

UNDERSTANDING AS LISTENING:
DOSTOEVSKY INFLUENCE ON BAKHTINIAN PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING AS LISTENING: DOSTOEVSKY INFLUENCE ON BAKHTINIAN PHILOSOPHY

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The primary purpose of this study is to reveal the difference between early and later philosophy of Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin in terms of his ideas on the nature of intersubjective relationships. The main claim is that Bakhtin's philosophy is not dialogical from the beginning, but the concept of dialogue begins to play a central role after his study on Dostoevsky in 1929. Starting with the explanation of the conditions of living communication between different particular subjects, I show the main features of dialogic relationships that are internality, mutuality and simultaneity. Later, by focusing on Bakhtin's works that he wrote before Problems of Dostoevsky's Art, I argue that the necessary conditions of dialogic relationship do not exist in participative relationship, because in his early philosophy Bakhtin defines a one-sided relationship rather than the one that each participant actively relate themselves to others simultaneously. After the explication of the difference between his early and later conceptions of aesthetic relationship, I demonstrate that the threshold between Bakhtin's participative and dialogical understanding of intersubjective relationships is his phenomenological examination of Dostoevsky's relation with the hero in his polyphonic novels. Finally, I examine Dostoevsky's internally dialogic approach, as

Bakhtin defines, in order to display the dialogic relationship between the author and the hero in his polyphonic novels.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Bakhtin, dialogic relationship, Dostoevsky, participative thinking

ÖZ

DİNLEYEREK ANLAMAK: BAHTİN FELSEFESİNDEN DOSTOYEVSKI ETKİSİ

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Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, öznelerarası ilişkilerin doğası hakkındaki fikirleri açısından Mihail Mihayloviç Bahtin'in erken ve geç felsefesi arasındaki farkı ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bahtin'in felsefesinin başından beri diyalojik olmadığını ve diyalog kavramının ancak 1929'da Dostoyevski üzerine yaptığı çalışmadan sonra merkezi bir rol oynamaya başladığını iddia ediyorum. Farklı ve belirli özneler arasındaki canlı iletişim koşullarının incelenmesi yolu ile, diyalojik ilişkilerin temel özelliklerini içsellik, karşılıklılık ve eşzamanlılık olarak belirledikten sonra, *Dostoyevski Sanatının Sorunları*'ndan önce yazdığı eserlerine odaklanarak katılımcı düşünceyi açıklıyorum. Erken dönemde felsefesinde Bahtin özneler arasında her bir katılımcının aktif olarak birbiriyle karşılıklı ve eşzamanlı ilişkilenmediği tek taraflı bir ilişki tanımladığından, diyalojik ilişkinin gerekli koşullarının katılımcı ilişkilerde mevcut olmadığını açıklığa kavuşturuyorum. Erken ve geç dönemde estetik ilişki anlayışları arasındaki farkın açıklanmasından sonra, Dostoyevski'nin çokselsi romanında yazar-kahraman ilişkisini incelemesinin Bahtin'in öznelerarası ilişkilere dair katılımcı ve diyalojik anlayışı arasındaki eşiği teşkil ettiğini gösteriyorum. Son olarak, çok sesli romanlarında yazar ve kahraman arasındaki diyalojik ilişkiyi göstermek için Dostoyevski'nin içsel diyalojik yaklaşımını inceliyorum.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Estetik, Bahtin, diyalojik ilişki, Dostoyevski, katılımcı düşünme

*This suffer is in dedication to the memory of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky
whose art dazzles me more than anything else.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Art and Answerability
AH	Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity
CMF	The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art
DN	Discourse in the Novel
Notes	From Notes Made in 1970-71
PDP	Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics
PT	The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis
SG	The Problem of Speech Genres
TPA	Toward a Philosophy of the Act
TRDB	Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

How I started this project has determined greatly the content of the study. I first started the project as a study on Dostoevsky. The richness of different philosophical viewpoints and the way Dostoevsky treats philosophical problems in his novels obviously provides a fertile land for a thesis of philosophy. However, the problem was, Dostoevsky is not a philosopher in the strict sense of the word but he is definitely an artist, a great artist. It was necessary to find a way to cope with artistic works in a philosophical way, that is, to find a ground to bind philosophy with literature. It soon became clear that this was not as easy as it might seem. For instance, if you choose a theme from Dostoevsky's artistic works to scrutinize philosophically, the study object, in this case the novels, ceases to be artistic works in character but becomes philosophical monologues from the viewpoint of the researcher. However, literature on Dostoevsky seems as not bothered by this very fact.

Studies on Dostoevsky's literature are mostly about Dostoevsky and not about his novels. Dostoevsky's attitude toward modernity, Christianity, Christ, capitalism, nihilism, etc. The scholars examine his place among the contemporary Russian intelligentsia, his ideas on the "soul" of Russia, or his prophecy. They compare Tolstoy and Dostoevsky without even constructing a firm ground. From a philosopher's point of view, when it comes to Dostoevsky, it becomes difficult to draw the line between literature and philosophy, as well as to find a philosophical position to deal with Dostoevsky's literature becomes a serious problem itself. Now I can state retrospectively that the problem begins if, when you encounter a Dostoevsky novel, you assume that you are alone with the author. After a long struggle among secondary literature on Dostoevsky and readings of the philosophers whose thoughts might be related with Dostoevsky's, I found out Bakhtin's phenomenological attitude towards the novel and the problem finally solved for me. The point is that we are not alone

with the author while reading a Dostoevsky novel. The ground that makes it possible to study Dostoevsky's novels without treating them as non-artistic prose works stands on a trivet: to read a Dostoevsky novel is an event between the author, the hero and the reader. After encountering Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, the study went off course and evolved into a thesis on Bakhtin's philosophy itself. Still, my motivation is the same: to understand the possibilities of such an authorship embodied in Dostoevsky's novels. During my research, I realize that to study Bakhtin without studying Dostoevsky is impossible and vice versa. The importance of Bakhtin's groundbreaking work on Dostoevsky for Dostoevsky studies is more apparent, but it might not be obvious the influence of Dostoevsky on Bakhtin. I claim that the cornerstone of Bakhtin's philosophy is his work on Dostoevsky.

I argue that the concept of dialogue is not central in Bakhtin's philosophy *from the beginning*. As I illustrate in this thesis, he started with conceptualizing intersubjective relationships as participative and not dialogical. Moreover, I claim that his study *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* in 1929 constitutes the threshold between his "participative thinking" and "dialogical understanding". More clearly, only after the close examination of Dostoevsky's authorship and his relation with the hero in the novel in the process of artistic creation, dialogue becomes pivotal in Bakhtin's philosophy. Accordingly, the main task in this study becomes showing the difference between the participative thinking and dialogical understanding and Dostoevsky's influence on this change in Bakhtin's philosophy.

To be able to express the distinction in his early and later philosophy, in the second chapter, I started with the examination of Bakhtin's dialogical understanding of communication. I begin with the explanation of Bakhtin's objections against linguistic standpoint, especially his objection against Ferdinand de Saussure's study of general linguistics. I demonstrate Saussure's account, that is, the general linguistics' approach to the word, the concept of abstract language system and its approach to communication. Bakhtin's main objection to linguistics is the abstractive approach of linguistics to language and especially the disregard of speech phenomenon. The speech itself is not studied by general linguistics and the essentiality of communicative function of language is ignored. Contrarily, Bakhtin is interested in language in its living complexity rather than the abstract stable generalities. Unlike Saussure, Bakhtin argues that the speech itself can be studied but from a different, dialogical, perspective.

He differentiates his study from the linguistics and focuses on the personal utterance in the living communication. He defines the utterance as the unit of his metalinguistic study. After the illustration of boundaries of the utterance, I explain the relationship of the subject with the word and the mutual internal relationship between the speaking subjects. After that, the notions of addressivity and its relation with the speech genres is explained. At the end, the relationship between the word and its subject, between the utterances that belong to different speaking subjects and the relationship between the utterance and the concrete reality is demonstrated. The point is that Bakhtin reveals dialogic aspects of the word by considering unique perspectives of the speaking subjects in a dialogue and the conditions that make any utterance unrepeatable.

In the third chapter, I clearly show the difference in Bakhtin's understanding of experiencing oneself and the other and also the foundation of the possibility of aesthetic act before and after Dostoevsky book. In his early works, especially in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* and "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity", Bakhtin explains a one-sided relationship between the "I" and the "other". Firstly, I explain his understanding of human existence as participation in the event-of-Being. According to him, being is possible for a consciousness only in the categories of the "I" and the "other". I make clear his main concepts that are otherness, outsideness, situatedness in their relation with each other, and later explain the difference between the "I" and the "other". Bakhtin defines an architectonics of the self that depends on the aesthetic activity of the "I" in relation to the "other". He claims that "I" is always dependent on the "other" to become an artistically consummated whole of meaning since it is impossible to experience oneself from the position of the other, that is, from the outside of oneself. In participative thinking, artistic act is possible only by preserving a distant, outside position with regard to the other since only from a distant standpoint the excess of seeing is possible. In the aesthetic activity, the active participant completes the other passive participant from outside the other consciousness both spatially and temporally through the advantage of the surplus of seeing. The important point is that in the participative act of consummation, only one participant is active and the other is passive against both oneself and the other active participant. In that sense, aesthetic activity is a self-activity in which the other is given for the active consciousness. Whereas, in dialogical understanding, aesthetic activity becomes a mutual relationship with two active consciousnesses since it is no more an act of seeing the other in time

and space but being in dialogue with the other. The difference in perspective in respect of the possibility of aesthetic activity comes to scene in Bakhtin's philosophy after his examination of Dostoevsky's internally dialogic relationship with the hero in the novel. I explain that not only the conceptualization of aesthetic relationship but also the understanding of being in relation with the other changes in Bakhtin's philosophy after his Dostoevsky study.

In the fourth chapter, I concentrate on the polyphonic novel of Dostoevsky that creates a great impact on Bakhtin's philosophy. First, I describe the difference between "dialogy", polyphony and monology. Then, I explain the notion of polyphony and Dostoevsky's artistic devices to create a polyphonic novel. The crucial point is that polyphonic novel is possible only through an internally dialogic relationship between the author and the hero that depends the author's polyphonic approach in his relation with the hero.

All in all, the aim is to show the dialogic nature of communication, for Bakhtin sees being is being in relation with the other. With contrast to dialogical understanding, I maintain the one-sided nature of participative thinking in Bakhtin's early philosophy and the transition into his dialogic philosophy through showing the change in his perspective of aesthetic relationship with the other consciousness. Finally, I analyse in detail the artistic discovery of Dostoevsky that makes this change possible in Bakhtin's philosophy.

CHAPTER 2

BAKHTINIAN UNDERSTANDING OF LANGUAGE

“Bare viewpoints (without living and new observations) are fruitless.”
Bakhtin, *The Problem of the Text*, p.124

2.1 The Problem of Linguistics

To grasp the nature of dialogic relationship, we must realize the necessity of looking at the same thing from different points of view. Nothing verbal is isolated or self-sufficient in Bakhtin’s dialogic world but always within the complex web of relationalities. Approaching the same point from different perspectives does not necessarily serve to eliminate fallacious appearances in order to unmask the true nature of the thing; instead, each point of view enriches our understanding and get us closer to the whole of the study object. If we approach an object just one-sidedly and assert that, this is the only and the whole extent of it, it inescapably ends up with abstraction through resecting just one aspect from the real unity and stay blind to the whole itself.

Bakhtin’s main objections against the general linguistics, and in particular against Ferdinand de Saussure’s conception of language and speech, depends fundamentally on the problem of abstraction. It should be noted that “abstraction” gains always a negative tone when Bakhtin uses the term; it indicates partiality. A whole would be mechanical when its parts bind each other only externally, but not interpenetrate each other in the unity of the whole (AA: 1). It is possible, when one deal with such a mechanic whole, to excise the parts from the whole by cutting the connections—they can disjoint from the whole without distortion since their relationship is external—for treating them abstractly from the whole mechanism. On the other hand, an organic whole cannot be treated in the same way. What Bakhtin emphasizes is the real unity of the utterance, which we will clearly delineate. To understand why Bakhtin sees the real unit of communication as the utterance

(*vyskazyvanie*) and not words or sentences as language units, and further, the difference between linguistic way of analysis and metalinguistics, we should comprehend Bakhtin's objections against Saussurean conceptions of language, speech and speaking subject. Comparing these different understandings of language provides us a background in order to grasp the distinctive features of Bakhtin's dialogic understanding of language with contrast to the general linguistics. In order to do that, firstly, we will clarify the main notions of Saussurean conception of language and mainly the difference between the language system and the speech. After explaining linguistic way of analysis and the object of linguistic study, we will concentrate on Bakhtin's objections against linguistic analysis. Bakhtin offers a new conception of speech and a new method to study concrete discourse. This new type of analysis requires re-evaluating the unit of the study and we will continue with the explanation of the utterance by delineating the constitutive features of it. After we state the nature of the utterance, we will explicate the speaker's relation with the language units and with her own utterance, the relationships between the speaking subjects and the interrelations between the utterances. Once the difference and relations between the language units and the utterance become clarified, the aim and the object of metalinguistic study will be explained. All in all, the main aim is to reveal the inevitability of dialogical relations between subjects by looking at the utterance as the semantic position of a concrete speaking subject.

2.1.1 Saussurean Linguistics

In *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure defines language as a “self-contained whole and a principle of classification”, on the other hand, “[t]aken as a whole, speech is many-sided and heterogeneous; straddling several areas simultaneously-physical, physiological, and psychological-it belongs both to the individual and to society; we cannot put it into any category of human facts, for we cannot discover its unit” (Saussure, 1959: 9). According to him, linguistics must be studied as a science and for the very reason it must be studied apart from speech act of the groups or individual members of the society. Language itself is homogeneous, whereas speech is heterogeneous and not adequate for studying scientifically. Hence, he separates language [*langue*] from the actual speech [*parolé*] and claims that *langue*

is the object of linguistics. *Parolé* cannot be studied without *langue*, since it is both instrument and product of the speech, whereas *langue* can and must be studied separately as an abstract system of signs. Although language and speech are interdependent, they are completely different things.

He asserts that a sign is a combination of two constituents, namely material and conceptual aspects: signifier that is the sound image and signified that is the concept. It is important that he does not assume a direct link between the sign and the object that it relates, rather the link is inside the sign itself: between the signifier and the signified. For instance, the sound image of the sign “blue” has a link only to the concept of the “blue” and it has no necessary relation with the actual blue colour itself. Sign as a whole results from the association of signifier and signified and the meaning of the sign depends on this internal structure and also its relations with other signs. Meaning itself, for Saussure, is not referential but structural and relational: “No sign makes sense on its own but only in relation to other signs. Both the signifier and signified are purely relational entities” (Chandler, 2007: 118). However, there is no rational or necessary bond between the signifier and the signified; the relationship between them is completely arbitrary. Therefore, “language is a system of arbitrary signs” (Saussure, 1959: 73). Because of the arbitrariness and irrationalness of association of signifier and signified, there is no ground for discussing the sign; it is given to the individual through the abstract system of language. “The signifier, though to a appearances freely chosen with respect to the idea that it represents, is fixed, not free, with respect to the linguistic community that uses it” (Saussure, 1959: 71). To put it concisely, while there is no internal determinism with respect to the association of signifier and the signified, once it is fixed in the language system, neither any individual member nor the community itself *voluntarily* change the internal association of the sign.

Saussure supposes speech communication as a speaking-circuit. He presents a mechanical explanation of speech of the speaker and its receiving by the listener. Circuit begins in the speaker’s (S) brain, wherein the sound-image unlocks the concept that it associates, and Saussure describes this as the psychological aspect. Then, brain functions for the physiological process of producing sound and speech are produced by S. The sound, physical aspect of expression, travels to the ears of the listener (L) and in the reversed order the process occurs again in the brain of L. While in S’s brain

the concept unlocks the sound-image, in L's brain the sound-image unlocks the concept (Saussure, 1959: 11-2). Moreover, this circuit has an active and a passive part: "everything that goes from the associative center of the speaker to the ear of the listener is active, and everything that goes from the ear of the listener to his associative center is passive" (Saussure, 1959: 13). When this circuit is continuous, the speaker and the listener interchange their active and passive roles in the circuit; S becomes L and L becomes S and then reverse. Saussure describes the process as a fixed, mechanical process, which is not personal or creative. S and L exchange the signs within the scope of the system of unitary language. Each individual is just depository of language units and speech is just an instantiation of general rules of the system. "Language exists in the form of a sum of impressions deposited in the brain of each member of a community, almost like a dictionary of which identical copies have been distributed to each individual. Language exists in each individual, yet is common to all. Nor is it affected by the will of the depositaries" (Saussure, 1959: 19). Therefore, another important conclusion to be drawn is that language is related to the social while speech is an individual function.

