bakhtin argues that the other is *not* immediately present, but is 'appresented' by his living body (cf. 2.2B). The act of *appresentation*, Husserl argues, is *intentional* (or *meaningful*), in that consciousness spontaneously *fills in* (i.e. *appresents*) what is meant, but not directly present in perception. A similar spontaneous act of intentionality is proposed by Bakhtin at the start of AH, when he writes of the *self's* reactions to the *other*:

[...] the [self's] reactions to particular self-manifestations on the part of the [other] are

founded on his unitary reaction to the *whole* of the [other] [...] as a human being, a reaction that ensembles all of the cognitive-ethical determinations and valuations of the [other] and consummates them in the form of a unitary and unique whole that is concrete, intuitable whole, but also a whole of meaning.

(AH, p. 5)

The self's reaction to the other, as a consummated *whole*, constitutes two *moments*: on the one hand the other is an immediate intuitable whole, a whole of *perceiving* the body of the other as a given body (*Körper*) which the self apprehends as it would any other intuitable material object. On the other hand, the other is a *whole* of 'meaning'—i.e. he/she exhibits what Husserl calls *motivation*, and Dilthey calls life-forms or *Erlebnissen*—consisting of the other's 'cognitive-ethical determinations and valuations', which the self *emphatically* 'appresents' from the other as a living human being (*Leib*).

As I have shown, Bakhtin argues that the other's inner lived experience (*Erlebnis*) apprehended by me is *in me*, and as such his notion of empathy—the act through which I appresent the alter ego—is not entirely congruent with that of Lipps. Scheler, we may remember, identified two forms of Lippsian empathy: *idiopathic* and *heteropathic*. Accordingly, in the *idiopathic* act the self suspends the *other* while judging, identifying the other *wholly* as the *I* ('the other is me'); while in the *heteropathic* act the self suspends *I* while judging, identifying itself *wholly* as the other ('I am the other'). Bakhtin, however, maintains that the empathic act and judgement constitutes two distinct *moments*: the self has first to project the *I* into the other *idiopathically*, and then *must return* back into the self before it can make the judgement: 'I must empathize or project myself into this other human being [...] and then, after returning to my own place, "fill in" his horizon' (AH, pp. 24-5). That is, the self cannot *appresent* the other as a living, thinking, feeling human being while the self is empathetically *in the other*.<sup>25</sup> Although this guarantees a notion of distance and differentiation between self and other, it also maintains the asymmetrical nature of Bakhtinian intersubjectivity.

As I have stated, the different perceptual horizons cannot be disclosed, in that they can be *present* only in the *perceiver* and not in the *perceived*. In order to over-come this difference of perceptual horizon, Bakhtin argues, *I* and other would have to merge into an undifferentiated unity:

As we gaze at each other, two different worlds are reflected in the pupils of our eyes. It is possible, upon assuming an appropriate position, to reduce this difference of horizon to a minimum, but in order to annihilate this difference completely, it would be necessary to merge into one, to become one and the same person.

(AH, p. 23)

Similarly, Bakhtin denies the possibility of reducing the difference of our empathetic horizons; that is, *I* cannot empathetically become the other, and the other cannot empathetically become me, and as such we cannot have a fully reciprocal relationship of intersubjectivity through our mutual acts of '*appresenting*' each other as *souls*. We cannot, argues Bakhtin, 'lose' ourselves in empathy: 'strictly speaking, a pure projection of myself

<sup>25</sup> However, in his discussion of the 'crisis of authorship' Bakhtin suggests the contrary: 'Lived life becomes intelligible and obtains the weight of an event only from within itself, only where I live and experience it as an *I*, in the form of my relationship to myself, in the value-categories of *I-for-myself*: to understand means to project myself into an object and experience it from within, look at it with its own eyes, give up my own situatedness outside its bounds as unessential' (AH, p. 203). That is, the self (or author) can only understand the other while *s/he is heteropathically* in the other (or hero). Thus, either Bakhtin is theoretically inconsistent, or he maintains a categorical and ontological distinction between an other (a real other, who exists as spirit/soul) and a hero (i.e. fictional other authored by the self) which is blurred in the essay.

into the other, a move involving the loss of my own unique place outside the other, is, on the whole, hardly possible'. If, however, it was to happen, the result would be, in the case of a suffering *other*, an infection of the *other's* pain—something that Bakhtin considers to be 'quite fruitless and senseless' (AH, p. 26). Moreover, pure empathetic projection would come at the cost of self-determination, as it would dissolve differentiation between I and other. Consequently, we would lose our acknowledgement of responsibility for our actions, and with it self-consciousness.

#### (D) Perception of My Living Body and My Soul by the Other

In section 2.3B I discussed Bakhtin's contention that our 'excess of seeing' leads to the impasse that the self cannot perceive its own external unity (*Leib*), and that, consequently, the self cannot apprehend its own soul (*dusha*). As such, Bakhtin argues, the self as *spirit* (categorised by the concept *I-for-myself*) lacks self-determination in that it cannot determine its own aesthetic wholeness:

As long as I remain *myself* for myself, I cannot be active in the aesthetically valid and consolidated space and time; I am not present for myself axiologically in that space and time, I am not upbuilt, shaped, and determined in them. The aesthetically significant value of my own *body* and my own *soul* [*dusha*] as well as their organic artistic unity in a *whole* human being do not exist in the world of my own self-consciousness, for they are not constructed within my own horizon by my own self-activity [*moei sobstvennoi aktivnost'iu*] and, consequently, my own horizon cannot close contentedly and surround me as my axiological environment; I *do not yet exist* in my own axiological world as a contented and self-equivalent positive *given*. My own axiological relationship to myself is completely unproductive aesthetically: for myself, I am aesthetically unreal. I can be only the bearer of the task of artistic forming and consummating, not its object—not the [other].

(AH, p. 188)

The self cannot, therefore, become an answerable, self-active or *self-determinate* agent in the world without the aesthetic activity of the other. Therefore, the self must be *for* the other, in that it is only the other who can 'consummate' the self's body (*Leib*) and soul (*dusha*) in 'the aesthetically valid and consolidated space and time' of his/her being-as-event.

At the start of this chapter I illustrated that self-consciousness and self-determination cannot be established through self-objectification, in that the self, as *locus operandi* of consciousness, cannot be the object of its own thought. Two key problems posed by the idea of self-objectification are identified by Bakhtin. On the one hand it is self-contradictory, in that the self cannot actively perceive itself as the object of its own perception:

[...] in this self-objectification I shall never coincide with myself—*I-for-myself* shall continue to be in the *act* of this self-objectification, and not its products, that is, in the *act* of seeing, feeling, thinking, and not in the *object* seen or felt. I am incapable of fitting all of myself into an object, for I exceed any object as the active *subiectum* of it.

(AH, p. 38)

On the other hand, the act of self-objectification leads to a 'consummation'. That is, by objectifying the self one destroys the ongoing event of being-as-event, and therefore self-determination:

If I am consummated and my life is consummated, I am no longer capable of living and acting. For in order to live and act, I need to be unconsummated, I need to be open for myself—as least in all the essential moments constituting my life; I have to be, for myself, someone who is axiologically yet-to-be, someone who does not coincide with

his already existing makeup.

(AH, p. 13)

Therefore, if I am to attain self-consciousness and self-determination I must be objectified by another. Moreover, the self cannot determine the category of *I-for-the-other* by positing a *possible* other, or an other in *general*—such as Scheler's *Du überhaupt*. Nor can the self, or I, treat the other as a *means to an end*, such that the other is treated as a mere instrument through which I am able to self-objectify myself:

when we contemplate our own exterior—as a living exterior participating in a living outward whole—through the prism of the evaluating soul of a *possible other*, then this soul of the other—as a soul lacking any self-sufficiency, a *soul-slave*, as it were—introduces a certain spurious element that is absolutely alien to the ethical event of being.

(AH, pp. 31-2, emphases added)

As such, the initial conception of self-consciousness as a *whole*, i.e. the apprehension of both the self—what I shall call—inner 'extra-aesthetic' being (*spirit*) and outer aesthetic being (*soul*), engendered through the excess of seeing by the *possible* other, establishes a limited form of self-determination and self-consciousness.

It is, moreover, telling that Bakhtin should use the term 'slave' to describe the soul of the *possible other*, as it recalls Hegel's relationship between master and slave in the *Phenomenology*. Bakhtin's the other as soul-slave functions much like Hegel's other as slave, in that both are treated by the self as a *means* to attain self-determination and are, as a consequence, denied self-sufficiency. According to Bakhtin, this is because the *other as slave* is not an independent individual:

For, inasmuch as it lacks any independent value of its own, what is engendered is not something productive and enriching, but a hollow, fictitious product that clouds the optical purity of being. What occurs here is something in the nature of an optical forgery: a soul without a place of its own is created, a participant without a name and without a role—something absolutely ahistorical. It should be clear that through the eyes of this fictitious other one cannot see one's true face, but only one's mask-face. This screen of the other's living reaction must be bodied and given a founded, essential, authoritative independence and self-sufficiency: it must be made into an answerable author [i.e. self]. A negative precondition for this is my complete disinterestedness with reference to him: upon returning into myself.

(AH, pp. 31-2)

That is, the other as soul-slave is treated by the self as someone who lacks his/her own essential independence. Therefore, as the self is in *essence* not *interested* in him/her as an independent and self-sufficient human being, it follows that the self is the only *essential* consciousness of the interrelationship. As such the self-objectification that the self attains through the other as soul-slave lacks the real reaction of another, and, therefore, lacks the necessary reciprocity the relationship requires to make it an ethically valuable one. The relationship between the self and the soul-slave, therefore, is one-sided, unequal, and unethical.

For Hegel the relationship between lord and bondsman comes about when the other capitulates his/her self-determination and independence following a 'trial by death' with the self. However, as a consequence the self or lord attains a false sense of self-determination because the other, as bondsman is not an independent and self-sufficient consciousness, but a dependent one:

Thus [the lord] is the pure, essential action in this relationship, while the action of the bondsman is impure and unessential. [...] The outcome is a recognition that is one-

sided and unequal.

In this recognition the unessential consciousness [the slave] is for the lord the object, which constitutes the *truth* of his certainty of himself. But it is clear that this object does not correspond to its Notion, but rather that the object in which the lord has achieved his lordship has in reality turned out to be something quite different from an independent consciousness. What now really confronts him is not an independent consciousness, but a dependent one. He is, therefore, not certain of *being-for-self* as the truth of himself. On the contrary, his truth is in reality the unessential consciousness and its unessential action.

(PS § 191-2, pp. 116-17)

According to Hegel this is only resolved once each consciousness comes to recognise the other as an essential and independent consciousness, and thereby establishes a reciprocal intersubjective relationship.

Similarly, for Bakhtin the other as soul-slave is dependent on the self, in that it is essentially a self-generated, self-reflective 'screen', lacking both an autonomous body and self-determinate or 'answerable' agency. The certainty of self-determination attained through the other as the soul-slave, therefore, is false. It is, as Bakhtin states, 'hollow' and 'fictitious'. This limited form of self-consciousness, must, therefore, be 'overcome', and this is only possible for the self through being 'seen' by the other:

For outward appearance must encompass, must contain within itself, and must consummate the whole of my soul—my unitary emotional and volitional cognitive-ethical stance in the world. For me, outward appearance fulfils this function only in the other. [...] My exterior is incapable of becoming *for me* a constituent in a characterization of myself. In the category of *I*, my exterior is incapable of being experienced as a value that encompasses and consummates me [*zavershaiushchaia menia tsennost'*].<sup>26</sup> It is only in the category of the *other* that it is thus experienced, and I have to subsume myself under this category of the other in order to be able to see myself as a constituent in the unitary pictorial-plastic external world.

(AH, pp. 34-5)

Although it is true that I need the other to 'fill in' my bodily exterior (*Körper*), I, more importantly, need the other to see me as thinking, feeling, self-determinate human being in the world (*Leib*). Thus, argues Bakhtin, the need for the *other* to establish self-consciousness and self-determination is categorical:

For self-consciousness, this integral image is dispersed in life and enters the field of seeing the external world only in the form of fortuitous fragments. And what is lacking, moreover, is precisely *external* unity and continuity; a human being experiencing life in the category of his own *I* is incapable of gathering himself by himself into an outward whole that would be even relatively finished. The point here is not the deficiency of the material provided by outer vision (although the deficiency is considerable); the point, rather, is the absence in principle of any unitary axiological approach from within a human being himself to his own outward expressedness in being.

In this sense, one can speak of a human being's absolute need for the other, for the other's seeing, remembering, gathering, and unifying self-activity—the only self-

<sup>26</sup> To 'consummate' is Liapunov's translation for the Russian *zavershit'*, meaning 'to bring to the utmost degree of completion or fulfilment, to accomplish' (Liapunov in AH, p. 233). The German *vollenden* (translated by Miller as 'to consummate') is similarly used by Hegel in PS to describe the establishment of self-consciousness through the interrelationship of *recognition* between the self and the other (cf. PS § 193, p. 117).

activity capable of producing his outwardly finished personality. This outward personality could not exist, if the other did not create it [...].

(AH, pp. 35-6)

Thus Bakhtin, *unlike* Husserl, understands that a one-sided action is useless, in that self-consciousness and self-determination can only be brought about reciprocally. That is, like Hegel, Bakhtin comprehends that the other *has* to act upon the self, and that the self *depends* upon the other. However, considering Bakhtin's essentially Cartesian ontology and the subsequent fact that the self has no *direct* access to the other, the question is 'can the other act upon the self?'. The answer is 'no'.

Bakhtin understands that, if self-consciousness and self-determination are to be established through the interrelationship between self and other, then the relationship must be reciprocal. However, as I have shown, Bakhtin argues that we have only *indirect* access to the other. Moreover, we have also illustrated that, as the act of *appresentation* of the other as soul is *in* the self, the category of *other-for-me* is an analogue of *I-for-myself*. Thus, if the determination of *I-for-the-other* is determined through the categories of *I-for-myself* and its co-factual analogue *other-for-me*, then *I-for-the-other* must also be an analogue of *I-for-myself*. That is to say, Bakhtin's category *I-for-the-other* is essentially self-reflective, and therefore circular and contradictory. Thus, logically *I-for-the-other* has as its *subject* I and as its *predicate* I, such that its structure exemplifies (*I-for-the-other*)-*for-me*—which is *contra hypothesis*.

Bakhtin thus starts from the certainty that I am *directly* aware of my own *presence* as spirit (*I-for-myself*), and argues that I come to *appresent* the other as soul through *my* act of empathy (*other-for-me*). It follows that I have only *indirect* or *appresentative* knowledge of the other, and as such I cannot recognise that the other is an *I-for-myself*. He then argues that I do not have *direct* knowledge of my soul, and that I, consequently, require the other to *appresent* my soul, and *disclose* it to me (*I-for-the-other*). However, it is difficult to see how the disclosure of the other's action is possible, as I do not have direct access to him/her, and conversely he/she has no direct access to me. Furthermore, as the other is a self-determined entity, it follows that the other cannot be determinate of the self, as this would be circular and contradictory.

Moreover, as I need the other to complete my external wholeness to obtain self-determination, how can I have direct access to myself as spirit? That is, the *indirect presence* of the other, and the *indirect presence* of my own external wholeness of being, *undermines* the inherently *direct presence* of *I-for-myself*, as it begs the question: 'presence of *what*, *where* and *when*?'. Bakhtin, like Husserl, therefore, cannot account for reciprocal intersubjectivity in Hegel's sense. As such, Bakhtin, like Husserl, cannot elucidate adequately the nature of self-consciousness or community. This, as Williams argues, demonstrates the superiority of Hegel's theory of intersubjectivity over Husserl's theory as presented in *Meditations*:

Both the objectivity of the world and ethical obligations to others rest upon and require intersubjective reciprocity. However, given the asymmetrical relation between ego and alter ego, Husserl cannot account for reciprocal recognition in Hegel's sense. Husserl's commitment to transcendentalism excludes reciprocity between ego and alter ego. As Hegel observes, a one-sided action is useless, because what is supposed to happen can only be brought about jointly and mutually, i.e., reciprocally. Husserl never gets as far as Hegel; the other never acts upon the I, nor does the I depend on the other.

(Williams 1996, p. 290)

The same is the case for Bakhtin's account of intersubjectivity. Although Bakhtin is not

committed to transcendentalism like (the late) Husserl, his commitment to a dualist ontology means that his relationship between self and other collapses into solipsism. This can only be overcome once Bakhtin comes to understand that the relationship between self and other is *ab initio* co-determinate, and that reciprocal intersubjectivity entails *immediate* and *direct* action. Direct action however, means that Bakhtin will have to jettison the dualist ontology of *dukh–dusha* (spirit–soul) and adopt a realist or holist ontology where *dukh–dusha*, rather than opposed, are in fact—as Hegel argues—‘originally identical’ elements of a synthetic unity or totality (cf. Hegel 1977, p. 71).

Bakhtin, as I shall now demonstrate, re-approaches the issue of intersubjectivity in his later works and reconstructs his asymmetrical phenomenology to represent a Hegelian symmetrical relation through adopting a logic that understands identity as identity in difference.

## 2.4 Reciprocal Intersubjectivity: Bakhtin and Hegel

Hegel’s *Phenomenology* argues that recognition (*Anerkennung*) is the existential phenomenological origin of *spirit* (*Geist*), and as such spirit should be understood as the essential intersubjective-social reality of the human being. Moreover, Hegel understands that the intersubjective-social actuality (*Aktualität*) is a dimension of freedom, knowledge, and truth, and as such prescribes the social conception of reason itself. However, whereas Fichte’s concept of right is a restricted form of individualism, for Hegel community is inherently not oppressive but an extension of the self and its freedom, and as such Hegel’s theory of intersubjectivity transcends Fichte’s (and Cohen’s) negative concept of freedom.

Hegel hopes to establish individual freedom without relapsing into domination and or alienation of the other, or reducing society to something oppressive. What Hegel does is to adopt Fichte’s concept of recognition, but reject his concept of summons. As I have shown, summons is asymmetrical, i.e. the other summons the self to freedom and responsibility *prior* to the self’s recognising the other, and this is why Hegel rejects it as a prior condition. Instead Hegel adopts the reciprocal concept of recognition as primary.

For Hegel recognition is a reciprocal relation, such that the self is *for itself* through the other, and *for the other* through *being-for-itself*, and *vice versa*. That is *Fürsichsein* and *Füreinanderssein* become equivalent through mutual recognition; the other reveals itself to the self not as a *foreigner* or *alien*, but rather as a constitutive of the self’s being and of the same kind of being as the self. As such, Hegel concludes that the ‘loss of self in the other’ is at the same time the ‘finding-of-self-in-the-other-as-onself’. In recognition, therefore, the difference between being-for-self and being-for-other is sublated. For Hegel recognition expresses ethical life in its immediacy and intimacy (cf. Williams 1997, p. 86). The self, thus, acquired determinant content by returning to itself from the other—and this reciprocal relation is essentially a precursor of Lipps’s and Husserl’s theory of empathy, and Scheler’s theory of sympathy—which, as I have demonstrated, strongly informed Bakhtin.

Hegel’s second form of recognition is conflict. The insight behind Hegel’s notion of conflict is the understanding that recognition, if it is to be free, is not necessarily mutually reciprocal. That is, freedom dictates the possibility of non-recognition and non-freedom just as much as the possibility of recognition and freedom. Therefore, recognition always contains the possibility of conflict, which signifies a failure to recognise (*Nichtanerkennen*). Hegel, therefore, radicalises the possibility of *Nichtanerkennen* by the introduction of intersubjective distance, alienation (*Entfremden*) and conflict. However, failure to recognise, exemplified by the struggle between master and slave in the ‘Lordship and Bondage’ section of the



*Phenomenology*, is not a theological or authoritarian issue, but a 'state of nature'. Hegel's notion of lordship and bondage is derivative of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan*, which identifies human beings in their 'state of nature' as self-interested individuals in a constant struggle between one and other. According to Hobbes, the struggle is resolved by their voluntarily giving up their freedom as individuals, and obeying a structure of authority in the form of a 'social contract' (cf. Hobbes 1992, pp. 141-2).

In the *Phenomenology* the initial mode in which the subject as self-consciousness desires recognition from the other takes the form of the master and slave relationship which Hegel describes in the famous section 'Independence and Dependence of self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage':

Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged. The Notion of this unity in its duplication embraces many and varied meanings. Its moments, then, must on the one hand be held strictly apart, and on the other hand must in this differentiation at the same time also be taken and known as not distinct, or in the opposite significance. The twofold significance of the distinct moments has in the nature of self-consciousness to be infinite, or directly the opposite of the determinateness in which it is posited. The detailed exposition of the Notion of this spiritual unity in its duplication will present us with the process of Recognition.

(PS § 178 p. 111)

The passage contains the Hegelian concept of the doubling of consciousness that argues that that self-consciousness is constituted by two distinguishable, yet inseparable elements: first, consciousness is in itself (*Ansichsein*) and second, consciousness is for another (*Füreinandersein*). Self-consciousness is said by Hegel to be *both* at once, such that determinate being or 'being-for-itself' (*Fürsichsein*) is the product of the dialectical relationship between 'being-in-itself' (*Ansichsein*) and 'being-for-another' (*Füreinandersein*).

Out of the dialectic of recognition between master and slave (lord and bondsman), Hegel develops his conception of the *social* nature of knowledge—that is, how knowledge can only manifest itself in *spirit* (*Geist*), in terms of participation in social practices, not in terms of being fixed in any kind of metaphysical relation between 'subjects' and 'objects' (Pinkard 1994, p.53). It is, therefore, important to note that the two self-consciousnesses (self and other) are distinct and separate from each other:

Now, this movement of self-consciousness in relation to another self-consciousness has in this way been represented as the action of *one* self-consciousness, but this action of the one has itself a double significance of being both its own action and the action of the other as well. For the other is equally independent and self-contained, and there is nothing in it of which it is not itself the origin.

(PS § 182, pp. 111-12)

The difference between the self and the other is, in the inception of recognition, a matter of self-assertion and self-maintenance: the self is stronger and higher than the other, and is capable of asserting this at the expense of the other. This distinction is, however, primary, because the equality of the two self-consciousnesses is the truth, or completer realisation, of the self in another self. This relationship is both a higher truth and a higher good, and brings the self-consciousness closer to a realisation of *spirit*.

For Hegel, the struggle between individuals is resolved through the formation of spirit, which—unlike Hobbes's 'social contract'—is the affirmation of freedom, in that freedom of the self and the other is intersubjectively mediated, through the recognition of responsibility. The individual is said to be the *separate* in the *unity*. The independent consciousness or

individual in the unity, is determined through the self's awareness of its responsibility, and its understanding that it should be prepared to fight for its independence to keep its responsibility. Therefore, Hegel's notion of *Nichtanerkennen* replaces Fichte's transcendental and *a priori* deduction of right (*Recht*), and replaces it with a phenomenological account of the genesis of right as the struggle for recognition (cf. Williams 1997, p. 87). Thus, although Hegel's concept of recognition appropriates Fichte's concept of recognition, Hegel radically reformulates the concept of recognition in the *Phenomenology*, through the introduction of the concept of *spirit*, moving from conflict, to domination to reconciliation.

The most important element of Hegel's notion of recognition is its reciprocity. Hegel understands that our self-consciousness is determined only through the reciprocal and responsible relationship to another:

[...] the movement is simply the double movement of the two self-consciousnesses. Each sees the *other* do the same as it does; each does itself what it demands of the other, and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the other does the same. Action by one side only would be useless because what is to happen can only be brought about by both.

(PS § 182, p. 112)

Moreover, I can only come to know of *my* totality as an independent and responsible self-consciousness through the appearance and actions (*Handeln*) of the *other* over and against me. That is, because Hegel, unlike Scheler and Husserl and others, does not maintain a dualist ontology, but a holist ontology (cf. Appendix I). Such that the other has 'an independent existence of its own, which, therefore, [the self] cannot utilize for its own purposes, if that [other] does not of its own accord do what the [self] does to it' (PS § 182, p. 112). This means that the other is both self-determinate and *directly* accessible to the self. As such the self does not have to *appresent* the other, but is directly aware of him/her through their mutual active desire for recognition. Williams gives a terse summary of the contrasts between the Hegelian conception of self-consciousness and that of the phenomenologists:

Hegel's view is an alternative to two others. First Cartesian solipsism, that is, the other is completely inaccessible and out of reach in principle. Since Cartesian subjectivity is a 'prison', solipsism is the human condition. The second view is that there is direct or immediate access to others, as empathy [Lipps] or sympathy [Scheler] may suggest. In this case, the problem is not how to escape the 'prison of subjectivity', but how to achieve individuality and independence, i.e., to break out of the grip of a collective consciousness. [...] The former construes identity as the first-person cogito [e.g. the 'transcendental ego' of Husserl's *Meditations*]. [...] The latter view construes identity as an undifferentiated universal [e.g. Scheler's '*Du*' *überhaupt*]. [...] But no matter whether it is construed as a particular or a universal, identity is here understood as abstract identity, exclusive of difference. In contrast, Hegel's account of intersubjectivity, like his speculative logic, presents a concrete identity or totality inclusive of both identity and difference.

(Williams 1992, p. 150, square brackets added)

Because Hegel maintains a non-transcendental idealism, his theory of intersubjectivity is not plagued by the implicit solipsism inherent in the transcendental idealism of Fichte and Cohen and other philosophers such as Lipps, Husserl and Scheler, who understand recognition as essentially phenomenologically asymmetrical. Like Hegel, Husserl, Scheler and Bakhtin find the inter-human to be a dimension of reason itself, and all apply the Hegelian principle of the doubling of consciousness. But, although Bakhtin initially adopts a Husserlian-Lippsian asymmetrical concept of recognition, there is nevertheless an inexorable

shift towards a Hegelian form of reciprocal recognition, as I shall now demonstrate.

### (A) Bakhtin's notion of Boundary Relation

Although Bakhtin did not write an extensive piece on the nature of intersubjectivity following AH he, nevertheless, continued to contemplate and address the issue throughout his subsequent works. Consequently, in his later works Bakhtin brings about a shift both in his application of the architectonic categories and in his overall approach to the relationship between self and other that brings him close Hegel. This is not surprising as Bakhtin's (neo-) Hegelianism continued to evolve throughout his career, notably through the influence of Ernst Cassirer, to a more pronounced, self-critical and integral element of his philosophy. For instance, in 'From Notes Made in 1970-71', he drops the asymmetrical determinate relation between 'I-for-myself' and 'other-for-me', and suggests a co-determinate or *boundary* relation that exemplifies identity in difference. That is, Bakhtin no longer takes the I-for-myself to be the *primary* category from which the self determines, or 'appresents' the *other*. Now Bakhtin, like Hegel, understands that the category of the *other-for-me* is co-determinate of *I-for-myself*. As such 'someone who is no longer the person, no longer the *I*, but the *other*' (i.e. *not-I-in-me*) is 'The reflection of the self in the empirical other through whom one must pass in order to reach *I-for-myself*' (N70, p. 137).

Interestingly, however, the first occurrence of this thesis is found at the start of AH, where, unfortunately, its full potential and implications remain undeveloped. As I discussed in 2.3C, the *self* must establish the characteristic parts of the *other* according to his/her knowledge of and reaction to the *whole* of the other. In this Bakhtin demonstrates an appreciation of, what is essentially, a Hegelian logic of intuitive understanding of objects, which moves *not* from the parts to the whole but from the whole to the parts. That is, Bakhtin rejects, like Hegel before him, the Kantian conception that the *whole is an organised unity, and not an aggregate*. Bakhtin writes that:

[...] the [self's] reactions to particular self-manifestations on the part of the [other] are founded on his unitary reaction to the *whole* of the [other]: all particular self-manifestations of the [other] have significance for the characterisation of this whole as moments or constituent features of it.

(AH, p. 5)

It is the self's relationship to the *whole* of the other 'as a human being' that, according to Bakhtin, makes it 'specifically aesthetic'. That is, the self's relationship to the other is a relationship to a *whole* that straddles both the other as cognitive *form*, exemplifying *meaning* (or *intention*), and the other as concrete actuality of the once-occurrent *historical* event of the other's *being*. The *whole* of the other, therefore, exists on the *boundary* between the other as *form* and the other as *living* event. This *boundary* is the *being-as-event* of the other, or the *becoming* of the other.

Furthermore, the very determinateness of the other as *aesthetic* 'object' depends on this boundary relationship with the perceiving self. Bakhtin illustrates this when he says:

What in life, in cognition, and in performed actions we call a determinate object acquires its determinateness, its own countenance, only through our relationship to it: it is our relationship that determines an object and its structure, not conversely.

(AH, p. 5)

In the next paragraph Bakhtin makes it quite clear that the subject-object relationship is crucial *not* only to the determinateness of the object, but also to the determinateness of the subject *for itself*. He writes that when the subject's, or self's, relationship to the object

[...] ceases to be founded on a necessary principle [...], where, in other words, we

depart from our principled relationship to things and to the world—only then are we confronted by the determinateness of an object as something foreign and independent.

(AH, p. 5)

The consequence of this, Bakhtin writes, is that

[...] the object's determinateness begins to disintegrate for us and we ourselves fall under the domination of the contingent, with the result that we lose ourselves and we also lose the determinateness of the world as well.

(AH, p. 5)

Therefore, a determinate subject—a self that is *in and for itself*—is only determinate *in that* and *while* it determines the object. Thus both the subject *and* the object are determinate and distinct *only* while the subject is actively determining the object. It follows, therefore, that the subject's cognition or self is defined by the act of determining the object. Thus, the identity of a subject as *self* is established when it is in the act of determining its *other*, namely the object. The structure wherein the subject establishes *self* through its relation to the *other*, or where the subject, through determining the object, becomes co-determinate of itself *for itself*, exemplifies a Hegelian concept of identity in difference and becoming. However, this is not the structure that Bakhtin goes on to apply in AH when he discusses the relationship between self and other.

Perhaps this is because Bakhtin's comprehension that the whole as an organised unity and not an aggregate does not stem from Hegel *directly* but was mediated to him through the neo-Kantian philosophy of Cohen and Natorp. Gillian Rose writes that in *Logik der Reinen Erkenntnis (Logic of Pure Cognition)* Cohen argues that:

[...] Kant merely misnamed the principles when he called them 'synthetic', and he was wrong to complete their meaning by connecting their employment to sensuous perception and intuition. For the idea that thought is a 'synthesis' makes its unity dependent on a *given* plurality which it synthesizes. But unity and plurality are equally preconditions of any thought. Hence they cannot be 'given' to thought but must be produced or created by the act of thinking itself. There must be an 'origin' (*Ursprung*) of thought which is prior to both unifying and diversifying, prior to the distinction between thought and being. Logic is the logic of this origin. Instead of calling thought a 'synthesis', with this heteronomous implication, thought should be considered a creating or producing (*Erzeugen*).

[...] No distinction can be made between the logic of thinking and the reality of 'being' (*Sein*). Being is the being of thinking: and thinking is the thinking of being [...].

(Rose 1981, p. 10)

That is, Cohen adopts a monistic view that is reminiscent of Hegel's claim that form and content are not absolutely opposed, but are originally identical elements of unity or totality *and* the view that 'What is Rational is Actual [*wirklich*]<sup>27</sup> and what is Actual is Rational' (Hegel 1942, p. 17). Consequently, Cohen rejects Kant's *ding an sich* and effaces the distinction between noumena and phenomena, form and material of cognition:

Where, then, is the material originally? Where did the *a posteriori* itself, with which all our cognition commences, originate? Is it perhaps like the marble before it receives a form? Is it not, rather, present in the whole phenomenon, inherently united in and with the form, and only analysed afterwards out of the effect on our senses? Thus both are from the beginning only present in us ourselves—as the entirety of a phenomenon.

(Cohen quoted in Köhnke 1991, p.181)

<sup>27</sup> *Wirklich*: what is actual, real, the case. Its root, *Wirken*, means to work, produce, bring about, effect.