Then, what does Bakhtin's objection against his linguistics as "abstraction" mean, given that Saussure has already defined language as an abstract system? As we noted above, the term "abstract" refers partiality in terms of Bakhtin's dialogic way of thinking; and according to him, what Saussure disintegrates is the mutual and internal relationships between the language and the speech, between the language and concrete speaking subject and between the speaker and the so-called listener. Saussure cuts the internal relation between speech and the language, when he approaches speech as an execution of language and focuses on the system itself rather than its instances. When he defines everyday speech and the language as two completely different things and claims that language, as a social institution, must be studied separately from the speech, he also cuts the vital connection between the particular speaking subject and the system of language. Furthermore, he explains everyday dialogue as a speaking-circuit. In his schema, speech and the meaning occur in isolation for the person who speaks and the person who listens. The speaker thinks in herself, produces the sound, expresses herself while the listener perceives the sound, and grasps the meaning of that expression inside himself. During this process, the only bridge from the speaker and to listener is the physical sound produced by the speaker. By this way, Saussure totally

disregards the internal relationship between the speaking subjects within a dialogue. In Saussure's linguistics, language is abstracted from speech, and consequently, the concrete speaking subject from the meaning. For Bakhtin, the main feature of the word that we must pay our attention is not its abstract internal structure but its *endless capacity to mean*.

2.2 Utterance as a Real Unit of Communication

Bakhtin regards the source of the problem of general linguistics, in terms of explaining speech phenomenon, as the ignorance of the communicative function of language. He says that "The subject of linguistics is only the material, only the means of speech communication, and not speech communication itself, not utterances in their essence and not the relationships among them (dialogic), not the forms of speech communication, and not speech genres" (PT: 118). Unless the nature of reciprocal dependence between language and the concrete speaking subject is recognized, we cannot define the object of linguistic study adequately. Bakhtin states that "Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity" (SG: 60). Even at first glance, we can see the difference in perspective: We are not talking about an individual member of society who replicates the possible instances of language anymore, but the utterance of a concrete person who participates in certain areas of human activity. This shift in perspective, however, is not enough to reveal the real whole of language phenomena: while Saussure defines an insurmountable distance between speech and language, Bakhtin defines *speech genres* somewhere in between.

In "The Problem of Speech Genres", Bakhtin's central concern is the *utterance*, more precisely the individual utterance, *as a real unit of speech communion* and not words or sentences as the units of systemically comprehended language (SG: 67). Unlike Saussure, Bakhtin's focus is on the concrete living utterance and not on the abstract system of language. In the beginning of the essay, he emphasizes the relation between different spheres of human activity and the use of language: "All the diverse areas of human activity involve the use of language. Quite understandably, the nature and forms of this use are just as diverse as are the areas of human activity" (SG: 60). Since the diversity of the areas of human activity is inexhaustible, the way we use the

language in these areas are extremely varied. Moreover, although one's own utterance is individual and personal in character, different spheres of human activity "develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances" (SG: 60). These "relatively stable types of utterances" are what Bakhtin calls *speech genres*.

As Bakhtin states, speech genres include both oral and written utterances from rejoinders of daily dialogue to the social and political commentary, from brief military commands to the multivolume novel, and from business documents to the scientific statements (SG, 61). From the standpoint of general linguistics, this heterogeneity precludes from finding a common ground to study speech scientifically and, indeed, from that perspective it might not be possible. However, to find common features of all the heterogeneity of speech genres, we should be aware of the fundamental and significant difference between primary (simple) and secondary (complex) speech genres (SG: 61). Primary genres are taken form in actual speech communication and have an immediate relation to the actual reality, whereas secondary genres are highly developed and organized cultural communication that includes various primary genres; such as novels and scientific works (SG: 62). According to Bakhtin, not just the differences but also the relations between primary and secondary genres should be revealed in order to understand the complex and profound nature of the utterance. Though a novel is also one complete utterance as a whole, in this chapter, we will analyse the primary genres and particularly the rejoinders of everyday dialogue.

When everyday speech genres considered from a general linguistic standpoint (as in Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*), the fundamental question is not even asked: What is speech itself? Without defining the "speech" or "speech flow" themselves, linguists break them down into units such as sentences, phrases and words. There is no definition for neither the beginning nor the end of the speech and there is no defined rule to segment this ambiguous given into smaller units (SG: 70). It has not been thought about the "whole" that they try to segment and study systemically; the term "our speech" has been used as if its meaning is self-evident. On the other hand, Bakhtin is vigorously against the typical underestimation of the communicative nature of language. For instance, while Wilhelm von Humboldt claims that language is a function of thought that emerges independently of communication, Vosslerians emphasize language's expressive function for the individual itself even in solitude. Bakhtin indicates that in both cases "[l]anguage needs only a speaker —one speaker—

and an object for his speech. And if language also serves as a means of communication, this is a secondary function that has nothing to do with its essence" (SG: 67). This ignorance of the essentiality of communicative function of language is what causes the ambiguity of the term "our speech". Consequently, utterance as a real unit of communication has not been studied at all:

Linguists have not yet transformed the imprecise *word* "speech"...into a definite (defined) *term* with clear-cut semantic boundaries. This can be explained by the almost complete lack of research into the problem of utterance and speech genres (and, consequently, of speech communion as well). ... Most frequently the expression "our speech" simply means any utterance of any person. But this meaning is never consistently sustained throughout (SG:70-71).

Unless one realises that language can exist only as concrete utterances of concrete subjects in a particular place at particular time, the essential role of communication cannot be understood in its fullest sense. Furthermore, when communication is seen as just a secondary function of individuals in society, the problem with the relation between the universal (the abstract body of language) and the individual (one's speech) remains unsolved. This is what drives Saussure to separate speech from the study of language. In fact, Bakhtin inverts the values of language system and the speech performance by focusing on the speech act of the subject (Clark & Holquist, 1984: 221). The realization of language depends on the coexistence of different perspectives in the actual communication that juxtaposes in the utterance. If one assumes that speech is nothing more than a limited and irregular representation of the abstract and comprehensible system of language, one inevitably falls out of the living diversity of language. On the contrary, Bakhtin always insists on the *living* utterance that may come to life only through the voice of a concrete person: "After all, language enters life through concrete utterances (which manifest language) and life enters language through concrete utterances as well" (SG: 63). Thus, the vagueness of "our speech" leads to nothing but misconception in terms of both the unit of real communication and the unit of linguistic study. The problem is the ignorance of wholeness of the utterance. The utterance as a unit of communion is a *whole* that cannot be divided into smaller units. Further, as long as it is not considered as a rejoinder in a dialogue, its semantic wholeness cannot be revealed at all.

2.2.1 Wholeness and Boundaries of the Utterance

After explaining the main problems of the perspective of general linguistics against speech phenomena, we should draw the boundaries for the utterance as a whole. As noted above, the speech circuit or speech flow in linguistics is considered only from the perspective of one active participant, the speaker, and the so-called listener's role is reduced to passively perceive and understand the speech. Bakhtin states that "One cannot say that these diagrams are false or they do not correspond to certain aspects of reality. But when they are put forth as the actual whole of speech communication, they become a scientific fiction" (SG: 68). Speech, in this picture, is considered as a one-way act. Utterance as a real unit of speech communion, however, is not something completed just by the speaker; it takes shape always in relation with the other. What is entirely missing here is that the essential role of the other participant in the dialogue.

According to Bakhtin, any understanding of live speech is inherently dialogic, to wit, any utterance anticipates and brings forth a response. The speech act, from the beginning, is oriented toward a possible response and when the listener perceives the speech, she *simultaneously* takes an active responsive attitude toward it (SG: 68). The speaker's and the listener's act of speaking and understanding are not one-way acts but occur simultaneously and reciprocally. This simultaneity in response —both the speaker and the listener are respondents at the same time—makes the listener an active participant of the dialogue even before the response is articulated. The lack of responsive understanding in speech communication from the viewpoint of linguistics results in the ignorance of the active role of the *other* in the process of speech communication (SG: 70). To put it concisely, response—both the anticipated response of the listener from the position of the speaker and the active responsive understanding of the listener—turns the impersonal language unit into an utterance that inevitably belongs to someone.

On the other hand, in the schematic diagrams of general linguistics, since the communicative function is ignored, the process of speech is regarded as successively ordered. In this case, the expression is considered as if a presentation prepared beforehand without knowing it is for whom since the so-called passive listener has no essential role in the constitution of that expression. Whereas we never speak without

knowledge of an interlocutor and without knowing in what circumstances the speech occurs; in such a situation we would have nothing meaningful to say. For instance, how could a lecturer create her speech without knowing who the audience is? Whether the audience is freshman or graduate class or even a group completely alien to the subject is the situation that directly affects the speech itself just from the beginning and throughout the speech. The other, in this sense, is always a constitutive part of our utterances. The other subject is not a passive listener but an active participant in the dialogue. The speaker plans her speech *towards* the other; in a live speech, we do not project our sentences to a neutral space. Between the listener and the speaker, there is no “wall” that provides a neutral space for exchanging the ideas. From the linguistic perspective, the expression is a neutral medium to project what is intended to be transmitted. It is assumed that the first step in the succession is the construction of the speech, the second is its expression and the third is the passive understanding of that expression. In a real communication, however, the utterance itself takes form in relation with the other’s anticipated response. Neither the utterance nor the understanding itself involves solely one subject, but it is an *event* that necessitates at least two participants dialogically related toward each other.¹ Active responsive understanding simultaneously inheres in the utterance itself from the beginning through the speaking subject’s anticipation of a response. Only if we cut this reciprocal simultaneous process of expression and understanding, speech can be analysed step by step from different perspectives of the listener and the speaker successively. Furthermore, when the simultaneous active roles of participants in a dialogue reduced to succession of divided activities of independent individuals, the speech product becomes either impersonal (as in Saussure) or solely psychological (as in Vosslerians). The utterance inevitably belongs to someone but, as Bakhtin insists, never belongs to solely one.

The utterance is the real unit of speech communication (SG: 71). The question is how we can differentiate the utterance from the units of linguistic study. While a sentence has a grammatical unity—punctuation ends the sentence—and framed by the other sentences, an utterance’s unity requires a different situation:

The boundaries of each concrete utterance as a unit of speech communication are determined by a change of speaking subjects, that

¹ “Event” is the translation of Russian *sobytie* and originally means the coexistence of beings.

is, a change of speakers. Any utterance—from a short (single-word) rejoinder in everyday dialogue to the large novel or scientific treatise—has, so to speak, an absolute beginning and an absolute end: its beginning is preceded by the utterances of others, and its end is followed by the responsive utterances of others (SG: 71).

The utterance is always personal. It begins by the concrete speaking subject and ends by the “change of subjects.” In other words, change of speaking subjects frames the utterance from the outside; it differentiates one’s own utterance from the other’s utterances.

The change of speaking subjects is the first constitutive feature of the utterance that distinguishes it from the language units. Bakhtin does not try to delimit the utterance in terms of any abstract and systemic rules that transcend the utterance; instead, he directly looks at the utterance itself precisely because he is thinking on the *whole* rather than analyzing certain features of the speech phenomenon. Any utterance belongs to a particular person, and, has an immediate relation with the current reality; that is, the utterance as a rejoinder in a dialogue has no abstract conventional limits. It has certain boundaries, which is inherent itself, and explicit in the change of the speakers. Utterance is not something that can be circumscribed by linguistic markers. The change of speaking subjects is clearly observable by each participant of any living communication. This can be seen most simply and clearly especially when it is in the form of an actual dialogue. Each speaker in a dialogue completes her own utterance to leave her place to the other. However, the completion of one’s own utterance *for oneself*, and not from the perspective of the other, does not necessarily coincide with the change of speaking subjects.

The second constitutive feature is the *finalization* of the utterance from within and for the speaker himself; it is the boundary between one’s own utterances. Bakhtin articulates it as follows: “The finalization of the utterance is, if you will, the inner side of the change of speaking subjects. The change can only take place because the speaker has said (or written) *everything* that he wishes to say at a particular moment or under particular circumstances” (SG: 76). Only if the subject has said “*everything* that he wishes to say”, his own utterance has completed *for himself*. It is the boundary, from the inside, that makes one’s own utterance a whole. In an actual dialogue, we clearly sense the end of the speech of both the other and our own, and obviously, at the end of each sentence we do not wonder whether the speech ends in that moment or not.

The utterance become a finalized whole for us when we sense the silent *dixi* at the end of the whole that one wants to say (SG: 72).² In a sense, hearing the silent *dixi* is a shared experience for both the speaker and the other participants in dialogue.

Indeed, it *must be* a shared experience since the very moment of *dixi* indicates the change of speaking subjects for both the speaker and the listener at the same time. Bakhtin maintains that “the possibility of responding to it” or “of assuming a responsive attitude toward it” is the first and foremost criterion for the finalization of the utterance (SG: 76). In a dialogue—since any utterance is a rejoinder in dialogue, it is accurate for the utterance as well but on a different level—there must be at least two participants simultaneously take an active responsive attitude toward each other. An utterance becomes a *whole* when it is possible for the speaker to assume a response and for the listener to respond to it. That is to say, finalized wholeness of the utterance is what guaranteeing the possibility of a response. If the response is articulated without any delay, it is the moment of *dixi* where the speaking subjects change and the listener turns into the speaker. In fact, the subject is never purely a speaker or a listener: in an actual dialogue, the listener becomes the speaker, since “[a]ny understanding is imbued with response and necessarily elicits it” (SG: 68). It is not a sequential process that two subjects understand each other since the understanding itself is not an isolated event but is always related with the other. Bakhtin says “[u]nderstanding 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: 282). To understand the other, at the same time, means to take an active responsive attitude towards the other. Consequently, passive understanding, that is, understanding within the boundaries of one and the same consciousness, is not possible at all.

Linguists assume an objective (external) position against the language, and further, observe the speech phenomenon as if one’s speech is not an expression of a particular semantic position but merely a “code” devoid of personality. As we noted above, language is dead outside the concrete utterance of a particular speaking subject. When the speech is de-personified, it is reduced to lifeless bits of possible utterances rather than being a semantic whole. Thereby, the linguists become capable of dealing with them as mere things. On the one hand, any utterance indispensably reflects the world-view of the speaker, and on the other hand, the person who observes is not an

² Latin expression that means “I have spoken”.

outsider. Bakhtin frequently refers to the position of the observer in quantum physics wherein the observer changes what he observes and this situation makes him an *active* part of the experiment itself (PT: 123). Similarly, the person who understands (even when the utterance is not addressed to her) cannot understand the utterance (the semantic wholeness of the utterance) without taking an active responsive position since understanding is always dialogic in itself. Not just the addressee of the utterance but also the observer of the dialogue become an interlocutor instead of a passive perceiver. In the utterance, different evaluative positions collide with each other. The reification of the utterance is alien to Bakhtin's understanding: "The text is not a thing, and therefore the second consciousness, the consciousness of the perceiver, can in no way be eliminated or neutralized" (PT: 107).³ The other participant in speech communication changes the meaning of the utterance from the beginning. From the very beginning, the *other* participates in the authorship of the utterance. Precisely for this reason, Bakhtin deals with the "utterance as a real unit of communication" from the perspectives of both the listener and the speaker and also from the perspective of a third party. Only in that way, the wholeness of the utterance can be revealed. On the contrary, when linguists analyse a sentence in terms of its language meaning, they do not ask the question "Whose sentence is this?" and indeed do not need to know the answer. From a Bakhtinian perspective, linguists focus on the inanimate skeleton of language and do not recognize the living, historical and internally social character of the actual communication. In that kind of study, there is only one active position, that is, the position of the observer and this position is not relative to any other. The utterance (the authorial intent of the speaker/author) becomes reified as well as the observer's understanding is narrowed. Understanding the meaning of the utterance turns into a subject-object relationship, which does not correspond to the real phenomenon. The utterance is where at least two consciousnesses encounter one another. Neither the viewpoint of the observer (listener/reader) can be neutralized nor can the particular semantic position of the speaking subject be disregarded. Bakhtin says:

³ In "The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis" (written in 1959-1961) Bakhtin uses the term "text" in the broad sense for "any coherent complex of signs" (p.103). Later, in the "From Notes Made in 1970-71", he says: "The term "text" is not at all adequate to the essence of the entire utterance" (p.136). The point is that linguistic signs do not bear the semantic depth of an utterance.

It is not enough for the utterance to be understood in terms of *language*. An absolutely understood and completed sentence, if it is a sentence and not an utterance comprised of one sentence, cannot evoke a responsive reaction: it is comprehensible, but it is still not *all*. This *all*—the indicator of the *wholeness* of the utterance—is subject neither to grammatical nor to abstract semantic definition (SG: 76).