Thus, according to Cohen, the fact that form and material constitute an inseparable unity of thought (and therefore of being), demonstrates that they are both conceivable only as 'present in us ourselves'. The consequence is that the concept of the object as both *Objekt* (object of knowledge) and *Gegenstand* (object of perception) evaporates through this interpretation, as the object is now understood simply as a 'produced phenomenon' conceived by the subject. Furthermore, as the object is solely derivative of the *a priori*, or 'purely subjective intuitions', we can no longer talk of any *a posteriori* element in the subject's experience of the object.

Cohen believes, explains Natorp, that the qualities and the truth content of the object of experience are grounded in what the subject has

*a priori* thought and mentally represented in it; and in like manner in the exact knowledge of nature reason perceives only what it itself produces. 'It is not outside...it is within you'; but even then not as something that lies there finished and has only to be exhibited: on the contrary, 'you are everlastingly producing it'. Such production of the object constitutes experience as it occurs in unbroken progress in genuine science, genuine human traffic, and all genuine culture.

(Natorp quoted in Köhnke 1991, p. 181)

It follows that Cohen's central thesis maintains that only those things can be seen as objective that are produced *a priori* by the subject. Thus objective reality, the reality of science, but also the reality of culture, and all human interaction are, *de facto, a priori* constructions.

'Cohen, and to a much greater extent Natorp', writes Willey, 'tended to turn the logical operations of the mind into ontological absolutes and even to make the mind productive of its own reality; thus, they drifted into a metaphysical idealism contrary to Kantian criticism and closer to the neo-Hegelianism of the late nineteenth century' (Willey 1978, p. 104/cf. Appendix III).

However, as I have shown, Hegel maintains that reality has an intrinsic unity of itself, which is free and independent of any synthesis imparted upon it by a Kantian transcendental subject. Thus, although the similarity between Cohen's position and Hegel are considerable, the two metaphysical systems differ crucially: Cohen argues that form and content are originally identical elements of the *a priori* unity of the *subject*, whereas Hegel argues that form and content are originally identical elements of the unity of *reality*. Thus while Cohen advances a monistic idealism that is transcendental, *a priori* and anti-realist, Hegel proposes a holistic idealism that is non-transcendental, non-*a priori* and essentially realist (cf. Stern 1991, Williams 1992).

In AH Bakhtin (although a realist) envisions, like Cohen, a subjectively grounded whole and unity, and this is principally the reason why Bakhtin's theory of intersubjectivity is asymmetrical and solipsistic: i.e. the self's knowledge of and relation to the other is ultimately an analogue of and mediated through the self. This changes, however, in Bakhtin's later works when he adopts a realist ontology more reminiscent of Hegel's, that argues that the other, rather than an object of the subject's consciousness, is an autonomous being in itself.

This thesis is first revealed in Bakhtin's 'Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book' (1961), which contains his most revealing and overtly Hegelian passage regarding the issue of intersubjectivity. There is a striking similarity between passages in Bakhtin's TRDB and passages §§ 178-84 of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. The *Phenomenology*, famously presents the moments of intersubjectivity in some of the following paragraphs (the first of which I have cited before):

Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged.

[...]

Now, this movement of self-consciousness in relation to another self-consciousness

has in this way been represented as the action of *one* self-consciousness, but this action of the one has itself a double significance of being both its own action and the action of the other as well. For the other is equally independent and self-contained, and there is nothing in it of which it is not itself the origin.

[...]

[...] each [self-consciousness] is for itself, and for the other, an immediate being of its own account, which at the same time is such only through this mediation. They *recognize* themselves as *mutually recognizing* one another.

(PS §§ 178, 182, and 184 pp. 111-12)

In TRDB Bakhtin presents the moments of intersubjectivity in the following passages:

I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself to another, through another, and with the help of another. The most important acts of constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness (toward a *thou*). Separation, dissociation, and enclosure within the self as the main reason for the loss of one's self. Not that which takes place within, but that which takes place on the *boundary* between one's own and someone else's consciousness, on the *threshold*. [...] *To be means to communicate*. Absolute death (non-being) is the state of being unheard, unrecognised, unremembered (Ippolit).<sup>28</sup> To be means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself. A person has no sovereign internal territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary; looking inside himself, he looks *into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another*.

[...]

I cannot manage without another, I cannot become myself without another; I must find myself in another by finding another in myself (in mutual reflection and mutual acceptance). Justification cannot be *self-justification*, recognition cannot be *self-recognition*. I receive my name from others, and it exists for others (self-nomination is imposture). Even love toward one's own self is impossible.

[...]

Not another person remaining the object of my consciousness, but another autonomous consciousness standing alongside mine, and my own consciousness can exist only in relation to it.

(TRDB, pp. 287-8)

The Hegelianism in Bakhtin's passages is clear. Bakhtin, like Hegel, understands that self-consciousness requires reciprocal intersubjective mediation, and that reciprocity is expressed through the *mutual recognition* of each other as autonomous consciousnesses. The most telling Hegelianism of the passage—aside from its phrasing and polemic—is Bakhtin's insistence that the other is not an object of the self's consciousness, but is a real and autonomous other consciousness that exists outside of and independently of the self. Moreover, the passages reveal Bakhtin's *new* use of the concept of the *boundary relationship*—something that he may have initially adopted from Simmel's *Lebensphilosophie*, but which now unambiguously resembles a Hegelian application. I have shown that Bakhtin's application of the *boundary* relationship throughout AH and PCMF employs a rigorous distinction between internal and external as boundary, where the inability to transcend the limits of internal and external leads to the dualism that establishes the asymmetrical relation between spirit and soul (cf. AH, pp. 90-1). This changes dramatically, however, in TRDB and later texts such as PT, where Bakhtin adopts the Hegelian concept of boundary relation as the co-determinate structure between spirit and soul, thereby radicalising

<sup>28</sup> 'Ippolit' most probably refers to Dostoevsky's character Hyppolyte in *The Idiot*.

the limits of internal and external.

However, Hegel's dialectic of the interrelationship between self and other simply cannot be understood *unless* we understand the dynamic of a dialectical *boundary* relation, it follows that if we want to demonstrate the extent to which Bakhtin adopts a Hegelian theory of intersubjectivity, we should 'map it' on to a similar dialectical *boundary* relation.

### (B) Bakhtin and Hegel: The Boundary Relation of Mutual Recognition

Throughout his career Bakhtin employs the categories 'I-for-myself', 'other-for-me' and 'I-for-the-other', and the concepts of 'soul' and 'spirit'. In the previous section I demonstrated how these categories, as they are applied in TPA and AH, are inconsistent and at times contradictory. However, with the appropriation of the Hegelian concept of the *boundary* relation the logical structure and dynamic of the *categories* and the *concepts* changes dramatically. In 2.3D I illustrated that there is an impasse between my internal being as spirit (the 'I-for-myself') and external being as soul (the 'I-for-the-other') because Bakhtin assumes the *primacy* of spirit. However, by applying the Hegelian concept of boundary relation, Bakhtin radicalises and dissolves this particular impasse, because the concept of boundary relation deems the spheres of internal and external to be co-determinate. Thus, Bakhtin shifts from a determinate to a co-determinate relation both between I-for-myself and other-for-me, and between soul and spirit. In so doing he appropriates a Hegelian concept of self-consciousness and becoming.

Hegel's moments of intersubjectivity are symmetrical, and as such the boundary categories are *co-determinate* and reciprocal. Using Kosok's formalisation of dialectical logic I can give an unambiguous interpretation of Hegel's (and consequently Bakhtin's) phenomenal structure of self-consciousness through recognition. To recapitulate: the principle of identity in difference or non-identity (R)e:  $+e \leftrightarrow -e$  establishes that conscious reflection R by the subject (R)e of the object e constitutes the identity of the object e' on the *boundary* of the *limits* +e (affirmation of e) and -e (negation of e). (Hegel would term these two moments as *e-in-itself* and *e-for-itself* respectively.) The affirmation and negation of e produces +–e, something that is neither +e nor –e, but their *mutual boundary*. The sublation (*Aufheben*) of +–e, denoted as e', expresses the co-determinate relation, or *boundary relation*, between affirmation and negation of e as a relation that is *in-and-for-itself* or *becoming* (cf. Logic, pp. 83, 85).<sup>29</sup>

The Hegelian desire for recognition of one self-consciousness by another self-consciousness exemplifies the following dialectic moments. The first reflection establishes two forms or *limits*; *self* S (self-in-itself) and *other* O (self-outside-itself, or the not-self-in-itself) which sublates to establish the *boundary relation* SO, such that self-consciousness is  $S \rightarrow O : S'$ . This first level reflection on self-consciousness S' exemplifies the 'master and slave' relationship in that the 'master' consciousness S recognises the other O *only* insofar as he/she exemplifies the *self-outside-itself* necessary for determining S as a self-consciousness *in-and-for-itself*. Thus, S forces *recognition* from the other as a being reduced to an *object* and a *means* or 'slave', and does not recognise that the other O is a *self-in-itself*. Furthermore, the *other* as 'slave' *understands* his/her narrow self-identification as the relationship SO. Which entails that the *other* is dependent on the perceiving and reflecting consciousness S and cannot see itself as a *self-in-itself*. It follows, argues Hegel, that S' is a limited form of self-consciousness, in that it is exploitative and repressive of the other, but also utterly dependent

<sup>29</sup> I give a full explanation of dialectical logic and the concepts limit, boundary, identity in difference and becoming in Appendix II.

upon the other (this relationship is similar in kind to Bakhtin's relationship between the self and his/her soul-slave, cf. 2.3D).

In the second reflection self-consciousness S' comes to understand the other as an other-self-consciousness O', through the negation of itself S(O) which establishes the *other for the self*, and through the negation of the other O(S) which establishes the *self for the other*. In recognising O's self-consciousnesses an equilibrium is established *for the self* wherein self and other share an equal and 'free' status as co-determining self-consciousnesses.

The third level of self-consciousness S' 'journeys' to is when S' or SO comes to reflect upon S (the *self-in-itself*), such that we obtain SO(S) which is dynamic self. Subsequently O' or OS comes to reflect upon O (the *self-outside-itself*), such that we obtain OS(O) which is dynamic other. The synthesis of the third reflection SOOS(SO) : S'O' = S'', establishes consciousness-of-self-consciousness, or the recognition of self-consciousness as a co-determinate dynamic, or *spirit (Geist)*. Again, using a simplified dialectical matrix we get:

S	→	O	:	SO	= S'
↓		↓			Self-consciousness as master-slave
O(S)		S(O)	:	OS(SO)	= O'
self-for-other		other-for-self			Equilibrium: equal status of self and other as determinate self-consciousnesses for self
..		..			
SO(S)		OS(S)	:	SOOS(SO) : S' O'	= S''
dynamic self-for-other		dynamic other-for-self			Dynamic equilibrium: consciousness-of-self-consciousness as a dynamic.

As we have seen in 2.3D, Bakhtin, in accordance with Hegel's scheme, argues that the *self should not* reduce the *other* to a mere *object* or *means* (i.e. 'soul-slave', or Hegel's *slave*) necessary for recognition. However, whereas Hegel insists that the master-slave relationship is a *necessary* and *unavoidable* consequence of the dialectic of the dependence and independence of self-consciousness, Bakhtin regards it as a 'hollow' and 'fictitious' moment. However, as Bakhtin comes to understand that the category of the *other-for-me* is co-determinate of *I-for-myself*, it follows that some sort of 'master and slave' relationship is required as first reflection. That is, I have to establish some form of initial self-consciousness *before* I can become the agent of *my* actions (*moi postupok*).

If I formalise Bakhtin's first reflection we obtain two forms: *self* S (Hegel's *self-in-itself*, for which Bakhtin has no category other than the, now problematic, notion of spirit); and *other* O (Bakhtin's 'no longer the *I*, but the *other*', or Hegel's *not-self-in-itself*) which sublates to establish the *boundary* SO, such that self-consciousness is S → O : S' (Bakhtin's 'I-for-myself', and Hegel's *self-for-and-in-itself*).

According to Bakhtin, this first-level reflection on self-consciousness S' exemplifies the relationship between the 'self' and the 'soul-slave' in AH, in that the self S recognises the other O *only* insofar as he/she exemplifies *self-outside-itself* (i.e. the self's external whole, or *soul*) necessary for determining S as a self-consciousness *in-and-for-itself* (i.e. the union of the self's internal unity and external unity as a *whole*). Thus, S *appresents* the other as an *object* and a *means*, and does not actually *recognise* that the other O is a *self-in-itself*. However, in contrast to Hegel's scheme, the *other* as 'soul-slave' does not *understand* his/her



narrow self-identification as the relationship SO, in that because the other as *soul-slave* is an *appresentation* he/she lacks any direct *actuality*. That is, the other as soul-slave is a fictitious *construct* of the self. Which entails that the *other* as soul-slave is self-determined and dependent on the *apperceiving* and self-reflecting consciousness S, and as such it cannot be a *self-in-itself*. Therefore, argues Bakhtin, S' is a 'hollow' form of self-consciousness, not because it is exploitative and repressive of the other, but because it is essentially solipsistic, in that it lacks the presence of a historically concrete, *real* other.

Beyond the relationship between self and other as soul-slave (an empathetic construct), Bakhtin also comes to recognise in TRDB that *capitalism* is a socio-institutional form of lordship and bondsman. The economic structures and class society of capitalism create the condition of the *failure to recognise* (similar in kind to Hegel's *Nichtanerkennen*) that results in both a loss of *freedom* and a lack of *identity*:<sup>30</sup>

Capitalism created the conditions for a special type of inescapably solitary consciousness. Dostoevsky exposes the falsity of this consciousness, as it moves in a vicious circle.

Hence the depiction of the suffering, humiliations, and *lack of recognition* of man in class society. Recognition has been taken away from him, his name has been taken away. He has been driven into forced solitude, which the unsubmitive strive to transform into *proud solitude* (to do without recognition, without others).

(TRDB, p. 288)

However, '*proud solitude*' is still a form of solitary consciousness, and as such it is *false* consciousness because my consciousness can only exist by being *recognised* by another autonomous consciousness.

On the second level, what Bakhtin would understand as the *actual* or *concrete* level of self-consciousness, S' comes to understand that it needs the historically concrete and actual other to obtain self-consciousness and self-determination. The self, therefore, comes to recognise the other as an other self-consciousness O' through the negation of itself S(O) which establishes the 'other-for-me' (i.e. Hegel's *other-for-the-self*) and through the negation of the other O(S) which establishes the 'I-for-the-other' (i.e. Hegel's *self-for-the-other*). Through the recognition of O's self-consciousnesses a reciprocal co-determinate interrelationship is established between the self and the other as equal and 'free' self-consciousnesses.

However, there is a clear difference between Bakhtin and Hegel in terms of the mode of *recognition*. For instance, Bakhtin argues—as opposed to Hegel—that the conflict between self and other as master and slave is neither necessary nor essential to establishing (self-) consciousness and freedom.

Hegel argues that the primary desire of the *self* is *recognition* (*Anerkennung*) by the *other*, with the potential of a *failure to recognise* (*Nichtanerkennen*). Thus, recognition always contains the possibility of conflict, exemplified by the master's failure to recognise the slave as a self-in-itself. Crucially, the possibility to recognise and fail to recognise is both *necessary* and *essential* for the possibility of freedom, and self-determination. The master-slave relation is essential for the formation of *spirit*, as it is only through the struggle between master and slave that the master can come to recognise the slave's intrinsic value and worth, and vice versa, establishing a moral dimension to self-consciousness as *spirit*. This is because Hegel does not adhere to any *a priori* or pre-existing normative moral *subiectum*; everything that comes to *be*, is valued and considered true by virtue of *spirit*.

In TPA the *real* desire of the *self* is to *communicate* recognition to the other by

<sup>30</sup> Although Bakhtin demonstrates his appreciation of Marxist Hegelianism here, it is important to point out that he does not suggest a materialist dialectic.

'confessing' or conferring 'responsibility' (*otvetstvennost'*) on the other, and in his later works this desire does not change.<sup>31</sup> The nature of this 'responsibility' is the subject's desire for moral disclosure and accountability to the other:

A probative description of the world of a once-occurrent life-as-deed, from within the performed deed and on the basis of its non-alibi in Being, would constitute a *confession*, in the sense of an individual and once-occurrent accounting to oneself for one's own actions.

(TPA p. 53)

In this respect, Bakhtin's notion of *responsibility* resembles Fichte's and Cohen's notion of *responsibility*, in that individuals acknowledge their moral duty and responsibility through the recognition that they *must* place restrictions on their freedom.<sup>32</sup>

Cohen's influence on Bakhtin is strongly conveyed by Bakhtin's use of the legalistic and religious terms 'non-alibi' and 'confession'. For instance, in *Der Begriff der Religion* (*The Concept of Religion*) Cohen argues that is only through humanity as a totality (*Allheit*) that the individual becomes conscious of his/her individuality as *Mensch*. In ethics the individual is *sublated* (*aufgehoben*) to a higher level in totality, such that the individual is dissolved in the allness of humanity. The individual feels the summons (*Aufruf*) to the totality through his awareness of sin and his/her desire to be unburdened:

Das Individuum fühlt sich seiner Sünde beschwert. Da soll ihm nun die Ethik helfen mit ihrem Aufruf zur Allheit.

(Cohen, quoted in Munk 1997, p. 162)

Thus, Cohen argues, self-consciousness is the sublative union of the self and the other—we can see here that Cohen adopts aspects of Hegel's notion of *Geist*. Later however, in *Ethik des reinen Willens* (*The Ethics of Pure Will*) Cohen substitutes the term sublation for *correlation* to diminish the Hegelian tone of his philosophy (cf. Munk 1997, pp. 162-3). Moreover, the ethical contract of correlation, argues Cohen, restricts the self and the other from establishing a master-slave relation.

The nature of Bakhtin's restriction is the *ought* which, as I have demonstrated, is determined by the post-empathetic intersubjective mediation between self and other(s). The background of Bakhtin's thought is the idea that the interrelationship between I and other establishes the architectonic moment of the ought. As such, Bakhtin skips several steps taken by Hegel and argues that the boundary relation between I and other is one that divulges their personal values, and axiological positions *immediately*, and has a normative value-in-itself namely, 'answerability'.

The self, therefore, *should not and must not* reduce the *other* to a mere 'object' or 'slave' in order to establish self-consciousness—which is quite different from saying that the self *would not and cannot* reduce the *other* to a mere 'object' or 'slave' in order to establish self-consciousness (as Cohen argues). That is, Bakhtin instils into the boundary relation

<sup>31</sup> For instance in TRDB Bakhtin describes confession 'as a higher form of a person's *free* self-revelation from within [...] an encounter of the *deepest I* with *another* and with *others* [...]' (TRDB, p. 294).

<sup>32</sup> Poole, moreover, demonstrates, with reference to the protocols of Bakhtin's interrogation (28 December 1928), Scheler's distinct influence on Bakhtin here. In the protocols Bakhtin admits that the first of two brief lectures he gave on Scheler was on confession: 'Confession, according to Scheler, is the revelation of one's self before another which makes social ('word') that which had striven to its asocial and extraverbal border ('sin') and was isolated, un-lived-out foreign body in the inner life of the individual' (Bakhtin, quoted in Poole 2000, p. 110). Of interest is the fact that Bakhtin emphasises Scheler's act of 'revelation' to exemplify a linguistic boundary relationship: the revelation socialises through verbalisation that which is its opposite (determined by a boundary); the 'asocial extraverbal'. (I shall discuss the verbal dimension of Bakhtin's theory of intersubjectivity in the next section.)

between self and other a normative moral imperative from the start. This is not to say that the reduction of the other to a mere object by the self is not possible—capitalism is a case in point—rather he argues that the ‘ideal’ boundary relation of intersubjectivity *should* not exhibit the master–slave relationship, by virtue of his notion of the normative moral *subiectum* and the correlative subjective *answerability*. That is, although Bakhtin is moving towards establishing a Hegelian conception of the sociality of being-as-event and knowledge in the form of culture, he is unwilling to jettison, indeed he is committed to, the normative universality of moral values (the *ought*) grounded in the non-*a priori* historical absolute transcendental moral *subiectum*.

Thus, Bakhtin’s concept of the *ought* and *responsibility*, as established through the architectonic moments that determine I and other, is reminiscent of Fichte’s and Cohen’s philosophy. That is, Bakhtin’s *ought* has a function that is similar to Fichte’s and Cohen’s summons: Bakhtin’s *ought* is given to the self through the *recognition* of the other, but is not separate from the relationship of intersubjectivity, and determines the self’s *responsibility* for its act (*postupok*) in relation to the other. However, whereas for Fichte and Cohen the summons is a prior *act* of the other, the *ought* as summons for Bakhtin is not an *act* of the other, but transcends the *act* (*postupok*) of recognition as an acknowledgement of mutual responsibility. Nevertheless, both Fichte and Bakhtin ultimately reduce the *summons* or *ought* to a noumenal moment. Therefore, for Bakhtin, the relationship between *I* and *other* is *imperatively* one between equals—‘mutual reflection and mutual acceptance’—and being-as-event exhibits an indubitable, indeed ontic moral dimension (PDP, p. 287).

Bakhtin, thus, side-steps the ‘master and slave’ relationship by, on the one hand, phenomenologically distinguishing between the two reflective moments of self-consciousness. The first-level co-determinate relationship between the self and soul-slave is a phenomenologically *appresentative* act, which lacks any direct or concrete ‘contact’ between the self and another. The second-level co-determinate relationship between the self and another, however is a phenomenologically direct act, with concrete ‘contact’ between the self and another. It should be noted, however, that the step from the first level to the second level co-determinate relationship of intersubjectivity is neither logically nor ontologically possible, and requires, as far as I can see, a leap of faith not certainty. On the other hand, the possibility of a master and slave relationship is ‘blocked’ by positing a normative imperative (‘responsibility’) in the concrete and actual boundary relation between self and other. This normative imperative, or *ought*, is marked out by the moral *subiectum*, which (as I have demonstrated in the previous chapter), is (in essence) a non-*a priori* historical absolute analogous to Hegel’s notion of absolute spirit.

### (C) The Social Nature of Being and Knowledge

The implications of Bakhtin’s developed understanding of boundary relations and the necessity of symmetrical intersubjective mediation are far reaching as it leads Bakhtin, in his later works, to further appropriate the Hegelian view that self-consciousness, culture and knowledge are *ab initio* social. However, the thesis that knowledge is socially posited is already present in his early works, as can be seen in the essay ‘The Problem Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art’ (PCMF) where Bakhtin argues that cultural domains or forms (i.e. history, art, ethics, religion, science etc.) are socially posited. Bakhtin writes:

A cultural domain has no inner territory. It is located entirely upon boundaries, boundaries intersect it everywhere, passing through each of its constituent features. [...] Every cultural act lives essentially on the boundaries, and it derives its seriousness and significance from this fact. Separated and abstracted from these

boundaries, it loses the ground of its being and becomes vacuous, arrogant; it degenerates and dies.

(PCMF, p. 274)

That is, a cultural domain or form has no content *in itself* but only content *for itself* that is wholly determined by its social territory—which is established by the becoming or being-of-event of ‘the unity of culture’ (PCMF, p. 274). The unity of culture consists simply in the unity of the stream of *cultural acts*, without a substantial ground or ‘spatial whole’ that establishes the unity (*ibid.*). In the same vein, we may remember, Bakhtin argues that a theoretical truth may be true in itself (*istina*) but lacks any determinate or *existential* content *unless* it is determined to be true (*pravda*) by someone within his/her unity of consciousness—which consists simply in the unity of the stream of lived experiences (*Erlebnissen*) of being-as-event. Thus it is not surprising that Bakhtin re-iterates the warning regarding theoretism voiced in TPA in the above passage from PCMF; when the cultural domains (such as the theoretical sciences) are separated from their determining source (living society), they become ‘vacuous’ and ‘arrogant’, and cease to be (cf. 1.2B).

For Bakhtin, as for the *Lebensphilosophen* Dilthey and Simmel, a cultural domain or form obtains its seriousness and significance through its co-determinate boundary relations with, on the one hand, other cultural forms (by virtue of the unity of culture), and on the other, the life process of society. For Dilthey and Simmel cultural forms or domains are constructs of objective spirit, and as such the various cultural forms (if they are to have any meaningful content) need to be both co-determinate and unified to maintain a stable and objective world-view. Similarly Bakhtin maintains that:

It is only [...] in its unmediated responsibility and orientation within the unity of culture, that a [cultural] phenomenon ceases to be simply and existing, naked fact, that it acquires validity and meaning [...].

(PCMF, p. 274)

Furthermore, the *Lebensphilosophen* maintain that spirit is objectified life, and that consequently the unity enjoyed by cultural forms or domains is grounded in the unity of life (cf. Dilthey 1997, Simmel 1971, 1.1B). Hence, *Lebensphilosophie* argues that there is an inherent dualism between life and culture, such that life and culture stand in a non-reciprocal *boundary* relation to each other. Again this view is represented in Bakhtin’s early work, and is exemplified by his argument that an act (whether cognitive, ethical, or artistic) must have ‘two-sided answerability’ or ‘responsibility’: it must look ‘at the objective unity of a domain of culture and at the never-repeatable uniqueness of actually lived and experienced life’ (TPA, p. 2, afore mentioned in 1.4). This ‘two-sided’ responsibility, it can be argued, establishes Bakhtin’s notion of spirit: ‘the spirit is the totality of everything that has the validity of meaning—a totality of all the forms of my life’s directedness from within itself’ (AH, p. 110). That is, spirit to Bakhtin is the inner awareness of the self that it is a *meaning* generating consciousness, and this entails that spirit assumes the awareness of ‘social space’.

Thus, Bakhtin, like Dilthey and Simmel, maintains that all the various cultural forms are brought forth and maintained in the social reality, which is determined through the interrelationship between I and others in ‘social space’—the *boundaries* that establish a cultural domain. Consequently it can be argued that Bakhtin’s early works *already* maintain—through his adherence to key concepts of *Lebensphilosophie*—a quintessentially Hegelian notion of spirit (*Geist*) (cf. 1.4).

In the previous sections I discussed how out of the dialectic between *self* and *other* Hegel develops his conception of the social nature of knowledge, or *spirit* (*Geist*). That is, self-consciousness as *Geist* comes to recognise that knowledge can only manifest itself in a co-determinate dynamic between the *self* and the *other*. Knowledge, therefore, necessarily

exists in ‘social space’, which is expressed in ‘terms of participation in social practices’, and *not* in terms of being fixed ‘in any kind of metaphysical relation between “subjects” and “objects”’—as Kantian and neo-Kantianism epistemology argues (Pinkard 1994, p. 53). Our awareness of ‘social space’, writes Pinkard, is established when we recognise that we;

reason in various ways; or when we assume various roles; or when we demand certain kinds of treatment because of who we think we are; or when we see some forms of behaviour as appropriate to the type of person we think ourselves to be; or when we recognise others as having the right to make certain kinds of moves within their speech-community [...].

(Pinkard 1994, p.7).

A distinguishing feature of a particular ‘social space’ is what counts within that space as the ‘necessary grounds’ or *essences* (*Wesen*) for agents to justify their beliefs and to guide their actions. Furthermore, for Hegel, an *essence* is a *formation of consciousness* (*Gestaltung*), that is, the ‘object’ of a consciousness that assumes that such and such is authoritative for it. The theory behind *essences*—the structured theoretical knowledge that circumscribes their domain—is what Hegel terms a *Wissenschaft* (science). However, as such ‘objects’ are *Gestaltungen* their *Wissenschaften*, or authoritative claim to knowledge, must be recognised as being a historical phenomenon, an *appearance* (*Erscheinung*)—as such any appeal to a *a priori Gestaltungen* is impossible. Thus, the importance of the realisation of *spirit* is not so much the fact that it reveals the social nature of knowledge, or the way that people *happen* to reason, but that it reveals how people *should* reason.

Like Hegel and the *Lebensphilosophen* Dilthey and Simmel, Bakhtin’s early works maintain that the boundary relation between *I* and *others* is determinate of the ‘social space’ wherein we live:

All the values of actual life and culture are arranged around the basic architectonic points of the actual world of the performed act or deed: scientific values, aesthetic values, political values (including both ethical and social values), and, finally, religious values. All spatial-temporal values and all sense-content values are drawn towards and concentrated around the central emotional-volitional moments: I, the other, and I-for-the-other.

(TPA p. 54)

However, whereas Hegel argues that *all Gestaltungen* are moments of (objective) *spirit*, and therefore no *Wissenschaft* can claim to have necessary truths, Bakhtin—who maintains the normative *a priori* validity of the *Naturwissenschaften*—restricts the notion of *spirit* to the realisation that it is just our ‘formations of value’, or *Wertgestaltungen*, that are produced in ‘social space’. Consequently, something is only held to be true (*istina*) if it is true for someone (*pravda*), and if it is true for someone it has value. Moreover, a truth or fact only exists when it is for someone. Therefore, all knowledge must and can only start with those facts and truths we find *valuable*, for if we did not find some fact valuable, no matter how truthful it was, we would not maintain it. As such, truth (*pravda*) and value are reciprocally dependent on each other for actual historical knowledge.

In his later works, however, Bakhtin broadens the ‘sphere’ of *spirit* significantly. With respect to intersubjectivity and self-determination, Bakhtin’s later work shifts from a boundary relation established by *perception* to one that is established by *linguistic interaction*. That is, self consciousness through intersubjectivity is no-longer (solely) determined through our sensory or intuitive awareness of another, but assumes by virtue of the necessity of linguistic interaction that we are aware of ourselves and others in ‘social space’. As such, it is principally in his later works that the full implications of his concept *otvetstvennost’* (‘responsibility’) come to force; it incorporates both the notion of moral accountability and

duty between *I* and *other*, and the *interlocutionary* nature of the boundary relation between *I* and *other*:

*To be means to communicate.* Absolute death (non-being) is the state of being unheard, unrecognised, unremembered.

(TRDB, p. 287)

That is, Bakhtin has come to understand that self-consciousness and the boundary relation of intersubjectivity that establishes it, is linguistic in nature: 'Spirit [is] the ultimate semantic position of the personality' (TRDB, p. 288). Indeed, in the late essay 'The Problem of the Text' he writes that:

The spirit [*dukh*] (both one's own and another's) is not given as a thing (the direct object of the natural sciences); it can only be present through signification, through realization in texts [and utterances], both for itself and others.

(PT, p. 106)

Therefore, as spirit is linguistic or *dialogic*, it follows that self-consciousness, and knowledge are *ab initio* social.

It is clear, therefore, that the concept and especially the logic of *boundary relations* greatly informs Bakhtin's early work, and evolves to become an important part of his later work as is illustrated by his consistent use of boundary relations in TRDB. Moreover, the development of Bakhtin's understanding of boundary relations from an asymmetrical relationship in his early works to a symmetrical relationship in his later works brings him close(r) to Hegel and Hegelianism—as we shall see in the next chapters. Nevertheless, with respect to his early work, the fact that Bakhtin applies the notion and the logic of *boundary relations* to the problem of intersubjectivity *and* to the dynamic between life and cultural domains demonstrates not only that his early philosophy is indebted to Simmel and Dilthey, but more importantly to Hegelian logic.