The *all* can be illuminated only from a dialogic perspective and not from the position of linguistics. To understand the “language meaning” means to understand a word’s or a sentence’s possible function in an entire utterance and not the same with understanding the whole meaning of the utterance (SG: 83). Language ensures the mutual understanding but a language unit does not express or create an active responsive understanding. On the other hand, when the subjects frames the sentence from both sides, the sentence becomes an utterance and acquires new qualities (dialogic) (SG: 73). It is not the same unit as sentence for linguistics, since it is not framed by the same subject’s other sentences anymore; instead, it is a rejoinder in a dialogue between different speaking subjects. An utterance can be framed, and so realized, only by the different positions and thoughts of at least two speaking subjects. A sentence, however, “is a relatively complete thought, directly correlated with the other thoughts of a single speaker” and therefore it is a self-enclosed fragment without expecting an answer (SG: 73). Since the limits of the context of a sentence determined by the single consciousness of the speaker, the sentence itself has no direct or personal correlation with the other’s utterances (SG: 73). It is not towards the other; hence, it neither calls for nor evokes a response. On the contrary, the utterance itself is dialogic; after all, it is not possible without an-other or outside the dialogue. Otherness (*chuzhdost’*) and outsidedness (*vnenakhodimost*) of the speaking subjects are necessary conditions for any dialogue to occur (compositionally); however, in the absence of an internal and mutual relationship between at least two speaking subjects, no sentence can assume a dialogic character. The two features of boundaries and wholeness of the utterance, namely, the change of speaking subjects and the finalization, are determined by not one subject, or an observer outside the dialogue, but by the coexistence of different participants in dialogue actively responding each other. This is why nothing but the possibility of a response makes a sentence an utterance. The point is that dialogue, in Bakhtin’s understanding, is not an *external form* of regulation but an *internal relationship* between at least two subjects, two non-coinciding world-views and two different semantic positions.

2.3 Speech Genres and Dialogical Spaces In-between

So far, we delineate mainly the nature of the utterance in terms of its relation with the speaking subject and her relation with the other participants in the dialogue. Even though the utterance is always personal, it takes shape in relation with the other and under the ineluctable condition that is the other's intervention. It can be said that Bakhtin puts forward an intricate case in terms of the ownership of a personal utterance by arguing that the utterance is always personal but is not possible without the other's participation. Besides, although distinct from the neutral language units, an utterance is created by means of those language units. At this point, Bakhtin's concern is how and under which conditions the subject takes over the word and makes it her own, but always and necessarily in a relation with the other active participants.

Both the utterance and understanding are responsive; the relation with the other transforms them from the inside. Furthermore, Bakhtin claims that the *meaning* itself is responsive in the sense that, it is possible only in a dialogue, a dialogue with another consciousness, with the others' utterances, with the other context: "Anything that does not respond to something seems meaningless to us; it is removed from dialogue" (Notes: 145). To understand an utterance means to understand its responsive position in the given context and, at the same time, the speaker's position under particular circumstances which inescapably determines the creation of the utterance. Neither the utterance as a created entity nor the concrete consciousness of a person can be understood separately. In "Discourse in the Novel", Bakhtin states that "[t]he authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogized heteroglossia, anonymous and social as language, but simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and accented as an individual utterance" (p: 272).⁴ The "dialogized heteroglossia" is the space where different viewpoints encounter in the same theme as well as different individual voices juxtapose in the word itself. Neither between the word and the subject nor between the word and its object there is a *void*, but as Bakhtin called, an *elastic environment*:

[B]etween the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about

⁴ In the given quotation, the word translated as "heteroglossia" is "raznorečie" which means "different-speech-ness" or "diversity of social speech types".

the same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that is often difficult to penetrate. It is precisely in the process of living interaction with this specific environment that the word may be individualized and given stylistic shape (DN: 276).

Therefore, the essential issue that needs explanation is the relationship between one's own word and that of the others'. Bakhtin says in the *Notes*: "I live in a world of others' words" (p: 143). We hear or read the others' words, we take offense at the other's word or rejoice at a news and any sphere of a person's life is full of the others' words and responses. Words do not exist in the experience of a living consciousness as something that belongs to nobody (apart from the specialized study on word). As Bakhtin states "[a]ll of each individual's words are divided into the categories of his own and others', but the boundaries between them can change, and a tense dialogic struggle takes place on the boundaries" (Notes: 143). He even mentions in "Discourse in the Novel" that a great part of everyday communication is composed of the transmission of others' words in varying ways (DN: 338). It can be said that an important part of daily conversations is conveying what others say and talking about what has been already said. The speaker's relation with her own word and the other's words affects the content and style of the utterance. The utterance manifests the active position of the speaker in respect of both the theme (that she orients her words) and the other's utterances on the same theme. A word or a sentence, however, as language units, cannot express the position of the speaker since they are not the *whole* but the *means* for one's expression and only when they function as a whole utterance, they can reflect a person's position and then become one's active responsive position, that is, the utterance.

Bakhtin claims that word exist in three aspects in its relation with the speaking subject:

[...]as a neutral word of language, belonging to nobody; as an *other's* word, which belongs to another person and is filled with echoes of the other's utterance; and finally, as *my* word, for, since I am dealing with it in a particular situation, with a particular speech plan, it is already imbued with my expression. (SG: 88).

Contrarily, from the general linguistics' standpoint, signs relate only with each other within the abstract system of language (without assuming a relation with the concrete subject or the concrete reality). Therefore, the understanding of a statement or a collective of statements is reduced to knowing the neutral meaning and function

of the signs. That is to say, the so-called passive listener/reader replicates the meaning of the speaker/author's words in his own mind as if they fly through the void between subjects without any interruption. This picture conveys the idea that any word or sentence can be used by anyone in an identical manner; as Saussure says, vocabulary that we use is the same for everyone "almost like a dictionary of which identical copies have been distributed to each individual". What is individual is our free selection of these language means to express any idea. It is, as if, in the actual communication, we choose our words from a dictionary that is indifferent to the individual speaker. Words can be used again and again by anyone and everyone, but they remain unscratched as if they will be used for the first time; no one can leave a trace on them. Words and sentences as language units are neutral, and then, anonymous. Such an explanation of language is inconsistent with speech phenomenon and it remains shallow for mainly two reasons: neither we find the word untouched nor can we utter anything neutrally. Word, not as a language unit but an utterance, is always expressive whether it is others' or mine. Bakhtin claims "[t]here can be no such thing as an absolutely neutral utterance" (SG: 84). We encounter the word in the dialogical space that we share with the others and when we use the other's word, it is not simply an instantiation or a repetition. What transcends the neutral repetition of the word *in a new utterance* is what makes a word one's own: the personal expressive intonation of the author-speaker as well as the position of the utterance as a link in the chain of speech communication.

The expressive aspect of the utterance determines its composition and style and exists within every sphere of communication in varying degrees (SG: 84). Contrary to the systematic understanding of language, it is only the utterance that expresses the speaker's emotionally evaluative attitude towards a particular reality. In accordance with this attitude, the speaker chooses the linguistic means for the speech. Language units themselves have no ability to manifest any particular evaluation. Bakhtin gives an example to illustrate the difference between the expressiveness of language tools and utterances: "The word 'darling'—which is affectionate in both the meaning of its root and its suffix—is in itself, as a language unit, just as neutral as the word 'distance'" (SG: 84). Without being addressed to someone, without having a direct relation with the concrete reality and without the expressive intonation of a concrete person any word in language cannot serve as an expression of an evaluative position.

Any word or sentence can acquire this expressive aspect only in the concrete utterance (SG: 85). Depending on the content and the intonation of the utterance, the same word “darling” can acquire affectionate or derisive tones. That is why, expressive intonation is one of the constitutive markers of the utterance. Bakhtin states, “If an individual word is pronounced with expressive intonation it is no longer a word, but a completed utterance expressed by one word” (SG: 85).

It is obvious that neutral dictionary meanings of the words ensure mutual understanding between participants in communication. Word as an item in dictionary has *meaning*; however, it lacks a *specific sense* (SG: 86). Only in the utterance, the meaning of a word relates to the particular conditions of speech communication since it is surrounded by a specific context. That is why, in an actual speech communication, we do not simply understand dictionary meaning of the word but we assume an active responsive position against what has been said. Emotion, evaluation and expression can emerge only in the process of the word’s live usage in a concrete utterance (SG: 87). In other words, these qualities transcend the word as a linguistic entity. The process of understanding is not similar to the process of translating. While we are reading or listening, we do not find the meanings of single words in our minds and then comprehend the overall meaning of sentences; rather we evaluate, we approach to the others’ utterances emotionally and we always take an active responsive position against both the speaker and the content of his speech.

We encounter words only in particular individual utterances, and only in the utterance, words gain an individual expression that is determined by the unrepeatable content of the utterance (SG: 88). Further, just like the unrepeatability of a particular situation that the utterance relates, the utterance itself is also unrepeatable. Words as language units in the text can be repeated and reproduced in an identical manner; that is, they can fulfil their function in different positions in the text again and again (PT: 105). Even the text itself, oral or printed, can be reproduced physically in several times. Conversely, since the surrounding extra-verbal reality cannot be reproduced, it is impossible to repeat an utterance in an identical manner and repetition always adds something new in the content. Linguistically, the word serves for the production and reproduction of the text and functions only in the close system of a given language; to wit, as a language unit, it is related only with other linguistic entities and has no immediate relation with living reality. However, a word or a text as an utterance is

always an experience of a concrete consciousness. Here, we do not imply only the practical aspects of the speech phenomenon (such as giving a command or writing a note to remind something) but historical, social, ideological and emotional aspects must also be taken into account. For instance, a slogan word is never merely a linguistic entity and never totally coincides with the dictionary meaning of the word but gains more semantic depth (e.g., “Freedom!” or “Enough!”) but always transcends it. Alongside the dictionary meaning of the words, when we find them, words are always already populated by others’ personal intonation as well as impersonal expressive intonation defined by generic forms of the utterances.

2.3.1 Addressivity and Generic Forms of Utterances

We have already said that the utterance is always responsive; i.e., brings forth and anticipates an answer. Bakhtin states, “an utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication, and it cannot be broken off from the preceding links that determine it both from within and from without” (SG: 94). While the concrete speaking subject creates those links between his own and other’s utterances, the past utterances on the same theme or the ones created under similar conditions, have an effect on his utterance and its expression in a great extent. In a sense, others’ utterances constitute a precondition for the actualization of language. Indeed, no one can utter anything without having any kind of a relation with the past utterances on the same object or theme of speech in a given context. Bakhtin illustrates this as follows in two different texts approximately twenty years apart:

On all its various routes toward the object, in all its directions, the word encounters an alien word and cannot help encountering it in a living, tension-filled interaction. Only the mythical Adam, who approached a virginal and as yet verbally unqualified world with the first word, could really have escaped from start to finish this dialogic inter-orientation with the alien word that occurs in the object (DN: 279).

The object, as it were, has already been articulated, disputed, elucidated, and evaluated in various ways. Various viewpoints, world views, and trends cross, converge, and diverge in it. The speaker is not the biblical Adam, dealing only with virgin and still unnamed objects, giving them names for the first time. Simplistic ideas about communication as a logical-psychological basis for the sentence recall this mythical Adam (SG: 93).

Bakhtin's objection against general linguistics can be found in his different works written in a long period. He relentlessly criticizes not only linguistics but also philosophy of language and stylistics, regarding their common misconception of language and their approach to the speaking subject. According to him, these different disciplines improperly taking as a unity and abstract the language depending on their understanding of the subject and its relation with the society. If the "I" were solipsistic and its relation with the other "I"s were only external, than a given language system would reflect the real case. In *Course in General Linguistics* Saussure says that "[i]n separating language from speaking we are at the same time separating: (1) what is social from what is individual; and (2) what is essential from what is accessory and more or less accidental" (p: 14). From a Bakhtinian perspective, these statements display the main problems regarding our concern: (1) the individualization of the internally social characteristics of the speech and speaking subject and (2) failure to see the socially typified languages in the same language. According to Bakhtin, language is not given to the "individual" but actively created by the concrete speaking subjects; not by the society, that transcends the individuals. Saussure claims that "[l]anguage is not a function of the speaker; it is a product that is *passively assimilated* [emphasis added] by the individual" (Saussure, 1959: 14). Contrarily, Bakhtin asserts that, in the process of living communication, what concrete speaking subject relates is not the language system and its norms; but the others' utterances and the speaking subject must *actively assimilate* the other's word to make it her own. He says that we know language before we study grammar. We do not get the word from the dictionary in any way, but from other people's utterances, created in a social environment, already fitted in a context and filled with other's personal intentions and intonations. In other words, "[r]ather than assume a transcendent grammar to which actual speech performance can be only imperfectly compared, Bakhtin looks at the social articulation and uses of diversity" (Stewart, 1983: 268). There is no unbridgeable gap between the language and the utterance since language is not possible without the living communication between the subjects. Cutting the connection between language and speech separates the subject from the language and from the society. Hence, it is not surprising that from a purely linguistic standpoint, speech is seen as totally heterogeneous and stable types of utterances stay out of sight.

When language is seen as an abstract system lying beyond the will of individual speaking subjects, the change in language is automatically reduced to changes of signs. Hence, general linguistics ignores the historical and social character of living discourse. Moreover, Bakhtin states that actual social interrelations and historical processes are the causes for sets of different types of utterances, which are speech genres. We can argue that Bakhtin places speech genres somewhere between *la parolé*, or the living communication, and *la langue*; or in Bakhtin's terminology, the abstract unitary language. If the speaker's will is separated from the changes in language, then speech in general, with its all heterogeneity, turns out to be a mass that is inadequate for studying scientifically. When speech is "in general", we have no object for study at all. We have already cleared the main characteristics of the utterance and determined the boundaries of our study object. That means, the change of speaking subjects frames the utterance from the outside and the finalized wholeness of the utterance from the inside. The utterance is a whole that cannot be divided further into smaller units. Language, as an object of linguistic study, must be abstracted from the living utterances in order to be studied scientifically. In that regard, Bakhtin does not claim that language as a living and created entity has evolved from bottom to top; from particular utterances to the totality of utterances that constitutes the totality of language. Linguistic entities ensure mutual understanding and are means for the utterance as a real unit of speech communication. However, the point is that, each utterance satisfies both the requirements of language and the generic requirements of speech types in a given sphere of communication. The utterance is where those different forces of unity and diversity encounter. If the existence of diversity of speech types is not realised, the fictitious gap between speech communication and language cannot be overcome. Bakhtin says:

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 (SG: 87).

A unitary language is not given but created (DN: 270). Speech genres, however, is given to the speaking subject (SG: 78). We learn our native language from concrete utterances, we create ours by actively assimilating the other's words in living communication with other. Furthermore, even if we are not aware of the existence of

speech genres theoretically, we are already using them. It is impossible to create a speech genre for a particular speaking subject. This is arguably the most important difference between Saussurean linguistics and Bakhtinian analysis of language. It is not the fact that the language as a system is given to the individual speaker and an individual member of society cannot cause a change of the system; hence, forms of speech, not the language are given to the speaking subjects and they are given through the individual utterances of others. Language is stratified by the living forces that are inherent in the living discourse, stratified not just into different dialects but also to the different types of speech. All our utterances are created in definite speech genres, and we actively assimilate the language forms only in those generic types of utterances. Bakhtin states that those generic forms of speech are given to us in almost the same way our native language is given to us (SG: 78). In *The Problem of Speech Genres*, he says that “[i]f speech genres did not exist and we had not mastered in them, if we had to originate them during the speech process and construct each utterance at will for the first time, speech communication would be almost impossible” (p. 79). Learning the language is possible only through the other utterances that are always created in definite speech genres and to learn a language is equal to learn to construct utterances in those given genres. Having knowledge of lexicon, grammar, and syntax of a certain national language is not sufficient to be able to communicate in that language. Albeit in one's own native language, it might be difficult to choose the correct word to say in the correct way in certain areas of social communication. Bakhtin explains this as the lack of practical command of the generic forms used in the given social spheres and says that “[f]requently a person who has an excellent command of speech in some areas of cultural communication, who is able to read a scholarly discussion, who speaks very well on social questions, is silent or very awkward in social conversation” (SG: 80). Circumstances like cultural differences, being belong to different generations or being connected to different religions are some of the causes speaking subjects to have different repertoire of genres of social communication. The social environment we live in results in our familiarity with different areas of social interaction and therefore different types of speech, even though we speak in the same national language. The linguistic forms should be reproduced in the form of an utterance in a speech genre that is chosen in acquaintance with the speaker's speech plan in a given sphere of interaction. To be able to construct individual sentences is

not the same as to participate in social communication. As we noted, individual words and sentences are the parts of utterances and without being framed by a certain context and filled with the individual expression of the speaking subject, cannot be a rejoinder in a dialogue and cannot create a response.

There is a large number of speech genres that are widespread in everyday communication and Bakhtin exemplifies some of them as “greetings, farewells, congratulations, all kinds of wishes and information about health, business and so forth” (SG: 79). It is quite possible to enlarge the number of examples in accordance with the extreme variety of situations that one can engage in everyday social life. Moreover, they differ depending on not just the situation but also social status or personal interrelations and they always require a certain tone, a certain expressive intonation. A military order, meeting with a colleague or request for a favour from a higher authority require both different forms of constructing the whole and different kinds of tonalities that are not personal expressive intonation but impersonal, belong to the generic forms of speech themselves. A certain speaking subject, while creating her utterances, conforms to the requirements of the given speech genres as well as requirements of the language.

The speaking subject creates the utterance that is personal and unrepeatable always in a definite speech genre. Speech genres themselves are impersonal whereas utterance is always personal. While speech genres are social and given to the subject, an utterance always belongs to a certain person since it is always the creation of a concrete subject. Speech genres define certain expressive tonality for the utterance, however, Bakhtin states that “[t]he majority of these genres are subject to free creative reformulation” (SG: 87). To be able to use a genre creatively necessitates being able to manipulate the given genre. A concrete speaking subject can manipulate the forms of speech (written or oral) and re-accentuate it. That is why, while always created in a socially typified and given form, an utterance can represent the *voice* of the particular speaking subject. The main point is that word is not univocal but empty without the voice of a concrete person and can acquire expressive intonation (personal or impersonal/generic) only in the utterance.

Until now, we considered the utterance mainly as a rejoinder in everyday dialogue. Boundaries of the utterance are determined by the change of speech subjects. It is created as a response to the previous utterances and always calls for an answer. A

word has always a bidirectional orientation. Bakhtin repeatedly reminds that “[a]ny utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication of a particular sphere” (SG: 91). That is to say, it is neither the beginning without answering anything nor the end without causing any response. When we step back from everyday dialogue and broaden our focus to the cultural communication, responsivity of the utterance gains a new scale. Each utterance is a rejoinder in an endless dialogue. Bakhtin asserts that “the utterance occupies a particular *definite* position in a given sphere of communication. It is impossible to determine its position without correlating it with other positions” (SG: 91). Utterances are not indifferent to one another; rather, they are mutually aware of and reflect one another.

As Bakhtin articulates, the prevailing idea assumes that the utterance is determined by the speaker’s will, worldview, emotions and evaluations on the one hand, and the object of his speech and the language means on the other (SG: 90). These are not the only features that have an effect on the utterance. The missing part is still the same: the relation with the others’ utterances. Any concrete utterance as a link in the speech communion is not just a response to the preceding but also related to the succeeding utterances; it always anticipates the active responsive understanding of the others. Each utterance is necessarily directed to someone. The quality of being directed to someone is what Bakhtin calls *addressivity* and it is a constitutive marker of the utterance (SG: 95). We already explained that being belong to a definite speaking person and being directed to the other, that is anticipation of a response, are the main qualities that distinguish the utterance from the neutral language units. The addressee and the concrete reality determine the generic style of the utterance. The extra-verbal reality consists of several elements, such as social status of speaking person and the other participants, the shared memories in a given community, speaker’s personal emotional and evaluative position against the others, and the way speaker/writer senses the addressees. Bakhtin asserts, “[e]ach speech genre in each area of speech communication has its own typical conception of the addressee, and this defines it as a genre” (SG: 95).

The addressee determines generic specifications since the speaking subject does not anticipate *any* response, but actively try to determine the other’s responsive understanding (SG: 95). The speaking subject constructs the utterance in accordance with the anticipating response of the addressee. In order to do that, each speaking

subject must take into account the apperceptive background of the addressee's perception of his speech. In the "Discourse in the Novel" Bakhtin says:

Therefore his [the speaker's] orientation toward the listener is an orientation toward a specific conceptual horizon, toward the specific world of the listener; it introduces totally new elements of his discourse; [...] The speaker strives to get a reading on his own, and on his own conceptual system that determines this word, within the alien conceptual system of the understanding receiver; he enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system. The speaker breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener's apperceptive background (p: 282).

Therefore, one's relationship with the other's word is not an external relationship that finds its foundation on an abstract, third ground—that is, the abstract and given system of language. Saussurean linguistics does not explain thoroughly the speaker's relation with the linguistic entities. Rather, undetermined "speech" is assumed as accidental. This paves the way for speech phenomenon to stay out of the area of scientific analysis. When the word's relationship with both the subject and the object is not recognized, the speaker's relation with the word is cognized as an external one. In order to be able to get into a relationship, two completely separated and isolated entities, require a third ground that is abstracted from the others. That is, if we consider from the other side, language, in Saussurean linguistics, is abstracted both from the object of speech and the speaker. It is not because the speech communication is accidental and unsuitable to study. In fact, it has to be abstracted since the internal relation between the speaker and the word is separated from each other. The speaking subject relates the word through the other people's words, thus *in* the utterance the speaker encounters with the other. Each word as an utterance is already filled with the expressions of speaking subjects in that community. The *ad hoc* abstraction of language is indeed the isolation of speaking subjects' from each other. If there were no encounter in the word itself, the complete isolation of subjects would follow. When there is no internal relation between the speaking subjects or the subject and the word, there must be an abstract third to be able to justify the obviously existing relation between them. Similar to the role that God plays in Cartesian mind-body dualism, abstract language system comes to the scene as the necessary third to be the ground of seemingly unrelated entities.

There is no environment outside the utterance, where different concrete consciousnesses encounter with each other, exchange the word and passively understand each other. The dialogical space between particular speaking subjects is filled with the other's utterances. Without internal interaction with the other, speech act is not possible. Speaking subjects are not related to only the object of speech and their own words on that object, but each utterance requires entering into dialogical relationships with others, their worldview, and their emotional evaluation of both the content and his own speech. That is why, to utter something means to reach beyond oneself and entering into a new alien territory, into the “world of others’ words” (Notes: 143).

2.4 Metalinguistics

Obviously, Bakhtin’s critique of Saussure does not mean that linguistic study is useless, but the point is that the linguistics of utterance is not applicable at all. Linguistics should confirm that its object of study is abstracted from the real speech phenomenon; that is, abstract unitary language is not the necessary source for speech act but exactly the opposite is the case. Furthermore, when language is assumed as given to the subject and speech as unsuitable to be studied, how the speaking subjects relates to the language system and the process of language learning remains ambiguous. Language is not abstract but a living entity and it lives through the utterances of concrete speaking subjects. In short, if we aim to understand the language or the speech phenomenon, we must assign our object of study properly. To be able to study the living language and concrete utterance, to study the dialogic word, we need a methodology other than of linguistics. Bakhtin states

Where there is no word and no language, there can be no dialogic relations; they cannot exist among objects or logical quantities (concepts, judgments, and so forth). Dialogic relations presuppose a language, but they do not reside within the system of a language. They are impossible among elements of a language. The specific nature of relations requires special study (PT: 117).

In *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, Bakhtin introduces the term *metalinguistics* and explain the object of analysis (p: 181). Both linguistics and metalinguistics study the same object, that is, the word; however, from completely different angles. Until this point, we already specified what linguistics excludes from

the word to turn it into an object of study for itself. Alongside the object, the word's relation with the speaking subject and the concrete reality; and the mutual relations between speaking subjects are out of the linguistic study. Exactly these aspects of the word; namely the dialogic relations in and between the utterances, is the concern of metalinguistic study.

Metalinguistics studies not language but *discourse*; that is, “language in its concrete living totality, and not language as the specific object of linguistics” (PDP: 181). As Sibel Irzik says

Units of discourse are individual utterances, that is, actions that take place by shaping the elements offered by language in time and space, under social constraints that cannot be reduced to grammatical rules, in line with both individual and social goals, perspectives, intentions and interests (Irzik, 2001: 13).

The linguistics of the utterance is not possible for linguistic studies of language on a single level. That is to say, linguistic units are repeatable, anonymous and indifferent to the position to where the word comes to life; linguistic study ignores the plurality of speaking subjects and hence the living relations both between the word and its subject and between the subject and the concrete reality. Whereas all these aspects determine the word as discourse and acknowledging word as discourse paves the way to study the word in its concrete living totality. As we have already noted above, an utterance is not repeatable and it depends on the unique position it occupies in the dialogue and in the extra-verbal context of that dialogue. However, from a linguistic standpoint, it is not possible to differentiate the semantic difference between one's own word and the representation of the other's word from a different standpoint.

Representation of another's speech has significance especially in the novel. Bakhtin says that “[t]he dialogic orientation of a word among other words (of all kinds and degrees of otherness) creates new and significant artistic potential in discourse, creates the potential for a distinctive art of prose, which has found its fullest and deepest expression in the novel” (DN: 275). Moreover, Bakhtin criticizes linguistics, philosophy of language and stylistics for their common ignorance of the category of otherness. He says that they postulate an unmediated relation between the speaker and his/her own language and consequently they study the word and artistic prose in a merely narrowed fashion by focusing on the realization of this abstract unitary language only in the *monologic* utterance of a single individual (DN: 269). Relations

between one's own word and the other's are not the concern for none of these disciplines. However, especially in the novel, the author represents the hero not only in his monological discourse but also through the hero's represented discourse. Dialogic relations between these two discourses (authorial discourse and represented discourse of the hero) are pivotal for Bakhtin's metalinguistic study.

Linguistics disregards speech genres and consequently the difference between primary and secondary genres. From the standpoint of linguistics, not only dialogic relations between the rejoinders of everyday dialogue but also the essential difference between a monologic and a polyphonic discourse cannot be revealed at all.⁵

Metalinguistics studies dialogic relations in and between the utterances. For that reason, we illustrate the unity and boundaries of the utterance, which depends on the recognition of unique positions of concrete speech subjects and responsiveness of the speech act. Dialogic relationship is a semantic relationship, that is to say, it presupposes language. Without understanding Bakhtin's conception of language, it is not possible to grasp the nature of dialogic understanding which we will examine in the following chapters.

⁵ The difference between "monologic" and "polyphonic" will be explained in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

DIALOGIC NATURE OF THE SELF

“No Nirvana is possible for a single consciousness. A single consciousness is contradictio in adjecto.”

Bakhtin, *Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book*, p.288

The period from “Art and Answerability” (1919) to the “Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art” (1929) is described mostly as Bakhtin’s philosophical period, which also includes his works *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (1918-1924), “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” (1922-1924), “The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art” (1924). There is a tendency to isolate these early works from the rest of Bakhtin’s *oeuvre* and to take into consideration together as if his only essentially philosophical works are those early ones. “Art and Answerability” should be read as his first and utmost manifesto on mutual responsibility of life and art against each other. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* is his attempt to construct his *prima philosophia*, in which he introduces the phenomenology of self-experience and experiencing the other. Later, “Author and Hero” is an examination of the “essentially necessary foundation of the author-hero relationship” (AH: 4). Last two works are influenced by mostly neo-Kantian phenomenology, especially by the Marburg School in various ways. Both remained incomplete, even the previous one has reached us in fragmented form, without not only the end but also the beginning. Still, the fragments of *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* that are the last part of a long introduction and the beginning of the first section, constitute a firm ground for us to begin for understanding how his philosophy evolved into a philosophy of dialogical relationships. What is noteworthy is that the vital role of the Dostoevsky book in terms of his overall philosophy is not regarded at all, as if the notion of polyphony is related solely to his reading of Dostoevsky. As I will argue, Bakhtin’s Dostoevsky study is the threshold

between his participatory and dialogical thinking. For this very reason, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* is the most essential work to understand Bakhtin's metalinguistics and his dialogical understanding of the self. In this chapter, I will examine how Bakhtin's ideas on the architectonic relationship between the "I" and the "other" changes. In the preceding chapter, the nature of dialogical understanding is already explained through an examination of living communication between the subjects depending on Bakhtin's works written after his Dostoevsky book. In this chapter, the aim is to show that prior to the Dostoevsky book, Bakhtin's understanding of human interaction is not dialogical yet. To display the difference between participative thinking and dialogical understanding, now our focus will be on the consciousness and aesthetic relationship rather than on the living communication between subjects.

3.1 Bakhtin's First Philosophy: Phenomenology of Responsible Act

In *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, Bakhtin distinguishes the existence of things and consciousnesses. While things exist in the level of *being (byt)* as indifferent entities, consciousnesses can never be as indifferent and being means *co-being/event (sobytie)* for any consciousness. Consequently, their worlds are different: *Being-as-event (sobytie bytiya)* is phenomenologically different from the semantically undetermined world of objects (*being/byt*). It is important to note that to be a consciousness, in Bakhtin's thinking, does not mean essentially to be a consciousness of an object. Husserl's phenomenology is one of the sources of Bakhtin's philosophy but phenomenological constitution of an object or the foundations of experiencing an object are not the main issues of his interest.⁶ It seems that in his thinking there is no noumenal aspect of the world, he accepts the certainty of physical existence of things. He says “[t]he validity of truth is sufficient unto itself [...] 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—as moments participating in once-occurrent Being-as-event” (TPA: 10). That is to say, he is not interested in the generic, abstract principles of experience; rather, his focus is

⁶ The relation between Bakhtin's and Husserl's phenomenology can be captured conceptually but in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, Bakhtin clearly gives the name of Husserl (p: 5).

on the architectonics of actually experienced world. Later in “Author and Hero”, he turns to the question of how consciousness is constituted in light of its relationship with another consciousness. Since its being is an event/co-being, consciousness is always consciousness alongside another consciousnesses. Besides, after Dostoevsky book (1929), personification and objectification also becomes one of the main interests of his philosophy. In participative thinking, “I” is active in its relationship with the “other” while the “other” is not necessarily active. In dialogical understanding, both participants are active with regard to each other; and after the point of dialogizing the intersubjective relationships, Bakhtin starts to problematize the objectification of another consciousness.

In *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, Bakhtin is dealing with the “architectonic of the actual world of the preformed act or deed—the world actually experienced, and not the merely thinkable world” (TPA: 54). As Bakhtin declares at the end of the introductory pages, the second part was to be on aesthetics and the third and fourth parts were planned to be dealt with the ethics of politics and religion (TPA: 54). As Liisa Steinby and Tintti Klapuri point out the dominant position assigned to ethics is new, compared to any of Bakhtin’s philosophical antecedents (Steinby and Klapuri, 2013: xv). Bakhtin’s point of departure is refusal of the dualism of cognition and life constituted by theoretical cognition itself that he called “a specific peculiarity of modern times” (TPA: 8). He criticizes both Kant and Neo-Kantianism for their attempt to obtain the abstract and general principles of different domains of culture through abstract theoretical reasoning. He rejects Kantian ethics for the reason that a priori moral principles are abstracted from experienced life, from the actual act. He even says that it is sinful to discriminate what is given and what is set as a task, namely what *is* and what *ought* to be (TPA: 20). A *prima philosophia*, for Bakhtin, must study the unique responsible act (*postupok*) of a particular subject that participates in the event-of-Being.

Bakhtin asserts that both the world of experience and the world of culture (not experienced but theoretical such as philosophy or science) are the moments of ongoing event-of-Being. His aim is to show the ground where both realms can unite. According to him, the individual act of a concrete subject is the medium that constitutes the ground of mutual responsibility between life and culture. Bakhtin says that

This act is truly real (it participates in once-occurrent Being-as-event) only *in its entirety*. Only this *whole* act is alive, exists fully and inescapably—comes to be, is accomplished. It is an actual living participant in the ongoing event of Being: it is in communion with the unique unity of ongoing Being. But this communion or participation does not penetrate its content/sense aspect, which pretends to being able to achieve full and definitive self-determination within the unity of this or that domain of sense or meaning (science, art, history) (TPA: 2).

As Augusto Ponzio states “[a]s soon as the sense of such an act is determined from a theoretical—scientific, philosophical, historiographical—or aesthetic viewpoint, it loses its character of a unique and self-determined event, a truly lived act, to take on a generic value, an abstract meaning” (Ponzio, 2003: 245). That is to say, such an act is always an event *in its entirety* but the theoretical aspect, content/sense, of this act is not a constitutive moment in the ongoing event of Being. Only in the unique unity of the act, in the unity of living experience, two mutually impervious worlds confront each other, the world of culture and the world of life in which we live our lives, the only world that we create, cognize, contemplate and die (TPA: 2). Bakhtin says “I cannot include my actual self and my life (*qua* moment) in the world constituted by the constructions of theoretical consciousness in abstraction from the answerable and individual historical act” (TPA: 8). This world, the content of the given area of human activity abstracted from the once-occurrent act, is not the *whole*, not the *all* Being. According to him, the cognition of an act is not an event in the ongoing event of Being since “I” is not included in it. From his point of view, this is what the reason for the failure of Kantian ethics:

Any kind of *practical* orientation of my life within the theoretical world is impossible: it is impossible to live in it, impossible to perform answerable deeds. In that world I am unnecessary; I am essentially and fundamentally non-existent in it. The theoretical world is obtained through an essential and fundamental abstraction from the fact of my unique being and from the moral sense of that fact—“as if I did not exist”. And this concept of Being is indifferent to the central fact—central for me—of my unique and actual communion with Being (I, too, exist), and it cannot in principle add anything to it or subtract anything from it, for it remains equal to itself and identical in its sense and significance, regardless of whether I exist or not; it cannot determine my life as an answerable performing of deeds, it cannot provide any criteria for the life of practice, the life of the deed, for it is not the Being *in which I live*, and, if it were the only Being, I would not exist (TPA: 9).