# 3

## Language, Dialogue and Dialectic:

### Bakhtin's Hegelian Philosophy of Language

*Inasmuch as intellectual striving does not merely occupy human understanding but stimulates the entire human being, it is especially promoted by the sound of the human voice. For, as living sound, it proceeds, as does respiration itself, from the breast; it accompanies—even without speech—pain and joy, aversion and avidity, breathing life from which it streams forth into the mind which receives it.*

(Wilhelm von Humboldt 1997, p. 101)

For Bakhtin *language itself* is of special significance in his philosophy of identity, society and culture, as it forms the *substrata* through which self-consciousness, social interaction and cultural formation are made possible. This view is strongly informed by the Marburg neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* and Wilhelm von Humboldt's hermeneutics, and form part of Bakhtin's background in the neo-Kantian, *Lebensphilosophisches*, and phenomenological conceptions regarding the nature of culture and the role of language in the development of culture. Bakhtin's single reference to Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (PSF1) in the essay 'Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel' suggest that he knew the text well (FTC, p. 251). And although Bakhtin mentions Wilhelm von Humboldt only once in the essay 'Discourse in the Novel' (DN, p. 271) it appears that Humboldt's important text *Einleitung zum Kawi-Werk* (*Introduction to the Kawi Language*, 1836) played an important part in the elaboration of Bakhtin's conception of language (DN, p. 271). Humboldt's influence on Bakhtin could have been mediated either directly or indirectly through Cassirer's text and/or through Bakhtin's friend and colleague Valentin Voloshinov.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, recent research has shown that the sparseness of references to Cassirer (in particular) in Bakhtin's works are misleading, in that it does not reflect the considerable influence the Marburg philosopher had on Bakhtin. As Brian Poole's paper 'Bakhtin and Cassirer' points out:

Bakhtin began to study Cassirer before 1936 [...] His synopses of Cassirer's *Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* and the second (1925) volume of *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* offer substantial evidence of his close reading of them [...].

(Poole 1998, p. 546)

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<sup>1</sup> Cassirer's PSF1 devotes part of a chapter to Humboldt, who forms an integral part of Cassirer's philosophy of language, as we shall see. Voloshinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929) engages directly with Cassirer's PSF1 (available in Russia in 1923) and especially Humboldt's works (available in Russian as early as 1859) (cf. MPL pp. 11, 47-9, 167-9). Humboldt's works in particular had a formative influence in Russian linguistic thought: Voloshinov writes that 'There is a vast literature on Humboldt' available in Russia, citing works written as recently as 1909 and 1922 (MPL p. 49 n5).

The paper also reveals that ‘Bakhtin cited the second volume of Cassirer’s *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* in the manuscript of “Discourse in the Novel”’, but that ‘the reference [was] removed when the essay was prepared for publication’ (Poole 1998, p. 546).<sup>2</sup> Poole, furthermore, demonstrates instances where Bakhtin blatantly plagiarises passages from Cassirer in his later works on *Rabelais* and *Goethe*, and suggests that in the essays on the novel ‘Bakhtin was not only *adopting* names and philosophical details from Cassirer’s [*Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*], however; he was also *adapting* method’ (Poole 1998, p. 546).

This is important to point out, as it is my contention that Cassirer’s *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* is one of the principal philosophical works that informs Bakhtin’s Hegelian conception of language and dialogue. The same view is held by Craig Brandist who writes in his paper ‘Bakhtin, Cassirer and Symbolic Forms’ that:

[...] there seems a wealth of evidence to suggest that behind the eclecticism of Bakhtin’s theory lies a unifying feature: Hegelian philosophy as modified by the work of Ernst Cassirer. [...] while Bakhtin’s own terminology differs significantly from that of Hegel and Cassirer, the structural features common to their works are too persuasive to be passed off as one influence among many.

(Brandist 1997, p. 20)

Therefore, without a general introduction to Cassirer’s *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, its relationship to Humboldt, and especially to Hegel, it is difficult to understand either Bakhtin’s philosophy of language or his Hegelianism.

### 3.1 Cassirer, Humboldt and Hegel

The neo-Kantians and *Lebensphilosophen* believed that the vocation of philosophy was to guide the actualisation of the potential of culture and to realise the promises of practical reason. This is most dramatically demonstrated in their endeavour to establish a theory of culture and in particular a conception of language. Ernst Cassirer, drawing on Kant, Hegel, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Simmel conceives language as the principal step to that common world towards which culture strives. As Frédéric Vandenberghe writes:

Culture in general and language in particular provide a common ground of human beings which connects them to each other. Culture, however, is not a thing, it is a process. [...] Culture can only be realized if it is appropriated by individuals who, by appropriating culture, realize themselves.

(Vandenberghe 1995, pp. 37-8)

Accordingly, many neo-Kantians and *Lebensphilosophen* believed that culture, like reason, is not a given, but is a task to be achieved, whose principal ‘instrument’ is language.

Cassirer’s early writings are on philosophical problems in the natural sciences, and as such it is not surprising that his point of departure from Marburg neo-Kantian and Kantian idealism in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* is the inception of *scientific positivism*, and the demise of the Marburg ideal that science is the prototype of all knowledge. *Scientific positivism*, or *instrumentalism*, came about at the end of the nineteenth century when scientists such as Ernst Mach and Heinrich Hertz came to see many of the fundamental concepts of science, such as force, mass and causation, as ‘fictions’ or ‘instruments’.<sup>3</sup> Science

<sup>2</sup> I shall discuss the removed reference to Cassirer’s *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: Volume 2* in Bakhtin’s essay later in this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> I am here interested not in the *positivism* of philosophers such as Isidore Comte, but rather in the *instrumentalism* which Mach inaugurated in geometry and theoretical physics: namely that in science we should appeal only to what we can observe, and not appeal to anything that is unobservable, on pain of reintroducing



thus renounced its conviction that it can provide an *immediate* understanding and communication of reality:

[Science] realizes that the only objectivization of which it is capable is, and must remain, mediation. And in this insight, another highly significant idealist consequence is implicit. If the object of knowledge can be defined only through the medium of a particular logical and conceptual structure, we are forced to conclude that a variety of media will correspond to various structures of the object, to various meanings of 'objective' relations.

(PSF1, p. 76)

The consequence of this is that the various 'media' do not coincide absolutely with each other: that the physical object will not coincide with the chemical object, nor the chemical with the biological, because the various sciences '*frame their questions* each from its own particular standpoint and, in accordance with this standpoint, subject the phenomena to a special interpretation and formation' (PSF1, p. 76). This, Cassirer concludes, seems to negate the initial endeavour of idealism—the unity of being—as it fragments knowledge of being into a plurality of spheres of knowledge:

The One Being, to which thought holds fast and which it seems unable to relinquish without destroying its own form, eludes cognition. The more its metaphysical unity as a 'thing in itself' is asserted, the more it evades all possibility of knowledge, until at last it is relegated entirely to the sphere of the unknowable and becomes a mere 'X'.

(PSF1, p. 76)

However, argues Cassirer, the concept of unity is not discredited by the 'irreducible diversity of the methods and objects of knowledge'; rather, it takes a new form. The unity of knowledge can no longer be found in a common and simple *object*; instead philosophy must seek to find a system wherein all the various branches of science—with their diverse specificity and independence—combine into one system that will maintain their independence and specificity, while allowing them to complement and advance one another. 'This postulate of a purely functional unity', according to Cassirer, 'replaces the postulate of a unity of substance and origin, which lay at the core of the ancient concept of being' (PSF1, p. 77).

The task of epistemology, therefore, is to investigate all the various 'special sciences and survey them as a whole' (PSF1, p. 77). Philosophy must uncover 'whether the intellectual symbols by means of which the specialized disciplines reflect on and describe reality exist merely side by side or whether they are not diverse manifestations of the same basic human function' (PSF1, p. 77). If philosophy finds the latter to be the case, it must seek to establish the universal conditions of this 'basic human function' and define the principle that grounds it:

Instead of dogmatic metaphysics, which seeks absolute unity in a substance to which all the particulars of existence are reducible, such a philosophical critique seeks after a rule governing the concrete diversity of the functions of cognition, a rule which, without negating and destroying them, will gather them into a unity of deed, the unity of a self-contained human endeavour.

(PSF1, p. 77)

Because human kind believes in the unity of being, all cognition—not just with respect

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metaphysics. As such the unobservable entities that we use in our sciences should not be seen as corresponding to any real entities rather they are just instruments to help scientists better understand real phenomena. In this respect Mach's positivism is a kind of phenomenalist epistemology, where abstract properties such as *essences* and *concepts* are deemed merely instruments of our understanding.

to the concepts of science but with respect to ‘the life of human spirit (*Geist*) as a whole’—is aimed at articulating the particular into a universal law and order (PSF1, p. 78). That is, the non-scientific modes of ‘objectivization’, such as art, myth, and religion, seek to elevate the particular to the level of the universally valid. And, although they obtain their universal validity *not* through logical concepts and logical law, they, nevertheless, exemplify the ‘authentic function of the human spirit’:

Each of these functions creates its own symbolic forms which, if not similar to the intellectual symbols, enjoy equal rank as products of the human spirit. None of these forms can simply be reduced to, or derived from, the others; each of them designates a particular approach, in which and through which it constitutes its own aspect of ‘reality’. They are not different modes in which an independent reality manifests itself to the human spirit but roads by which the spirit proceeds towards its objectivization, i.e., its self-revelation. If we consider art and language, myth and cognition in this light, they present a common problem which opens up a new access to a universal philosophy of the cultural sciences.

(PSF1, p. 78)

As such, Cassirer is interested in understanding the relationships between the diverse branches of cultural life as a *whole*: language, religion, myth, art and scientific cognition. Consequently,

[The] critique of reason becomes the critique of culture. It seeks to understand and to show how every content of culture, in so far as it is more than a mere isolated content, in so far as it is grounded in a universal principle of form, presupposes an original act of human spirit. Herein the basic thesis of idealism finds its true and complete confirmation.

(PSF1, p. 80)

The starting point for the critique of culture, and therefore of philosophical thought, must be the critique of language and of the linguistic form of thinking. This is because, Cassirer holds, all cultural forms—the sciences’ intellectual symbols, the symbolic forms of art, myth and religion etc.—before they established their own independent ‘logos’ with specialised and circumscribed meanings, had their origin in language and general linguistic concepts.

With regard to science, ‘the logic of things, i.e. of the material concepts and relations on which the structure of a science rests, cannot be separated from the logic of signs’:

For the sign is no mere accidental cloak of the idea, but its necessary and essential organ. It serves not merely to communicate a complete and given thought-content, but is an instrument, by means of which this content develops and fully defines itself. The conceptual definition goes hand in hand with its stabilization in some characteristic sign. Consequently, all truly strict and exact thought is sustained by the symbolics and semiotics on which it is based. Every ‘law’ of nature assumes for our thinking the form of a universal ‘formula’—and a formula can be expressed only by a combination of universal and specific signs. Without the universal signs provided by arithmetic and algebra, no special relation in physics, no special law of nature would be expressible. It is, as it were, the fundamental principle of cognition that the universal can be perceived only in the particular, while the particular can be thought of only in reference to the universal.

(PSF1, pp. 85-6)

Moreover, this same relation between universal signs and the particular is present in *all* the various forms of cultural activity. That is, by no longer seeking to ground the unity of being in

the object and its metaphysical substratum 'matter', but rather by seeking it in the various symbolic forms, language and symbolic thinking become the sensuous substratum of that unity:

This substratum is so essential that it sometimes seems to constitute the entire content, the true 'meaning' of these forms. Language seems fully definable as a system of phonetic symbols—the worlds of art and myth seem to consist entirely in the particular, sensuously tangible forms that they set before us. Here we have in fact an all-embracing medium in which the most diverse cultural forms meet. The content of the spirit is disclosed only in its manifestations; the ideal form is known only by and in the aggregate of the sensible signs which it uses for its expression.

(PSF1, p. 86)

Hence *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, writes Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, 'assigned a special status to language which provides the key to man's entire range of symbolic creations'. Cassirer's conception of language is thoroughly Humboldtian, and he applies the latter's philosophy of language 'for the purposes of providing an epistemological basis for Cassirer's own theory of the human sciences and their modes of operation' (Mueller-Vollmer 1997, p. 13).

For Humboldt *understanding* is the principal characteristic of human behaviour and this is intrinsically linked to humankind's ability to use language, and to the nature of language in itself. In his important *Einleitung zum Kawi-Werk (Introduction to the Kawi Language, 1836)* Humboldt argues that language is *the* formative organ of thought, in that intellectual activity 'becomes externalized in speech and perceptible in the senses'. Intellectual activity and language, therefore, 'form a unity and are indivisible from each other':

Intellectual activity is inherently tied to the necessity of entering into a combination with the [speech-sound <*Sprachlaut*>].<sup>4</sup> Otherwise thought cannot attain distinctness, the image cannot become a concept.

(Humboldt 1997, p. 100)

Language, furthermore, is necessary for the 'objectivisation' of the object of thought, in that it is able to externalise and 'liberate' the subjective activity of thought that produces the object. When the intellectual activity of the subject 'makes its way past the lips, its product wends its way back to the speaker's own ear', transforming the concept 'over into a state of objectivity, without losing its subjectivity' (Humboldt 1997, p. 101). It is the transformation from subjectivity to objectivity, conceivable *only* through language, that makes possible the formation of concepts, and, therefore, of all true knowledge—including knowledge of self or self-awareness:

As a phenomenon [...] language develops only in social intercourse, and humans understand themselves only by having tested the comprehensibility of their words on others. For objectivity is increased whenever a word coined by oneself resounds from a stranger's lips.

(Humboldt 1997, p. 101)

Cassirer draws our attention to the clear Kantian elements in Humboldt's philosophy of language.<sup>5</sup> The view that objectivity is not given but always remains to be achieved is similar in kind to Kant's notion of the correlation between subjectivity and objectivity in the transcendental synthesis:

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<sup>4</sup> The original text translates *Sprachlaut* as 'phoneme'—a word that, besides the obvious structuralist connotations, does not sufficiently convey the two terms, *speech* and *sound*, which make up *Sprachlaut*.

<sup>5</sup> Cassirer's Kantian interpretation of Humboldt has been challenged by Hans Aarsleff (cf. Aarsleff 1982).

Here Humboldt applies the Kantian critique to the philosophy of language. The metaphysical opposition between subjectivity and objectivity is replaced by their transcendental correlation. In Kant the object, as 'object in experience', is not something outside of and apart from cognition; on the contrary, it is only 'made possible', determined and constituted by the categories of cognition. Similarly, the subjectivity of language no longer appears as a barrier that prevents us from apprehending objective being but rather as a means of forming, of 'objectifying' sensory impressions. Like cognition, language does not merely 'copy' a given object; it rather embodies a spiritual attitude which is always a crucial factor in our perception of the objective.

(PSF1, p. 158)

The 'spiritual attitude', therefore, is not *pure*; by virtue of Kant's transcendental synthesis, it embodies a *world-view* and includes the subject's emotional-volitional attitude in his/her apperception of the objective.

Cassirer's work applies Humboldt's philosophy of language in such a manner that it starts to approximate a conception of Hegel's notion of the phenomenology of *spirit*. He notes that for '[...] Humboldt language primarily represents the opposition between the individual and the "objective" spirit, and its resolution' (PSF1, p. 156). That is, although each individual speaks his/her 'own language', the freedom he/she enjoys in its employment carries with it a recognition of 'spiritual constraint' that resembles a formation of *spirit*: 'Language is everywhere an indeterminacy, first between infinite and finite nature, then between one individual and another—simultaneously and through the same act, it makes union possible and arises from this union' (PSF1, p. 156). Citing *Introduction to the Kawi Language*, Cassirer illustrates that language establishes the relationship between *self* and *other*, forms *spirit*, and governs the development of cultural life:

The individual, wherever, whenever and however he lives, is a fragment broken off from his whole race, and language demonstrates and sustains this eternal bond which governs the destinies of the individual and the history of the world.

(Humboldt cited in PSF1, p. 157)

One of the key issues of Humboldt's philosophy of language for Cassirer is the view that we should understand language not as an existing thing (*ergon*), but as a process (*energeia*). In "'Geist" und "Leben" in der Philosophie der Gegenwart' ("Spirit" and "Life" in Contemporary Philosophy', 1930) Cassirer writes:

Language then is no longer a given, rigid structure; rather it becomes a form-creating power, which at the same time has to be really a form-breaking, form-destroying one. Even the world of grammatical and syntactical forms is not merely a kind of firm dike and dam, against which the formative, the truly creative forces of language continually break. Rather it is the original, creative power of language which floods thorough this world as well, and which supplies it with ever new momentum. In this process the hardened forms are also ever and again melted down, so that they cannot clothe themselves in 'rigid armour'; but on the other hand, only in this process do even the momentary impulse, the creation of the moment, receive their continuity and stability.

(Cassirer 1949, p. 879)

Symbolic forms, therefore, whether language or other forms of symbolic thinking, should not be seen as a static things, but as dynamic principles, 'the totality of characters that transform *impressions* into intellectual and spiritual *expressions*' (Hartman 1949, p. 306). Moreover, symbolic forms are independent structures, viewed in juxtaposition, each animated by an immanent, unique creative *energeia*.

The purpose and the plan of Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms correspond to those of Hegel's phenomenology—as is shown when Cassirer explains the title of the third volume of *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Phenomenology of Knowledge*:

In speaking of a phenomenology of knowledge I am using the word 'phenomenology' not in its modern sense but with its fundamental signification as established and systematically grounded by Hegel. For Hegel, phenomenology became the basis of all philosophical knowledge, since he insisted that philosophical knowledge must encompass the totality of cultural forms and since in his view this totality can be visible only in the transitions from one to the other.

(PSF3, p. xiv)

As such every particular form is representative of the whole; every cultural unit, every utterance, religious ritual, or mathematical algorithm 'mirrors monadlike the whole universe of forms' (Hartman 1949, p. 306). The formative development of the form, its successive stages, is the 'dynamic metaphor' of the telos of the human spirit (Cassirer 1949, p. 879). The various symbolic forms, although autonomous, 'do not stand by themselves, [...] between them takes place a peculiar relation of "com-positing" (*Mit-setzung*). Nowhere is there anything isolated and detached' (PSF3, p. 332). It is through the unfolding of all cultural forms that a higher reality unfolds itself, and a richer symbolic expression of the human spirit evolves:

The truth is the whole—yet this whole cannot be all at once but must be unfolded progressively by thought in its autonomous movement and rhythm. [...] It would be impossible to state more sharply that the end, the telos of the human spirit, cannot be apprehended and expressed if it is taken as something existing in itself, as something detached and separate from its beginning and middle. Philosophical reflection does not set the end against the middle and the beginning but takes all three as integral factors in a unitary total movement. In this fundamental principle the Philosophy of Symbolic Forms agrees with Hegel's formulation, much as it must differ in both its foundation and its development.

(PSF3, pp. xiv-xv, emphasis added)

The difficulty Cassirer has with Hegel's phenomenology is that Hegel, following Descartes, makes *logic* the prototype of all forms of the human spirit:

They hold that philosophy can be said to encompass and permeate the universitas, the concrete totality of the spirit, only if it can be deduced from a logical principle. [...] [In] Hegel with whom [classical idealism] ended, this methodic relationship is still evident. [...] All the diverse forms of the spirit set forth in the Phenomenology seem to culminate in a supreme logical summit—and it is only in this end point that they attain to their perfect 'truth' and essence. Rich and varied as they are in content, their structure is subordinated to a single and, in a certain sense, uniform law—the law of dialectical method, which represents the unchanging rhythm of the concept's autonomous movement.

(PSF1, p. 83)

The consequence of this, Cassirer argues, is that in arguing that all cultural forms culminate in absolute knowledge, Hegel reduces the various cultural forms to 'mere factors' of the concept, with the result that the cultural forms, although preserved, are also negated in logic. It follows, argues Cassirer, that it is only the cultural form of logic that enjoys 'a true and authentic autonomy':

So that, with all Hegel's endeavour to apprehend the specific differentiations of the spirit, he ultimately refers and reduces its whole content and capacity to a single dimension—and its profoundest content and true meaning are apprehended only in

relation to this dimension.

(PSF1, p. 84)

Cassirer, moreover, points out that the reduction of all cultural forms to one form of logic is the ‘fundamental principle’ of idealism, in that it is only through the conception of this unity that idealism believes that the ‘strict *systematic* understanding’ of the various forms can be attained. We can avoid the dialectical method of *logical unity* that would efface the individuality of each cultural form, argues Cassirer:

[...] only if we can discover a factor which recurs in each basic cultural form but in no two of them takes exactly the same shape. Then in reference to this principle, we might assert the ideal relation between the individual provinces—between the basic function of language and cognition, of art and religion—without losing the incomparable particularity of any one of them.

(PSF, p. 84)

According to Cassirer, this necessary intermediary link between the various cultural forms is the expressive function of the *symbol*.

Following Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Cassirer describes in his *Phenomenology of Knowledge* three major eidetic<sup>6</sup> stages in the development of mind in relation to the object. The first stage is the ‘expressive function’ (*Ausdrucksfunktion*), which is a simple unity of symbol and object, where no genuine distinction is made. The second stage is the ‘representative function’ (*Darstellungsfunktion*), which is a stage of disjunction of symbol and object, where the object is seen as wholly other than the symbol. And the third stage is the ‘pure meaning function’ (*reine Bedeutungsfunktion*), where the separation is overcome, and the object comes to be viewed as a construction of the symbol (cf. PSF3, pp. 67-8, 112-14, 283-5). All three stages stand in a dialectical relation to each other, and correspond, as Donald Verene points out, to Hegel’s stages of consciousness (where the mind does not originally distinguish itself from the object), self-consciousness (where the mind does distinguish itself from the object, and other subjects), and spirit (where the mind reconciles the distinction between itself and the object, and other subjects, and establishes their mutual constructive inter-relationship) (cf. Verene 1969, p. 38).

Yet it is important to remember that in Cassirer’s system the number of symbolic forms is not limited; that each symbolic form is an autonomous entity that can be comprehended independently of the others, as a constituent member of the becoming of spirit; and that all symbolic forms enjoy an *equal* status. It is in this that Cassirer’s phenomenology of symbolic forms ‘differs in both its foundation and its development’ from Hegel’s phenomenology of spirit.

### 3.2 Monoglossia, Polyglossia, Heterology<sup>7</sup>

According to Bakhtin any natural language, such as Russian, is in essence and of necessity in a constant state of renewal in that it reflects and embodies the social and ideological struggle within the society of that language. In this struggle language-in-and-for-itself constitutes an integral part of the processes of evolution and of the renewal of society and its culture. (It should, however, be pointed out that Bakhtin himself does not use the logical terms ‘in itself’, ‘for itself’ and ‘in and for itself’. We are applying these terms to effectively extend the logic

<sup>6</sup> Although the term eidetic is generally associated with Husserlian phenomenology, it is now a term used quite frequently in Hegel studies (cf. Williams 1992, Harris 1993).

<sup>7</sup> The discussion regarding Bakhtin’s terminology and the translation thereof into English follows an extensive e-mail correspondence between Karine Zbinden and myself between 16 and 20 January 2001.

of Bakhtin's position by extending his terminology in directions suggested by this and earlier chapters.) Like Cassirer, Bakhtin understands language as a cultural form, whose *energeia* is a 'form-creating' and 'form-breaking' dynamic. Bakhtin's key concepts of heterology and monoglossia exemplify Cassirer's notions that language is not 'a given, rigid structure' but is *posited*. As we have seen, its unified grammatical and syntactical forms serve not merely as a 'firm dike and dam against which the formative, the truly creative forces of language continually break', but actually constitute the creative power of language itself, and allow for its *energeia*: 'In this process the hardened forms are also ever and again melted down, [...]; but on the other hand, only in this process do even the momentary impulse, the creation of the moment, receive their continuity and stability' (Cassirer 1949, p. 879). Bakhtin's concept of heterology within a language is clearly derivative of Cassirer's philosophy, as I shall now demonstrate.

The development of language, argues Bakhtin, occurs on two levels, establishing a triadic relationship; the *intra*-language level, the *inter*-language level, and the relationship between both are necessary to establish the social-ideological becoming of a language, society and culture. Following Hegelian phenomenology Bakhtin describes these linguistic levels or moments as eidetics of 'linguistic consciousness' (*iazykovogo soznaniia*) (DN p. 400).

Language, by which Bakhtin means any particular natural language such as Russian, must exhibit *monoglossia*,<sup>8</sup> that is, it must be fully formed and unitary. By fully formed and unitary Bakhtin does not simply mean that it has consistent grammatical and syntactical rules, but that it expresses a world-view in the Cassirerian and Humboldtian manner and comes to exemplify the unification of humankind's socio-political and cultural activities into a formation of *spirit*:

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 towards concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralization, which develop in vital connection with the process of sociopolitical and cultural centralization.

(DN, p. 271).

However, monoglossia is always in essence relative *in-and-for-itself*, in that it is determined by both *inter*- and *intra*-language forces:

It must not be forgotten that monoglossia is always in essence relative. After all, one's own language is never a single language: in it there are always survivals of the past and a potential for other-languageness that is more or less sharply perceived by the working literary and language consciousness.

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<sup>8</sup> In PDA (1929) Bakhtin employs the term *polyphony* to describe Dostoevskii's poetics, where it refers to the 'multi-voiced' characteristic of his novels, in contra-distinction to *monoglossia*, which refers to the 'single-voiced' quality of certain novels—in particular early Romantic novels. As such, in PDP both polyphony and monoglossia have a poetic meaning that pertains to the narrative structure of the novel. However, in PND and DN Bakhtin effects a terminological shift with respect to the latter of these two terms, moving from literary, or more accurately narratorial composition to a philosophy of language by adjusting the use of the term *monoglossia* to refer to a fully 'formed and whole' national language (PND, p. 66). The term *polyphony*—the 'counter' of monoglossia in PDP—does not feature in PND and DN. (Emerson and Holquist, however, have translated '*raznoiazychiem iazykovogo soznaniia*' simply as 'polyphony', whereas it should read 'heteroglossia of linguistic consciousness', DN, p. 400.)

(PND, p. 66).

This ‘other-languageness’ exhibits itself on the *inter*-linguistic level as *polyglossia* (*mnogoiazychie*), which is the ‘inter-animation’ of a natural language (e.g. Russian) through its boundary-relationship with *other* languages (e.g. French), establishing inter-linguistic self-consciousness (PND, p. 66). As an example of *polyglossia* Bakhtin refers to the inter-animation that occurred between Latin and Greek during the Roman period, establishing for Roman poets a ‘polyglot consciousness’ (PND, p. 66). *Polyglossia* is essential, writes Bakhtin, because it is only through the interanimation by an *other* language that the *unique*, and therefore, *relative* world-view embodied within a *particular* language is highlighted to its speakers:

Where languages and cultures interanimated each other, language became something entirely different, its very nature changed: in place of a single, unitary sealed-off Ptolemaic world of language, there appeared the open Galilean world of many languages, mutually animating each other.

(PND, p. 65)

In PND and DN Bakhtin also employs a second term, *heteroglossia* (*raznoiazychie*), to describe the inter-animation of national languages. There is in our view a slight difference in emphasis between *heteroglossia* and *polyglossia* in that the former insists on the heterogeneity of tongues, whereas the latter stresses the plurality of tongues. However, as Bakhtin himself is fairly inconsistent in his use of the two terms, I will principally apply the term *polyglossia* to cover both terms (Dop-Zbinden, 2001).

The ‘other-languageness’ exhibits itself on the *intra*-linguistic level as *heterology* (*raznorechie*), which is the internal differentiation and stratification inherent within any natural language (e.g. Russian), establishing a form of intra-linguistic self-consciousness:

Closely connected with the problem of *polyglossia* and inseparable from it is the problem of [heterology <*raznorechie*>] within language, that is, the problem of internal differentiation, the stratification characteristic of any national language

(PND, p. 67)

I am using Todorov’s suggested translation of *raznorechie*, ‘heterology’,<sup>9</sup> because it makes the distinction between *raznorechie* (heterology) and *raznoiazychie* (heteroglossia) clear—as opposed to Emerson and Holquist’s translation, which renders both *raznorechie* and *raznoiazychie* as *heteroglossia* (cf. Todorov 1994). The problem with Emerson and Holquist’s translation is that it loses the terminological and, therefore, categorical distinction between the two terms, which can lead to structural and logical inconsistencies.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Cross-referencing back to the *Dostoevskii* text, Zbinden argues that ‘Bakhtin has an aestheticised or aesthetic equivalent of heterology in mind when he talks about polyphony in PDP’ (Dop-Zbinden 2001).

<sup>10</sup> This can be shown using simple set theory. Consider for example the following set:

Set 1: Animals.

Set 2 (Subset of Animals): Vertebrates, Invertebrates.

Set 3 (Subset of Vertebrates): Mammals, Fish, Birds, Amphibians.

Set 4 (Subset of Mammals): Apes, Rodents, Marsupials, etc.

Set 5 (Subset of Apes): *Homo sapiens*, Chimpanzees, etc.

It makes no sense to place, for instance, Apes in both sets 3 and 4 as it renders Apes in 4 redundant, and brings about a category mistake in 3.

In formal logic set theory helps us filter out nonsense arguments like:

All *Homo sapiens* are Mammals.

All Chimpanzees are Mammals.

Hence, some *Homo sapiens* are Chimpanzees.

Wrong! It might be the case that there are *Homo sapiens* who are also Chimpanzees—alarming as that may seem (i.e. substitute *Homo sapiens* and chimpanzees for Irishmen and rugby players, and mammals for Catholics)—but we simply cannot deduce this from the premises above.



### 3.3 The Unity in Disunity of Language

Hitherto, argues Bakhtin, philosophy of language and linguistics have only come to a marginal understanding of language as becoming, in that they have sought to establish a theory of language that only incorporated two phenomena: ‘on the one hand, the system of a *unitary language*, and on the other the *individual* speaking in this language’, thereby ignoring both the polyglossia and the heterology inherent to this language (DN, p. 269).<sup>11</sup> The strength but also the weakness of such philosophies of language and linguistics lie in the concepts and categories they developed to understand the phenomena of their science:

The strength and at the same time the limitations of such basic stylistic categories become apparent when such categories are seen as conditioned by specific historical destinies and by the task that an ideological discourse assumes. These categories arose from and were shaped by the historical *aktuell*<sup>12</sup> forces at work in the verbal-ideological evolution of specific social groups; they comprised the theoretical expression of actualizing forces that were in the process of creating a life for language.  
(DN, p. 270)

That is, rather than demonstrating that the language of their respective verbal-ideological world is in a continuous state of becoming, determined by the forces of polyglossia and especially heterology, these philosophies of language actually came to form part of ‘the forces that serve to unify and centralise the verbal-ideological world’ (DN, p. 270). Because such philosophies were concerned with their current centralised and official verbal-ideological discourse, they failed to note the dialogised heterology [*raznorechie*] inherent in language:

This is why they could have no access to the dialogic quality of language, which was determined/conditioned by the struggle of socio-linguistic points of view, and not by an intra-linguistic/language struggle of individual wills or logical contradictions.  
(DN, p. 273, translation amended)<sup>13</sup>

As a result, these philosophies came to express something quite different from what they endeavoured to express: rather than establishing a philosophical and scientific understanding or conception of the *becoming* of language, their unified and centralised ideological view of language leads them to present a *reified* conception of language, that, consequently, will simply be sublated by language. They fail to recognise, in other words, Humboldt and Cassirer’s realisation that language should be understood as a dynamic process (*energeia*), rather than as a thing (*ergon*).

Bakhtin’s argument follows the passage of thought of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which understands previous philosophical theories, or forms, simply as historical moments of the becoming of philosophy/scientific theory over history. He, furthermore, demonstrates his Cassirerian understanding of language as a cultural form by arguing that the *energeia* of language, its process of development and becoming, is *autonomous*; we cannot reduce the content and capacity of language to a single *prototypical* dimension such as ‘individual wills’, or logic. Thus, like Hegel and Cassirer, Bakhtin argues that it is the ‘passage’ of the phenomenon, *not* its moments, that constitutes the life and development of

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<sup>11</sup> Bakhtin cites the following philosophical and linguistic theories as prime examples ‘Aristotelian poetics, the poetics of Augustine, the poetics of the medieval church, of “the one language of truth”, the Cartesian poetics of neo-classicism, the abstract grammatical universalism of Leibniz (the idea of a “universal grammar”), Humboldt’s insistence on the concrete [...]’ (DN, p. 271).

<sup>12</sup> *Aktuell*: what is *actual* with a temporal-historical qualification.

<sup>13</sup> This passage is badly mistranslated by Emerson and Holquist, who have misread the ‘determined/conditioned’ and somehow translated it as ‘could make no provision for’.

language—and, therefore, the truth and ought of language. As such, Bakhtin argues, it is the task of a philosophy of language to disclose this phenomenologically.

It follows that, far from stating that the centralising, unifying ‘centripetal forces’ in language are ‘bad’, or counter-productive (as some Bakhtin scholars have been wont to say), Bakhtin states that these forces are absolutely necessary for the phenomenology of language in that they guarantee a ‘certain maximum of mutual understanding’. That is, they are determinate in establishing a formation of spirit within a structure of ‘mutual understanding’:

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

(DN, p. 270)

Consequently, it is because the centripetal forces establish ‘a force for overcoming this heterology, imposing a specific limit’ that the becoming of language is possible—here Bakhtin clearly restates Cassirer’s thesis. Therefore, a unitary or monoglot language is *established* or ‘posited’ through its boundary relationship with heterology, establishing a dialectical relationship of identity-in-difference:

But the centripetal forces of the life of language, embodied in a ‘unitary language’, operate in the midst of [heterology <*raznorechie*>]. 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. [...] And this stratification and [the quality of being heterologic <*raznorechivost’*>], once realized, is not only a static invariant of linguistic life, but also what ensures its dynamics: stratification and [the quality of being heterologic <*raznorechivost’*>] widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing.

(DN, pp. 271-2)

Although Bakhtin denies that the unifying and centralising *norms and rules* within a language expresses *the ought* (*dolzhenstvovanie*)<sup>2</sup> of language, he does believe that it is only through their establishment that we can safeguard against heterology’s dis-unifying and decentralising dynamic, which threatens linguistic dissipation and, consequently, relativism:

A common unitary language is a system of linguistic norms. But these norms do not constitute [the ought <*dolzhenstvovanie*>]; they are rather the generative forces of linguistic life, forces that struggle to overcome the [heterology <*raznorechie*>] of language, forces that unify 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 growing [heterology <*raznorechie*>].

(DN, pp. 270-1)

Thus, logically it follows that heterology is determined by and within the limits of monoglossia, in that, if language did not exhibit a firm and stable linguistic nucleus,

heterology would not be possible. Therefore, the internal stratification and differentiation of national language—heterology—is *determined* through its boundary relationship with monoglossia—again exemplifying a dialectical relationship of identity-in-difference. As such, the dynamic nature of heterology ensures that its relationship to monoglossia is continually evolving, and thus language continues to live and develop, establishing the historical becoming of language:

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.

(DN, p. 272)

The diagram below illustrates the dialectical boundary relations between monoglossia, polyglossia and heterology. The *horizontal* 'links' represent the set of inter-language relationships, and the *vertical* 'links' represent the intra-language relationships. As such, the members of the lateral set are monoglossia and polyglossia/heteroglossia, and the members of the vertical set are monoglossia and heterology. (Now, if we did not make the terminological distinction between *heteroglossia* and *heterology* we would have to assert that heteroglossia is a member of both the lateral *and* the vertical set, at which point we would lose the meaning that the two terms have in themselves.)

<b>Monoglossia</b> <i>Russian</i>	<b>Polyglossia-Heteroglossia</b> $\leftrightarrow$ Inter-Language animation.	<b>Monoglossia</b> <i>French</i>
Centralising, unifying tendency $\updownarrow$ Decentralising, stratifying tendency  <b>Heterology</b> Intra-Language animation		Centralising, unifying tendency $\updownarrow$ Decentralising, stratifying tendency  <b>Heterology</b> Intra-Language animation

Monoglossia, therefore, *is* a member of both the lateral and the vertical 'set', illustrating that its determinate meaning is *dependent* on its relationships to both polyglossia and heterology. That is, although monoglossia is a phenomenon of language-*in-itself*, it is determinate *only* in relation to polyglossia and heterology, which establish monoglossia-*for-itself*. This relationship, furthermore, is reciprocal: although polyglossia and heterology are phenomena *in themselves*, they are determinate only in relation to monoglossia, which establishes them *for themselves*. Thus the determinate content of monoglossia, polyglossia and heterology is established by two *boundary relations*: polyglossia-*in-and-for-itself* (P) expresses the boundary relationship *between* two monoglot languages (e.g. Russian and French); heterology-*in-and-for-itself* (H) expresses the relationship *between* the centralising and unifying forces (c) and decentralising and stratifying forces (d) *within* a monoglot (e.g. Russian); and monoglossia-*in-and-for-itself* (M) expresses the relationship between polyglossia and heterology in a single unified language (monoglot). All three terms, therefore, express identity-in-difference, established through a dialectic. It follows, therefore, that a national language (e.g. Russian) *in itself* is heterologic, *for itself* is polyglossic, and *in-and-for-itself* is monoglossic:

Language-in-itself	Heterology	$H : c \leftrightarrow d$
Language-for-itself	Polyglossia	$P : M1 \leftrightarrow M2$
Language-in-and-for-itself	Monoglossia	$M1 : P \leftrightarrow H1$

Bakhtin, however, frequently identifies *only* the decentralising and dis-unifying forces (d) as exemplifying heterology (H), in *contradistinction* to the centralising and unifying forces (c). In doing so, Bakhtin transgresses the *diachronic* identity of heterology  $H : c \leftrightarrow d$ , and states instead a *synchronic* identity of heterology  $H : d \ \& \ \neg \ c$ ; hence  $H : d$ . It would seem that Bakhtin is not aware that because the identity of heterology is phenomenologically *diachronic* it *necessarily* expresses the co-determinate relationship  $c \leftrightarrow d$ . Consequently, he does not recognise that his *synchronic* use of heterology as  $d \ \& \ \neg \ c$  contradicts the very *nature* of heterology he wishes to disclose.<sup>14</sup>

Logically speaking, Bakhtin shifts between applying *diachronic* dialectical identity-in-difference to heterology;  $e' : +e \leftrightarrow -e$  (where  $+e = d$ ,  $-e = c$ , and thus  $e' = H$ ), and formal logic's *synchronic* law of identity to heterology;  $A = A \ \& \ \neg \ \neg A$  (where  $A = d$ ,  $\neg A = c$ , and thus  $H = d$ ). Although Bakhtin's intended *meaning* of heterology (i.e. as *essentially* diachronic) is generally clear, he, nevertheless, regularly invokes a logical fallacy—something that Bakhtin's method of exposition, in lacking a clear heuristic structure, is prone to (cf. Appendix I).

A national language-*in-itself* (*heterology*) presents itself to its speakers in two distinct and mutually opposing modes: on the one hand the language exhibits itself as a singular unified tongue, while on the other hand the language exhibits itself as a differentiated and stratified plurality of tongues. In this respect a natural language-*in-itself* presents itself to its speakers in a way that is analogous to Hegel's phenomenological differentiation between a one (*Eins*) and an also (*Auch*) when perceiving the properties of an object (cf. PS § 113, pp. 68-9).

As we have seen in Appendix I, Hegel explains the notions of one and also using the example of a grain of salt wherein the properties of being white, cubical, and tart coincide simultaneously and independently. A grain of salt is a one because the properties coincide simultaneously in a grain of salt; and an also because the properties coincide independently in that a grain of salt *is* white *and* cubical *and* tart. In this respect language-*in-itself* is both a one and an also: it is a one when determining its unity (a fully formed and unitary language), and an also when determining its disunity (internal differentiation and stratification), both of which coincide simultaneously and independently as *heterology*. In the *Phenomenology* the contradiction between a one and an also is shown to be resolved dialectically, and a similar dialectic is proposed by Bakhtin, as we shall see.

A national language-*for-itself* (polyglossia) also presents itself to its speakers in two distinct and mutually opposing modes. Again following Hegelian logic, if the properties of an object are to be determinate they must be *contrasted* with the properties of other things. That is, there needs to be a moment wherein we can determine the one in contrast to other ones: 'this' grain of salt in contrast to 'that' grain of salt, establishing identity-in-difference (cf. Appendix II). This determinate identity is established by Bakhtin through the inter-language relationship between two natural languages (polyglossia), establishing a boundary relationship that exemplifies identity-in-difference.

According to Bakhtin both polyglossia and particularly heterology exhibit themselves in relation to monoglossia, as two forces that animate and give life to a natural language, and

<sup>14</sup> For an explanation of notation of dialectical and formal logic see Appendix II and Glossary.

he explains how they are essential for our understanding of how language, and therefore culture and society, is in a state similar to that of Hegelian becoming. This is furthermore stressed by Bakhtin's explicit historicist qualification that the becoming is particularly exemplified 'in the languages of European peoples', thereby emphasising his belief that a language and its culture and society must have attained a certain level of 'maturity' in order to exhibit polyglossia and especially heterology (PND, p. 67).

Bakhtin frequently applies the term *monologism* to the *centralising and unifying forces* (c) in language, and the term *dialogism* to the *decentralising and dis-unifying forces* (d) in language. However, whereas c and d refer directly to language's heterologic dynamic, the terms *monologic* and *dialogic* refer to the socio-ideological and axiological attitude towards either c or d. Thus, although Bakhtin stresses that it is only through the unifying and centralising *norms and rules* within a language (c) that we can ensure protection against heterology's threat of linguistic dissipation (by virtue of d), he denies that it expresses *the ought* (*dolzhenstvovanie*) of language (DN, pp. 270-1). If, however, the socio-ideological and axiological attitude *did* maintain c to be *the ought* of language, then it can be said to hold a *monologic* view of language, and, consequently, of socio-ideological and cultural becoming. It follows that, if the socio-ideological and axiological attitude considered the dis-unified and decentralised dynamic within language (d) to be *the ought* of language, then it can be said to hold a *dialogic* view of language, and, consequently, of socio-ideological and cultural becoming. It is for this reason that Bakhtin states in his alter work 'Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences' that Hegel's and Dilthey's dialectics are both *monological*: 'The monologism of Hegel's 'Phenomenology of Spirit. Dilthey's monologism has not been completely surmounted' (MHS, p. 162).

However, because c and d are co-determinate of each other, the distinction between and identity of monologic and dialogic *must* be seen to exemplify a similar co-determinate relationship of identity-in-difference. This is something that many Bakhtin scholars fail to recognise, and in so doing they fail to see what would otherwise be very clear: Bakhtin's Hegelianism.

### 3.4 The Individual Utterance and Heterology

For Bakhtin the individual utterance, like Humboldt's *Sprachlaut*, is an expression of both the subjective and the objective, established by the intersection between the centripetal (centralising) and the centrifugal (decentralising) forces of heterology. As such, the utterance of a subject, as an *individual*, necessarily *voices* both the centralising and the decentralising forces of his/her language as a unified act (note the initial *synchronic* use of the term heterology):

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 [heterology <*raznorechie*>] as well; it is in fact an active participant in such speech diversity. And this active participation of every utterance in living [heterology <*raznorechie*>] determines the linguistic profile and style of the utterance to no less a degree than its inclusion in any normative-centralizing system of unitary language.

(DN, p. 272)

The phenomenological nature of Bakhtin's argument is clear. To illustrate let us consider the phenomenological analysis of an object X with the properties Q, R, S. The *given* object X has the properties Q, R, S and will always present these properties as they are *in themselves* and define the object's *unity*; i.e. a grain of salt is white, cubical and tart *in itself*, and will continue to have these properties while it remains a grain of salt. However, an object *for itself* is its *co-determinate* context or *space*, existing '*for*' the object, defining the object's *difference*. This co-determinate space is defined by the perceiving subject. It is *determined* and is thus an *act*; as such object X's properties *for itself* may at *time*  $t_1$  be  $Q_1, R_1 S_1$ , and at *time*  $t_2$  be  $Q_2, R_2 S_2$ . The point being that although the properties of object X *in-itself* are Q, R, S, they are not identical with the properties of object X *for itself*,  $Q_1, R_1 S_1$  at  $t_1$ , or  $Q_2, R_2 S_2$  at  $t_2$ . Furthermore,  $Q_1$  is not identical to  $Q_2$  in that their *temporal* co-determinate contexts are different. (A similar phenomenological reduction is obtained when the *spatial* co-determinate contexts differ, as we have seen in chapter 1.)

Taking the analysis a step further, the properties an object has *in itself* are said to exemplify *universals*, whereas the properties an object has *for itself* exemplify *particulars*. Accordingly, the subject's relation to an object is always a relationship to a *particular for itself*, and secondly, this *particular in-itself* exemplifies a *universal*. It is only once the subject has performed the *act* of 'synthesising' the *particular* and the *universal* to form an *individual* that he/she can come to perceive the object-*in-and-for-itself*.

When these phenomenological terms are applied to Bakhtin's conception of the utterance in heterology a similar structure follows. An individual's utterance expresses both the speaker's language-*in-itself* or the 'universal' (the normative-centralising system of unitary language as a monoglot), and the speaker's language-*for-itself* (the speaker's participation in heterology as a subject, the 'particular'). It follows that if an utterance  $\varphi$  has the 'universal' constituents Q, R, S *in-itself*, any 'particular' utterance  $\varphi_U$  would express  $Q_U, R_U$  and  $S_U$ —where the U signifies the speaker's participation in heterology, and would include the speaker's dialect, his/her emotional-volitional attitude, axiological disposition etc. Furthermore, it is in the subject's *act* of utterance that the *particular* and the 'universal' *intersect*, yielding his/her *individual* utterance. That is, the 'concrete utterance of a speaking subject' is established on the boundary of the unifying and dis-unifying forces of language.

However, as the unity of a language-*in-itself* is not something given [*dan*] but is always in essence socially posited [*zadan*], the constituents  $\varphi$  has *in itself* are necessarily historical, and therefore, *not* universal in any *a priori* sense. That is to say, a unitary language is a historical-cultural formation, and as such it is subject to development and renewal over history:<sup>15</sup>

Every utterance participates in the 'unitary language' (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical [*heterology* <*raznorechie*>] (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.

(DN, p. 272)

The historical development and renewal of language is grounded in language's living *Aktualität*:<sup>16</sup> the utterance in discourse, which, as I shall show, expresses and embodies the becoming of socio-ideological and cultural reality through dialogue and dialectic.

<sup>15</sup> This historical development is expressed by the dialectic  $M : H \leftrightarrow P$

<sup>16</sup> Although Bakhtin does not use the term *Aktualität* he does explicitly use the term *Aktuell*, which will suffice to justify our use of the term *Aktualität*.

### 3.5 Dialogue, Dialogic and Dialectic

Bakhtin, like Humboldt and Cassirer, views language as the formative organ of thought, in that thought and the object of thought become externalised through speech and perceptible to the senses. The utterance objectifies the object of thought, it liberates the subjective activity of thought and projects it into the social *Aktualität*. Moreover, as a result of the combination of intellectual activity with the utterance, the object of perception passes over from an image of intuition to a concept of knowledge; the subject's thought becomes objectivised while maintaining its subjective essence, thereby establishing self-awareness and identity in *spirit*—as was demonstrated in the previous chapter with respect to the co-determinate relationship between I and other in establishing self-consciousness and identity.

Bakhtin, therefore, treats words and language as Cassirerian symbolic forms in that words *conceptualise* thought. Thus, when I see an object X, designated by the word  $\varphi$ , I not only think ' $\varphi$ ' but I utter ' $\varphi$ ' in order to externalise it, insert it into the social domain, and thereby objectify and *conceptualise* X. In this Bakhtin's understanding of the word and its object resembles Cassirer's third stage of the 'pure meaning function' (*reine Bedeutungsfunktion*), where the object comes to be viewed as a construction of the symbol. To illustrate let us consider two subjects (call them A and B) and an object X, designated by the word  $\varphi$ . The two subjects, A and B, are located in different spaces, so that each subject has his/her *unique* or *subjective* spatial perception of X, such that A perceives a dimension of X that B cannot, and *vice versa*. Nevertheless, it is by virtue of their utterances of the word  $\varphi$  that A and B can mutually communicate that each thinks X to be such and such an object, thereby establishing the *objectification* of X.

However,  $\varphi$  only communicates that X exemplifies *a* X, it does not determine X as a *particular instance* of X, i.e. *this* X. Thus although both A and B are aware that the object exemplifies a X, their perception of X also means that X is a *particular*, i.e. *this* X as opposed to *that* X. Furthermore, because A and B are located in different spatial locations, they perceive different *instances* of X, and hence, *different particulars* of X. Bakhtin argues that this difference is linguistically conveyed in A's and B's individual utterances of  $\varphi$ . Such that (A) $\varphi_U$ , the individual utterance of A, carries with it the *particularity* of A's perception of X; and (B) $\varphi_U$ , the individual utterance of B, carries with it the *particularity* of B's perception of X (where U signifies not only the speaker's *particular* 'perspective' on X, but also his/her dialect, emotional-volitional attitude, axiological disposition etc. towards X). The *dialogic* interaction between (A) $\varphi_U$  and (B) $\varphi_U$ , (A) $\varphi_U \leftrightarrow$  (B) $\varphi_U : \varphi_U'$  determines the heteroglot *Aktualität* of  $\varphi_U'$  as the *conceptualising* act wherein the social knowledge of X is posited.

The dialogic interaction (A) $\varphi_U \leftrightarrow$  (B) $\varphi_U : \varphi_U'$ , however, expresses a *synchronic* dialogic relation, which cannot be the case. The dialogic interaction between A and B has to be *diachronic* in that the two utterances, if they are to form a dialogue, cannot be uttered *simultaneously*. one *must* be spoken before the other, and as such the first utterance necessarily orients itself towards ( $\rightarrow$ ) a response and the second utterance rejoins ( $\leftarrow$ ) the first establishing dialogue ( $\leftrightarrow$ )—and, in so doing, the second utterance orients itself towards ( $\rightarrow$ ) the *next* rejoinder. Therefore, if we are to express the dialogic interaction between A and B *diachronically*, we must give the *particulars* of each utterance and rejoinder a temporal qualification; thus, the subscript signifier P is *past*, N is *present* and F is *future*, so that (A) $\varphi_N \leftrightarrow$  (B) $\varphi_F : \varphi_N'$  and (B) $\varphi_N' \rightarrow$  (A) $\varphi_F'$ .

The dialogic interaction between A and B, moreover, is not simply *diachronic*, it is

*historical* in that the particulars of the future rejoinders will accumulate *in* the word along with the particulars of the antecedent utterances:  $(B)\varphi_N' \leftrightarrow (A)\varphi_F' : \varphi_N''$ ,  $(A)\varphi_N'' \leftrightarrow (B)\varphi_F'' : \varphi_N'''$ , ...  $\varphi_N''$ . Thus, every straight dash ' indicates a dialogic relation between interlocutors, such that  $\varphi_N'$  expresses  $(AB)\varphi_N$ ,  $\varphi_N''$  expresses  $(ABBA)\varphi_N$ , and  $\varphi_N'''$  expresses  $(ABBAAB)\varphi_N$ , ...  $(n)\varphi_N$ . This exemplifies Bakhtin's notion that every individual utterance is *filled* with other voices, and that it is *within* the dialogic relation of a 'concrete utterance', such as  $\varphi_N'$ ,  $\varphi_N''$ , and  $\varphi_N'''$ , that the unitary language—symbolised by  $\varphi$ —is *posited* (*zadan*). The shape of the dialogic interaction between A and B has, as I have demonstrated, a clear dialectical structure that expresses Bakhtin's notion of the unfinalisability of discourse, and the *becoming* of heterologic *Aktualität*. In this Bakhtin's dialogic interaction unequivocally resembles Hegel's and Cassirer's world of spirit:

In this world there is no sudden breach or leap, no hiatus by which it breaks into disparate parts. Rather, every form through which consciousness passes seems to belong in some way to its enduring heritage. The surpassing of a particular form is made possible not by the vanishing, the total destruction, of this form but by its preservation within the continuity of consciousness as a whole; for what constitutes the unity and totality of the human spirit is precisely that it has no absolute past; it gathers up into itself what has passed and preserves it as present. 'The life of the actual spirit', writes Hegel in this connection, 'is a cycle of stages which on the one hand still subsist side by side and only on the other hand appear as past. The features which the spirit seems to have left behind it are also present in its depths.'<sup>17</sup>

(PSF3, p. 78)

Moreover, Bakhtin's becoming of heterologic *Aktualität* in *dialogue*—the *dialogic*—is, following Cassirer's phenomenology, not a 'closed' dialectic, but rather an 'open' dialectic in that there is an immutable tension and friction between the heterogeneous interpretations and meanings that social consciousness has *deposited in* the word throughout its history, *and* an immutable tension and friction between the *Aktuell* living utterance and the understanding of that utterance.

Bakhtin's dialectic, therefore, is 'open' in both temporal directions, and each 'direction' exemplifies a different dialectical moment. His dialectic is open to the *past* with respect to the co-determinate relationship between the speaker's word and the *other* or *alien* (*chuzhie*)<sup>18</sup> words he/she encounters *in* the object—establishing the dialogic utterance-*in-itself*. And the dialectic is open to the *future* with respect to the co-determinate relationship between the speaker and his/her interlocutor—establishing the dialogic utterance-*for-itself*. I will start by looking at the utterance's dialectic that establishes the dialogic utterance-*in-itself*.

<sup>17</sup> Cassirer is citing from Hegel's *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*.

<sup>18</sup> It is more than likely that Bakhtin's use of the word *chuzhie* is synonymous with the German *fremd* (other, alien, strange(r)). The use of this term, in Hegelian and post-Hegelian philosophy, is of varied and widespread importance. For Hegel alienation (*Entfremdung*) is the stage of disunion that emerges from a simple unity and is subsequently reconciled or *sublated* to a higher, differentiated unity (cf. Inwood 1992, p. 36). In PS Hegel argues that experience (*Erfahrung*) requires the object to alienate itself and then return to itself from this alienation: 'we can', writes Michael Inwood, 'comprehend phenomena only by invoking abstractions which initially seem remote [i.e. *alien*] from the phenomenon themselves' (Inwood 1992, p. 38). The Hegelian concept of alienation was very important for Marx's social theory, where alienation refers to the loss of individual identity, and independence through socio-economic relationships. Alienation is also a key concept in Nietzsche's philosophy of being, where it refers to humankind's rejection of God and metaphysics and acceptance of its anthropocentric nature.



(A) The Dialogic Utterance-*in-itself*

Subject A's 'initial' utterance of  $\varphi_N$  does not enter the discourse between A and B 'neutrally', as the word  $\varphi$  is always and already *saturated* with the heterogeneity of meanings that social consciousness had *deposited* in it; hence, the word at any given historical moment is  $\varphi_N^x$ .<sup>19</sup> Thus, subject A's *individual* utterance (A) $\varphi_N$  enters into, and is necessarily part of, the heterologic *Aktualität* of socio-ideological discourse, which is a *present* environment pregnant with *past* iterations  $\varphi_N^x$  that A encounters *in the object* as the *alien* or *other* (O) utterances (O) $\varphi_P$ :

[...] any concrete discourse (utterance) finds the object at which it is 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 [*chuzhie*] words that have already been spoken about it. It is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien [*chuzhie*] value judgements and accents.

(DN, p. 276)

It is, moreover, in the differentiation, or the co-determinate context of *other* iterations of  $\varphi$  as *individuals*, that the social meaning and value of the utterance (A) $\varphi_N$  in relation to the *object* is disclosed. That is, although we saw that it is the *particularity* *n* of the *individual* utterance (A) $\varphi_N$  (not its 'universality'  $\varphi$ ) that posits the socio-ideological context and content of the  $\varphi_N$ , this positing is only *in itself*. The subject's utterance as *individual-in-itself* (A) $\varphi_N$  becomes saturated with the heterogeneous meanings and valuations deposited *in* it by the *other* utterances (O) $\varphi_P$  in the object. As such, the utterance (A) $\varphi_N$  must determine its own 'semantic and stylistic contours', by establishing boundaries *within* the heterogeneous meanings of  $\varphi_N^x$ . That is, the utterance (A) $\varphi_N$  establishes its own *limits* relative to (O) $\varphi_P$ :

The way in which the word conceptualizes its object is a complex act—[any/every object <*vsiakii predmet*>], open to dispute and overlain as [it is] with qualifications, [is] from one side highlighted while from the other side dimmed by heteroglot social opinion, by an alien [*chuzhoe*] word about [it]. And into this complex play of light and shadow the word enters—it becomes saturated with this play, and must determine within it *the boundaries* of its own semantic and stylistic contours.

(DN, p. 277, emphasis added)

Thus the utterance (A) $\varphi_N$  does not enter into the socio-ideological discourse as a fully formed *individual* utterance that *conceptualises* the object X—i.e. it does not identify X as

<sup>19</sup> Bakhtin writes in a revealing footnote: 'Highly significant in this respect is the struggle that must be undertaken in such movements as Rousseauism, Naturalism, Impressionism, Acmeism, Dadaism, Surrealism and analogous schools with the "qualified" nature of the object (a struggle occasioned by the idea of a return to primordial consciousness, to original consciousness, to the object itself in itself, to pure perception and so forth)' (DN, p. 277n). Thus the Surrealists and Dadaists, etc. desire to strip away the dialectic history of the word; to wash away the heterogeneous points of view and values that have deposited themselves upon the word and its designated object. Bakhtin's notion of the 'primordial consciousness' may refer to L. Lévy-Brühl's social anthropological treatise *Les Fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* (*How Natives Think*, 1926), where the term refers to primitive or adolescent consciousness (cf. Lévy-Brühl 1926). However, the context wherein the term is used may also suggest Husserl's notion of 'primordial consciousness', which designates the world of first order, of private self or monad in abstraction from the world of the other or the intersubjective world. In Hegel's *Phenomenology* the 'primordial consciousness' corresponds to the pre-intersubjective, pre-spirit self of sense-certainty. However, as Hegel, Husserl and Bakhtin all agree that self-consciousness is *necessarily* intersubjective, it would follow that 'a return to primordial consciousness' by someone who is self-consciousness would entail that someone has to strip him/herself of self-consciousness, which leads to a contradiction.

'this X'. The utterance  $(A)\varphi_N$  becomes an *individual* utterance that conceptualises the object-*in-and-for-itself* through its necessary co-determinate relationship to the *other* individual utterance  $(O)\varphi_P$ , exemplifying the dialectic  $(O)\varphi_P \leftrightarrow (A)\varphi_N$ :  $(AOOA)\varphi_N$ :

[...] the object reveals first of all precisely the socially heteroglot multiplicity of its names, definitions and value judgements. Instead of the virginal fullness and inexhaustibility of the object itself, [there are] *a multitude of routes, roads and paths that have been laid down in the object by social consciousness*. Along with the internal contradiction inside the object itself, [there is] as well the unfolding of social [heterology <*raznorechie*>] surrounding the object [the social dialogue], the Tower-of-Babel mixing of languages that goes on around any object [object]; *the dialectics of the object are interwoven with the social dialogue surrounding it*.

(DN, p. 278, emphasis added)

As such the heterologic *Aktualität* into which the utterance  $(A)\varphi_N$  enters is not passive; it is an agitated, indeed, hostile environment—similar to Hegel's notion of *conflict* in recognition in his moments of self-consciousness (such as the struggle between the master and the slave in the *Phenomenology*):

The word, directed towards its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension filled environment of alien [*chuzhie*] words, value judgements 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.

(DN, p. 276)

For example, subject A may encounter *within*  $(O)\varphi_P$  a multitude of voices, such that  $(O)\varphi_P$  expresses  $(QRST)\varphi_P$ ; where A 'merges' with Q, 'recoils' from R, and 'intersects' with S and T. Nevertheless *all* 'voices' find expression in  $(AOOA)\varphi_N$ , such that  $(AOOA)\varphi_N$  :  $(A[QRST][QRST]A)\varphi_N$ , and are, therefore, *all* instrumental in determining the semantic and stylistic profile of  $(AOOA)\varphi_N$  in relation to the *object X*.

Thus, the *word* designating the *object* of the speaker is dialectically *formed* or *conceptualised* through its encounter with the *other* [*chuzhie*] words *in the object*, which are lit up, or are presented to the consciousness of the speaker through his/her utterance. That is, although the past *other* utterances  $(O)\varphi_P$  of the word orient themselves towards the rejoinder  $(O)\varphi_P \rightarrow (A)\varphi_N$ , it is, nevertheless, the 'living utterance' of the *rejoinder*  $(A)\varphi_N$  that *posits* the previous utterances *in the object* in the speaker's consciousness in the *present*  $(A)\varphi_N \rightarrow (O)\varphi_P$ , such that  $(AOOA)\varphi_N$  expresses  $(A)\varphi_N$ -*in-and-for-itself*—as opposed to  $(OAAO)\varphi_N$ , which has the wrong temporal, existential and, therefore, historical sequence:

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 [*dannyi predmet*] 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 [*replika*] to it—it does not approach the object from the sidelines.

(DN, pp. 276-7)

Furthermore, because the dialectic of the utterance  $(A)\varphi_N$  that *conceptualises* the *object in and-for-itself*  $(AOOA)\varphi_N$  is between subject A and the *other* words he/she encounters in the *object*, as opposed to another *subject*,  $(AOOA)\varphi_N$  may be said to establish A's *dialogic utterance-in-itself*.

(B) The Dialogic Utterance-*for-itself*

It follows, therefore, that if A's utterance is to enter the heterologic *Aktualität* as a *dialogic utterance-for-itself*, it must do so, not through its co-determinate relationship with the *object*, but through its co-determinate relationship with another *subject*. This co-determinate relationship, which exemplifies Bakhtin's second dialectic, is between the *utterance* and *another* utterance as *rejoinder*:

The word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien [*chuzhoe*] word that is already in the object. [The conceptualisation of its object by the word is dialogic <*Kontsipirovanie slovom svoego predmeta—dialogichno*>].

But this does not exhaust the internal dialogism within the word. It encounters an alien [*chuzhoe*] 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 as living conversation is directed, blatantly, orientated towards a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. *Forming* [*Slagaias'*] *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.*

(DN, pp. 279-80, emphasis added).

Thus, as we saw, the dialogic word is formed *in-itself* in the 'atmosphere of the already spoken' in the *object*, and at the same time the dialogic word is formed *for-itself* by that 'which has not yet been said' but which is necessarily anticipated, namely the *future rejoinder* of another. It is important to note that Bakhtin's use of the word *Slagaias'* (from *slagat'sia*), denotes taking on a certain form in certain circumstances, rather than an active 'forming itself'. There is no link with aesthetic notions of form, but rather the term suggests the formative dynamic (*energeia*) of language in socio-cultural *Aktualität*.

Like the dialogic utterance-*in-itself* (in relation to the object), the dialogic utterance-*for-itself* enters a hostile and tension-filled environment teeming with *other* words. And it is within this environment that the speaker has to *protend*<sup>20</sup> the rejoinder of the *other*:

This new [type <*vid*>] of internal dialogism of the word is different from that form determined by an encounter with an alien [*chuzhoe*] word within the object itself: here it is not the object that serves as the arena for the encounter, but rather the subjective belief system of the listener. Thus this dialogism bears a more subjective, psychological and (frequently) random character, sometimes crassly accommodating, sometimes provocatively polemical. Very often, especially in the rhetorical forms [*formy*], this orientation toward the listener and the internal dialogism of the word may simply overshadow the object: the strong point of any concrete listener becomes a self-sufficient focus of attention, and one that interferes with the word's creative work on its referent.

<sup>20</sup> Protention: the immediate forward reach of consciousness towards the future, the intentional future horizon. The term comes from Husserl's *Ideas I* (cf. Husserl 1982, p. 771). Alfred Schutz writes: '[...] we live in the present and are directed towards the immediate future which we anticipate by our expectations. These expectations—Husserl calls them, as the counterpart of retentions, "protentions"—belong, of course, to our present acting. They are elements of our present, although referring to our immediate future. They pull the future, so to speak, continuously into our present. (Schutz 1973, p. 172). Although Bakhtin is familiar with Husserl's text he himself does not use the term 'protention' in his philosophy, but the logic of his position does suggest that he has a form of 'protention' in mind.