Being always has an event character for the consciousness that lives in it. It means that consciousness, as long as it lives, necessarily participates in the ongoing event-of-Being and as a unique participant from its non-replaceable unique position in Being. Contrarily, Kantian formal ethics, while asserting the supremacy of practical reason and, consequently, the primacy of theoretical domain over the others, disregards the consciousness that practically lives and acts in the actual event-of-Being; Being, in its entirety. An act of our activity, as a moment of our unindifferent existence in Being, is the medium for the unity of these two worlds that otherwise do not communicate with each other. Bakhtin says that an act is like a two faced Janus, it looks in two opposite directions: “the objective unity of domain of culture” and “never-repeatable uniqueness of actually lived and experienced life” (TPA: 2). Where there is no unitary plane to provide a common ground for these two different worlds’ unity, according to Bakhtin, only the once-occurrent event of Being in the very process of actualization of an act can constitute this unity. He claims “[a]n act must acquire a single unitary plane to be able to reflect itself in both directions—in its sense or meaning and in its being; it must acquire the unity of two-sided answerability—both for its content (special answerability) and for its Being (moral answerability)” (TPA:2-3). Moreover, the content of the act must be brought into communion with its moral answerability. Bakhtin asserts that everything that is performed is an act, including thought and feeling. The problem of formal ethics is assuming that an act of cognition, the presence of a given judgement, is sufficient to perform an “ought-to-be act”. The interrelation between form and content is obliterated here. The *ought* is like an empty form without content whereas any form is a form of content and any content is content of form (CMF: 316). In terms of Kantian categorical imperative, as an empty form without relation with neither the content nor the concrete performer of the act, practical reason and realm seems to be like still in the realm of theoretical reason. As Dušan Radunović points out, “[m]y responsibility is not conditioned by any kind of imperative, or by the content of the good itself, no matter how indisputable this content may be” (Radunović, 2003: 11). Rather, responsibility of an act depends on the unique position of “I” without alibis in the event-of-Being. The position of a consciousness in the event-of-Being cannot be replaceable and in participation to the Being from this unique place that one occupies in the world, it is “absolute responsibility” that one has and cannot be deferred to others. The question is not the knowledge of the *ought*, since

“there is no 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” (TPA: 38).

3.2. The Difference between the “I” and the “other”

In *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, Tzvetan Todorov claims that Bakhtin’s ideas related with the human existence

recur in strikingly stable form throughout the course of his entire career, from his very last writings to a book recently published but actually the first to be written (probably between 1922 and 1924) that finally helps us understand Bakhtin’s whole trajectory [...]. These ideas have to do with otherness (p.94).⁷

It is obvious that, throughout Bakhtin’s entire works, the notion of *otherness* (*chuzhdost’*) plays an indispensable role. Nevertheless, the role of the “other” in relation with the “I” is seen to have quite changed. Bakhtin’s early works, written in 1920s, are the ones published the last. This situation leads to the retrospective reading of his works; the reader has been already introduced to his dialogical way of thinking prior to reading his early philosophy. After the *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art* [*Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo*] (1929) in which Bakhtin declares the polyphony of Dostoyevsky’s novel, it is more accurate to say that the conception of participative human existence, consciousness, and aesthetic act are re-evaluated and reach beyond the formerly demonstrated one-sided relationship. I claim that after a close examination of Dostoevsky’s relation with his heroes, not only the possibility of a brand new way of aesthetic relationship appeared but Bakhtin’s general conception of human existence and communication has greatly changed. Before a comparison between participative and dialogical conceptions of the relationship between two different consciousnesses, we should examine some of the essential notions, which are

⁷ The book Todorov refers is “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity”. English translations of Bakhtin’s early works can be found in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin (1990), edited by Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov, that includes the essays titled “Art and Answerability” (earlier publication (1919) in *Den’iskusstva* and later (1977) in *Voprosy Literatury*), “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” (written about 1922 to 1924 and published in 1977 in *Voprosy Literatury*) and “The Problem of Content, Material and Form in Verbal Art” (written in 1924 and published in 1974 in *Kontekst*).

otherness, *outsidedness* and *situatedness*, through his works earlier than the Dostoevsky book.

Bakhtin always insists on the categorial difference between the “I” and the “other”. Just as the wholeness of the utterance and the boundaries between one’s own utterance and the others’ are determined by different speaking subjects, the wholeness of the “I” necessitates the “other” in relation with himself. In that sense, otherness is one of the most fundamental notion of his all philosophy, since any whole is not self-sufficient but determined by the boundaries that constituted by interaction with the other. In “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity”, Bakhtin examines the I-other relationship in order to analyse the conditions of the wholeness of the “I” which, according to him, could be realized only by the “other”. It also indicates that, the “I” as a whole is not given (*danny*) for oneself but created (*zadannyi*) through the other, through the aesthetic self-activity of the other.⁸

Otherness is the necessary consequence of *outsidedness* (*vnenakhodimost*) of the subjects, of the “I” and the “other”. The “I” is the center of the directedness towards the world for the “I” itself; however, not the only center in the world. Bakhtin says “[L]ife knows two value centers that are fundamentally and essentially different, yet are correlated with each other: myself and the other” (TPA: 74). Bakhtin initially does not take for granted the content of the “I” as immediately accessible for the subject itself *as a whole*. He vigorously attacks the idea of a solipsistic consciousness that relates with the rest of itself as a negation of itself. In that sense, Hegel’s monologic philosophy is the total opposite of Bakhtin’s both participatory and dialogical perspectives.⁹ Bakhtin neither questions the reality of the outside world as distinct from the consciousness nor regards the question of relationship of the “I” with the possible others as metaphysical. According to him, the self-sufficiency and isolation of the “I” is an absurd illusion of cognition. He says that

⁸ The conception of aesthetic activity as a *self-activity* changes in and after the Dostoevsky book. In *Toward a Philosophy of The Act* and “Author and Hero” aesthetic activity recognizes only one active participant.

⁹ Bakhtin clearly expresses his idea on Hegel’s philosophy in the “Methodology for the Human Sciences” as follows: “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 hit the bottom, reach a standstill)” (p:162).

Solipsism, which places the entire world within my consciousness, may be intuitively convincing, or at any rate understandable. But it would be intuitively quite incomprehensible to place the entire world (including myself) in the consciousness of *another* human being who is so manifestly himself a mere particle of the macrocosm (AH: 39).

Just as the independent existence of the physical objects from one's consciousness, the "other" consciousness independently exists in the world without depending on any other consciousness. The "I" is not *transcendental* in the Kantian sense; nor is it *indefinite à la Husserl*. "I" is always a definite, concrete "I", and a construction that requires the other's relation with itself. According to Bakhtin, what distinguishes the "I" and the "other" as different categories is the unique place that one occupies in the event-of-Being (*sobytie bytiya*).

The *situatedness in being* (*byt*) is the ineluctable condition of outsideness and, consequently, the otherness of the selves. It is Bakhtin's phenomenological distinction between being (*byt*) and Being-as-event/event-of-Being (*sobytie bytiia*) that establishes the ground for irreducibly different perspectives of the "I" and the "other". He says that "[t]he *event of being* [*sobytie bytiia*] is a phenomenological concept, for being [*byt*] presents itself to a living consciousness as an event [*sobytie*], and a living consciousness actively orients itself and lives in it as an event" (AH: 188). The unique place that one stands in *being*, to wit, the spatial situatedness of one's own body, limits the vision, in the sense that this particular position necessarily produces a limited view. Since one is situated in the world, cannot see the world in its totality from outside the world. On a different level, in the *event-of-Being*, this limitedness does not remain physical anymore but transforms into one's own axiological position towards oneself and the others and one's unique perspective towards the object as distinct from the others'. Bakhtin says that

the whole world that is unitary in content, when correlated with me or with another, is permeated with a completely different emotional-volitional tone, is evaluatively operative or valid in a different way in the most vital, essential sense. This does not disrupt the world's unity of meaning, but, rather, raises it to the level of a unique event (TPA: 74).

On the other hand, being-in-itself is just an "empty possibility" without the valuation of a concrete subject from her unique place in the event-of-Being (TPA: 48). Therefore, human existence (not in the existentialist sense) lasts in two phenomenologically different planes of being. In order for being (*byt*) to gain the character of an event (*sobytie*) there must exist the "I" and the "other". For that reason,

the existence of a solitary consciousness cannot engender *any* event, not just because the idea of solitary “I” is fictitious but also because any determinateness of meaning necessitates the “other” to construct its own boundaries.

Since the “I” and the “other” are categorically different and both have limited perspectives in the ongoing event of Being, in order to accomplish the wholeness in terms of value and meaning, for consummating (*zaveršeniye*) the features transgradient to oneself, one necessarily needs the “other”. To establish the conditions of the “I” as a whole of meaning, we must articulate the role of “other” with respect to the “I”. In other words, we must examine the creative/form-giving activity of the self and the essential difference between one’s relationship with oneself and with the other.

3.3 Participative Thinking

To think participatively means to know how to relate my performed act and its product in the unitary and unique plane of life and as an indivisible unity (TPA: 19). A once-occurrent event of life in which “I” performed an act cannot be thought of in its uniqueness, it is not something can be captured by theoretical thinking, rather can only be participatively experienced by *me*. In that sense, Bakhtin says that “[a]ll of theoretical reason in its entirety is only a moment of practical reason, i.e., the reason of the unique *subiectum*’s moral orientation within the event of once-occurrent Being” (TPA: 13). Moral responsibility of the “I”, “the concrete and once occurrent ought of the answerably performed act”, lies in the fact of *my non-alibi in Being*; that is, the fact that “I” can participate in the event only from my unique position (my situatedness) (TPA: 40). “I” cannot but be situated in the once-occurrent event of Being and this unique position cannot be obliterated or devolved on another. From this unique situation in the event, “I” must affirm the singularity and irreplaceability of its own performed act (TPA: 11). To Bakhtin, “[t]his is not simply an affirmation of myself or simply an affirmation of actual Being, but a non-fused yet undivided affirmation of myself in Being: I participate in Being as its sole actor” (TPA: 41). This is the departure point of triadic architectonics of self in Bakhtin’s early philosophy; namely, the moments of I-for-myself, I-for-others and others-for-me.

From my own unique place in Being, only I-for-myself constitutes an “I” and nothing else is “I” for me. All other I’s are not “I”, but “others”, and any other’s

position cannot engender a perspective to participate in Being for me (impossibility of pure empathizing). The unity of the moments of I-for-myself, I-for-others and others-for-me must be actualized for oneself in Being. In the unity of the unique event of Being, “I” exists both as passive and active at the same time. Accordingly, Bakhtin says:

what is also given here in a non-fused yet undivided form is both the moment of my passivity and the moment of my self-activity: [1] I find myself in Being (passivity) and I actively participate in it; [2] both that which is given to me and that which is yet to be achieved by me: my own uniqueness is given, yet at the same time it exists only to the extent to which it is really actualized by me as uniqueness—it is always in the act, in the performed deed, i.e., is yet to be achieved; [3] both what *is* and what *ought* to be: I am actual and irreplaceable, and therefore *must* actualize my uniqueness (TPA: 41).

Bakhtin claims that I-for-myself is not given for me but something that I must actualize in the unity of the performed act or deed. The crucial point is that “I” is not given for me as something completed; I-for-myself, from the unique perspective of the “I” occupies in the event, is not the whole. Architectonic nature of the self requires “others” in order for self to become the subject of the performed act since any act is a constitutive moment in the Being-as-event. Therefore, I-for-myself must also become I-for-others; “I” must be “other” for the others. While the uniqueness of the “I” is given for me with regard to the fact that one finds oneself already *in* Being and in a unique position that cannot be replaceable, the “others” are given for me not in the same way.

The question of *other I* and interrelationships between the “I” and the “other” is what Bakhtin investigates in “Author and Hero”. The relation between the author and the hero provides Bakhtin an observatory in which he scrutinizes the relations between the “I” and the “other”. In fact, Bakhtin already states the affinity between aesthetic seeing and the world of life in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* as follows:

What we intend to provide is a representation, a description of the actual, concrete architectonic of value-governed experiencing of the world [...] In order to give a preliminary idea of the possibility of such a concrete, value-governed architectonic, we shall analyze here the world of aesthetic seeing—the world of art. In its concreteness and its permeatedness with an emotional-volitional tone, this world is closer than any of the abstract cultural worlds (taken in isolation) to the unitary and unique world of the performed act (TPA: 61).

The reason is that, according to him, aesthetic seeing produces not a systemic unity but a unity that is concretely architectonic since the unity of the world of art is

constituted around a concrete value-center and what constitutes this center is the human being (TPA: 61). In *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, Bakhtin explains us what an answerable, unrepeatable, unique act means and later in “Author and Hero”, he deals specifically with the architectonics of the aesthetic act alongside with the ethical act.

In Bakhtin’s thinking, the scope of aesthetics goes beyond the limits of art. Alongside the relationship between author and hero as constituents of the novel, the relationship between living subjects are also included in his aesthetic investigation. For this reason, while he examines the author’s aesthetic creation of the hero, he simultaneously dwells upon the existence of the living human being as a concrete consciousness. Bakhtin considers the hero as an “other” and not as an outcome of the aesthetic activity of the author. In other words, aesthetics is not about the subject-object relationship, but it is necessarily a relationship between non-coinciding consciousnesses.

3.3.1 Aesthetic Seeing/Act

Bakhtin states that “[the] difference in the experiencing of myself and the experiencing of the other is overcome by cognition, or, rather, cognition ignores this difference, just as it ignores the uniqueness of the cognizing subiectum” (AH: 37). Contrarily, one’s experiencing her own self differs radically from experiencing of the other in terms of both space and time. Since consciousness exists as uniquely situated in the world, it is impossible to see oneself from the outside, temporarily or spatially.

“I-for-myself” is not given for *me* as a whole neither in space nor in time. “I” cannot coincide with itself since there is always something transgradient to itself. In “Author and Hero” Bakhtin introduces a difference between “horizon” and “environment”; that is, “[t]here are two possible ways of combining the outside world with a human being: from within a human being—as his horizon, and from outside him—as his environment” (AH: 97). He clarifies this transgression through two living persons who stand against and contemplate each other. When they look at each other, their experienced “horizons” do not coincide; each one sees something inaccessible to the other. These two persons view different horizons from their unique points of view and see two different worlds behind each other. One cannot experience

his/her own facial expressions from outside, cannot see oneself from the back or cannot see the background that s/he is standing in front of, these are one's features only for the other. Bakhtin calls this phenomenon "the surplus of seeing" (AH: 23). This surplus is grounded on both the limitedness of one's positioned vision and uniqueness and the irreplaceability of that position in the event of being. From that particular position, the "I" can never coincide with its own horizon. I am out of my horizon, I am the origin of my directedness towards the world, and I always fall into the other's horizon. Since anyone can contemplate oneself from outside his/her own position, it is impossible to experience one's own self in his/her environment. The point is that the position in which a person is among the things surrounding him/her cannot be the object of one's own gaze, just as the eye cannot see itself. Therefore, I-for-myself cannot be encircled in space by my own seeing but only when I am included in another's horizon I can be seen totally, when I am an-other for the other. This is why I-for-myself cannot be the whole for itself spatially, without contemplation of the other. Only when one becomes an object for the other's sight, the other's sight completes the transgradient features for oneself. I-for-other is a constitutive of the "I" in order to become completely experienced spatially. As Clark and Holquist say, "[s]urplus is after all a relative term having no meaning without reference to others" (Clark & Holquist, 1984: 71). That means, while I become an-other for the other, become an object for the other's gaze, the other also becomes an other-for-me. Both persons that contemplate each other have the surplus of seeing with regard to the other.

Bakhtin says that "[a]n aesthetic event can take place only when there are two participants present; it presupposes two noncoinciding consciousnesses" (AH: 22). The outsidedness of consciousnesses is the ground of both the aesthetic consummation of the hero and the architectonic structure of the self in life. However, it is necessary but not sufficient for an artistic event. The possibility of perceiving the other in space as s/he cannot perceive him/herself is not the same with contemplating the other. In the other's eyes, one's body turns into an object among other objects *for the other* (one's own body cannot become solely an object for oneself). Each living person is able see the other in his/her environment but this does not ensure the consummatedness (*zaveršennost'*) of the other. Only the act of contemplation, aesthetic seeing, can be capable to consummate the other I's spatial features. The act of contemplation is always an artistic act in the sense that it enriches the other's experience of oneself.