(DN, p. 282).

Thus, the speaker encounters an atmosphere of alien words, filled with contradictions and tensions. However, the speaker does not locate the reply in an object; rather it is encountered by the speaker in his/her *protended* reply of the interlocutor that the speaker understands as an alien or *other* (*chuzhoe*) word (O) $\phi_F$ :

Only now this contradictory environment of alien [*chuzhie*] words is present to the speaker not in the object, but rather in the consciousness of the listener, as his apperceptive background of understanding, which is not a linguistic background but rather [an object/objective expressive background <*predmetno-ekspressivnyi fon*>]. There occurs a new encounter between the utterance and an alien [*chuzhoe*] word, which makes itself felt as a new and unique influence on its style.

(DN, p. 281)

The speaker's understanding of (O) $\phi_F$ , through *protention*, is determined by his/her knowledge of the listener's *apperceptive* background. Apperception, in the Kantian sense, refers to '[c]onsciousness of self according to the determinations of our state of inner perception' of the object and our judgements of it—which is purely subjective (CPR A107, p. 136).<sup>21</sup> For Bakhtin, however, it includes the subject's point of view and value judgements, in relation to the object and its objective, or socio-ideological sphere of understanding. The speaker comes to 'fill in' or—to use the Husserlian term—*appresent* the listener's apperceptive background through an intentional act of *empathy* (cf. 2).

Crucially, as the living utterance establishes 'meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment', and as the *understanding* and the *utterance* form a *dialectic*, it follows that the listener's apperceptive background of understanding is historically determined. As such, the listener's 'conceptual horizon' is a social-historical construct determined by an objectified world-view or *spirit*:

In the actual life of speech, every concrete act of understanding is active: [it assimilates that which is understood to *its own* object/objectual-expressive horizon/purview <*ono priobshchaet ponimaemoe svoemu predmetno-ekspressivnomu krugozoru*>] 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.*

(DN, p. 282, second emphasis added)

The speaker's protention of his/her utterance's reply, therefore, is possible through his/her participation in the socio-ideological *Aktualität*, that determines the *object/objectual expressive background* of his/her interlocutor. If we refer back to Bakhtin's earlier works, TPA and AH, then the *means* by which the speaker *protends* the listener's rejoinder would be through *empathy*: the speaker determines the 'conceptual horizon' of the *other* through *appresenting* the other's emotional-volitional etc. disposition, which is possible by virtue of their mutual participation in the socio-ideological *Aktualität* (cf. 2.2-4).

The speaker's *protention* of the rejoinder determines not just *how* the subject perceives

<sup>21</sup> Kant distinguished between *transcendental apperception*, 'the pure unchangeable consciousness' grounded in the *a priori* transcendental subject, and *empirical apperception*, the consciousness of self that accompanies our perception and judgements. Empirical apperception, is 'always changing', as '[n]o fixed and abiding self can present itself in this flux of inner appearances' (CPR A107, p. 137). As Bakhtin rejects Kant's transcendental subject, we should assume that he is referring to empirical apperception.

his/her word, but also his/her emotional-volitional attitude, and axiological disposition *towards* the word *relative* to the listener. As such, it determines not just the *intention*<sup>22</sup> of the word, but also *how* the speaker utters the word:

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 towards the listener is an orientation towards a specific conceptual horizon, towards 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 each other. The speaker strives to get a reading on his own word, and on his own conceptual system that determines this word, within the alien [*chuzhoi*] conceptual system of the understanding receiver; he enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system. The speaker breaks through the alien [*chuzhoi*] conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien [*chuzhaia*] territory, against his, the listener's, apperceptive background.

(DN, p. 282)

Thus, argues Bakhtin, the utterance *must* orientate itself towards the response, and although it is not explicitly stated, it does so dialectically. Looking at the dialogic interaction between A and B we see that, because utterance  $(A)\varphi_N$  *orients* itself towards B's *future rejoinder*  $(A)\varphi_N \rightarrow (B)\varphi_F$ , it follows that B's understanding and reply is *determinate* of the utterance  $(A)\varphi_N$ , such that  $(A)\varphi_N \leftarrow (B)\varphi_F$ . However, because A's utterance must *protend* B's reply, the rejoinder is qualified *future* tense  $(B)\varphi_F$ , and, therefore, exists only *for* A. Moreover, the *protention* not only 'anticipates' the rejoinder, but, because it is necessary, actually *intends* the *form* of the rejoinder. Therefore, the utterance  $(A)\varphi_N$  establishes the *utterance-for-itself* through determining the *future horizon* of his/her utterance's *rejoinder* such that  $(A)\varphi_N \leftrightarrow (B)\varphi_F : (ABBA)\varphi_N$ . It is because the dialectic of the utterance  $(A)\varphi_N$  *protends* the *rejoinder*  $(B)\varphi_F$ —i.e. the *not yet spoken* or *future* reply—that  $(ABBA)\varphi_N$  is said to establish A's *dialogic utterance-for-itself*.

However, like the dialectic that establishes the *utterance-in-itself*, the dialectic between the speaker and the listener is not a clean dialectic. Because the speaker can only *approximate* the interlocutor's conceptual horizon against which he/she places the utterance, the differences (e.g. the emotional-volitional, axiological etc. variances) between the speaker's *protended* conceptual horizon of the rejoinder and the rejoinder's *actual* conceptual horizon only become *realised* by the listener's *Aktuell* response, i.e., in the dialogic interaction between A and B as interlocutors.

### (C) The Dialogic Utterance-in-and-for-itself

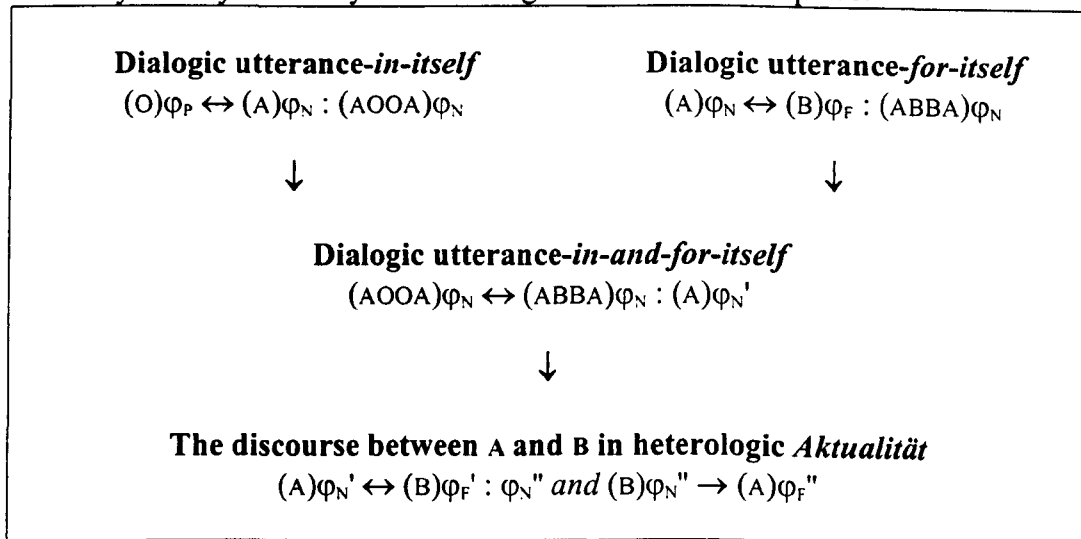
Thus, we can see that our initial structure of the dialogic interaction  $(A)\varphi_N \leftrightarrow (B)\varphi_F : \varphi_N'$  embodies two distinct dialectical moments. First, the establishment of A's utterance as dialogically *in-itself* occurs through its relationship with *other* previous utterances  $(O)\varphi_P$ ,

<sup>22</sup> Intention is used here in the Husserlian sense. In the Husserl's *Investigations* consciousness is said to be phenomenologically *intentional* in the sense that it is *directed towards an object*; consciousness is consciousness of something as we apprehend or *intend* it—as opposed to how we *perceive* it (cf. Husserl 1970). As such, when Husserl speaks of *intentional* acts he is speaking of meaning-giving acts, by which an object is represented to consciousness.

which A *experiences* as  $(O)\varphi_P \leftarrow (A)\varphi_N : (AO)\varphi_N$ . The speaker locates the *other* words *in* the *object* because his/her utterance is not a *rejoinder* to another *subject*. Through this experience A becomes aware that the *other* words are orientated towards his/her word  $(O)\varphi_P \rightarrow (A)\varphi_N$  and that therefore his/her *object* is dialectically determined in the word  $(A)\varphi_N \leftrightarrow (O)\varphi_P : (AOOA)\varphi_N$ . However, as we have seen, this is not a clean dialectic, because the relationship between  $(O)\varphi_P$  and  $(A)\varphi_N$  takes place in an agitated and hostile environment—the dialogic eidetic of the uttered word and its object.

Second, the establishment of A's utterance as dialogically *for-itself* occurs through its relationship with the *intended* rejoinder  $(B)\varphi_F$ . In orientating his/her utterance towards the interlocutor  $(A)\varphi_N \rightarrow (B)\varphi_F$ , it follows that the B's *understanding* becomes co-determinate of the utterance  $(A)\varphi_N \leftarrow (B)\varphi_F$  for A, such that A becomes aware that the *response* to his/her utterance and the *understanding* of his/her utterance are dialectically determined  $(A)\varphi_N \leftrightarrow (B)\varphi_F : (ABBA)\varphi_N$ . However, this too is not a clean dialectic: as we have seen, the *protended* rejoinder enters into a conflicting and opposing (differentiating) relationship with the *Aktuell* rejoinder—the dialogic eidetic of the uttered word and its interlocutor.

The two dialectically determined dialogic eidetics of the utterance occur on different levels, but *not* at different temporal moments. That is, they occur at the same time, as constituent parts of the utterance, dialectically combining to establish the dialogic utterance *in-and-for-itself* necessary for heterologic discourse to take place:



Bakhtin's dialectical eidetics of the word and the object correspond strongly to Cassirer's three stages of the expressive function of the *symbol*. Prior to language's self-consciousness—i.e. before the consciousness of polyglossia and heterology—the relationship between the word and the object expresses Cassirer's 'expressive function' (*Ausdrucksfunktion*), which is a simple unity of symbol and object, where no genuine distinction, or 'disassociation' is made. The *Ausdrucksfunktion* between object and word exemplifies what Cassirer calls mythical thought, and Bakhtin seems to appropriate this theory:

By 'disassociation' we have in mind here a destruction of any absolute binding of ideological meaning to language, which is the defining factor of mythological and magical thought. An absolute fusion of word with concrete ideological meaning is, without a doubt, one of the most fundamental constitutive features of myth, on the one hand determining the development of mythological images, and on the other determining a special feeling for the forms, meanings and stylistic combinations of

language. [...] But language too is under the power of images of the sort that dominate mythological thinking, and these fetter the free movement of its intentions and thus make it more difficult for language categories to achieve a wider application and greater flexibility, a purer [formalness <formal'nost'>] (*this would result from their fusion with materially concrete relationships*); they limit the word's potential for greater expressiveness.

The absolute hegemony of myth over language as well as the hegemony of language over the perception and conceptualization of reality are of course located in the prehistory (and therefore necessarily hypothetical) past of language consciousness. But even in those eras where the absolutism of this hegemony has long since been displaced—in the already historical epoch of language consciousness—a mythological feeling for the authority of language and the faith in the unmediated transformation into a seamless unity of the entire sense [...].

(DN, pp. 369-70, emphasis added)

The view that there is a clear relationship between Cassirer's notion of mythical thought and Bakhtin's view of the relation between language and myth is supported by the section of the note accompanying the above passages that was deleted in the typescript of DN. 'Had it been retained in the Russian original', writes Poole, 'the missing reference would likely have been included in note 36 of "Discourse in the Novel" [p. 369]':

In the typescript the note continues: 'A more fundamental connection between the problems of linguistics [i.e., the relation of myth and language] is given in Usener's study [...] and, in particular, in Cassirer's work [*Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, T. 2]'.<sup>23</sup>

(Poole 1998, p. 573 n.39)<sup>23</sup>

Cassirer's second stage, the 'representative function' (*Darstellungsfunktion*), which is a stage of disjunction of symbol and object, where the object is seen as wholly other than the symbol. This function is similar in kind to what I have termed Bakhtin's dialogic 'utterance-in-itself'. It is the realisation by the speaking subject that his/her word neither 'captures' the object completely, nor exhausts the *conceptualisation* of the object in the word. The subject becomes self-conscious of this through his/her encounter with the *other* words in the object—it follows the initial mythical language consciousness, where there was only one complete and exhaustive word for the object.

The third stage, Cassirer's 'pure meaning function' (*reine Bedeutungsfunktion*), where the separation between the word and the object is overcome, and the object comes to be viewed as a construction of the symbol, is similar in kind to what I have termed Bakhtin's 'utterance-in-and-for-itself'. The utterance-in-and-for-itself, as we have seen, comes with the realisation by the subject that the word constructs or *conceptualises* the object in social *Aktualität*, and follows only after the subject becomes aware that it is the uttered *word* that conveys the object to the other (the utterance-for-itself). All three stages, for Cassirer and as I have shown for Bakhtin, stand in a dialectical relation to each other. Moreover, Bakhtin's 'eidetic' stages of language and the utterance, like Cassirer's symbolic/linguistic functions, correspond, in terms of their general conception, to the three stages of Hegel's *Phenomenology*: consciousness, self-consciousness, and spirit. But, like Cassirer's, Bakhtin's philosophy departs from Hegel's phenomenology in its 'foundations' and its 'development'.

<sup>23</sup> Poole furthermore points out that '[s]ignificantly and for purely ideological reasons, Bakhtin's ensuing references to Marr and Dilthey were also left out of the published text' (Poole 1998, p. 573 n.39).

### 3.6 Bakhtin's Dialectic versus Hegel's Dialectic

Like Hegel, Bakhtin maintains that self-consciousness and knowledge are *ab initio* social, requiring, as we have seen in previous chapters, the distinction, recognition, and responsibility between self and others. The dialectic of these relations generates an ordered and organised social-political and cultural life. Although numerous Bakhtin scholars have argued that this contradicts the reality of social heterology, this is not the case.<sup>24</sup> It must be remembered that, if '*To be means to communicate*' (TRDB, p. 287), then communication, if it is to be successful, must be ordered and organised—as it is by virtue of the centralising and unifying forces in language as monoglossia. Bakhtin illustrates this in the essay 'The Problem of the Text':<sup>25</sup>

The dialogic relationships among texts and within the text. Their special (not linguistic) nature. Dialogue and dialectics.

The two poles of the text. Each text presupposes a generally understood (that is, conventional within a given collective) system of signs, a language (if only a language of art). If there is no language behind the text, it is not a text, but a natural (not signifying) phenomenon, for example, a complex of natural cries and moans devoid of any linguistic (signifying) repeatability. [...]

And so behind each text stands a language system. Everything in the text that is repeated and reproduced, everything repeatable and reproducible, everything that can be given outside a given text (the given) conforms to this language system. But at the same time each text (as an utterance) is individual, unique, and unrepeatable [...].

(PT, p. 105)

As I have shown, the utterance as *individual* in social heterology must express *both* the centralising and unifying forces of language *and* the decentralising and disunifying forces of language. Thus, if an utterance were simply to *vocalise* the 'universality' of the unified language system, and no *particularity*, it would express 'only a passive understanding of discourse, [...] an understanding of an utterance's *neutral signification* and not its *actual meaning*', in that it would not partake in the heterologic *Aktualität* of discursive interaction (DN, p. 281). Conversely, therefore, if an utterance does not *vocalise* the unified language *at all* it is simply 'a natural (not signifying) phenomenon [...] devoid of any linguistic (signifying) repeatability' (PT, p. 105). That is, Bakhtin in effect sees language as

<sup>24</sup> For instance Morson and Emerson argue that 'mess' is the ontological *sine qua non* that accounts for 'prosaic's' (a surrogate term for dialogism) anti-system attitude. 'Prosaics', they argue, is concerned with order and mess: 'Order needs justification, disorder does not. The natural state of things is *mess*' (Morson and Emerson 1992, p. 30). Accordingly Freud and Marx and others have always understood things backwards, namely that behind 'mess' there lies order, a system that can explain the mess. Morson and Emerson contend that Bakhtin's epistemology accepts that there is simply 'mess', with no underlying order, and that it is thus order that needs to be explained and not mess. From this principal premise regarding the 'correct' ontological hierarchy of mess and order, Morson and Emerson construct a reading of Bakhtin, and Bakhtin's principal concerns. Cultural artefacts, for instance, are produced by the dynamic of 'order' and 'mess', represented by 'centripetal forces' or 'official forces' and 'centrifugal forces' or 'unofficial forces': 'The former seek to impose order on an essentially heterogeneous and messy world; the latter either purposely or *for no particular reason* disrupt that order. We stress "for no particular reason" because it is quite common among Bakhtin's admirers, especially Marxists, to misinterpret centrifugal forces as a unified opposition. Bakhtin's point, however, is that although forces of organized opposition sometimes *do* coalesce, centrifugal forces are generally speaking messy and disorganized. [...] Because this divergence from the official (which is itself never as unified as it pretends to be) can differ in degree as well as in kind, it may in principle be impossible to draw a sharp line between the centripetal and the centrifugal. These categories are themselves subject to the centrifuge' (Morson and Emerson 1992, p. 30).

<sup>25</sup> Although PT discusses the co-determinate relationship in relation to texts, rather than utterances, the two can be, and are (in this case), unambiguously interchanged.



exemplifying Hegel's dialectic of *universal*, *particular*, and *individual*: every text as an utterance must exemplify the *universal* by virtue of the language system (exemplified by the repeatability and reproducibility of its 'universals'); but at the same time the utterance expresses something that is unique, unrepeatable and unreproducible, exemplified by it as a *particular*; and it is only by actualising *both* the *universal* and the *particular* that the utterance becomes an *individual*, and thereby *means*.

There is, however, a clear difference between Hegel's dialectic and Bakhtin's dialectic. For Hegel the dialectic does not necessarily involve a dialogue either between two thinkers or between a thinker and his/her subject matter. The dialectic is simply conceived as the autonomous activity between the *universal* and the *particular*, or self-criticism and self-development of the subject matter *in-and-for-itself* as *individual* (cf. Inwood 1992, pp. 81-3).

Bakhtin, strongly resembling both Humboldt and Cassirer, maintains that thought and the object of thought can only become objectified in the *utterance*. Therefore, the dialectic between the *universal* and the *particular* cannot operate autonomously of language, or of a linguistic form of thinking. This is because Bakhtin understands the rational human being, like Aristotle, as the animal that speaks (Gk. *zoon logon ekhon*). And as such the dialectic *necessarily* involves a *dialogue* either between two thinkers or between a thinker and his/her subject matter (e.g. in a text). That is, for Bakhtin recognition between self and other is *ab initio* and necessarily linguistic and verbal, whereas

Hegel denies that recognition is linguistic or verbal, for speech is only an ideal medium, and the requisite recognition is supposed to be real, and that requires the positing of the self as a totality (*Fürsichsein*) in and by the *Fürsichsein* of the other. This is not to deny that language may play a role in recognition. But that role comes at a later stage of development, of society on the one hand, and consciousness on the other.

(Williams 1992, p. 94 n.69)

It follows that, for Bakhtin, when the utterance is *connected* to the speaker and his/her interlocutor, it exemplifies a *dialogic* relation, and when *detached* from the speaker and his/her interlocutor it becomes a *dialectical* relation (cf. PT, p. 105). With this in mind, Bakhtin says the following regarding the nature of, and relationship between, dialectics and dialogue:

Take a dialogue and remove the voices (the partitioning of voices), remove the intonations (emotional and individualising ones), carve out abstract concepts and judgements from living words and responses, cram everything into one abstract consciousness—and that's how you get dialectics.

(N70, p. 147)

The above citation makes it clear that Bakhtin considers dialectics the abstract *form* of *dialogue*. True, we can only obtain dialectics through the phenomenon of dialogue from which we 'abstract' it; but this very abstraction shows that the dialectic is a necessary constituent factor of the content and existence of dialogue. That is, the dialectic is dialogue's *internal structure* or *inner form* that generates the becoming of dialogue over history, establishing 'higher levels' of—in this case—philosophical discourse:

Dialectics was born of dialogue so as to return again to dialogue on a higher level (a dialogue of personalities).

The monologism of Hegel's 'Phenomenology of Spirit'.

Dilthey's monologism has not been completely surmounted.

(MHS, p. 162)

Interestingly, whereas some scholars, notably Tihanov and Brandist, have recognised this

passage's intrinsic Hegelianism, many have erroneously seen it as proof that Bakhtin is 'anti-Hegelian' (cf. Holquist 1990, and Morson and Emerson 1992). However, Bakhtin makes a point of calling Hegel's dialectic a 'monological dialectic' (MHS, p. 162), which not only suggests that Bakhtin believes that there are other forms of dialectics, but—considering the passages cited above—that the concept of the dialogic is to be understood as exemplifying *dialogised dialectic*.

Hegel's dialectic is termed *monological* because it does not necessarily involve a dialogue either between two thinkers or between a thinker and his/her subject matter. This, according to Bakhtin, strips away, on the one hand, the *conceptual* meaning of the dialectic, which is posited in the form-giving and form-breaking function of language, and on the other hand, the *contextual* meaning, which is posited in the *Aktualität* of discourse:

If we transform dialogue into one continuous text, that is, erase the divisions between voices (changes of speaking subjects), which is possible at the extreme (Hegel's monological dialectic), then the deep-seated (infinite) contextual meaning disappears (we reach a bottom, reach a standstill).

Complete maximum reification would inevitably lead to the disappearance of the infinitude and bottomlessness of meaning (any meaning).

(MHS, p. 162)

To consider the dialectic monological is to strip it of its infinitude, and thereby, argues Bakhtin, to conceive the attainment of the absolute or 'complete maximum reification' in history. However, because living discourse is heterologic, dialogue is 'unfinalisable', and as such dialogised dialectic will never attain 'complete maximum reification'.

Moreover, when we look carefully at the above passages, we realise that Bakhtin is saying two things: first, a dialogue is dialectically determined, and this dialogue will be dialectically sublated *forward* into new and higher form of dialogue; and second, this phenomenology is historical—the early Socratic dialogue (whose 'carnivalised' dialectic is between 'heroes' who are *ideologists*) (cf. PDP, pp. 109-12) is sublated by Hegel's and Dilthey's dialogue (whose 'monological dialectic' does not *necessarily* involve a dialogue between two subjects), which is in turn 'surmounted' or sublated into a *new* and 'higher' philosophical dialogue ('a dialogue of *personalities*', the dialogised dialectic or *dialogic*). As such, for all the differences between Bakhtin's and Hegel's notions of the dialectic, Bakhtin's dialectic is, nevertheless, unambiguously Hegelian, in that its phenomenology discloses the historical becoming of individuals and society *in* society.

### 3.7 The Superaddressee and Universal Spirit: Bakhtin vis-à-vis Hegel

As I have shown Hegel's philosophy sees the unity of thought and being, reason and reality, subjectivity and objectivity, as also the unity of the true, the good, and the beautiful in the absolute. That is, although the revelation of the absolute, as universal spirit, can present itself in different forms according to the activity of spirit, in the idea, god, beauty, goodness, history—all the various forms of the absolute are manifestations of the same absolute in that *ens et verum et bonum convertuntur* in the absolute. The realisation of this unity is the goal and the activity of the dialectic becoming of *spirit* over history.

The *Phenomenology* demonstrates how spirit evolves, and the moments of the dialectical progression show how spirit explains and justifies itself as an inferential system. At each stage, because of the contradictions and incoherences, spirit is forced to move on until it has reached the end of the logical progression in the 'absolute spirit' or 'absolute idea'. Once spirit has attained the absolute spirit, it is supposed to be able to give an account of itself and

its inferential method that it constructed in order to reach the point at which it can reflexively give such an account of itself. This account must *demonstrate* that spirit is ‘self-subsuming (that all the various moves within the system are moments of itself) and self-explanatory (that it explains the structure of the system of thought in terms internal to the logical system, not in terms of its matching up with any kind of metaphysical reality)’ (Pinkard 1994, p. 348 n. 20). Thus, the absolute spirit is both the teleological subject and object of spirit.

The problem that Hegel’s philosophy and, consequently, any Hegelian philosophy faces is disclosing the relationship between the finite historical periods of spirit and its infinite teleological goal of the absolute. Or, more to the point, how and in what sense is the absolute spirit revealed in the temporal process of the dialectic of spirit in life? The answer, Hegel argues, lies in the rational nature of humankind, and human action. All human action, in so far as it is self-consciousness and, therefore, *ab initio* social, is *de facto* rational—even when the act is irrational, for irrationality is possible only for rational beings (animal action being non-rational). It is *because* we are rational that we *can* develop, and attain higher levels of knowledge, whereas animals, being non-rational, remain constant. It is by virtue of reason that the mind can apprehend the universal in the particular and in spirit.

Thus, Hegel argues, it is by virtue of reason that the dialectic continues to progress, that spirit overcomes the contradictions and inconsistencies and attains a higher world-view, and in so doing is able to reveal—although *not* attain—the absolute. Hegel, therefore, a true son of the Enlightenment, sees the world ruled by reason:

Reason is the substance as well as the infinite power; that Reason is for itself the infinite material of all natural and spiritual life, as well as the infinite form, and that its actualization of itself is its content. [...]

Thus Reason is the substance [of our historic world] in the sense that it is that whereby and wherein all reality has its being and subsistence. It is the infinite power, since Reason is not so powerless as to arrive at nothing more than the ideal, the ought, and to remain outside reality—who knows where—as something peculiar in the heads of a few people. Reason is the infinite content, the very stuff of all essence and truth, which it gives to its own activity to be worked up. For, unlike finite activity, it does not need such conditions as an external material, or given means from which to get its nourishment and the object of its activity. It lives on itself, and it is itself the material upon which it works.

(IPH, p. 12)

As reason is its own *infinite content* and its own *activity*, it follows that reason is *freedom*. This freedom is the only truth of *spirit*, whose final goal is the consciousness of that *freedom*.

Hegel, moreover, draws our attention to the fact that observation is always *theory-laden*. Which means that, when we apprehend data, we always and necessarily do so not passively, but bring our categories along with the apprehension and see the data through them. Furthermore, although different historical periods will apply different categories according to their respective world-views—i.e. they are not *a priori*—they always exemplify reason:

In every treatise that is to be scientific, Reason must not slumber, and reflection must be actively applied. To him who looks at the world rationally, the world looks rational in return. The relation is mutual.

(IPH, p. 14)

Hence, Hegel’s contentious thesis in the Preface of *Philosophy of Right* that ‘What is Rational is Actual [*Wirklich*]<sup>26</sup> and what is Actual is Rational’ (Hegel 1942, p. 17). It is by virtue of reason, therefore, argues Hegel, that *spirit* overcomes its opposition to *life* to realise the *idea* and attain *freedom*:

<sup>26</sup> *Wirklich* is not necessarily historical, as opposed to *Aktualität*; what is historically *actual*.

The final goal of the world [...] is Spirit's consciousness of its freedom, and hence the actualisation of that freedom. This, then, is what characterised the spiritual world—and therefore is the substantially real world, to which the physical world is subordinate (or, to say this in speculative terms, the physical world has no truth as against the spiritual).

(IPH, p. 22)

However, the idea that history should have, or indeed could, come to its final goal of freedom is not only absurd, but is, furthermore, something that Hegel never intended to suggest.<sup>27</sup> The absolute spirit is *absolute*, it is the true infinite and as such eternal: 'Spirit belongs to the dimension of eternity and has no actual length' (IPH, p. 98). Therefore, the absolute is unattainable in history, which is, necessarily, a temporal and therefore a finite process. It follows that the dialectic of spirit is 'open-ended' and unfinalisable in history—as is clearly understood by Cassirer, and is demonstrated by Kosok's dialectical logic. David Kolb's *The Critique of Pure Modernity* qualifies this point accurately when it states:

Hegel is an a priori philosopher in the sense that he wants to find necessity in many features of the world. But he is not a predictive philosopher. He never claimed to be able to deduce concrete content from some first principles. If we tried to make the universal or the concept or the idea a first principle, take it in isolation, and gaze into it to see what we could deduce from it, we would find it empty.

(Kolb 1995, p. 89)

Bakhtin, however, as we have seen in the previous section, believes that Hegel *does* suggest that the absolute spirit, or 'complete maximum reification', could and would be attained in history. In this, however, he seems to misinterpret both Hegel *and* Cassirer, as is suggested by the following passage (which is part of the overtly Hegelian section of TRDB which I discussed in chapter 2):

No human events are developed or resolved within the bounds of a single consciousness. Hence Dostoevsky's hostility to those world views which see the final goal in a merging, in a dissolution of consciousnesses in one consciousness, in the removal of the individuation. No Nirvana is possible for a single consciousness. A single consciousness is *contradictio in adjecto*. Consciousness is in essence multiple.

(TRDB, p. 288)

Bakhtin appears to suggest that Hegelianism purports a form of Buddhist philosophy, where the divine atonement of Nirvana is attained through the obliteration of human individuality and loss of all diversity in a featureless (n)oneness in silence. He, furthermore, adopts the

<sup>27</sup> Many Hegelians, however, believe that absolute spirit and absolute knowledge should realise themselves in history. If there is some period in history in which spirit in its absolute fulfilment is completely actual, then all progress and development will come to an end, resulting in 'the end of history'. Some Hegelian scholars, such as Alexandre Kojève, maintain that this has already happened, and that Hegel said as much in his philosophy (cf. Kojève 1980). More recently, the somewhat over-zealous Francis Fukuyama heralded the end of history following the demise of Communism and, as he saw it, the universal establishment of democratic regimes (cf. Fukuyama 1992). Like Kojève, Fukuyama argues that the basic desire in 'human nature' is recognition, and then goes on to argue that the institutional structures of modern democratic societies satisfy this desire in a rational way that avoids the contradictions and incoherences endemic in earlier, alternative institutional structures. Both Kojève and Fukuyama transform Hegel's phenomenology into a non-Hegelian project that attempts to locate some 'fixed, transcendent standard to use for evaluating historical phenomena' (Pinkard 1994, p. 437). The same attempt is to be found, argues Galin Tihanov, in Bakhtin, who posits the desire for recognition in dialogic interaction, and argues that the compositional structure of the novel satisfies this desire, thereby establishing the genre of the novel as the fixed, transcendent standard for evaluating historical phenomena (cf. Tihanov 1997, p. 278).

mistaken neo-Kantian view that Hegel is a 'monist' who reduces everything to a 'unified evolving spirit' which denies 'a plurality of unmerged consciousnesses to blossom' (PDP, p. 26). The misunderstanding, however, is deeply ironical, in that Bakhtin's adamant view that consciousness, or spirit, is in essence multiple, simply *confirms* Hegel's view that spirit is nothing more than the *collective* human consciousness, the "I" that is "We" and "We" that is "I" (PS § 177, p. 110). This collective is not *merged*, it is necessarily filled with the contradictions, inconsistencies, oppositions, and conflicts that drive history forward.

Furthermore, it seems that Bakhtin understands Hegel's spirit *principally* in terms of the self-consciousness obtained through the interdependence of recognition between self and other, which suggests not only his belief that Hegel is a monist, but also that he may not be too familiar with Hegel's philosophy beyond the *Phenomenology*:

If multi-leveledness and contradictions were present to Dostoevsky or perceived by him solely as a fact of his personal life, as the multi-leveledness and contradictoriness of the spirit—his own and others—then Dostoevsky would be a Romantic, and he would have created a monologic novel about the contradictory evolution of the human spirit, very much in keeping with the Hegelian idea. But in fact Dostoevsky found and was capable of perceiving multi-leveledness and contradictions not in the spirit, but in the objective social world. In this social world, planes were not stages but *opposing camps*, and the contradictory relationships among them were not the rising or descending course of an individual personality, but the *condition* of society. The multi-leveledness and contradictoriness of social reality was present as an objective fact of the epoch.

(PDP, p. 27)

Bakhtin's misunderstanding of Hegel's project, again, brings him closer to Hegel than he realises: according to Hegel the 'objective social world', its cultural, socio-political, religious and scientific institutions, *et cetera* are *all* formations (*Gestaltungen*) of spirit, and as such they display contradictions and incoherences in themselves. It is because of this, Hegel argues, that the structures and institutions that make up objective social reality are to be seen as the historical phenomena (*Erscheinungen*) of the epoch of spirit.

We may well wonder, therefore, what *veritable* objections Bakhtin has to Hegel's philosophy. It is clear that he misunderstands Hegel in fundamental ways, but these misunderstandings themselves are not consistent, and he contradicts himself at times.

Interestingly, Bakhtin does not reject Hegel's belief in the *teleological* development of spirit over history. This is shown when he writes that '[t]he unity of the Einsteinian world is more complex and profound than that of the Newtonian world, it is a unity of a higher order (a qualitatively different unity)' (TRDB, p. 298). Bakhtin thus sees the dialectical development of the scientific world-view as a progressive, *teleological* process that leads to unities of a qualitatively 'higher order'—which also means that he has jettisoned his initial view that the truths of the natural sciences, such as Newton's laws of motion, are true *a priori* (cf. 1.2). What Bakhtin rejects is Hegel's conception that all the various activities of spirit will form a unified and indivisible whole in absolute spirit. It can be argued, therefore, that Bakhtin's objections to Hegel are similar to and run concurrent with those expressed in Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*.

As we have seen in 3.1, Cassirer adopts Hegel's phenomenology for his philosophy, but objects to Hegel's 'foundations' and envisioned 'development'. Cassirer's criticism of Hegel's philosophy is with respect to the view that the various cultural forms of humankind are in essence all reducible to the single dimension of logic. As such, argues Cassirer, Hegel understands all forms of knowledge ultimately to culminate in the prototype of logic, such that logic is the only cultural form that enjoys 'a true and authentic autonomy' or freedom

(PSF1, p. 84).

Cassirer hopes to avoid Hegel's dialectical method of *logical unity* that would efface the individuality of each cultural form by establishing 'the ideal relation between the individual provinces' of the cultural forms, 'without losing the incomparable particularity of any one of them' (PSF1, p. 84). He argues that the basic and common factor that *all* cultural forms share, 'but in no two of them takes the same shape', is the *universal* expressive function of the *symbol*. Hence, according to Cassirer, all the various cultural forms are symbolic forms, i.e. each is a cultural domain that exemplifies a language or linguistic form of thinking. As such, all symbolic forms are independent and autonomous structures, which 'do not stand by themselves, [...] between them takes place a peculiar relation of "com-positing" (*Mit-setzung*)', and it is through the unfolding of all cultural forms that a higher reality unfolds itself, and a richer symbolic expression of the human spirit evolves (PSF3, p. 332).

As such, Cassirer argues, philosophy has to reject the idea that it can ground the unity of being either in the *object* and its metaphysical substratum *matter*, or in an ideal and universal *logic*. Rather we have to establish the *universal* expressive function of the *symbol* as the sensuous substratum that unites the various symbolic forms. This substratum, the 'ideal form', is so essential, argues Cassirer, that at times it seems to constitute the entire content and significance of its various *particulars*—such as the symbolic forms art and myth. Nevertheless, although the 'content of the spirit' is disclosed *only* in the manifestation of the ideal form, the *ideal form* manifests itself *only* in the particulars—i.e. it has no ontological reality in itself: 'the ideal form is known only by and in the aggregate of the sensible signs which it uses for its expression' (PSF1, p. 86).

In PT Bakhtin expounds a position that corresponds closely to Cassirer's central thesis of the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*: Bakhtin argues that although the various cultural forms ('sign systems') express their own *logos* or linguistic form of thinking, all are grounded in a common logic, or ideal linguistic form, that demonstrates the 'ideal relation between the individual provinces' of the various cultural forms:

Any sign system (i.e. any language), regardless of how small the collective that produces its conventions may be, can always in principle be deciphered, that is, translated into other sign systems (other languages). Consequently, sign systems have a common logic, a potential single language of languages (which, of course, can never become a single concrete language, one of the languages).

(PT, p. 106)

This 'potential single language of languages' establishes for Bakhtin what Cassirer refers to as the 'peculiar relation of "com-positing" (*Mit-setzung*)' of the various cultural forms, namely their *ideal form* or the *logic* of the symbol. Like Cassirer's *ideal form*, Bakhtin's 'single language of languages' has no ontological reality—it can 'never become a single concrete language'—it is known only by and in the aggregate of the various sign systems that express it.

As such, and because of the fact that the various cultural forms enjoy autonomy, no *particular* (here the *text* and the *utterance*) is reducible to the universal, the *ideal form*:

But the text [and utterance] (as distinct from the language as a system of means) can never be completely translated, for there is no potential single text of texts.

(PT, p. 106)

Like Hegel and Cassirer, Bakhtin maintains that we can only come to apprehend the *universal* through the *particular*, and that the particular can never be reduced to the universal—only in the absolute can this be so, but, as the absolute is infinite, it will never be the case. The fact that the particular can never be reduced to the universal is what, according to Bakhtin, establishes 'the life of the text', and maintains the crucial opposition between life and culture

that establishes spirit: 'The event of the life of the text, that is, its true essence, always develops *on the boundary between two consciousnesses, two subjects*' (PT, p. 106). (Here Bakhtin demonstrates that his early commitment to *Lebensphilosophie* is still central to his philosophy of culture.)

As we have seen, any text or utterance, because it satisfies the ideal form or logic of linguistic interaction, has a stable system that allows repeatability and reproducibility of its constituent 'universal signs'. This is the *conditio sine qua non* of language and linguistic forms, in that the stability in the characteristic universal sign grounds the conceptual definition of its content. As Cassirer writes:

Without the universal signs provided by arithmetic and algebra, no special relation in physics, no special law of nature would be expressible. It is, as it were, the fundamental principle of cognition that the universal can be perceived only in the particular, while the particular can be thought of only in reference to the universal.

(PSF1, p. 86)

The same applies for Bakhtin, in his view of language:

Therefore, behind every text stands a system of language. In the text it corresponds to everything repeated and reproduced, everything repeatable and reproducible, everything that may be presented outside of a given text.

(Bakhtin translated by and quoted in Hirschkop 1990, p. 15; cf. PT, p. 105)

Moreover, Cassirer, following Humboldt, argues that language can never be regarded as a given substance that can be apprehended as a whole; it is something that must constantly be produced, and while the 'laws of its generic processes are defined', its 'scope and to a certain extent the character of its products remain completely undetermined' (Humboldt 1997 p. 103). That is, although the particular can only be thought of with reference to the universal, the particular of every *individual* utterance is not *wholly* determined by the universal: 'For what language designates and expresses is neither exclusively subjective nor exclusively objective; it effects a new mediation, a particular *reciprocal relation* between the two factors' (PSF1, p. 93). That is, following Hegel's phenomenology, Cassirer argues that the 'reproduction' of the content of the sign by the subject constitutes an *Erfahrung* or *Erlebnis*, embodying a 'new level of reflection':

By the mere fact that it no longer takes this content as something simply present, but confronts it in imagination as something past and not yet vanished, consciousness, by its changed relation to the content, gives both to itself and the content a changed ideal meaning.

(PSF1, p. 90)

This 'new level of reflection' constitutes the dialectic of human spirit, determining the deeper and higher level of judgement of the subject and the object (e.g. of science, of art, of religion, of ethics, etc.).

Similarly, Bakhtin writes that the *individual* utterance embodies and expresses in its *particularity* the transcendence to 'a new level of reflection':

The given and the created in the speech utterance. An utterance never consists only of the reflection or expression of something already existing, given and finished outside of it. It always creates something which had not existed before it, absolutely new and unrepeatable, something always having a relation to value (to truth, to the good, the beauty, etc.)

[...] every text (as an utterance) appears as something individual, unique and unreproducible, and in this lies its entire sense (its project, for the sake of which it was

created). This is that in it which relates to truth [pravda], veracity [istina],<sup>28</sup> the good [sic.], beauty, history.

(Bakhtin translated by and quoted in Hirschkop 1990, p. 15; cf. PT, p. 105)

Thus, Bakhtin envisages all activities of spirit, including spirit-*in-and-for-itself*, to be mediated through linguistic forms of thinking—as is demonstrated in this already cited passage:

The spirit [dukh] (both one's own and another's) is not given as a thing (the direct object of the natural sciences); it can only be present through signification, through realization in texts, both for itself and for others.

(PT, p. 106)

The question remains, however, how and in what figuration does the *ideal form*—the generative *law* and *logic* of all linguistic systems—reveal itself in the utterance/text? That is, how does Bakhtin intend to disclose the relationship between the finite historical periods of spirit and the activities of spirit and their infinite teleological goals in the absolute; how and in what sense are the *ideal form* of spirit and the activities of spirit revealed in the temporal process of the dialectic of spirit and the activities of in life? The answer, Bakhtin argues, lies in the linguistic nature of humankind, and human action. All human action, in so far as it is self-conscious and, therefore, *ab initio* social, is *de facto* linguistic: 'A human act is a potential text and can be understood (as a human and not a physical action) only in the dialogic context of its time (as a rejoinder, as a semantic position, as a system of motives)' (PT, p. 107). It is *because* we are linguistic creatures that we *can* develop, and attain higher levels of knowledge, and it is thus by virtue of language that the mind can apprehend the universal in the particular.

Bakhtin's 'language of languages', or *ideal form*, demonstrates that spirit and the activities of spirit are, on the one hand, *self-subsuming* (i.e. all the various moves within their linguistic systems are moments of themselves), and, on the other hand, that they are *self-explanatory* (i.e. they explain the structure of their system of thought in terms internal to their logical system, not in terms of their matching up with any kind of metaphysical reality) (Pinkard 1994, p. 348 n. 20).

Bakhtin's *ideal form* (the language of languages, the generative logic of all sign systems), like Hegel's notion of reason, reveals itself in spirit and in all the activities of spirit, past, present, and in the future, as the *superaddressee*. The *superaddressee* is the *ideal form* conceptualised; it is the substratum that grounds all discourse as it is actually and concretely experienced in *discourse*. As such, the superaddressee is the 'addressed' and *Aktuell* relation that 'com-posit's' (*Mit-setzt*) all the various cultural forms. As such, all speakers necessarily presume this *ideal* 'interlocutor' who guarantees universal understanding in order to make possible any language system in itself, translations between language systems, and the historical understanding of texts:

The person who understands inevitably becomes a *third* party in the dialogue [...], but the dialogic position of this party is quite a special one. Any utterance always has an addressee [...], whose responsive understanding the author of the speech work seeks to surpass. This is the second party [...]. But in addition to this addressee (the second party), the author of the utterance, with a greater or lesser awareness, presupposes a higher *superaddressee* (third), whose absolutely just responsive understanding is presumed, either in some metaphysical distance or in distant historical time (the loophole addressee). In various ages and with various understandings of the world, this superaddressee and his ideally responsive understanding assume various ideological

<sup>28</sup> For Bakhtin's distinction between *pravda* and *istina* see 1.2A.



expressions (God, absolute truth, the court of dispassionate human conscience, the people, the court of history, science, and so forth).

(PT, p. 126)

This is one of Bakhtin's most revealing Hegelian comments, as all the guises under which the superaddressee is said to have existed in this passage have their semantic origin in Hegel's philosophy where they refer to the various expressions of the universal spirit as idea.<sup>29</sup>

For Hegel an idea refers to the concept together with the reality of the *concept*. An idea is not a mental entity, nor something we *ought* to realise, but something that is actual in the present. As such, an idea is not transcendent and separate from particulars, it is fully realised in certain types of particulars. The idea is the full *realisation* of a concept, and is thus true or the truth. Although the idea is rational it does not simply regulate our understanding of the world, it actively participates in the practical development of it.

Similarly, Bakhtin's superaddressee has no ontological *existence in itself*, it is the logic or generative law of any sign system as it is *realised* in a sign system. As such, the superaddressee is an idea, it is not transcendent and separate from its particular (the text/utterance), but is fully realised in the particular. The superaddressee engenders the full realisation of the concepts of a sign system, and is thus the truth of that sign system. Furthermore, although the superaddressee regulates our understanding of the world mediated through language, it also actively participates in the linguistic, and, therefore, practical development of it.

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<sup>29</sup> All these ideological expressions can be traced back to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Science of Logic*, *Philosophy of Right* and *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. Although I cannot provide any evidence that this is the lineage in Bakhtin's text, the agreement is too persuasive to be dismissed.

# 4

## Genre and World-View:

### Bakhtin's Hegelian Aesthetics

*German speculative philosophy stands in direct contrast to the ancient Solomonic wisdom: whereas the latter believes that there is nothing new under the sun, the former sees nothing that is not new under the sun; whereas oriental man loses sight of differences in his preoccupation with unity, occidental man forgets unity in his preoccupation with differences; whereas oriental man carries his indifference to the eternally identical to the point of an imbecilic apathy, occidental man heightens his sensibility for the manifold to the feverish heat of the imaginatio luxurians. By German speculative philosophy, I mean that philosophy which dominates the present—the philosophy of Hegel.*

(Ludwig Feuerbach 1983, p. 95)

When Bakhtin's Hegelianism is identified by scholars, they principally locate it in his essays on the novel and explicitly with regard to his notion of literary genre. For instance, Holquist, who identifies Bakhtin as being 'militantly *anti-Hegelian*', nevertheless recognises that '[t]here are patent filiations in Bakhtin's concept of novelness to certain key ideas of Hegel' (Holquist 1990, pp. 16, 73), and tells Robert Barsky that Bakhtin's 'organizing metaphors' used to disclose the history of the novel 'are very close to Hegel's' (Barsky 1990, p. 8). However, the full extent to which Bakhtin's Hegelian approach to (literary) genres is a constitutive part of his wider Hegelian view of the social nature of being and knowledge has only recently been recognised. The informative research conducted by scholars such as Craig Brandist, Jean-François Côté, and Galin Tihanov is important to mention here in that they have sought to go beyond Bakhtin's theory of the novel and literary genre, and investigate Hegel's influence on Bakhtin's theory of culture and society in general (cf. Brandist 1997; Tihanov 1997, 2000A/B; Côté 2000). This chapter will investigate how Bakhtin tries in his essays on the novel (EN, FTC, PND, and DN) to incorporate the notion of literary genre into his view of the becoming of culture and knowledge, or 'the becoming of reality/actuality itself' (*'stanovlenie samoi deistvitel'nosti'*) (EN, p. 7).<sup>1</sup>

Galina Tihanov, in the essay 'Bakhtin, Lukács and German Romanticism', argues that one of the most important Hegelian views Bakhtin holds is the notion that literary genre models a world-view or 'historical *durée*':

To [Bakhtin] literary genre changes neither quickly or easily, because it expresses ideas about the world which are themselves only changing slowly. Literary genre, for [Bakhtin], is a concept which is needed for a work of art to be perceived as the

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<sup>1</sup> Although the previous chapter moved from an extensive discussion of DN to focus on Bakhtin's late works, it is necessary in this chapter to return to the works of the 1930s and 1940s on the novel. This is because in the previous chapter we suspended the topics of the novel, genre and culture in order to discuss Bakhtin's philosophy of language and discourse in isolation. As such, the narrative chronology of this chapter runs parallel with that of chapter 3.

expression of a particular outlook. The genre models the content of this outlook, and selects those elements which can be translated into the language of the work of art. Crucial transformations within genres can only occur when and if people's basic outlooks are transformed.

(Tihanov 1997, p. 278)

Thus, argues Tihanov, Bakhtin adopts an 'Aristotelian-Hegelian' model when describing the development and evolution of genres. This is illustrated when Bakhtin writes of the need to see the history of the creation [*sozdanie*] of the Greek novel-genre through the sublation of the epic-genre<sup>2</sup> as a *dialectical* process:

For [Erwin Rohde],<sup>3</sup> the Greek novel was solely a product of the decay of the major straightforward genres. In part this is true: everything new is born out of the death of something old. But Rohde was no dialectician. It was precisely what was new in all this that he failed to see.

(PND, p. 65)

According to Bakhtin, the process from one genre to another resembles the life-cycle of birth and death in the form of the Hegelian sublation of world-views (*Weltanschauungen*) over history, where the death of the old proves productive for the birth and development of the new, and, conversely, the immanent birth of the new proves fatal for the old (PND, p. 65). Furthermore, as a genre reflects a world-view, the *reified* particular or object of a genre—such as the novel—resembles the Hegelian-Aristotelian *idea*, as I shall show.

It is Tihanov's contention, furthermore, that Bakhtin's conception of the genre is committed to a contradictory position, in that Bakhtin desires both to establish the historical nature of the genre of the novel while maintaining that the genre has a universal or perennial<sup>4</sup> value:

With Bakhtin we can observe a classic attempt to ascribe to the otherwise historically conceived genre of the novel a permanent and ahistorical meaning: the novel embodies the dialogical aspects of human thought and existence which are rooted in the essence of the human being; different historical periods act only to impede or stimulate them.

(Tihanov 1997, p. 278)

The consequence of this, as Tihanov observes, is that Bakhtin is split in his temptation to 'remain faithful to the spirit of remorseless historicism, on the one hand, and on the other, to transcend it in order to promote hypotheses of human civilization and nature in general' (Tihanov 1997, p. 279). This chapter will show that, although Tihanov correctly identifies Bakhtin's view that the novel embodies the dialogical aspects of human thought and existence, his view that Bakhtin commits himself to a contradictory position with regards to the genre of the novel is not necessarily the case. However, in order to do so I will need to give a general introduction to Hegel's philosophy of art and the role of irony, and an explanation of the notion of genre.

## 4.1 Hegel: Art as Idea of a World-View

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<sup>2</sup> In EN and PND Bakhtin does not theorise about *literary genres* in general, and although he mentions numerous types of literary genres (i.e. novel, poetic, epic, etc.), there are only really two types: the genre of the novel, and the rest. We have, therefore, as a matter of expedience, opted to use the terms novel-genre, epic-genre for a particular non-novel-genre, and other-genres for all non-novel-genres.

<sup>3</sup> Bakhtin refers to Erwin Rohde's text *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer* (*The Greek Novel and its Precursor*, 1896 n.p.) (cf. PND, p. 64n.).

<sup>4</sup> In a conversation with Galin Tihanov, he voiced his reluctance to use the term 'universal' in the context of Bakhtin, preferring instead the term 'perennial'.

Hegel, as I have shown, locates knowledge within a particular ‘social space’. This ‘social space’ provides the structure of authoritative standards and norms that constitute both how subjects reason and how they *should* reason. Hegel refers to the set of grounds that individuals take as authoritative (i.e. what counts as true and necessary) as the *essence (Wesen)* of a formation of consciousness (*Gestaltung*). Furthermore, for a subject to become self-conscious of authoritative reasons and norms is to become aware of the apparent paradoxes, incoherences, and conflicts within them. This entails that within the ‘social space’ subjects construct a self-conscious, reflective account of the authoritative standards and norms in order to affirm the legitimacy of these authoritative standards and norms (cf. Pinkard 1994, p. 9). When there is mutual recognition between self-conscious subjects of that which is self-consciously affirmed and taken as authoritative, we have what Hegel calls spirit (*Geist*).

The self-conscious awareness of spirit of the apparent paradoxes, incoherences, and conflicts inherent in its authoritative construction means that the ‘social space’ is internally lucid. That is to say, spirit is self-conscious *in-and-for-itself* of the fact that its *formation-of-spirit*<sup>5</sup> is only an *appearance (Erscheinung)*<sup>6</sup>—a historical phenomenon or *world-view (Weltanschauung)*. As such, no world-view can claim to be correct. All any world-view can claim is that it ‘works’ relative to itself and ‘fits’ the contemporary period better than the previous world-view did (cf. Pinkard 1994, p. 9).

Hegel uses the term spirit in a variety of ways. The use outlined above is often referred to as objective spirit (*Objektiver Geist*), where self-conscious individuals (as subjective spirits or *Subjektive Geister*) share a world-view or formation-of-spirit (*Gestaltung*), which as historical phenomenon is finite in character. Absolute spirit (*das Absolute Geist*) covers art, philosophy and religion (cf. *Enc.* III). It is absolute, and therefore infinite, because its object of reflection is spirit itself, or the self-consciousness of spirit as spirit-*in-and-for-itself*. World-spirit (*Weltgeist*) refers to spirit as it manifests itself in history, and is responsible for the development of art, philosophy, and religion, and thus, absolute spirit (cf. Inwood 1992, pp. 274-7). Hegel’s various uses of spirit are intrinsically and systematically related through the activity of spirit itself. Spirit, therefore, is not a thing but an activity, which cannot be distinguished from the finite or the infinite. Thus, Hegel maintains that spirit is the absolute, by which he means that the unified system of thought and rational structures that form and ground the phenomenon of *objective spirit* are immanent in nature and in development of spirit-*in-and-for-itself* as the absolute.

In the *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* Hegel argues that art, like religion and philosophy, has a rational cognitive value: it progressively reveals the nature of the world, the nature of humankind and the relationship between them (the absolute). Thus art, like philosophy and religion, has its own purpose as revelation of truth (or ‘essence’). In this, art has to be self-determinate and free if it is to be considered fine art. That is to say, art cannot be subservient to any aims or purposes other than itself (i.e. a fleeting pastime, entertainment, decoration, etc.), it has to liberate ‘itself from [such] service to rise in free independence to the attainment of truth, in which medium, free from all interference, it fulfils itself in conformity with its proper aims’:

Fine art is not real art till it is in this sense free, and only achieves its highest task when it has taken its place in the same sphere with religion and philosophy, and has become simply a mode of revealing to consciousness and bringing to utterance the Divine Nature [*das Göttliche*], the deepest interests of humanity, and the most comprehensive truths of the [Spirit <*Geist*>]. It is in works of art that nations have

<sup>5</sup> Form, formation; *Gestalt, Gestaltungen*.

<sup>6</sup> *Spirit* cannot look outside itself to gain some ‘objective’ or second viewpoint from which to judge its authority.

deposited the profoundest intuitions and ideas of their hearts; and fine art is frequently the key—with many nations there is no other—to the understanding of their wisdom and their religion.<sup>7</sup>

This is an attribute which art shares with religion and philosophy, only in this particular mode [i.e. fine art], that it represents even the highest ideas *in sensuous forms*,<sup>8</sup> thereby bringing them nearer to the character of natural phenomena, to the senses, and to feeling.

(ILA §§ XII-XIII, p. 9)

Hegel suggests that the historical process of spirit towards non-sensory thought (that of philosophy and/or religion) creates a ‘supra-sensual world’ or ‘a beyond’. This leads to a ‘schism’ between ‘pure thought’ (*Gedanke*) and what is external and sensory, which is subsequently bridged by art. Such schisms, furthermore, are a recurrent event throughout the historical process of non-sensory thought, and in each case it is art that endeavours to close them:

The world, unto whose depths *thought* penetrates, is a supra-sensuous world, which is thus, to begin with, erected as a *beyond* over against immediate consciousness and present sensation; the power which thus rescues itself from the *here*, that consists in the actuality and finiteness of sense, is the freedom of thought in cognition. But [Spirit <*Geist*>] is able to heal this schism which its advance creates; it generates out of itself the works of fine art as the first middle term of reconciliation between pure thought and what is external, sensuous, and transitory, between nature with its finite actuality and the infinite freedom of the reason that comprehends.

(ILA § XIII, pp. 9-10)

To state that art expresses the absolute is to say that it exhibits and embodies the conceptual system (the formations of truths or *Gestaltungen* and *Wesen*) embedded within a *formation-of-spirit* in a sensory form of *intuition* (*Anschauung*).<sup>9</sup> The absolute, therefore, is not static; it develops through the dialectic of spirit, and exhibits itself at successively higher levels through the advance of human knowledge over history. Art exhibits and embodies the absolute as *idea* (*Idee*). We may remember that to Hegel an idea refers to the concept together with the reality of the *concept*. He often illustrates this with the case of a human: the soul is the *concept*, the body the *reality* (or *object*), and the whole is the *idea*. An idea is not a mental entity, nor something we *ought* to realise, but something that is actual in the present—as such it is not ‘ideal’ in the Kantian sense. Nor is an idea transcendent and separate from particulars—as Plato’s dualism argues—it is fully realised in certain types of particulars (in this Hegel agrees with Aristotle). The idea is the full realisation of a concept. It is thus true or the truth. Moreover, although the idea is rational it does not merely regulate our understanding of the world, but actively participates in the practical development of it.<sup>10</sup>

As such, art has a history that develops. This is because, although art may be the product of an individual’s talent or genius, it is, nevertheless, *de facto* the product of the society to which the artist belongs. This development, according to Hegel, is prefigured and

<sup>7</sup> Their ‘wisdom and religion’, i.e. their *philosophy* and *religion*.

<sup>8</sup> Philosophy and religion also represent the highest ideas (the absolute), but do not do so in sensuous forms.

<sup>9</sup> To Hegel *Anschauung* (‘sensory intuition’) refers to the intuition of the ‘theoretical spirit’, where what is sensed (*das Empfundene*) is transformed into an external object. *Empfindung* (‘sensation, feeling’), although close in meaning to *Anschauung*, refers to the ‘feeling soul’; it is more subjective and does not necessarily require an object of intuition (cf. Enc. III, Inwood 1992, 42).

<sup>10</sup> Throughout this chapter the term *idea* will refer to the Hegelian-Aristotelian conception.

predetermined by the concept that art exhibits and embodies as idea. However, art does not develop in the same way as the *Wissenschaften* (sciences) do, presenting progressively more accurate and adequate formations-of-spirit of what for Hegel is an unchanging reality. Art changes, according to Hegel, because the human being, through his/her becoming self-conscious in spirit alters him/herself. Thus we cannot, according to Hegel, speak of Hellenic art as somehow being less true, or indeed false, with respect to reality, than, say, eighteenth-century art. Nor can we say that Hellenic art expresses the absolute in the idea any more or less than eighteenth-century art. Both are equally true and valid *relative* to the world-view that begot them. Hellenic art was entirely consistent and self-contained *within* the Hellenic world, and was thus the 'truth' of its age. That the Hellenic world-view was eventually supplanted by another world-view is not due to any flaw that could have been noted at the time of its emergence and dominance, but came about simply because it ceased to be an adequate vehicle for the advanced human self-consciousness (to which the Hellenic world-view gave rise). Thus, one can argue, as both Schelling and Hegel have, that Greek art reached an aesthetically coherent whole within their society—a certain 'perfection' (something that eighteenth-century art could not achieve, according to Hegel, as its society was too fragmented and self-aware of its socio-economic and cultural complexity and diversity), but that this 'perfection' is located within the Hellenic world-view, which, compared to the eighteenth-century world-view, is relatively false and underdeveloped.

Hegel's *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* provides a systematic account of art, with a corresponding account of its historical development (cf. ILA, pp. 76-97). Hegel divides art into three main styles—symbolic, classical, and romantic—which in turn are subdivided into five *kinds* (*Gattungen*)<sup>11</sup>—architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry (*Poesie*, which includes novels, stories, drama and aphorisms). Hegel recognises three main historical periods of art: the ancient Orient (especially Ancient Egypt); Greek and Roman antiquity; and Christian modernity (these divisions have more detailed subdivisions).

Hegel argues that while the *kinds* occur in all the periods, one *kind* tends to dominate a particular period and is associated with a particular style. Thus, for instance, Ancient Egyptian art was dominated by the kind of architecture, whose associated style was symbolic. As such, Ancient Egyptian architecture give rise to the highest artistic expression of the absolute in that period. Later architecture, such as Greek and Roman, is transposed into the classical style, but as it is not the dominant kind of that period, it does not present the highest artistic expression of the absolute in that period.

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<sup>11</sup> *Gattung* translates as *kind, sort, manner, or genus*. Although Bosanquet uses *genre*, we have decided to use *kind* in order to differentiate between the kind of art form (i.e. poetry) and that kind's genres (i.e. novel, drama, epic, etc.), thereby making *genre* a subset of *kind*. In this way we can restrict the use of the term *genre* solely to the Platonic-Aristotelian sense of the word.

## (A) Hegel: Irony, Art and Philosophy

Irony, derived from the Greek *eironeia*, meaning 'dissimulation, pretended ignorance', originates from the Greek comedy character the *eirone*, the 'dissembler', who spoke in understatement and deliberately pretended to be less intelligent than he/she was, yet triumphed over the *alazon*—the self-deceiving and foolish boaster. Often associated with Socrates—who was accused of it by his protagonists—*eironeia* was traditionally seen as a fault (cf. Inwood 1992, p. 147). The term irony (*die Ironie*) was re-introduced to philosophical discourse by Fichte and Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829). Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* linked it explicitly to the Socratic irony of Plato's early dialogues (cf. Fichte 1970). Schlegel, however, in his *Lyceum Fragments* extended the meaning of the term considerably to refer to the necessity of a writer, while still creative and emotional, to remain aloof from and critical of his composition (cf. Schlegel 1971).

Hegel differentiates between Socratic irony (*eironeia*) and Schlegel's Romantic irony (*die Ironie*).<sup>12</sup> Romantic irony, Hegel insists, is marked by an attitude that calls everything into doubt, it is an 'unfinitised' irony that leads one's reflection to radical uncertainty and nihilism—and as such it is criticised by Hegel. Although Hegel associates Romantic irony with Fichte and Schlegel, he sees it expressed in Protestantism, which promotes the detachment from externals (i.e. God is interested only in the *individual's* inner life), and the Cartesian Ego that is disconnected from its own time and space.

Hegel sees irony as being akin to dialectic, and goes so far as to state that the dialectic is the 'universal irony of the world' (Hegel cited in Inwood 1992, p. 147). Irony, therefore, is a necessary condition of reflection, and as such is not just part of serious art but is deeply rooted in philosophy itself. This, argues Hegel, is clearly demonstrated by Socratic irony which directs itself towards individuals, in the form of a *dialogue* wherein the character professes ignorance, accepting his/her protagonist's claim at face value and letting it refute itself, thereby exemplifying dialectic. It is considered a 'stable' and fairly unproblematic variety of irony.

Romantic irony, on the other hand, is speculative and reflective with respect to the world, its ideas and values. Romantic or reflective irony exhibits itself when an individual 'removes' him/herself from his/her society, its ideas and values, and considers the merits of the *other* and the limits of one's own (cf. ILA § LXXXVII-III, pp. 70-1). Whereas a limited form of reflective irony may result in the individual choosing one side over another and restoring his/her relationship to society and its ideas and values, Romantic irony never ceases.

Fully reflective irony (*die Ironie*) detaches the ironist from any way of life, ideas and values, to the extent that the ironist becomes a *tabula rasa*; although sympathetic to his/her subject matter, he/she remains aloof and disassociated. In art (Romantic) irony can most readily be expressed as the destruction of values at the hand of the artist, thereby demonstrating his/her subjectivity. However, such irony is vicious, in that it proves to be irony that ultimately directs itself at itself:

The ironical, as 'genial' individuality, consists in the self-annihilation of what is noble, great, and excellent; and thus even the objective shapes of art will have to represent the mere principle of absolute subjectivity, by displaying what has value and nobleness for man as null in its self-annihilation. This implies, not merely that we are not to be serious about the right, the moral, and the true, but that the highest and the best of all has nothing in it, inasmuch as in its exhibition through individuals,

<sup>12</sup> In German eighteenth-century philosophy *Romantik*, as an epoch of art, is associated with the novel, the *Roman*.

characters, and actions, it refutes and annihilates itself, and so is irony at its own expense.