Contemplation is creative in the sense that it enriches the other's both inner and outer experience of him/herself, that is, the other's self-experience does not remain equal to itself. Concerning this, Bakhtin defines a specific movement of consciousness that he calls "sympathetic co-experiencing".¹⁰ One must project oneself into the other and must return to his/her unique position. Bakhtin says that experiencing the other can only be co-experiencing. According to him, if one would be able to experience the other's experiencing (other's inner life) in the same fashion with the other, that would necessitate occupying the others place in the event and that cannot be possible. That is why pure empathizing is not possible for the author against the hero in his own creative process. Empathy, for Bakhtin, does not produce meaning; it is the "passive mirroring or duplication of an-other's experience within myself (nor is such duplication really possible)" (AH: 102). In order for my self-activity in relation to the other's inner world to produce a new understanding, I must relate myself to the other sympathetically and two interrelated consciousnesses must sustain their unique positions in that interrelationship. He says:

Sympathetic co-experiencing of the hero's life means to experience that life in a form completely different from the form in which it was, or could have been, experienced by the *subiectum* of that life himself. [...] Only sympathetic co-experiencing has the power to conjoin or unite harmoniously the inward and the outward on one and the same plane. From within a co-experienced life itself, there is no access to the aesthetic value of what is outward in that same life (the body). It is only love (as an active approach to another human being) that unites an inner life (a *subiectum's* own object directedness in living his life) as experienced from outside with the value of the body as experienced from outside and, in so doing, constitutes a unitary and unique human being as an aesthetic phenomenon. That is, only love unites one's own *directedness* with a *direction* and one's own *horizon* with an *environment*. A whole, integral human being is the product of the aesthetic, creative point of view and of that point of view alone (AH: 82-83).

To be able to experience the other's inner life one must reach to the other, must take an active position against the other akin to love, only in that way is it possible to create and impose aesthetic value by completing transgradient features from outside that life. In his/her own aesthetic self-activity, the author contemplates and consummates

¹⁰ In *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, this movement with regard to another consciousness is called "to actively empathize" or "aesthetic emphatizing". Later, in "Author and Hero" Bakhtin names the same activity as "sympathetic understanding".

(*zaveršeniye*) the hero both inwardly and outwardly. Bakhtin writes: “It is only the position of being situated outside the hero that enables the author to produce the aesthetic value of the hero’s exterior: the spatial form of the hero expresses the author’s relationship *to* the hero” (AH: 96). It must be underlined that when it comes to the hero as an aesthetic creation, what is represented in the novel is not the hero’s horizon but her environment. The represented object world of the novel does not coincide with the hero’s horizon, since the author’s unique position is not obliterated: the author does not see through the hero’s eyes but apparently has contemplated her from the outside. Besides, the author relates to the hero in terms of the hero’s inner experience of herself and of the world. Accordingly, I can relate to the other’s inner experience, such as fear. In other words, I can co-experience the other’s fear. However, when I co-experience it from the outside, it is not the same experience but one that is principally different from the other’s fear as she experiences it for herself and one that is also different from my own experience of fear. Sympathetic understanding is a new valuation that recreates the whole inner person in aesthetic categories (AH: 104). Bakhtin contends that a lived experience, when it is just for the I who experiences, does not yet exist in full (AH: 117). A lived experience, an inward given, is not something contemplated for the one who is experiencing. Therefore, otherness is a necessary condition in order for meaning to be enriched aesthetically; “[t]he withdrawal of one of the participants destroys the artistic event, and we are left with nothing but a misleading illusion of an artistic event” (AH: 200). By means of sympathetic co-experiencing, the hero gains his own unity and wholeness as an other consciousness but always and principally in relation with the author. The author creates the background for the hero in which the latter’s consciousness takes place in the unity of the event, and the author takes the other’s place to consummate (*zaveršeniye*) the hero’s inward experience of herself.

Bakhtin’s formulation of artistic act in “Author and Hero” depends on the act of *looking/seeing*. What we should pay attention at this point is the one-directional nature of the act. When two persons stand against and look at each other, “I”’s excess of seeing does not depend on the other’s being contemplating the “I” reciprocally. The other’s horizon is what defines transgradient features of oneself and the ground for the possibility of being “consummated” (*zaveršennyi*'); however, Bakhtin defines no simultaneity in that relationship between consciousnesses. Aesthetic activity, as he explains in “Author and Hero”, is a *self*-activity in which the “other” is *given*. Now we

should clarify the difference between one's own *inner* experiencing of oneself and the experiencing of the other *in time*. This is necessary both to understand the notion of polyphony and to capture the difference between participative thinking and dialogical understanding.

3.4. From Participative Thinking to Dialogical Understanding

Just like the other's body is given for the "I" in space (within the horizon of the "I" but transgradient to the other's seeing), the other's life *as a whole* can be given only for the "I". Bakhtin says that "[a]s the *given*, artistically experienced *whole* of the hero's inner life, the soul as well is transgradient to the hero's *self*-consciousness, to his directedness to meaning in living his own life. We shall see that the soul, as an inner whole that comes to be *in time*, the soul as a *given, presently existing* whole, is constituted in terms of aesthetic categories" (AH: 100). The reason is that, as mentioned above, I-for-myself must always be actualized in life; it is not something given for the "I" but exists as a task. Therefore, it must be a problem in ethics (ethics of responsibility) but not in aesthetics. I-for-myself is not something that "I" itself can consummate or enclose; only the "other" can give the inner person an aesthetic form. Aesthetic self-activity of the "I" means giving form and so consummating the other's inner and outer self (one's experiencing of oneself in time and in space) as a *whole*. Aesthetic act, in Bakhtin's early philosophy, means to finish/consummate the "other" by constituting the boundaries; creating the lines of the other's life as a whole in time and contemplating the other's interrelationships within his/her environment in space *in* the "I"'s aesthetic *self*-activity.

I-for-myself is not a whole in time for the "I" since one can be witness only to the other's birth and death whereas it is not possible for the "I" to experience these moments for him/herself. This is what constitutes "the outer *boundaries* of inner life—the point where inner life is turned *outward* and ceases to be active out of itself" (AH: 103). In the sense that one's life cannot become an integrated whole in time for him/herself (since it is not yet ended), but only can become an aesthetically consummated whole in the eye of the other, Bakhtin regards consummating (*zaversheniye*) the other's life, necessarily from the outside of that life, as a creative act. It is creative since it is an act of enclosing the other's life in a way that the other cannot

do it for him/herself. It depends on the excess of temporal seeing that “I” has from the outside of that life. Bakhtin states that even though I can *think* of the world as it would be after my death, I can never *experience* the world in which I am no longer present, “as a world that is emotionally toned by the fact of my death” (AH: 104). Hence, one’s life can be enclosed not by him/herself but only by the “other”.

A living consciousness experiences itself as something that is not finished yet. In “Author and Hero” Bakhtin says that “[i]f 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 have to be, for myself, someone who is axiologically yet-to-be, someone who does not coincide with his already existing makeup” (AH: 13). A single consciousness is unable to overcome its own unique situatedness and the limited vision of itself from this particular position without the other’s aesthetic activity in relation to itself. Aesthetic activity of the author is shaping, form-giving activity. Author as an “other” for the hero’s self (I-for-myself or *soul* as Bakhtin states) completes the hero’s transgradient features in his/her own aesthetic self-activity, in his/her own active relation *to* the hero and not in a relationship *with* the hero. From within the I-for-myself, hero (as “other” for the active consciousness of the “I”) is passive, that is, is not given to herself in entirety neither spatially nor temporally but exists as someone yet-to-be. The *inner self* or *soul* of the hero is included in the artistic self-activity of the author/contemplator and resides in it as an object, as something given in its entirety. The hero’s exterior and inner experience of him/herself provide the content for author’s form-giving, finalizing activity. Hero’s consciousness for the author cannot stay as a living consciousness since to be alive means to be open, to be unfinialized (*nezaveršennyi*’).

It does not mean that hero’s consciousness is *merely an object* for the author; rather, author must *objectify* the other’s consciousness in its entirety to consummate the other as a “whole of meaning”. The author as a performer of the aesthetic act is not a hero for him/herself either. Bakhtin states that a performed act itself does not say anything about the performer, that is, a performed act does not need a hero (AH: 140). One cannot be the hero of one’s own life since, as long as one is alive, one cannot finish/consummate that life from within itself. Being consummated/finished/completed (*zaveršennyi*’), completed in terms of time, space and meaning, necessitates the other’s activity and cannot be achieved for I-for-myself by myself. One must be

active for the other, assume a position outside the other and lovingly co-experience other's life. Therefore, the hero is an-other consciousness for the author but an already *dead* consciousness. Bakhtin states “[t]hroughout the entire course of an embodied hero's life, one can hear the tones of a requiem” (AH: 131).

Hero's life is ended so can be contemplated *in its totality* and can be recreated by the author artistically. Author's artistic self-activity saves the *soul* of the “other” and reincarnates it as a hero. Bakhtin says that “[i]n art, however, this lived-out life is saved, justified, and consummated in eternal memory” (AH: 131). One's life can be evaluated artistically, given as a whole, only from a particular position outside that life and only after that life has ended. My birth, death and my *whole* life is not for me but for the others. There is no life for a consciousness apart from being embodied in a certain value-centre in Being-as-event, being the “I” and the “other”. In the artistic act, by sympathetic co-experiencing, “I” reaches beyond itself and arrives another value-center *in* the “other”. Bakhtin mentions that even God must be embodied to forgive: “Any valuation is an act of assuming an individual position in being; even God had to incarnate himself in order to bestow mercy, to suffer, and to *forgive*—had to descend, as it were, from the abstract standpoint of justice” (AH: 129). Bakhtin claims that aesthetic consummation can be possible only with love, by sympathetic understanding. Apparently, what is in his mind is loving the other as Jesus does; stepping outside oneself and seeing the other's need, co-experiencing the other's suffering not in the other but in myself. After all, the other's suffering cannot be replaced with mine nor can be objectified as it is. He says repeatedly in “Author and Hero”, that one cannot love oneself as loves the other; I-for-myself is not included in my axiological horizon: “I cannot love my fellow being as myself or, rather, I cannot *love* myself as a fellow being” (AH: 48). I cannot embrace myself but my relationship with myself can only be in penitent tones, “from within myself in relation to my own givenness—only prayer and penitence is possible” (AH: 128). According to Bakhtin, *soul* is always something that relies on the future and feels remorse in relation to the past. I cannot forgive my own self; I can be forgiven. The last word of my life can be said only by the “other” and only after I am *completed*, after the moment has passed that I can change; that is, only after my death. My own last word about myself cannot finalize me, it is aesthetically unproductive; “[i]n my last word, I turn to the outside of myself

and surrender myself to the mercy of the other (the ultimate sense of deathbed confession)” (AH: 128).¹¹

As Bakhtin articulates before *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, interrelationships of the “I” and the “other” depends on the I’s participation to the event of other’s life. He says “I am active only in relation to the other and I am passive in the other’s relationship to me; I exchange gifts” (AH: 121). I cannot be aesthetically active toward myself since I have no excess of seeing concerning myself; I cannot stand against myself unless I reach out and see myself from the eyes of the other (I-for-other). I find myself in the other and the other in myself. Each living consciousness is devoid of being “a whole of meaning”, being lovingly evaluated and so consummated, without the other’s active relation to itself. In “Author and Hero”, Bakhtin states

it is a whole that descends upon him [hero]—is bestowed upon him as a gift—from another active consciousness: from the creative consciousness of an author. The author’s consciousness is the consciousness of a consciousness, that is, a consciousness that *encompasses* the consciousness and the world of a hero—a consciousness that encompasses and *consummates* the consciousness of a hero by supplying those moments which are in principle transgradient to the hero’s consciousness (AH: 12).

“I” and “other” is equal in that relation since both are in need to the other; the “I” and the “other” can both active (finalizing) and passive (finalized) in their relation to each other. However, regarding the other as constitutive of the architectonics of self-consciousness is not equal with dialogical understanding.

In secondary literature on Bakhtin’s philosophy, there is a common misunderstanding as we exemplified with Todorov’s words above. Namely, while Bakhtin’s ideas on the interrelationship between the “I” and the “other” has quite changed through time, his overall philosophy is typically regarded as “dialogical”. In

¹¹ In 1918, Bakhtin participated in a public debate on the topic “God and Socialism”. The following quotation, indicative of Bakhtin’s position concerning religious subjects, belongs to a review of the journal “Molot” (“The Hummer”): “In his talk in defense of the muzzle of obscurity that is religion, comrade Bakhtin floated up in the clouds or even higher. In his remarks, there was not to be found a single living example, drawn from life or from the history of mankind. At some points he did recognize, and even expressed appreciation of, socialism, but he complained of, and worried about, the fact that socialism had no care for the dead (as if there weren’t enough services for the dead!), and that, accordingly, in some future time, the people would not forgive us such neglect. ... Listening to his words one could form the general impression that this entire buried host, reduced to powder as it is, would shortly arise from its tombs and sweep from the face of the earth all the Communists and the Socialism they promote. ... (December 13, 1918)” (Todorov, 1992: 4”).

his early manuscripts, Bakhtin puts forward non-theoretical reality of the “other I”. Just as the “I”, the “other” is concrete, historical, and participates the event-of-Being from his/her unique position. I cannot experience the “other” as I experience myself but as an “other I”, as “You”. Moreover, I cannot experience myself in completeness and as unity without becoming an-other for the “other”. “I” must become an object for the other’s aesthetic seeing to be completed by the “other”. Since being for a human being is co-being (*sobytie*) both “I” and the “other” are participants in the event-of-Being (*sobytie bytiya*). I can experience the “other” as a whole human being, whereas I am dependent on the “other” to be complete. Being is to participate the event of Being, in which each concrete consciousness is passive concerning itself and each value-centre, each concrete “I”, is mutually dependant the “other”. Contrarily, in dialogical understanding, being passive in relation with the “other” is not possible at all since dialogical relations effects *both* participants in the event *from within* and *simultaneously*.

The misunderstanding partly depends on the English translations of Bakhtin’s works and partly on the chronology of publications. In “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity”, the original Russian word that Bakhtin uses for “consummatedness/completedness” is “zaveršennost’” and in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, he uses the same word in negative form as “nezaveršennost’” but the translation is not “incompletedness”, rather, “unfinalizability” or “open-endedness”. That is to say, in “Author and Hero”, Bakhtin defines the “essentially necessary foundation of the author-hero relationship” as finalizing the hero and his life (AH: 4). Whereas in the Dostoevsky book, Bakhtin’s approach against finalizing the “other” gains a negative tone. However, the inconsistency between the translations of his different works, carried out by different scholars, opens the way to unite his early and later philosophy like there is a single, undifferentiated narrative in terms of interrelationships between consciousnesses. Since his later works published earlier, Bakhtin readers were already introduced with his dialogical approach, and later, when his earlier works published, the difference in his perspective mostly stayed out of attention. Bakhtin starts with the uniqueness and concreteness of both the “I” and the “other” but the relation he explains was not dialogical, rather he builds a phenomenology of self-experience in its dependency on the other’s experience of the “I”. In “participative thinking”, the

missing notion is *simultaneity*, which is crucial for “dialogical relationship”; there is no simultaneity since there is no *mutual interaction*.

3.4.1 Understanding as Listening

It is more appropriate to say that Bakhtin’s ideas on the nature of intersubjective relationships “evolved” than saying that he contradicts with himself. In “Author and Hero”, he defines aesthetic act as aesthetic *seeing* of the author/I from a viewpoint outside of the hero/other. The outsideness of the “I” and the “other” with respect to each other is the ground of the author’s/I’s surplus of seeing against the hero/other. In the process of artistic creation of the hero, author must use this advantage of “seeing more” than the hero to *finalize* the hero, to *encompass* the hero from each side, to give the final form the hero as a whole. In that case, the hero is passive *in* the author’s aesthetic activity. We already stated that the hero/other is passive concerning his/her inner self and inner experience of his/her body. Here, we should pay attention that the hero (i.e., the “other” with respect to the “I”) is passive not only in terms of finalizing/consummating herself but within the very relationship with the author/I during the author’s aesthetic activity in relation to the hero. The point is that one of the consciousnesses in that relationship does not *response* to the other; the author/I does not anticipate any response from the hero/other. That is why to finalize the other is a *self-activity* of one of the participants in the artistic event. Later, Bakhtin calls this type of a relationship with the hero as “monologic approach”, and the novel as a “monological novel”. In the *Problems*, Bakhtin uses Tolstoy’s monological novel as an example in contrast to Dostoevsky’s polyphony. He illustrates monological approach as follows:

The words and consciousness of the author, Leo Tolstoy, are nowhere addressed to the hero, do not question him, and expect no response from him. The author neither argues with his hero nor agrees with him. He speaks not with him, but about him. The final word belongs to the author, and that word—based on something the hero does not see and does not understand, on something located outside the hero’s consciousness—can never encounter the hero’s words on a single dialogic plane (PDP: 71).

Although it is explained, in “Author and Hero”, as the only creative way of author’s relation to the hero, later, the monological approach becomes “simplified”, “low

level”, “ordinary” or “usual” in Bakhtin’s language, since it is unable to or is not willing to represent the multi-centeredness and eventness of lived life. In the monological novel, the only active consciousness is the author’s consciousness and the characters are objectified for his/her monological all-encompassing point of view. In his notes titled as “Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book”, Bakhtin’s words expresses the distance from his earlier philosophy:

The *materialization of a human being*. Social and ethical conditions, and the forms of their materialization. Dostoevsky's hatred of capitalism. The artistic discovery of the human being-personality. The dialogic relationship as the only form of relationship toward the human being-personality preserving its freedom and open-endedness. Criticism of all *external* forms of relationship and interaction, from violence to authority; artistic finalization as a variety of violence (TRDB: 291-92).

It is clear that according to Bakhtin finalizing the hero is not a “responsible” act anymore. When Bakhtin discovers Dostoevsky’s invention to represent the consciousness of the hero not as an object but another autonomous consciousness, what has changed is not only his ideas on the possibility of artistic activity but also his overall ideas on the nature of interrelationships between consciousnesses. Bakhtin contends that in the polyphonic novel the author has no surplus of seeing against the hero (PDP: 251). When the author does not have the surplus of seeing against the hero, the author’s relation to the hero turns into an *internal relationship*, because the encompassing point of view from outside the hero is replaced with an internal dialogue with the hero. That means, the hero is unfinalized/incomplete (*nezaversennyi*); to put it concisely, the hero, in the polyphonic novel, is *alive*. Bakhtin illustrates Dostoevsky’s artistic activity as follows:

It is one thing to be active in relation to a dead thing, to voiceless material that can be molded and formed as one wishes, and another thing to be active *in relation to someone else's living, autonomous consciousness*. This is a questioning, provoking, answering, agreeing, objecting activity; that is, it is dialogic activity no less active than the activity that finalizes, materializes, explains, that drowns out the other's voice with nonsemantic arguments. Dostoevsky frequently interrupts, but he never drowns out the other's voice, never finishes it off “from himself,” that is, out of his own and alien consciousness. This is, so to speak, the activity of God in His relation to man, a relation allowing man to reveal himself utterly (in his immanent development), to judge himself, to refute himself. This is activity of a higher quality (TRDB: 285).

When dialogic relationships are reduced to minimum by not addressing or not questioning the other and not anticipating a response, as if, one is against not a person but a thing, when the last word has already said by the all-encompassing/authoritative consciousness of the author, dialogue does not last anymore. Obviously, it is not accidental that Bakhtin's terminology and conception regarding the aesthetic act changes from "seeing" into "listening". Here, in the polyphonic novel, the relationship between the author and the hero turns into a dialogue and this discovery is what changes Bakhtin's thinking for it opens the possibility of understanding the "other" without framing his/her personality. In the *Problems*, he says that "[i]t is impossible to master the inner man, to see and understand him by making him into an object" (PDP: 251-52). In the polyphonic novel, hero's discourse is not homophonic but *in* the hero's consciousness, through his dialogic word, not only his position but the other's position against him and the others as he relates him to themselves are represented *simultaneously*; the other's voices are included in the hero's discourse. Dostoevsky's invention is to depict a person in the moment of living interaction with the other. Hence, in one's consciousness, the other's consciousness resounds without merging with each other. Otherness of the subjects gains a new tension, when the artistic event takes place not in the activity of a single consciousness (in aesthetic seeing, the "other" is objectified and the author becomes consciousness of a consciousness not consciousness among others) but between different active consciousnesses.

In "Author and Hero", Bakhtin states: "the author must move the very center of value from the hero's existence as a compelling task into his existence as a beautiful given; *instead of hearing and agreeing with the hero* [emphasis added], the author must see all of him in the fullness of the present and admire him as such" (AH: 19). Whereas in the polyphonic novel, the hero does not accept the final word of the "other" as a gift; since it is not a gift but it is a way to "kill" the other. Since hero's consciousness represented as *alive*, that is to say, in the *ongoing* event of his life as being capable of answering the author, author does not recreate the hero's consciousness and life but listens to the hero: "*To think, for him, means to question and to listen* [emphasis added], to try out orientations, to combine some and expose others. For it must be emphasized that in Dostoevsky's world even agreement retains its dialogic character, that is, it never leads to a merging of voices and truths in a single impersonal truth, as occurs in the monologic world" (PDP: 95). Dostoevsky does not

talk about the hero but finds out the words for the hero in order for him to become able to reveal his self, and it is possible only through “listening” to the hero. In that case, the author *becomes both the speaker and the listener*, as we have already stated in the previous chapter, it is the only possibility in the living communication. In Bakhtin’s dialogical understanding of consciousness, consciousness is not solely participative or intentional, does not reach beyond itself into the world and into the other and does not turn back into itself with the object of its intention. Rather, in any single moment consciousness is in an open-ended dialogue with the other consciousnesses: “[t]he very being of man (both external and internal) is the *deepest communion*. To *be* means to *communicate*, and we have already explained that living communication between concrete consciousnesses can only be dialogic” (TRDB: 287).

Bakhtin’s work on Dostoevsky is far away from being extraneous within his overall philosophy. Dostoevsky book should not be read as Bakhtin’s discovery of the distinctive authorship of a particular novelist. Not only Bakhtin changes “Dostoevsky” but also Dostoevsky changes “Bakhtin”. For Bakhtin’s thinking, Dostoevsky’s authorship constitutes the threshold between his *participative* and *dialogical* understanding of human existence. His understanding of human existence evolves from the inescapable situation of being mutually dependent to each other into a mutual relationship. The architectonics of the self, the unity of I-for-myself, I-for-other, others-for-me, depends on the movement of the “I” that first reaches beyond itself, encounters with the “other”, turns back to its own centre and evaluates the other in its self-activity. Since the other is given in this conceptualization, the “other” becomes an object that “I” can encapsulate. Within the experience of the “I”, the other consciousness that is experienced remains silent, there is no possibility to respond the experiencing consciousness in that relationship. Although the movement itself includes the “other”, this is not a relationship but the way to relate oneself to the other.

In the preceding chapter, I explained the inescapably dialogic nature of the word as an expression of one’s unique perspective in life in order to provide a background for her comparison between “participative” and “dialogical” relationships. Here we focused on the early manuscripts of Bakhtin, which do not represent his dialogical thinking yet. Following that, we must now articulate the distinctiveness of Dostoevsky’s internally dialogic relationship with the hero that constitutes the

possibility of representing a consciousness in verbal art not as a dead image but as a *personality*, from the unique position of that person and with his own voice.

CHAPTER 4

POLYPHONY

“The depths of consciousness are simultaneously its peaks (up and down in the cosmos and in the microworld are relative). Consciousness is much more terrifying than any unconscious complexes.”

Bakhtin, *Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book*, p.288

4.1 The Differences Between “Dialogy”, Polyphony, Monology

First of all, it should be clear that there is no such thing as “dialogy”. The reason is that Bakhtin indicates a certain kind of relationship and not a theory. According to Bakhtin, “[d]ialogic relations have a specific nature: they can be reduced neither to the purely logical (even if dialectical) nor to the purely linguistic (compositional-syntactic). They are possible only between complete utterances of various speaking subjects” (PT: 117). It is a semantic relationship and can occur only when there are different consciousnesses addressing one another or two particular utterances coming into contact in a single semantic plane (PT: 117). That is to say, we cannot refer to a single concept or to Bakhtin’s overall philosophy as “dialogy” or “dialogism”. It would be a fatal mistake mainly for two reasons: firstly Bakhtin rejects the supremacy of theory over the lived experience, and secondly cramming a relationship between non-coinciding and unique consciousnesses into a single concept is an abstraction of the speaking subjects and their unique positions. When we start speaking about abstract and comprehensible possibilities, we lose our bond with concrete reality. For instance, since linguistic entities are repeatable and anonymous, between two linguistic entities such as two different words, we cannot assume a dialogic relationship. Moreover, we cannot find dialogic relationships between linguistic elements within an utterance of a single speaking subject. Two words, when they belong to two different speaking subjects, can dialogically relate to each other in the unity of the event that constitutes

the common semantic background for each subject. We can say that since utterances are always embodied, the necessary condition for dialogic relationship is the encounter of two non-coinciding consciousnesses. Bakhtin's understanding of dialogic relationships does not suppose naïveté unlike another common misunderstanding.

Dialogic relationships include agreement, support, sympathy as well as disagreement, insult, rejection, objection, provoking, etc. Stating that there is a dialogic relationship between two utterances of particular consciousnesses does not necessarily mean this is a “peaceful” relationship. In fact, Bakhtin's selection of exemplary utterances is not optimistic at all, such as hunger, disease, cold or death. Nevertheless, somehow the majority of the literature on Bakhtin's formulation of “dialogy” understands it as synonymous with polyphony. Holquist and Clark provides us one of the clearest examples of this misreading:

The phenomenon that Bakhtin calls “polyphony” is simply another name for dialogism. [...] Dostoevsky's polyphony illustrates the concept of authorship that Bakhtin had proposed at a more abstract level in 1919 in *The Architectonics* and again in 1924 in ‘The Problem of Content, Material and Form in the Verbal Work of Art’ (Holquist and Clark, 1984: 242).

The names “The Architectonics” and “dialogism” are due to the authors' love for renaming Bakhtin's works and concepts.¹² In his book *Dialogism*, Holquist explains his aim for inventing his term “dialogism” as follows:

[T]he term used in this book to refer to the interconnected set of concerns that dominate Bakhtin's thinking is “dialogism,” a term, I hasten to add, never used by Bakhtin himself. There can be no theoretical excuse for spawning yet another “ism,” but the history of Bakhtin's reception seems to suggest that if we are to continue to think about his work in a way that is useful, some synthetic means must be found for categorizing the different ways he meditated on dialogue. That is, some way must be found to conceive his varied activity as a unity [...] all Bakhtin's writings are animated and controlled by the principle of dialogue (Holquist, 1990: 14).

Apparently, failure to distinguish the early “participative thinking” from “dialogical understanding”, which I provided its detailed comparison in the previous chapter, causes also the confusion between “dialogism” and polyphony. It must be stressed that labelling Bakhtin's philosophy as dialogism is an unacceptable mistake since Bakhtin opposes any kind of “theoreticism” because “it gives no significant place to the

¹² Holquist and Clark title the early works of Bakhtin as “The Architectonics of Answerability” since they claim that each is as an attempt to write the same book (Holquist and Clark, 1984: 63).

ungeneralizable and the irreducibly particular; and so it does not see the importance of specific human decisions in response to ongoing experience" (Morson, 1991: 1073). Even at the expense of contradicting Bakhtin himself, the pointless striving to unite Bakhtin's works under one “-ism” narrows the vision to the extent that his most essential concepts become undistinguishable and hence their relations with each other are concealed. As we have already demonstrated, in Bakhtin's thinking, the possibility of dialogic relationship becomes visible through Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel. Prior to the Dostoevsky book there is no dialogue between consciousnesses but a one-sided relationship, and later, Bakhtin never uses the word “polyphony” for actual human communication. Polyphony requires “orchestration” of the author; that is, a specific position of the author in relation with the hero in which the author listening to the heroes externalizes their individual voices.

In lived life, human communication and understanding can only be dialogic. In verbal art, Bakhtin distinguishes two distinct artistic “approaches” of the author, “monological” and “internally dialogic” or “polyphonic”. “Monological” refers to authoritarian attitude in terms of “truth”. The author of the monological novel appropriates the “truth” (*istina*) for him/herself. That is to say, the viewpoints of the author and the heroes' do not intersect dialogically with each other. Author takes advantage of the surplus of seeing and hero's “individual truth” (*pravda*) does not interact with the author's all-encompassing point of view. All the heroes and their fields of visions are inscribed into the monologic whole of the novel that can be seen only by the author. The point is that the author with *monological* attitude does not bring his/her own truth for discussion. Since there is no unitary plane that makes the dialogue between the author and the hero possible, monologic approach cannot engender a dialogic relationship between the author and the hero; the author finalizes (*zaveršeniye*) the hero's consciousness. Contrarily, *internally dialogic* or *polyphonic* approaches provide the realm to interaction of diverse points of view in one single semantic plane with each other. As we will be going to explain in the following sections, author's internally dialogic relationship with the hero is the only foundation of polyphonic novel.

While dialogic relationships between consciousnesses and utterances are inescapable when they are addressed to each other or intersects with each other on a

single semantic plane, it is not a sufficient reason for a polyphonic novel. Bakhtin states that

The degrees of objectification and subjectification of depicted people (the dialogic nature of the author's relations to them) vary drastically in literature. ... Novels usually represent completely final arguments summarized from the author's standpoint (if there are arguments at all). Dostoevsky's work contains transcriptions of incomplete and uncompletable arguments. But any novel is generally filled with dialogic overtones (not always with its heroes, of course) (PT: 112).

The important point is that both monological and polyphonic novels are dialogic (the discourse is dialogic); in other words, the hero is never merely an object but when the hero is objectified by the authoritative monological consciousness of the author, polyphony cannot be achieved but only monological novel.

4.2 Dostoevsky's Artistic Devices to Create Polyphonic Novel

So far, we delineated Bakhtin's approach to what he defines as dialogic relationship. I proposed that defining the totality of Bakhtin's work as dialogical is misleading since there is a break that manifests itself in the conceptual transition from "participative thinking" to "dialogic relationship". I argued that what leads Bakhtin to this shift is his Dostoevsky book, in other words Dostoevsky's influence in Bakhtin's intellectual life. In order to better grasp the nuances of this influence we need to perceive Dostoevsky's literature with Bakhtin's eyes. Therefore, the aim in this section is to clarify the specific character of Dostoevsky's novels, which reveals itself in the creative activity of the author as well as in the reader's experience vis-à-vis the novel. In my opinion, to read one of Dostoevsky's novels is by itself a genuine experience. In the polyphonic novel, the reader finds herself in the peculiar position of having the responsibility of listening to the hero for making any judgement on his personality instead of locating herself in the pre-given perspective of the author against the hero. This peculiarity, however, is not an arbitrary phenomenon; it finds its ground precisely in the possibility of an actual dialogue. What Dostoevsky does is principally to ensure this ground in his unique way. According to Bakhtin, Dostoevsky is the creator of a

new artistic way of thinking that he appropriately calls “polyphonic.” Here I attempt to explain and critically examine the conditions of the polyphonic novel.¹³

4.2.1 The Notion of Polyphony

In the *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin describes the chief characteristics of Dostoevsky's novels as a “plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices” (PDP: 6). He draws attention not merely to the plurality of characters in the novels but also to their independence from one another as well as from the author. In Dostoevsky's novels, the consciousness of the hero is not an object of a single authorial consciousness; rather they are represented as equal participants in the unity of the event “with equal rights and each with its own world.” (PDP: 6). Since the event is equal with co-existence, the necessary condition for any event to occur is the plurality of interacting consciousnesses. There can be no isolated event—there must always be an “I” and an “other” and the categorial difference between the two is unsurmountable. Therefore, any event emerges from the co-existence of different interacting consciousnesses in a dialogue.

Only in the unity of the event, which is mediated through the artistic vision of the author, can the plurality of different integral fields of visions co-exist without losing their independence from each other. In Dostoevsky's novels, multiplicity of utterly incompatible elements, such as completely different worldviews, are distributed among several different consciousnesses, i.e., the multiplicity is not represented through a single authoritative point of view. Instead, they are presented within several fields of vision. Moreover, as Michel Gardiner says, the “multiplicity of interacting consciousnesses is a necessary but not a sufficient characteristic of a genuine polyphony” (Gardiner, 1992: 25). The dialogical principle can be accomplished only when the heroes are treated as other subjects with their own words. For example, Dostoevsky unites together the criminal/thinker Raskolnikov and the righteous prostitute Sonya, and we do not see them through the eyes of a transcendent observer who does not participate in the event, but rather through their own eyes; we

¹³ This chapter contains parts of my article previously published in *Sofia Philosophical Review* (Kocaoğlu, 2020).

see them through their dialogue with each other. They are united in the event as equal participants. In other words, the heroes are not reified by the author. Instead, each hero is considered as the author of his or her own worldview and not as an object of Dostoevsky's artistic vision. (Hermans, 2003: 93).

For this reason, the reader does not meet the heroes through Dostoevsky's own judgment about them, but rather listens to and questions Raskolnikov himself. Unlike the cases of monological constitution, in a polyphonic novel there is no stable perspective from which the heroes are situated and contemplated one-sidedly. The authors of monological novels tend to have this god-like vision over the characters. In that kind of structure, the author knows everything about the character and even things that the character does not know about itself. On the contrary, in the polyphonic novel, there is nothing to say about the hero which the hero cannot articulate about himself. To put it concisely, the hero is a free consciousness of himself. We can know the hero only through his own voice. He enters into dialogue both with himself and with the others and; moreover, the event provides the realm in which the hero's consciousness is revealed. In Bakhtin's thought, the function of dialogue is to provide a basis for a freely flowing and potentially inexhaustible human exchange. (Tihanov, 2000: 69). Monologism is the enemy of the genuine novel, since it distorts the interaction and ensures a single authoritarian position. The main premise of the dialogue is the destruction of the monopoly and omnipotence of the author. The author must lose his divine control over the hero and heroes, and their speech can be safe from the author's superintendence. Only after that can the dialogue ensue. (Tihanov, 2000: 80).