(ILA, § XCI, p. 73)

Although Hegel identifies a clear correspondence between irony and comedy, he argues that whereas comedy nullifies what is null in itself, irony (*die Ironie*) nullifies what is intrinsically valuable in itself. As such, the comic character may express strength, worth and virtue through the self-annihilation of values, whereas the ironic character is essentially weak, worthless and 'despicable':

This mode [of irony], taken in the abstract, borders closely on the principle of comedy; but yet within this affinity the comic must be essentially distinguished from the ironical. For the comic must be limited to bringing to nothing what is in itself null, a false and self-contradictory phenomenon; for instance, a whim, a perversity, or particular caprice, set over against a mighty passion; or even a *supposed* reliable principle or rigid maxim may be shown to be null. But it is quite another thing when what is in reality moral and true, any substantial content as such, exhibits as null in an individual and by his means. Such an individual is then null and despicable in character, and weakness and want of character are thus introduced into the representation.

(ILA, § XCI, pp. 73-4)

Therefore, whereas comedy, through its annihilation of what is essentially defective, can represent artistic value and meaning, irony (*die Ironie*), on the other hand, because its annihilation attacks essentially worthy values and truths, does not represent artistic value and meaning to the public:

Now, if Irony is taken as the keynote of the representation, this means that the supremely inartistic is taken as the true principle of the work of art. For the result is in part insipid figures; in part shapes void of import and of conduct [...] Representations of this kind can awake no genuine interest. And for this reason it is from the Irony that we can have eternal lamentations over the lack of profound feeling, artistic insight, and genius in the public, inasmuch as it does not understand these heights of Irony. That is to say, the public does not like all this mediocrity, half grotesque and half characterless. [...] man has a desire no less for full and genuine interests than for characters which remain true to the weighty purposes of their lives.

(ILA, § XCI, p. 74)

Nevertheless, irony (*die Ironie*) is essential for art, in that it is only through irony that the artist can transcend his/her world-view, and come to reflect upon its ideas and values in a detached critical manner. However, just as modern art cannot attain the unity expressed by Greek art, Hegel contends that the reflective artist cannot express his/her ironical (*Ironisches*) detachment in his/her art adequately, in that eighteenth-century society—as we have seen—is too fragmented and self-aware of its socio-economic and cultural complexity and diversity. As such, ironical modernity cannot be adequately expressed in art, leading Hegel to conclude that the history of art is a history of decline.

Hegel's solution to this problem is to suggest that the artist, rather than remain *tabula rasa*, seeks to 'integrate all the themes and styles into a single coherent work, or type, of art' (ILA, p. xxx). However, as Hegel cannot see how a single work of art *could* embrace and contain all previous types of art, the problem cannot be solved *for art within art*, but only within *philosophy of art* (cf. ILA, § XCIV-CV, p. 76).



**(B) Genre as Literary *Genus* and Hermeneutic Form**

*Genre*, a term that is French in origin, is generally used to denote a recurring type or *genus* of art or 'artistic form'. The genres into which works of literature have been classified over time are numerous, but since the works of Plato and Aristotle the overall literary domain has been divided into three main generic classes, based on who 'speaks' in the literary work: 'lyric (uttered throughout in the first person); *epic* or *narrative* (in which the narrator speaks in first person, then lets his characters speak for themselves); and *drama* (in which the characters do all the talking)' (Abrams 1985, p. 76). Other classical theorists identified more limited genres, or sub-genres (i.e. not based on who speaks in the literary work) such as *tragedy*, *comedy*, and *satire*. Since the Renaissance new genres have been added such as *essay*, *biography*, and *novel*.

Throughout the Renaissance and much of the eighteenth-century, genres were considered to be fixed literary types, rather like biological species. As such, many theorists argued that genres should remain pure and not mix with others. Genres, furthermore, were organised into a hierarchical framework (related to the ranking of social classes), ranging from *epic* and *tragedy* at the top to the *pastoral*, *lyric*, and other 'minor genres' at the bottom. The advent of the novel and other new genres in the eighteenth-century, however, destabilised and weakened the confidence theorists had in the fixity and stability of genres (cf. Abrams 1985, pp. 75-7). The destabilisation of the categorical and social nature of genre is of special interest to Bakhtin, and forms an integral part of his theory of the novel genre, as we shall see.

During the Enlightenment the notion of genre came to be considered in a hermeneutic context. Realising that a great deal of our knowledge comes to us through texts, eighteenth-century philosophers recognised the need to establish a critical theory whereby a text's truth content, and its knowledge of its subject, matter could be judged. In doing so, philosophers such as Christian Wolff (1679-1754)<sup>13</sup> and Johann Chladenius (1710-1759) saw a necessary relationship between genre and the authorial intention (*Absicht*). Authorial intention, as used by the Enlightenment philosophers, however, does not carry a psychological meaning; nor does it express, as the Romantic theorists would come to understand, the author's individuality. Instead, for Wolff, writes Mueller-Vollmer,

the author's intention [...] relates to the specific genre of writing he intends to produce. There were, according to Wolff, in addition to the system of rules and principles governing all fields of knowledge, particular discursive [*sic.*] forms in which this knowledge should be presented. The opinion, the intention of the author, carries first and foremost an objective and generic denotation. [...] To judge a book by its authorial intention thus means to ascertain the degree to which its author had succeeded in adhering to the generic requirements of the particular discourse he had chosen.

(Mueller-Vollmer 1997, p. 4)

For Wolff, in judging the *truth* content of a text the *meaning* of a text was not an issue, in that words and sentences—if used correctly—would necessarily convey the meanings the author intended. According to Wolff, if a text was ambiguous or obscure it was because the author had either not constructed his/her arguments correctly, not explained his/her terms adequately, or had not succeeded in adhering to the generic requirements of the particular discourse (genre) he/she had chosen. Wolff's theory of authorial intention and its relation to genre, therefore, is strongly normative, in that genre determines not only *how texts should be read* but also *how they should be written* (cf. Mueller-Vollmer 1997, pp. 4-5). In this respect

<sup>13</sup> Christian Wolff is, after Kant, probably the most influential eighteenth-century enlightenment philosopher.

Bakhtin's notion of genre has strong affiliations with Wolffian hermeneutic theory of genre, although it is greatly informed by Hegel, Humboldt and Cassirer as I shall demonstrate.

## 4.2 Genre as a 'Form-shaping Idea'

The notion of genre is crucial to Bakhtin because it acts as a mediator between language and social reality. Genre as *concept* does not simply regulate our understanding of the world through articulating it, *genre actively participates in the practical development of our understanding of the world*. Tihanov's essay emphasises this point succinctly when it recognises that the relationship between the genre and the world-view of its given period 'involves epistemological dispositions towards reality', and that consequently;

Genres no longer *reflect* the world, they rather *represent* and model it. This idea of the active nature of literary genre is based on a new understanding of language.

(Tihanov 1997, p. 281)

For Bakhtin, Tihanov notes, 'language is inseparable from the very idea of human existence: we only come to know the world by articulating it' (Tihanov 1997, p. 281):

[Within genre Bakhtin sees] the essential mechanism which activates language and renders it far more concrete and socially oriented. Genre is thought of as the vehicle which transform language into *utterance*. The fact that literary genres represent specific and, in this sense only, also concrete knowledge about the world, and the utterances represent concretizations of language, proves to be inherently interconnected.

(Tihanov 1997, p. 282)

Bakhtin's 'new understanding of language' is derivative of Humboldt's and Cassirer's thesis that the relationship between the diverse branches of cultural life as a *whole*—language, religion, myth, art and scientific cognition etc.—is intrinsically linked to humankind's ability to use language and the nature of language in itself (cf. 3.1). According to Humboldt, intellectual activity and language 'form a unity and are indivisible from each other', and as such the individual's world-view is *necessarily* expressed in his/her utterance (Humboldt 1997, p. 100). The same is true for Bakhtin, who expresses the view most fully in his late essay 'The Problem of Speech Genres': 'All the diverse areas of human activity involve the use of language', and '[...] the nature and forms of this use are just as diverse as are the areas of human activity' (SG, p. 60).

Bakhtin maintains that language is the medium and dynamic of the historical becoming of socio-ideological actuality, and as such it is inextricably linked to the world-view of individuals (PND, p. 62). In this Bakhtin's position is very close to Humboldt's, whose 'Introduction to the Kawi Language' states that:

However, language is never a mere tool of communication, but an imprint of the mind and the world-view of its speakers. Sociability is the necessary means for its development, but by no means the only purpose behind its labors, because this purpose is found after all in the individual as its end-point.

(Humboldt cited in Vollmer-Mueller 1997, p. 12)

Moreover, as language is *de facto* social it follows that an individual's world-view is also social in nature. This not only means that an individual's world-view is intersubjective, but that the development of the individual's language is intrinsically linked with the development of his/her world-view.

Bakhtin's most general and comprehensive explanation of genre is as the 'form-

shaping idea' of language, such that genre *forms* the specific way or mode of linguistic interaction *between* persons in a particular socio-ideological context (PDP, p. 110). Bakhtin uses the terms *form* and *formation* in the sense in which Hegel uses them to denote an essential way in which individuals have a fundamental formation (or *Gestalt*) to them that gives the *parts* or *moments* their characteristic determinateness. (Thus by 'formation' I do not mean the *external* ordering of *discrete* parts or moments.) However, in the essays on the novel Bakhtin sometimes confuses or equivocates between the strong conception that genre corresponds to the Hegelian notion of *Gestaltung* (a formation of spirit), and the weak conception that genre corresponds to the *gestalt theoretische* notion of *Einstellung* (an attitude or disposition) on reality.<sup>14</sup> The strong conception leads Bakhtin to maintain the Hegelian and Wolffian position that the relationship between the speaker's or author's intention and the genre is strongly *normative*, in that genre determines not only *how utterances or texts should be understood* but also *how they should be spoken or written*. Again, when we look at Bakhtin's late work SG, which presents the most immediate and direct discussion of genre in general, we see the strong conception come to the fore:

Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral or 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 recourses of the language, but above all through their compositional structure. All three of these aspects [...] 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*.

(SG, p. 60)

The weaker conception is obtained when Bakhtin argues that the diverse human activities have corresponding uses of language leading to a diversity of dialects and generic languages. Each of these exemplifies a particular vantage point of a world-view, i.e. a particular socio-ideological *stratum*, or a scientific discipline and so forth, which determines a particular *attitude* towards, and way of perceiving, the world:<sup>15</sup>

The internal stratification of any single language into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious language, 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 emphasis) [...].

(DN, pp. 261-2)

Each of these *strata* appropriates a genre as a linguistic 'form-shaping idea' when it becomes embodied in dialogue, such that a *stratum*, as the embodiment of a world-view, becomes *externalised* in language through assuming a particular generic form. Thus, Bakhtin, particularly the essays on the novel, is not entirely clear regarding the definitive nature of genre.

The study of genre as the 'form-shaping idea' (in the strong sense) of the utterance is important, Bakhtin argues in his late work, because it determines the mode whereby life

<sup>14</sup> I would like to thank Craig Brandist for his helpful comments on this issue.

<sup>15</sup> The weaker conception is possibly related to Simmel's notion of 'forms of sociation', which are *strata* or levels of social relations along which individuals can 'move' (cf. Rose 1981, pp. 25-7).

enters the utterance, and—*vice versa*—the utterance enters life:

To ignore the nature of the utterance or to fail to consider the peculiarities of generic subcategories of speech in any area of linguistic study leads to perfunctoriness and excessive abstractness, distorts the historicity of the research, and weakens the link between language and life. After all, language enters life through concrete utterances (which manifest language) and life enters language through concrete utterances as well.

(SG, p. 63)

Therefore, the lived experience (*Erlebnis*) of the individual—the realm of spirit—enters the socio-historical actuality through the utterance, which is actively formed by the appropriated genre. In chapter 3 I demonstrated that, for Bakhtin, thought and the object of thought become externalised through speech and perceptible to the senses. The utterance objectifies the object of thought, it liberates the subjective activity of thought and projects it into the social *Aktualität*, establishing spirit. Thus, genre determines the mode or ‘form’ of the objectification, and as such it is a determinate part of the expressed world-view. Moreover, given that *spirit* can ‘only be present through signification, through realization in texts [and utterances], both for itself and others’ (PT, p. 106), that every text/utterance *de facto* exhibits a genre, and that genre is the ‘form-shaping idea’ of texts and utterances, it follows that genre has a ‘form-shaping’ affect on *spirit*. As such genre is a ‘function’ of and for spirit—both objective and subjective—in that it has a determinate role in how we understand and express our world-view(s).

### 4.3 The Becoming of the Self-Consciousness of a Language

In SG Bakhtin distinguishes between *primary* and *secondary* speech genres. Primary speech genres include the everyday interlocution (usually oral) of persons in a particular sphere of communication, such as in a café or at a grocer’s. Secondary speech genres are ‘more complex and comparatively highly developed and organised’ forms of ‘cultural communication (primarily written)’, and include novels, dramas, scientific research, etc. (SG, p. 62). Secondary speech genres generally subsume primary ones:

During the process of their formation, they absorb and digest various primary [...] 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.

(SG, p. 62)

The primary speech genres subsumed by the secondary speech genre ‘retain their form and everyday significance only on the plane of the [secondary speech genre’s] content’. A primary speech genre (e.g. rejoinders in everyday dialogue) subsumed in, say, a novel is a *moment* of the novel as *whole*; ‘that is, as a literary-artistic event and not as everyday life’ (SG, p. 62).

Secondary genres, such as literary genres, thus present an interaction between various primary genres. However, if the various genres subsumed in a secondary genre are not recognised as autonomous individual genres-in-themselves, but become totally subordinate to the *whole*, ‘their form and everyday significance’ cannot be realised. An example of this is the genre of the epic, as discussed in his earlier essays ‘Epic and Novel’ and ‘From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse’. The relationship between the epic genre and its subsumed genres is analogous to the failure to recognise in the asymmetrical boundary-relation of intersubjectivity (cf. 2.3-4):

[The world of the epic] is as closed as a circle; inside it everything is finished, already over. There is no place in the epic world for any openedness, indecision,

indeterminacy. [...] The epic world is constructed in the zone of an absolute distanced image [*obraz*], beyond the sphere of possible contact with the developing, incomplete and therefore re-thinking and re-evaluating present.

(EN, pp. 16, 17)

The genre of the novel, on the other hand, subsumes various primary *and* secondary genres as recognised autonomous individual genres in-themselves, and as such they are not subordinate to the *whole* and ‘retain their form and everyday significance’ (SG, p. 62):

Literary language is not represented in the novel as a unitary, completely finished-off and indisputable language—it is represented precisely as a living mix of varied and opposing voices [*raznorecivost* ], developing and renewing itself.

(PND, p. 49)

Thus, the relationship between the novel genre and its subsumed genres is analogous to reciprocal recognition of intersubjectivity. (Although Bakhtin does not use the terms primary and secondary genres in DN, PND and EN, the logic of the distinction is present, I believe.)

As such Bakhtin argues that the *conception* of the genre of the novel is only possible once language in-and-for-itself becomes self-conscious, or attains ‘linguistic consciousness (*iazykovogo soznaniia*)’ (DN p. 400).<sup>16</sup> In this, the logic of Bakhtin’s argument follows Hegelian *phenomenology*, in that the pre-history of novelistic discourse exemplifies Hegel’s preparatory stages or moments of consciousness towards establishing self-consciousness and *spirit* (cf. PS I-IV). That is, the social discourse of a *living* language has to go through certain stages of consciousness to achieve the ‘higher level’ of self-consciousness required for novelistic discourse to become possible.

For the becoming of the self-consciousness of a language, social discourse must become consciousness of *itself* and of the *other*. Bakhtin argues that this occurs on two levels, establishing a triadic relationship: the *intra*-language level, the *inter*-language level, and the relationship between both are all necessary to establish the self-consciousness of a language, which is the necessary condition of novelistic discourse.

Starting with the *intra*-language level, Bakhtin argues that any given national language (e.g. Russian) must exhibit *monoglossia*, that is, it must be fully formed and unitary (cf. PND, p. 66). However, monoglossia is always in essence relative in itself, in that any monoglot language always exhibits and embodies *heterology* (*raznorechie*), which is the internal differentiation and stratification characteristic of any national language (cf. PND, pp. 66, 67).

According to Bakhtin it is *laughter* that functions as language’s critical *consciousness-of-self*. Through the carnival forces of laughter, satire and parody, social discourse becomes conscious that the world-view, objectified through language, is social in nature, and that as such, there exists a plurality of discourses (heterology) wherein different world-views *can be and are* expressed within the same language (monoglossia). This destroys the *myth*<sup>17</sup> that the language has a singular authoritative and absolute meaning and truth (essence). Bakhtin writes that in the pre-history of novelistic discourse laughter, satire and parody liberated

[...] the object from the power of language in which it had become entangled as if in a net; they destroyed the homogenizing power of myth over language; they freed consciousness from the power of the direct world, destroyed the thick wall that had imprisoned consciousness within its own discourse, within its own language. A distance rose between language and reality that was to prove an indispensable condition for authenticating realistic forms [*formy*] of discourse.

(PND, p. 60)

<sup>16</sup> The translators have translated ‘*raznoiazychiem iazykovogo soznaniia*’ simply as ‘polyphony’, whereas it should read ‘heteroglossia of linguistic consciousness’.

<sup>17</sup> As I have demonstrated in Chapter 3 Bakhtin’s notion of myth is greatly informed by Cassirer’s PSF2.

On the inter-language level, Bakhtin argues that a national language (e.g. Russian) becomes self-conscious through the interanimation of other languages within a language; this relationship Bakhtin terms polyglossia. It is only through the interanimation with another language that the *unique*, and therefore *relative*, world-view embodied within a particular language is highlighted to its speakers:

[...] languages interanimate each other and objectify precisely that side of one's own (and the other's) language *that pertains to its world view*, its inner form, the axiological accentuated system inherent in it. [...] what stands out is precisely that which makes language concrete and which makes its world view ultimately untranslatable, that is, precisely the *style of the language as a totality*.

(PND, p. 62)

Polyglossia, thus, dissolves the myth that a given language is the sole means of articulating, and thereby objectifying, actuality/reality:

In the prehistory of novelistic discourse one may observe many extremely heterogeneous factors at work. From our point of view, however, two of these factors prove to be of decisive importance: one of these is *laughter*, the other *polyglossia* [*mnogojazychie*]. The most ancient forms [*formy*] for representing language were organised by laughter—these were originally nothing more than the ridiculing of another's language and another's direct discourse. Polyglossia and the *interanimation of languages* associated with it elevated these forms [*formy*] to a new artistic and ideological level, which made possible the genre of the novel.

(PND, pp. 50-1)

#### 4.4 The Becoming of the Novel-genre and its Realisation in the Novel

In this section I hope to demonstrate that Bakhtin's conception of the genealogy and formation of literary genres takes a distinct Hegelian turn in its methodology and considerations regarding literary genres in general, and the novel-genre in particular. It is my contention that literary genre (as *Gestaltung*) is a fundamental notion of Bakhtin's philosophy of culture, because a literary genre in its *reified* form embodies and reflects a particular world-view of a particular historical period as idea: the world-view is the *concept* (i.e. novel-genre), the body-text the *reality*, and the whole is the *idea* (i.e. the novel).

According to Bakhtin, the novel-genre is exceptional, in that it is the *sole* literary genre that expresses and embodies itself, the *other*-genres, and the relationship between them. As such '[...] there is no unitary language or style in the novel. But at the same time there does exist a center of language (a verbal-ideological center) for the novel' (PND, pp. 48-9)—an analogue of the Superaddressee (cf. 3.7). Instead, the novel-genre expresses the interpersonal and social nature of cultural forms, knowledge and the world-view as a whole. That is, the novel-genre exhibits a quality that Bakhtin, in my opinion, regards as essential for his philosophy of human thought and existence, namely, becoming (R. *stanovlenie*, G. *Das Werden*)—which is posited within the dialogical aspect of human thought and existence. When we consider Bakhtin's position in terms of dialectical logic it can be argued that the novel-genre is *in-and-for-itself*. It follows that the novel-genre's realisation as idea in the novel, embodies and expresses a particular historical period of novel-genre, *other*-genres and the *whole*. And, as such, the realisation of novel-genre in the novel can be said to express absolute spirit.

Applying the same logic, a non-novel-genre (e.g. epic-genre) does not express and

reflect the *other-genres*,<sup>18</sup> and the *whole* (absolute spirit), and as such it is only *in-itself*. Furthermore, the epic-genre's realisation as idea in the epic expresses only a particular historical period of *itself* in relation to *itself*.

The novel-genre and the *other-genres* exhibit a dialectical relationship over history that, according to Bakhtin, operates both on a generic-epistemological level and a socio-institutional level—thereby reaffirming his view of the social nature of knowledge, and its foundational medium of language (cf. 2, 3). Applying what is logically Hegelian historicism and Cassirerian idealism, Bakhtin addresses the *epistemological* inadequacy and inaccuracy of the world-view exhibited and embodied in the epic-genre, and accounts for the historical sublation of its reifications (Ideas). The epic-genre, first of all, exhibits an inadequate understanding of history in that it treats the past, and therefore time, as 'absolute', and consequently presents an 'idealization of the past' (EN p. 13 and p. 20):<sup>19</sup>

The world of the epic is the national heroic past: it is a world of 'beginnings' and 'peak times' in the national history, a world of fathers and the founders of families, a world of 'firsts' and 'bests'.

(EN, p. 13).

That is, the epic portrays *mythical time* which, according to Cassirer, has no notion of a strict chronology determining the progression from past, present, to future. Mythical thought, writes Cassirer, 'causes the members of this relation to flow together and merge [...]. The stages of time—past, present, future—do not remain distinct; over and over again the mythical consciousness succumbs to the tendency and temptation to level the differences and ultimately transform them into pure identity' (PSF2, pp. 110-11).<sup>20</sup>

The epic-genre therefore presents an essentially ahistorical idea of its world, a world-view that is not conscious of itself as being historically posited. Consequently, Bakhtin argues, the ahistorical nature of the epic-genre denies real contact with the present. The epic-genre 'lacks any relativity, that is, any gradual, purely temporal progressions that might connect it with the present' (EN, p. 15). The result is that the epic-genre is a genre that simply *is* and is not *becoming*. As such, the epic-genre denies both the historical development of the world-view that it *conceptualises*, and the literary art-form that it gives rise to as idea:

[T]he 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 in it through which we glimpse the future; it suffices unto itself, neither supposing any continuation nor requiring it. [...] Everything incorporated into this past was simultaneously incorporated into a condition of authentic essence and significance, but therefore also took on conclusiveness and finality, depriving itself, so to speak, of all kinds of potential for a real continuation. Absolute conclusiveness and closedness is the outstanding feature of the temporally valorized epic past. [...] The epic world is constructed in the zone of an absolute distanced image [*obraz*], beyond the sphere of possible contact with the developing, incomplete and therefore re-thinking and re-evaluating present.

(EN, pp. 16, 17)

The novel-genre, argues Bakhtin, 'is the sole genre that continues to develop'; as such 'the birth and [becoming <*stanovlenie*>] of the novel takes place in the full light of the

<sup>18</sup> 'Other-genres' naturally excludes the novel-genre, otherwise they would become 'novelised'.

<sup>19</sup> With 'absolute' Bakhtin's means perfect and complete, and not in Hegelian sense as exemplifying the essence (or truth and value) of a particular moment or formation of *spirit*. 'Idealization' refers to the Platonic/Kantian sense of a transcendent, or noumenal notion of the past.

<sup>20</sup> 'Pure identity' is analogous to the Law of Identity (A is A), and as such does not exhibit *becoming*.

historical day' (EN, p. 3). The novel-genre comes into 'contact with the spontaneity of the inconclusive present' so that the novel-genre 'is determined by experience, knowledge and practice (the future)' (EN, pp. 27, 15). That is, the novel-genre exemplifies lived experience, or *Erlebnis*. This, according to Bakhtin, is absolutely essential if we are to fully understand the historical nature of our world-view, and the nature of its becoming:

[W]hen the present becomes the centre of human orientation in time and in the world, time and world lose their completedness as a whole as well as in each of their parts. The temporal model of the world changes radically: it becomes a world where there is no first word (ideal word), and the final word has not yet been spoken. For the first time in artistic-ideological consciousness, time and the world become historical: they unfold, albeit at first still unclearly and confusedly, as becoming, as an uninterrupted movement into a real future, as a unified, all-embracing and uncompleted process. [...] Through contact with the present, an object is attracted to the incomplete process of a world-in-the-making, and is stamped with the seal of inconclusiveness.

(EN, p. 30).

Shifting to the socio-institutional perspective, Bakhtin identifies the *other*-genres as 'high' literature, and writes that they are 'accomplishing the task of cultural, national and political centralization of the verbal-ideological world in the higher official socio-ideological levels' (DN, p. 273). One of the features of 'high' literature is the failure to *recognise* and, consequently *alienation* of other genres. Consequently, high literature represents a static, ahistorical and, fundamentally, unified world-view of socio-institutional authority:

[A]ll genres in 'high' literature (that is, the literature of ruling social groups) harmoniously reinforce each other to a significant extent; the whole of literature, conceived as a totality of genres, becomes an organic unity of the highest order.

(EN, p. 4)

The novel-genre, by contrast, 'never enters into this whole, it does not participate in any harmony of the genres' (EN, p. 4). That is to say, both the *other*-genres and novel-genre exist together; they mutually 'determine' each other over history. Thus when the 'period' or world-view is dominated by *other*-genres, 'the novel has an unofficial existence, outside "high" literature' (EN, p. 4):

At the same 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 [...] was being historically shaped by the current decentralizing, centrifugal forces [...] The novel genre is [heterology <*raznorechie*>], grounded in the low genres, that not only came vis-à-vis the accepted literary language [...], that is, vis-à-vis the linguistic center of the verbal-ideological life of the nation and the epoch, [the heterology that was organised in these low genres was not simply heterology in relation to the accepted literary language [...], i.e. in relation to the linguistic centre [...], but a conscious opposition to it]. It was parodic, and aimed sharply and polemically against the official languages of its given time. It was [heterology <*raznorechie*>] that had been dialogized.

(DN, p. 273)

During such periods the novel-genre criticises the 'literariness and poeticalness inherent' in 'high' literature: 'i.e. the relation the epic, poetic, etc. genres bear to reality: their stilted heroizing, their narrow and unlikelike poeticalness, their monotony and abstractness, the pre-packed and unchanging nature of their heroes' (EN, p. 10). Whereas, for example, in the novel-genre the hero should 'not be portrayed as an already completed and unchanging person but as one who is [becoming <*stanoviashchiisia*>] and [changing



<*izmeniaiushchiisia*>], a person who learns from life' (EN, p. 10).

The novel-genre, thus, challenges the authority, validity and adequacy of the *other*-genres of 'high literature' through its mode of critical and self-critical awareness, which Bakhtin calls 'the novel's coming to self-consciousness' (EN, p. 11): 'Here the novel—its texts as well as the theory connected with it—emerges consciously and unambiguously as a genre that is both critical and self-critical, one fated to revise the fundamental concepts of literariness and poeticalness dominant at the time' (EN, p. 10). That is, Bakhtin's position suggests that a kind of Kuhnian paradigm-shift occurs: the paradigm-genres of 'high-literature' are challenged by the novel-genre, resulting in a period of 'generic-revolution' where the genres of 'high-literature' are 'novelized' and the novel-genre becomes the new paradigm (cf. Kuhn 1970):<sup>21</sup>

Of particular interest are those eras when the novel becomes the dominant genre. All literature is then caught up in the process of 'becoming,' and in a special kind of 'generic criticism'. [...] In an era when the novel reigns supreme, almost all the remaining genres are to a greater or lesser extent 'novelized'.

(EN, pp. 5-6)

According to Bakhtin the crucial 'features' of the novel-genre that lead to the novelisation of the other-genres are laughter, satire and irony:

What are the salient features of this novelization of other genres suggested by us above? They become more free and flexible, their language renews itself by incorporating extraliterary [heterology <*raznorechie*>] and the 'novelistic' layers of literary language, they become dialogized, permeated with laughter, irony, humor, elements of self-parody and finally—this is the most important thing—the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still evolving contemporary reality (the openended present).

(EN, pp. 6-7).

In this the novel-genre embodies and exhibits the carnivalistic nature present in the becoming of the 'social space' in-and-for-itself as a whole. For Bakhtin carnival refers to the use of humour and satire by the people (folk humour) to challenge and criticise the dominant and authoritative world-view of the time. In *Rabelais and His World* Bakhtin writes:

As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked a 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.*

[...]

We must stress, however, that the carnival is far distant from the 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.*

(RW, pp. 10, 11, emphasis added)

Bakhtin's notions that carnival is the feast of *becoming*, whose hostility towards that which is *unified* and *complete* is not one of 'bare negation', clearly points to a dialectic.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> It would, of course, not have been possible for Bakhtin to have knowledge of Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) when he wrote his essays on the novel.

<sup>22</sup> It is not within the scope of this thesis to examine the Hegelianism in Bakhtin's RW. I refer the reader instead to Tihanov's extensive chapter 'Hegel and Rabelais' in *The Master and the Slave*, where he successfully argues that Bakhtin's *Rabelais* is 'under the spell of Hegelian progressivist historicism', and that Bakhtin believes that;

Laughter and popular speech, argues Bakhtin, destroy the epic, destroy the hierarchical distance between the popular world-view and the authoritative world-view. They invert the authoritative world-view's values, opening up the possibility for the development of new and revolutionary creativity in science and art:

Laughter has the remarkable power of making an object come up close, of drawing it into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides, turn it upside down, inside out, peer at it from above and below, break open its external shell, look into its center, doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it, examine it freely and experiment with it. [...] Laughter is a vital factor in laying down that prerequisite for fearlessness without which it would be impossible to approach the world realistically. [...] Familiarization of the world through laughter and popular speech is an extremely important and indispensable step in making possible free, scientifically knowable and artistically realistic creativity in European civilization.

(EN, p. 23)

The carnival forces within society, therefore, initiate the dialectical negation and sublation of the authoritative world-view, bringing society as a whole into the process of becoming. Bakhtin expands on this in the *Dostoevsky* book when he explains Socratic Irony, and Menippean Satire, as forms of 'novelising' genres in that they incorporate irony, laughter, and carnival; in doing so, the Socratic dialogue turns the *closed* philosophical discussion into an open *dialectical* investigation regarding epistemology, and especially the nature of truth (cf. PDP, pp. 110-11).

Furthermore, it crucially illustrates that for Bakhtin novel-genre is not a quality restricted solely to 'novels'—i.e. extended works of prose fiction written around the middle of the nineteenth-century. A literary artefact does not have to be a 'novel' in order to exhibit novelness, it only has to incorporate *carnival*, *laughter* and *irony* to qualify as exemplifying the novel-genre.

In arguing this Bakhtin differs from Hegel's view that the various art *kinds* (literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, etc.) are present at any historical period, by arguing that—in the case of literary genres—the various *genres* (epic, poetry, novel, etc) are *also* present at any historical period. As such, in the case of literature, it is not so much the *kind* of art that dominates a given historical period that is important to Bakhtin, but which *genre* of that *kind* dominates the period. This is shown when he argues that the dominance of the novel-genre is a recurring social-phenomenon over history: it occurred 'several times in the Hellenic period, again during the late middle Ages and the Renaissance, but with special force and clarity beginning in the second half of the eighteenth century' (EN, pp. 4-5). The fact that there are different genres at any given historical moment, furthermore, consolidates Bakhtin's view that there are different world-views in that period, and that one tends to dominate that period.

As I have shown, the novel-genre is the *sole* literary genre to reflect its own world-view, the world-views of the other-genres, and the relationship between the two as a *whole* (absolute spirit); its becoming of self-consciousness *reflects* the becoming of actuality itself:

The novel is the only [becoming <*stanoviashchiisia*>] genre and therefore it reflects more deeply, more essentially, more sensitively and rapidly, [the becoming of reality/actuality itself <*stanovlenie samoi deistvitel'nosti*>]. Only [he who is becoming <*stanoviashchiisia*>] can comprehend [becoming <*stanovlenie*>] as a process.

(EN, p. 7)

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laughter 'is bound to the contradictory manifestations of Spirit in language; [...] that the people's laughter is a form of the growing historical consciousness [...]' (Tihanov 2000B, p. 290). See also Poole's paper 'Bakhtin and Cassirer' for a detailed analysis of the strong influence of Cassirer's PSF2 in RW (Poole 1998).

It can be argued that the novel-genre's moments of 'critical and self-critical' logically correspond to the now familiar Hegelian boundary-relation of a dialectic: the novel-genre *for-itself* (the critical-of-*other*) and the novel-genre *in-itself* (the critical-of-*self*), establishes the becoming of self-consciousness of the novel-genre.

To extend on Bakhtin's notion of the becoming of the novel-genre it will be useful for us to apply dialectical logic and distinguish the *novel-genre* G from the *novel* N. The novel-genre G is the only becoming literary genre and therefore reflects the becoming of reality/actuality itself (the becoming of world-view, or spirit). As such the novel-genre G exhibits the moments of *critical* and *self-critical* consciousness, which exemplifies the dialectical boundary relation between the novel-genre-*in-itself* (+G) and the novel-genre-*for-itself* (-G), establishing the becoming of self-consciousness of the novel-genre ( $G : +G \leftrightarrow -G, G'$ ). Thus, G expresses the dialectical relationship between the novel-genre +G and the *other-genres* -G, such that the novel-genre is *in-and-for-itself* (+-G, or G'), establishing—what Hegel would term—absolute spirit.

Bakhtin continues to develop his theory that genre can exhibit becoming in the chapter 'Characteristics of Genre and Plot Composition in Dostoevsky's Works' (1963) in PDP. The work, however, does not discriminate between novel-genre as becoming and other-genres as merely being: genres in general *live* in the *present*, sublimate the *past*, and are in a continuous process of *becoming*:

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 a 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.<sup>23</sup>

(PDP, p. 106)

The novel N is a literary *artefact*, which, by virtue of its *conceptualisation* (i.e. the realisation R of a *concept*) of the novel-genre G, embodies and expresses a particular historical world-view as idea, making it  $N_x$ . It follows that the historical *instances* of N (i.e.  $N_1$  the 'Greek novel',  $N_2$  the 'Renaissance novel', ...  $N_n$ )<sup>24</sup> are particular formations or Ideas of the becoming of the novel-genre over history G. As such the historical moments of N ( $N_1, N_2, N_3, \dots, N_n$ ) exemplify consecutively 'higher levels' of the novel-genre's G becoming self-conscious (i.e. the Renaissance novel exemplifies a 'higher level' of self-consciousness than the Greek novel). As such,  $N_n$  exemplifies a reified R moment of the becoming of G—expressed formally as  $(R_n)G = N_n$ —where a moment of  $(R_n)G$  is conditional on the social/cultural forces that stimulate or impede it at n. Tihanov's essay identifies this as Bakhtin's notion that genre (which I qualify *specifically* as novel-genre) has its own 'internal *entelechy* which governs its development' (Tihanov 1997, p. 278).

As such we are not dealing with the same formation re-occurring over different historical periods (i.e.,  $N_1 \neq N_2$ ). Furthermore, although the Greek novel is not the same as the Renaissance novel, both are part of the process of becoming of the novel-genre G over history, and thus both exhibit certain values and truths of G by virtue of being Ideas of G. However, the values and truths that the Greek novel embodies and exhibits are relatively false and underdeveloped when compared to the Renaissance novel.

<sup>23</sup> Note how the logic of genre here is analogous to the logic of heterology (cf. 3).

<sup>24</sup> Where n is all the natural numbers starting with 1.

Our distinction between N and G, furthermore, illustrates that Bakhtin's conception of the novel-genre is not *necessarily* committed to a contradictory view-point, as Tihanov maintains, because Bakhtin can *simultaneously* argue for the historical conception of a given novel as  $N_n$  and maintain the universal (or perennial) meaning of the novel-genre as G. The ambiguity that lies at the root of Tihanov's contention is that, although Bakhtin identifies the historical conception of the genre of the 'novel' (i.e. the conception of *extended works of prose fiction written around the middle of the nineteenth century*), Bakhtin also maintains the universal value of the *novel-genre* throughout the history of humankind.

Nevertheless, the very division into novel-genre and novel betrays the uncertainty of Bakhtin's argument, and the contradiction Tihanov speaks of certainly would ensue if Bakhtin (and we) identified the concept of 'novel' in 'the genre of the novel' as being identical with the historical occurrence of the 'novel' of the mid nineteenth-century. This problem, however, does not lie in the concept of the novel-genre as 'form-shaping idea' if we recognise the 'novelising genres' Bakhtin identifies in PND and PDP, such as Menippean satire and Socratic dialogue (both of which clearly *cannot* be examples of the 'novel') as exemplifications or reifications of the novel-genre G. Thus, although the reifications N of such 'novelising-genres' as the Menippean satire may not be called 'novels' proper—in that the qualification of 'novel' has a historical truth condition—they are nevertheless the product of the same phenomenon G.

However, whether Bakhtin actually does advance the contradictory view noted by Tihanov is not clear, even though I have demonstrated that it need not be the case. It is nevertheless true, however, that Bakhtin's lack of structural consistency and terminological distinction often results in burdensome ambiguities regarding the history of the novel and the theory of the novel-genre.

#### 4.5 Novel-genre and the Image of Man: Bakhtin vis-à-vis Hegel

The various realisations  $N_n$  of the becoming of the novel-genre G over history embody and express the becoming of the world-view (what Bakhtin refers to as the 'image' (*obraz*) of humankind) at a higher level:

Finally, in a novel the individual acquires the ideological and linguistic initiative necessary to change the nature of his own image (there is a new and higher type of individualization of the image). [...] the present, in all openendedness, taken as a starting point and center for artistic and ideological orientation, is an enormous revolution in the creative consciousness of man.

(EN, p. 38).

Moreover, when we apply dialectical logic to Bakhtin's position we see that the dialectic of the becoming of the novel-genre G does *not* run linearly-parallel with the becoming of the world-view-in-and-for-itself; rather the two *interact* during those (r)evolutionary periods when the novel-genre becomes the dominant genre. The novel N, by virtue of the becoming of the novel-genre G, brings the image of man (the world-view) that it embodies and exhibits as idea into contact with the actual ongoing and living event of social-existence. The novel thus, as artistic image (sensuous idea), comes into contact with the becoming of actuality/reality itself.

Bakhtin's Humboldtian view that a world-view requires of necessity to be objectified through articulation leads him to hypothesise that this relationship leads to a (r)evolutionary moment in society's becoming. The interaction between the literary artistic image and actuality/reality itself destabilises the 'semantic stability' wherein the world-view is posited,

transforming *both* the living articulations within the ‘social space’ and the world-view (here the ‘object’ [*predmet*]) that the novel exhibits and embodies as ‘artistic image’ (the idea):

And in this inconclusive context all the semantic stability of the object [*predmet*] is lost; its sense and significance are renewed and grow as the context continues to unfold. This leads to radical changes in the structuring of the artistic image [*khudozhestvennyi obraz*]. The image [*obraz*] acquires a specific actual existence. It acquires a relationship—in one form [*forma*] or another, to one degree or another—to the ongoing event of current life in which we, the author and readers, are intimately participating. This creates the radically new zone for structuring images [*obrazy*] in the novel, a zone of maximally close contact between the represented object [*predmet*] and contemporary reality in all its inconclusiveness—and consequently a similarly close contact between the object [*predmet*] and the future.

(EN, pp. 30-1)

Furthermore, Bakhtin’s contention that ‘[when] the novel becomes the dominant genre, epistemology becomes the dominant discipline’ suggests an intimate relationship with Cassirer’s philosophy. Bakhtin, as we have seen, links the epic-genre with mythical thought—the concept of which, I demonstrate, is informed by Cassirer’s PSF2. Now Bakhtin appears to *couple* the transition from ‘epic-genre’ to ‘novel-genre’ to Cassirer’s shift from *mythical world-view* to *theoretical world-view* (EN, p. 27). In PSF2 Cassirer argues that mythical consciousness ‘lives in the immediate impression [of reality], which it accepts without measuring it by something else’:

For the mythical consciousness the impression is not merely relative but absolute; the impression is not through something else and does not depend on something else as its cognition; on the contrary it manifests and confirms itself by the simple intensity of its presence, by the irresistible force with which it impresses itself upon consciousness.

(PSF2, pp. 73-4)

Theoretical consciousness (scientific thought), by contrast, ‘makes the clear distinction between illusion and truth, between what is merely perceived or represented and what truly “is”, between the objective and the subjective’. Theoretical consciousness ‘[...] takes an attitude of enquiry and doubt towards the “object” with its claim to objectivity and necessity [...]’, resulting in the theoretical differentiation and stratification of what it is to *know* the object, into the necessary ‘causes’ and ‘grounds’ and ‘consequences’ of the object (PSF2, pp. 73-4). Mythical thought, Cassirer argues, knows no such differentiation and stratification. Like Cassirer’s theoretical consciousness, Bakhtin’s novel-genre takes an ‘attitude of enquiry and doubt towards’ the *epic-object* with its claim to objectivity, authority and necessity—although its mode of differentiation and stratification is *novelisation*.

Furthermore, Bakhtin’s idea of the shift from a period when the epic-genre is dominant to one when the novel-genre becomes dominant exemplifies not just an epistemological shift but also an ontological shift which is, in our mind, distinctly Hegelian in nature. Through the dominance of the novel-genre consciousness comes a *higher level* of recognition of the necessary relationship between *I* and *other* in the sociality of knowledge, establishing a new mode of self-consciousness mediated in language (cf. 2, 3). The monoglot or ‘epic’ consciousness and his/her word/discourse (*slovo*) does not *recognise* the epistemological and ontological actuality/reality of the *other* and his/her word/discourse, thereby assuming an asymmetrical intersubjective mediation:

One who creates a direct word [*slovo*]*—*whether epic, tragic or lyric*—*deals only with the subject whose praised he sings, or represents, or expresses, and he does so in his own language that is perceived as the sole and fully adequate tool for realizing the

word's direct, objectified meaning. [Both the] meaning and the objects and themes that [make it up] [*ego predmetno-tematicheskii sostav*] are inseparable from the straightforward language of the person who creates it: the object and themes are born and grow to maturity in this language, and in the national myth and national tradition that permeate this language.

(PND, p. 61)

The carnivalised, or 'novelised' consciousness and his/her word/discourse (*slovo*) do recognise the epistemological and ontological actuality/reality of the *other* and his/her word/discourse, thereby establishing reciprocal intersubjective mediation:

The position and tendency of the parodic-travestyng consciousness is, however, completely different: it, too, is orientated towards the object—but towards another's word as well, a parodied word *about* the object that in the process becomes *itself* an image. Thus is created that distance between language and reality we mentioned earlier. [There takes place a transformation of language <*Sovershaetsia prevrashchenie iazyka*>] from the absolute dogma it had been within the narrow framework of a sealed-off and impermeable monoglossia into a working hypothesis for comprehending and expressing reality.

(PND, p. 61)

The process where by the word 'becomes *itself* an image', turning language into a 'working hypothesis for comprehending and expressing actuality', exemplifies in Hegelian terms the language's consciousness of becoming self-conscious. Again applying dialectical logic to Bakhtin position, we see that the consciousness of becoming self-conscious of language is established on the boundary relationship between the language's consciousness of *itself*, of the *other-within* (*heterology*), the *other-without* (*polyglossia*), and the relationship between the three to *reality*. And for Bakhtin, literary genre, especially novel-genre, plays a crucial part in the language's consciousness of becoming self-conscious, and therefore the phenomenological becoming of culture and knowledge.

The novel-genre, therefore, is instrumental to Bakhtin's notion of the sociality of being and knowledge, in that it both exhibits and embodies the becoming of a world-view as idea *and* actively interacts with and thus transforms the world-view:

Of course all these processes of shift and renewal of the national language that are reflected *by* the novel do not bear an abstract linguistic character *in* the novel: they are inseparable from social and ideological struggle, from processes of evolution and of the renewal of society and the folk.

(PND, pp. 67-8).

That is, *both* the novel-genre and the world-view are in a dynamic interrelationship of becoming. Moreover, the logic of Bakhtin's argument does not merely correspond to Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, but exemplifies the fundamental notions of Hegel's phenomenology of spirit and his philosophy of art.

As I have shown in section 4.1, Hegel believes that art reveals to consciousness and brings to utterance 'the Divine Nature [*das Göttliche*], the deepest interests of humanity, and the most comprehensive truths of the [Spirit <*Geist*>]'. It is within art that society has placed 'the profoundest intuitions and ideas of their hearts; and fine art is frequently the key [...] to the understanding of their wisdom and their religion' (ILA §§ XII-XIII, p. 9). Although Bakhtin's view regarding *literary* art is comparatively similar to Hegel's view regarding fine art, his Aristotelian and Humboldtian views regarding dialectics and language lead him to view literary art as more than just a frequent key to *understanding* society's culture, wisdom and religion: literary art is one of the principal means through which culture, wisdom and religion are actively in a state of *becoming*.

Moreover Bakhtin *explicitly states* that his view regarding the novel is derivative of Hegel. Hegel, as we have seen, believes that Hellenic art reached an aesthetically coherent whole within its society, and that this aesthetically coherent whole cannot be realised in the contemporary world. Hegel argues that this is because eighteenth-century society is too fragmented and aware of its socio-economic and cultural complexity and diversity, that this is the case for art in general—believing that in order for art to achieve an aesthetically coherent whole it has to express and embody the eighteenth-century world-view as a *whole*, something Hegel feels *no art kind* (*Gattung*) is capable of. Bakhtin, however, argues that, because the novel-genre is self-conscious and embodies and exhibits the fragmented, socio-economic and cultural complexity and diversity of society, ‘[...] the novel should become for the contemporary world what the epic was for the ancient world (an idea that Blankenburg expressed very precisely, and was later repeated by Hegel)’ (EN, p. 10).

#### 4.6 Irony and Dialectic: Bakhtin vis-à-vis Hegel

Bakhtin, as I have shown, sees an intimate relationship between irony and dialectic, and in this he implicitly expresses a very Hegelian view. Bakhtin, however, differs from Hegel on two key issues, both of which he resolves in a Hegelian manner. First of all, Bakhtin’s philosophy maintains, unlike Hegel’s, that the dialectic of society’s cultural becoming *is* necessarily mediated in and through language—thereby expressing his Cassirerian and Humboldtian view of language. And secondly, Bakhtin believes, again in contrast to Hegel, that there is an art form wherein the artist can integrate all the themes and styles into a single coherent work, wherein the artist can express cultural complexity and diversity with ironical detachment and dialectic development, namely the novel:

The novel orchestrates all its themes, the totality of the world of objects and ideas depicted and expressed in it, by means of the diversity of [heterology <*raznorechie*>] and by the differing individual voices that flourish under such conditions.

(DN, p. 263).

That is, society’s fragmentation and awareness of its socio-economic and cultural complexity and diversity—expressed and embodied in heterology—can be reified in the novel by virtue of the novel-genre.

In section 4.1A I demonstrated that Hegel recognises that there are various forms of irony, and that Romantic irony (*die Ironie*) is a necessary artistic mode for modernity and the dialectic. Bakhtin, on the other hand, identifies irony (carnivalistic) and the dialectic as explicitly Socratic. Bakhtin’s notion of irony is *eironeia* insofar as it expressly takes place in *dialogue*, and exhibits the structural components of *syncrisis* and *anacrisis*:

Syncrisis and anacrisis dialogize thought, they carry it into the open, turn it into a *rejoinder*, attach it to dialogic intercourse among people. Both of these devices have their origin in the notion of the dialogic nature of truth, which lies at the base of the Socratic dialogue. On the territory of this carnivalized genre, syncrisis and anacrisis lose their narrow, abstractly rhetorical character.

(PDP, p. 111)

Syncrisis and anacrisis are the two structural components of Plato’s dialectic: to *examine closely*, and *enquire into fact* (anacrisis), that which has been *separated, compared*, and *compounded anew* (syncrisis) (cf. Liddell 1901, pp. 101, 348, 1450). Bakhtin writes that:

Socrates was a great master of the anacrisis: he knew how to force people to *speak*, to clothe in discourse their dim but stubbornly preconceived opinions, to illuminate them by the word and in this way to expose their falseness or incompleteness; he knew how

to drag the going truths out into the light of day.

(PDP, pp. 110-11)

Furthermore, although syncrisis and anacrisis may be presented in the dialogue as *dissimulation and pretended ignorance*—as they are by Socrates—this is not necessary to carnivalistic irony, as the much broader activity of *carnival* (laughter, comedy and satire) actively undermines the rhetorical character of the discourse.

Bakhtin believes that irony, and therefore dialectic, *should* be Socratic in form—i.e. it has to be inter-personal verbal and linguistic, or *dialogic* (cf. 3). Once the dialectic of irony ceases to be *dialogic*, and becomes abstract, speculative and reflective, it ceases to be irony, and consequently ceases to express reflection on society, its ideas and values. This is because Bakhtin rejects Romantic irony's detachment from externals, especially *others*, and in so doing he rejects Romantic irony as a viable dialectic.

This is demonstrated in his discussion of the Socratic notion of truth. Bakhtin laments Socrates's move from a facilitator (a 'midwife') of truth seeking discourse (the dialogue of the human thinking about truth) towards a teacher (an expounder of 'ready-made irrefutable truths'). Early Socratic dialogues, according to Bakhtin, demonstrated that there was a 'folk-carnivalistic base' to the dialogic thinking about truth—that is, the dialogue did not abstract and bracket the 'primary realities' of '*my word*' and the '*other's word*'. Within the content of the Socratic dialogue, the dialogic nature of truth itself 'often assumed a monologic character that contradicted the form-shaping idea of the genre' (PDP, p. 110). This changed, however, in Plato's final dialogues, where Socrates was 'transformed into a "teacher"' and the content of the dialogue was *formed* into a monologue which 'begins to destroy the form of the Socratic dialogue':

Consequently, when the genre of the Socratic dialogue entered the service of the established, dogmatic worldviews of various philosophical schools and religious doctrines, it lost all connection with a carnival sense of the world and was transformed into a simple form for expounding already found, ready-made irrefutable truths; ultimately, it degenerated completely into a question and answer form for training neophytes (catechism).

(PDP, p. 110)

Bakhtin identifies Plato's dialectic as 'dialogic', a dialectic filled with *others' voices*, carnivalised. To Plato, dialectics was the art of critical examination of the truth of an opinion by discussion. Plato developed dialectics as the principle of all philosophical enquiry, and used it in two senses. In his early dialogues, the Socratic dialectic is a dialogue which tends to take a destructive form: Socrates interrogates someone about some concept that he/she has employed and derives contradictions from the successive answers given. In Plato's later dialogues, which it is believed owe less to Socrates, the dialectic is a positive method, designed to produce knowledge of the Forms and Ideas, phenomena and noumena, and of the relationship between them. In these latter dialogues, the dialogue form tends to become relatively unimportant and the dialectic comes to lose its link with conversation—except insofar as thinking is considered a form of *internal* dialogue.

For Hegel, as I have shown in 3.6, the dialectic does not necessarily involve a dialogue either between two thinkers or between a thinker and his/her subject matter. The dialectic is conceived as the autonomous dynamic between the *universal* and the *particular*, or self-criticism and self-development of the subject matter in and for itself as *individual*—such as consciousness or a concept (cf. Inwood 1997, pp. 81-3).

I have shown that Bakhtin argues that the dialectic is *necessarily* linguistic and *should not* be destructive in the Platonic sense. This is because Bakhtin's dialectic entails the explicit



imperative of *responsibility*, the dual dynamic of ethical discursive intersubjectivity. It follows that Bakhtin argues that the dialectic should be *positive* and *constructive* as it is the dynamic of the becoming of self-identity, cultural forms, values, and ideas. Therefore, although Bakhtin's dialogised dialectic may seem to approximate the early Platonic dialectic, it nevertheless remains clearly Hegelian in that it is the drive-belt of society's socio-ideological and cultural *becoming*.

# Conclusion

## Bakhtin By and Beyond Hegel

In his preface to *The Young Hegelians* Lawrence Stepelevich writes that

A distinction must be made between being a Hegelian philosopher and a student of Hegelian philosophy, for the practice of this philosophy extends well beyond the mere scholarly recollection of that thought. To philosophize, as a Hegelian, is to take up, develop, and apply the dialectical methodology of Hegel to a point that would extend beyond the limits found in Hegel himself. Hegel once remarked that ‘we can be Platonists no longer’, and by the same token we can be Hegelians no longer—if by that is meant we would philosophize in the same terms and imagery, and seize upon those same problems which reflected only Hegel’s time and place in history. Again—in Hegel’s words—‘as every individual is a child of his time; so philosophy too is its own time apprehended in thoughts’. This restriction of philosophy to its own age rests upon the most fundamental of Hegelian principles: that philosophy is nothing other than the continuing development of the same self-reflective spirit driving ever onward to transcend the confines of any fixed system of thought. The historical development of philosophical systems which are treated in the history of philosophy are, to Hegel, but a ‘series of successive spiritual forms ... the moments of one Spirit, of the one self-present Spirit’. In sum, that ‘one self-present Spirit’ which found birth in the consciousness of the first to properly claim the name *philosopher*, and which from that time developed in a self-consciousness of itself in the philosophy of Hegel, must—if philosophy is to continue—go beyond Hegel.

(Stepelevich 1983, p. ix)

The earliest philosophers who understood Hegelianism in this manner and sought to go beyond—indeed refute to the point of contradicting—Hegel, were known as the Young or Left Hegelians. Those who felt that Hegel’s philosophy represented the culmination of, and therefore end of philosophy were known as the Old or Right Hegelians.<sup>1</sup>

If we consider taking up, developing, and applying ‘the dialectical methodology of Hegel to a point that would extend beyond the limits found in Hegel himself’ to be the essential and minimal criteria to qualify as a Young Hegelian, then it can be argued that Dilthey, Simmel and Cassirer exhibit strong ‘Young’ Hegelian predilections. Bakhtin, unlike Dilthey or Cassirer, was not a student of Hegelian philosophy in any conventional sense, however the fact that we could and, arguably *should*, consider many facets of his philosophy be ‘Young’ Hegelian—in the same vein as Dilthey, Simmel, and Cassirer—is what this thesis believes to have demonstrated.

However, because the approach applied in this thesis is partly historical, partly philosophical and analytical, it is difficult to proffer a synthesised conception or generalisation of Bakhtin’s Hegelian views. Instead I propose to look at a number of key concepts, theories, and recurrent methodologies and on this basis offer a summary of

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<sup>1</sup> The Young Hegelians included, among other, Ludwig Feuerbach, Arnold Ruge, Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx. Among the Old Hegelians we can name, among other, Friedrich Vischer, Kuno Fischer, and Eduard Zeller.

Bakhtin's Hegelianism.

In this thesis I started with Bakhtin's earliest extended work of philosophy, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*—a work known for its strong neo-Kantian, and ~~Lebensphilosophisches~~ <sup>Philosophy of Life</sup> resonances. Given that Bakhtin did not approach or engage Hegel directly in this or any other early work, I nevertheless argued that through his connection with the *Lebensphilosophen* Dilthey and Simmel many key Hegelian ideas were mediated to him and infiltrated his work. For instance, we have seen that Bakhtin adopts the ~~Lebensphilosophisches~~ <sup>Philosophy of Life</sup> notion of the opposition between life and culture, the Heraclitian concept of life, and the irreducibility and primacy of becoming (i.e. being-as-event)—all of which are informed by Hegelian philosophy.

With respect to Bakhtin's theory of intersubjectivity it was important to point out that the problem of the other, and its relation to freedom and the ought is derivative of the post-Kantian idealism of Fichte and Hegel. I, therefore, argued that any delineation and examination of Bakhtin's (or his contemporaries') phenomenology of intersubjectivity *ipso facto* involves the exposition of Fichte's and Hegel's theories of intersubjectivity. As a result I was able to demonstrate that Bakhtin's initial theory of intersubjectivity proposes a Husserlian asymmetrical theory <sup>may</sup> gives way to a (more) Hegelian symmetrical theory later in his career. Key to this exposition was the exploration of Bakhtin's understanding and use of the concept of *boundary relation*—a concept that Bakhtin may originally have adopted from Simmel, but which is derivative of Hegel's logic. It was shown that in his later work, 'Toward the Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book', the boundary relationship between I and other evolved, such that both the logic and polemic of Bakhtin's theory of self-consciousness and intersubjectivity clearly resembled key passages of 'Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness' in Hegel's *Phenomenology*. This deduction was supported by the application of dialectical logic, through which I was able to give an unambiguous account of both Bakhtin's and Hegel's theory of intersubjectivity, and demonstrate points where they concurred and where they were at variance.

We have also seen that Bakhtin's notion of *spirit (dukh)* is both genealogically and logically linked to the Hegelian notion of spirit (*Geist*), and that this (combined with the influence of *Lebensphilosophie*) leads Bakhtin to argue that being and knowledge are socially posited—both of which are key Hegelian concepts.

When analysing Bakhtin's philosophy of language I not only highlighted Bakhtin's extensive use of the term *dialectic*, but furthermore (through applying dialectical logic as an analytical tool) demonstrated Bakhtin's essentially dialectical methodology. As a result I was able to show how Bakhtin's key concept of *dialogic* has an indelible relationship to the Hegelian concept of *dialectic*, and disclosed the clear similarity between Bakhtin's theory of the *superaddressee* and Hegel's notion of *universal spirit*.

Key to my arguments was the examination of Bakhtin's close relationship with Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* and Humboldt's philosophy of language. By demonstrating that Cassirer and (to some degree) Humboldt exhibit strong Hegelian tendencies, I was able to identify the philosophers as two of the most important sources of Hegelian thought in Bakhtin's middle and late philosophy.

Similarly, when analysing Bakhtin's theory of the becoming of the novel-genre, and the historical development of literary aesthetics in general, I demonstrated that Bakhtin applies a Hegelian model. Again, however, Bakhtin's Hegelian ideas were shown to have been principally mediated through the work of other thinkers—in this case mainly Ernst Cassirer, whose concerns regarding Hegel's reputed logical monism, are taken up by Bakhtin, and colour Bakhtin's understanding of Hegel.

As a result my examination in Chapters 3 and 4 into the similarities and differences

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between Bakhtin's notion of dialectic and Hegel's revealed that, although Bakhtin maintains some very astute and well founded objections to Hegel's dialectic, some of the arguments that may appear to refute Hegel's dialectic actually disprove something not advanced by Hegel. This leads, as I have shown, to some incongruous statements in Bakhtin's later works where the polemic of his critical comments directed explicitly at Hegel's *Phenomenology* and dialectic methodology are shown to be essentially Hegelian in themselves.

Overall my investigation into and analysis of the Hegelianism in Bakhtin's philosophy has shown that Hegelianism played a significant and formative role in Bakhtin's philosophy early on and continued to contribute to his philosophy throughout his career. Perhaps one of the most fundamental things this thesis had revealed, however, is Bakhtin's desire to redefine and develop the nature of the dialectical methodology, beyond the philosophy of Hegel. That is, like the Young Hegelians, Bakhtin's philosophy shows us that the dialectical method can be Hegelian no-longer: 'Dialectics was born of dialogue so as to return again to dialogue on a higher level [...]' (MHS, p. 162).

My enquiry into Bakhtin's Hegelianism has been valuable not least for the fact that it presents a new perspective on Bakhtin's philosophical concepts and theories, as well as a new perspective on Hegelian philosophy. Nevertheless, it is clear to me that this thesis does not exhaust the investigated topic and that further historical, and especially philosophical research needs to be conducted to fully appreciate the complexities that make up Bakhtin's philosophical *oeuvre*. As Wilhelm von Leyden points out:

[...] a historical study of an earlier philosophical theory or concept can no more claim finality for itself than a contemporary philosophical theory can. For no philosophical theory or interpretation can either eliminate or incorporate every (logically or humanly) possible perspective and emphasis. In light of this predicament the permanent need for a reappraisal of former philosophical theories and for advancing upon contemporary ones is obvious.

(Leyden 1968, p. xiv).

# Glossary

## Logical Symbols and Philosophical Terminology

This thesis cannot define the logical symbols precisely, both because they may have somewhat different definitions in different logical systems and because the methods of definition used by logicians cannot be explained in a few words. The following list, therefore, merely offers rough equivalents in English for letters and symbols used in the thesis, with a few comments. As the thesis makes use of two logical systems (formal logic and Kosok's dialectical logic) that share some common symbols, I have divided the list. The glossary also includes the other symbols and some of the philosophical terms used in the thesis.

### Formal logic

- $\neg$  not.
- $\&$  and or conjunction.
- $\vee$  or or disjunction (generally *exclusive*: i.e. 'either A or B *not* both').
- $\rightarrow$  if (i.e. 'A  $\rightarrow$  B' means 'If A then B'). Known as material implication.
- $=$  is the same as, equivalence or identity.
- $\neq$  is not the same as, non-equivalence or non-identity.

### Dialectical logic

- $\rightarrow$  or  $\leftarrow$  determinate, or a relation of *dependence* (i.e. 'S  $\rightarrow$  O' entails that 'if O is dependent on S, then O is as a matter of necessity such that it cannot exist unless S exists').
- $\leftrightarrow$  co-determinate, or a relation of *reciprocal dependence* (i.e. 'S  $\leftrightarrow$  O' 'if O is reciprocally dependent on S, then O is as a matter of necessity such that it cannot exist unless S exists, and S is as a matter of necessity such that it cannot exist unless O exists'). Also called *boundary relation*.
- + or - affirmation or negation, opposites (i.e. '+S' means 'hypothesis' and '-S' means 'antithesis'). Also called *limit (Schranke)*.
- +− opposites or affirmation/negation (i.e. 'hypothesis *and* antithesis' or 'pre-synthesis'). Also called *boundary (Grenze)*.

'	level of reflection (i.e. [ $R$ , $R'$ , $R''$ , ...] indicates that a consecutive number of reflections $R$ have been completed).
O	other, alien or 'not-I'.
$R$	reflection or <i>Erfahrung</i> (Hegel)
S	self, or 'I'.

### Other Symbols

$E$	<i>Erlebnis</i> or 'lived experience' (Dilthey, Husserl).
$J$	judgement or 'I think' (Kant, <i>et al.</i> ).
$n$	all real numbers (0, 1, 2, 3, ...).
$X_F$	future X.
$X_N$	present X.
$X_P$	past X.

### Philosophical Terminology

Apprehension	what the mind intentionally experiences (i.e. we apprehend a six sided cube, event though we can only perceive three sides of the cube at any one time).
Appresentation	the indirect perceptual presentation of an object or part of an object mediated through the direct presentation of another object, or other parts of the object (i.e. the back of a door through the frontal aspect, or of other minds through their bodies).
Perception	the immediate intuition or experience of our senses; to be distinguished from apprehension.
Protention	the immediate forward reach of consciousness toward the future; immediate expectation (corresponds to retention).
Retention	the immediate backward reach of consciousness toward the past (corresponds to protention); to be distinguished from recollective memory.
Sublate	the translation used for the German <i>aufheben</i> ; 1. to raise or to hold, 2. to annul or cancel, 3. to keep or preserve.
Transcendent	outside of or beyond experience. Husserl: the status of the intentional object as constituted by the intentional mind.

## Glossary

Transcendental      before experience. Kant: sphere of consciousness not affected by experience, but brought to the object to constitute the object by the transcendental subject.

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