4.2.2 Idea in the Polyphonic Novel

In the majority of studies on Dostoevsky's novels, the notion of polyphony is not mentioned at all. It is obviously possible to approach his novels in completely different ways of literary analysis. However, in the foreword of the Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, Bakhtin states that

[I]literature on Dostoevsky has focused primarily on the ideological problems raised by his work. The topical acuteness of those problems has overshadowed the deeper and more permanent structural elements in his mode of artistic visualization. Critics are apt to forget that Dostoevsky is first and foremost an artist (of a special type, to be sure) and not a philosopher or a publicist (PDP: 4).

At first glance, Dostoevsky's novels seem to embody different, or even opposite, philosophical attitudes, and critics often try to analyse and interpret the diversity of opposite ideologies in the novel. That kind of critique leads to failure since different ideas of particular heroes are impersonalized. As far as Dostoevsky's work is concerned, this attitude seems to be rather inadequate: none of the philosophical ideas embodied in Dostoevsky's work has authority over the others and none of them clearly belongs to the author himself. They are rather personal ideas peculiar to the heroes. Bakhtin rejects the claim that an idea or an utterance can be meaningful in the same way for anyone and under any circumstances. Rather, he always places the emphasis on the unique character of a particular subject and of an utterance. Similarly, in Dostoevsky's novels, an idea is not an abstract assertion, but is always the thought of a particular person from his or her unique perspective in the event.¹⁴ When one attempts to construe the ideational complexity of the novel as if the ideas belonged to the author and as if the heroes were just mouthpieces, the attempt inevitably ends in abstraction. With this kind of approach, all we can obtain is a list of ideas and not the holistic understanding of the novel itself. Dostoevsky's novel is composed of the interactions between consciousnesses and not of the monological regulation of ideas.

The above-mentioned approach is not the proper way of tackling Dostoevsky's novel insofar as the notion of "idea" plays a remarkable role in the novel. And, as Bakhtin says, the "idea is not the hero in the novel." (PDP: 31). Dostoevsky represents not the idea in man but "the man in man".¹⁵ The idea is a medium, an environment in which consciousness is revealed. All ideas are personalized in his novels as if they themselves are free agents. Consequently, there is no idea which belongs to no one. Each and every idea originates from the necessarily unique position of a particular person in the event and becomes the representation of this unique position. Ideas may change, but they never break free from the consciousness to which they belong; they are never free floating. In Dostoevsky's novels, thinking is interwoven with feeling;

¹⁴ Since neither the event nor the participants of the event are represented from a single authorial point of view, there is no unified consciousness inherent in the novel that carries the philosophical or ideological structure of the novel.

¹⁵ Quoting Dostoevsky's own words from his last notes in 1881: "With utter realism *to find the man in man* . . . They call me a *psychologist*; *this is not true*. I am merely a realist *in the higher sense*, that is, I portray all the *depths of the human soul*" (PDP: 60). Dostoevsky's original statement can be found in: *Biografija, pis'ma I zamečki iz zapisnoj knigi F. M. Dostoevskogo* [Biography, Letters and Notes from the Notebook of F. M. Dostoevsky], St. Petersburg: Tipografija A. S. Suvorina, 1883, p. 373.

an idea has a unique meaning for someone and under certain circumstances. Moreover, an idea gains meaning as it is uttered. Only when it is uttered, it becomes a concrete person's voice and, in this way, the idea becomes an active participant of the event.

It should be stressed here that none of Dostoevsky's novels can be regarded as a philosophical work *stricto sensu* because the idea never becomes the *principle* of representation or construction of the novel, but is the *object* of representation. It is not the principle since the idea exists only for the hero and not for Dostoevsky himself as the author (PDP: 24). The idea shapes the world of the hero; it becomes the principle for his understanding of the world from his unique and irreplaceable point of view. However, it must be pointed out that ideas do not become the principles of authorial representation of the novel. In other words, the idea does not become the hero of the novel. The hero is the consciousness of the hero itself, which does not coincide with the author's consciousness. Dostoevsky represents the consciousness of the hero in a way that regards the hero's consciousness as a second consciousness independent of himself. Furthermore, this other independent consciousness of the hero is not the object of the author, but another subject on its own. As an author, Dostoevsky creates free "others" with their own ideas that are related in the overall unity of the event. The other reason why Dostoevsky's novels are not properly speaking philosophical is that, although they contain plenty of different confronting ideas, they never dialectically evolve into an ultimate statement—just as different consciousnesses do not merge in one another and do not dissolve into the single unitary consciousness of the author. Since the idea is always embedded in a concrete consciousness and the event means interaction of different consciousnesses, the idea serves as a principle to understand the world from a unique position in the hero's ongoing event of life. In "From notes made in 1970–71", Bakhtin clearly delineates the difference between dialectic and dialogue with respect to the embodiment of the idea:

Dialogue and dialectics. Take a dialogue and remove the voices (the partitioning of voices), remove the intonations (emotional and individualizing ones), carve out abstract concepts and judgments from living words and responses, cram everything into one abstract consciousness—and that's how you get dialectics (p: 147).

Consequently, the attempt to abstract an idea from a hero ends up in distortion, since to trace an idea abstractly as if it exists on its own is nothing but to expel the idea from the event in which it is rooted in the first place. As an author, Dostoevsky, represents

the consciousness of the hero with her own world, but does not represent a person against a static background constructed in a merely one-sided fashion.

4.2.3 Time-space and Plot

It must be stressed that Dostoevsky does not “consume” the hero since he does not constrain the hero within the boundaries of some certain, unchanging personality. At this point, his way of visualizing the event in the novel has crucial importance. His artistic visualizing is remarkably based on his seeing the world in terms of space and not time (PDP: 28). He represents multitude of noncompatible material as if they coexist in space and simultaneously. Hence “[t]he fundamental category in Dostoevsky’s mode of artistic visualizing was not evolution, but coexistence and interaction” (PDP: 28). A linear timeline necessitates an authorial view “from above” that is not relative to the heroes but monologically all-encompassing. In Dostoevsky’s novels, the specific relationship between the author and the hero produces a world in which all the meaningful elements of reality are contained in the same time frame. In a single moment, all the interrelationships of the hero in the event with the other heroes and the awareness of the hero’s situation relative to his or her surroundings are represented simultaneously. Dostoevsky develops reality extensively. In this manner, he plays with the function of the plot in the novel. Since the ongoing event is developed extensively but not temporally, he breaks the essentiality of causality over his heroes. It is no accident that a great deal of his characters show clear symptoms of various mental illnesses. The hero seems to live in his own mind and not in his socially conditioned spatiotemporal environment. Bakhtin states that there are “[e]ccentricity, scandals, hysterics, etc., in Dostoevsky’s world. This is neither psychology nor psychopathology, for the issue here is *personality* and not the *reified* layers of a person, free self-disclosure and not the second-hand objectified analysis of a materialized person” (TRDB: 295).

Thus, Dostoevsky does not examine the psychological continuity of the hero. This kind of examination results in excessive control over the “other.” Particular past experiences of the hero would become the explanation of the acts of the hero. Bakhtin says that “[t]he real connections begin where the ordinary plot ends” (PDP: 277). The reality of the novel depends on the linear timeline that brings certain experiences and

reactions in that time period together. In this manner, the hero's actions would become interpreted by the author and this interpretation would also result in giving a description of the personality of the hero—to wit, the hero's life would no longer be an open-ended event but would be finalized. Rather, Dostoevsky depicts the hero in the ongoing event of his life, always in his presence. Accordingly, Bakhtin states that the goal of the plot in Dostoevsky's novels is as follows: “[i]ts goal is to place a person in various situations that expose and provoke him, to bring people together and make them collide in conflict” (PDP: 266).

The plot serves to reveal the unpredictability and unfinalizability of a living person. The hero is in becoming and the author gives this freedom to be oneself to the hero by not describing or finalizing him. The hero in the polyphonic novel, just as a living person, sees himself “inwardly” as a task still yet-to-be. A story can be told only after it is once known. On the contrary, the hero's life has not yet ended—the hero stands against the author as a living person who has endless possibilities. The rejection of the monological perspective prevents the hero's possibilities from being consumed. Since the event of the hero's life always unfolds in the present time, the author depicts the hero's ongoing event of becoming himself but not his own judgement about the personality of the hero. In other words, the author does not play the judge in the polyphonic novel.

4.2.4 Simultaneity and Co-existence

All these artistic innovations of Dostoevsky knot in the notion of simultaneity and manifest themselves as genuine polyphony. Different unmerged consciousnesses, with their unique positions in the event, are represented simultaneously in the threshold, bordering on a crucial decision, on the eve of crisis and even in the state of delirium. Dostoevsky provokes the heroes to spell out ultimate revelations of themselves in extreme situations (Dentith 1995: 41). The space is organized accordingly, and plot is used for the meeting and juxtaposition of different consciousnesses in the very complexity of the event. Actions take place in the threshold, in the foyer, on the stairway, on the bridge. In *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov's room is six steps long, not unlike a coffin, and still is the place for crowded scenes where lots of commotion take place. Marmeladov's rooms is a walk-

through hole but becomes the scene of a significant crowd when Marmeladov is just about to die. In *The Double*, Goladkin encounters himself as another on a bridge. Time expands as the space narrows and all the significant multitude come across at the same time and coexists. Turning points are squeezed in those narrow spaces and so the weight of the event is increased. The possibility of simultaneous coexistence turns into a criterion for distinguishing the essential from nonessential:

Only such things as can conceivably be linked together at a single point in time are essential, and are incorporated into Dostoevsky's world, such things can be carried over eternity, for in eternity, for Dostoevsky, everything is simultaneous, everything coexists. That which has meaning only as "earlier" or "later," which is sufficient only unto its own moment, which is valid only as past, or as future, or as present in relation to past or future, is for him nonessential and is not incorporated into his world (PDP: 29).

Thus, Dostoevsky gathers all the meaning at the very moment of interaction. Each hero in that moments of crisis enters into the event relying on their unique points of view. Meaning of the event gravitates through each other and for each of them differently. There is no standing point outside the event; objective, all-encompassing point of view is categorically rejected. The event is meaningful only for the participants. Moreover, it is not just that contradictions among different consciousnesses presented in the thresholds as if they are not in time but only in space. Dostoevsky also represents the conflicts in one particular consciousness as they belong to different bodies, side by side and facing each other as if the inner dialogue of a person occurs in space and not in time. Through paired characters such as Ivan and the devil or Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov, he dramatizes the contradiction and develops it extensively (PDP: 28).

4.2.5 Microdialogue and Great Dialogue

Dostoevsky's relation with the hero is, in a nutshell, an internally dialogic relationship. He interrupts the discourse of the hero dialogically—he interrupts through another discourse. Dostoevsky's novel is essentially dialogic; the dialogue between the consciousnesses is not just compositional. Particular dialogues between two heroes, such as meetings of Raskolnikov and the court investigator Porfiriy Petrovich, are truly dialogic in the sense that it is not an image of a dialogue; each of

them hears the other's voice inwardly. Their possible responses, doubts, fears, thrill and all that are not uttered also pervades the dialogue. Thus, the other becomes an active constituent of one's own words. Hence, one's own speech turns into an internal dialogue with the other. In one's speech, the other's voice echoes simultaneously: "Dialogue has penetrated inside every word, provoking in it a battle and the interruption of one voice by another"; this is what Bakhtin calls "microdialogue" (PDP: 75).

Furthermore, dialogic relationships exist among all elements of the novel, not just in the interrelationships of the particular consciousness of the hero, but "[t]he polyphonic novel is dialogic through and through" (PDP: 40). Dostoevsky forces different worlds of the heroes to enter into relationship with each other and forces the heroes to see and know what the others know about both themselves and the others and, further, what the author knows about the heroes. The author of the polyphonic novel extends his own point of view on the hero to the heroes own consciousnesses and by this way the hero becomes capable of answering the author. "For the author the hero is not 'he' and not 'I' but a fully valid 'thou', that is another autonomous 'I'" who is capable of answering the author (PDP: 63). The possibility of the condition for creating fully valid voices of a completely other consciousness lies in the construction of the author's discourse as dialogically addressed to the hero. The author of a genuinely polyphonic novel talks with the hero and not about the hero (PDP: 63). The consciousness of the other cannot be treated as an object or a mere thing among the other objects, but to think about them is to talk with them and to understand them necessitates entering into a dialogical relation with them. For Dostoevsky, thought is two-sided, "to think means to question and to listen" (PDP: 95). Dostoevsky definitely creates his novel as a great dialogue, by creating the sphere to interaction and granting the juxtaposition of the different voices. His novel is never quiet.

The disturbance of quietude by sound is mechanical; the disturbance of silence by the word is personalistic and intelligible: it is an entirely different world. In quietude nothing makes sound (or something does not make a sound), in silence nobody speaks (or somebody does not speak). Silence is possible only in the human world (and only for a person) (Notes: 133).

If the hero's consciousness fell silent, there would remain nothing to say for Dostoevsky as an author.

The great dialogue of the polyphonic novel takes place not in the past but always right now; it is not an image of an already finished dialogue (PDP: 63). If this were the case, then the author's position would be outside the dialogue, he would not become the part of the event and would have the view to the whole of the dialogue from above. This would be ended as a very successful monologization of a lifeless dialogue. All we heard would be the voice of the narrator and not the interlocutors' of the dialogue. On the contrary, the condition of the ultimate dialogicity is the simultaneity of emergence of the dialogue with the author's creative activity and the reader's participation. As mentioned above, the fundamental necessity for the dialogical relationship is the outsidedness and interaction of the consciousnesses with respect to each other, and the reader is not positioned out of this event either. If the dialogue's time were the past, and it were represented by omniscient monological consciousness of the author and against the firm background of a unified consciousness, it would result in the location of the reader in the author's point of view, since there remains no other position anymore. Heroes would become dead silhouettes of once living persons, and the living plurality of voices would be covered by monotony. Rather, the dialogue, the event, takes place just right now; and, furthermore, since dialogue occurs between the independent and unmerged consciousnesses which do not become an object for each other and are not objectified by the author, there is no ground for the reader to choose any position in the ongoing event of the novel. Reader must take a position on its own and in a manner removes the reader from being a passive witness and becomes an active interlocutor.

To conclude, I believe that an adequate understanding of Dostoevsky's internally dialogic relationship with the hero is *a conditio sine qua non* for understanding the specific character of his novel. Unlike the omniscient and unitary consciousness of the author of the monological novel, we find Dostoevsky's creative power in the great dialogue of the novel itself. In a monological novel, the characters reach us through the filter of the author's own consciousness. The author, who has an indisputable authority over the past, present, and future of the character, presents us with the power of his authorship in all its majesty. The author of a monological novel does not share his creative power with the character of the novel and does not make the character the center of its own world or the author of its own fate. The author constructs the characters as images, not as consciousnesses, and what the author relates

himself to is not the necessarily unique point of view in which the hero has a sense of herself and her world. What is represented is the author's own perception of the character in the world wherein the character is situated. This impersonal reality surrounding the character loses nothing of its own reality and of its meaning if the character is removed from it because the world in the monological novel does not gain a new meaning through the perspective of the character. As a result, a character image is not transformed into the living consciousness of the hero.

Bakhtin was undoubtably the most influential figure among those who tried to explain Dostoevsky's attitude towards his heroes. As Bakhtin claims, what makes his novels polyphonic is the presentation of the hero as an "independent consciousness" along with his own world and not merely as the depiction of a character image. The author of the polyphonic novel indeed listens to the hero's voice and externalizes it. The subtle relationship between Dostoevsky and his hero, which is completely different from the authoritarian and one-sided relationship of the author with the character in the monological novel, has now become a mutual relationship. Consequently, there is no single truth or isolated whole of meaning in the polyphonic novel. The authoritarian mono-centrism, however, is skilfully replaced by multi-voicedness and multi-centeredness. The author does not pass judgments and deprive the hero of his or her right to answer the author.

We must also indicate here that Bakhtin regards the novel as responsible for re-creating the dialogical nature of actual human understanding and communication. He does insist that there is no possibility for any event to occur within the limits of a single consciousness. Solitude, in this sense, is nothing but an illusion. He says that a "person has no internal sovereign 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" (TRDB: 287). The reason why Bakhtin celebrates the polyphony of Dostoevsky's novel is the latter's unique attitude against heroes, which results in the freedom of the hero against the author-creator and his ability to hear all the different voices and orchestrate them. The relationship between the author and the hero is dialogized and the possibility of the reader's dialogical relation with both the author and the hero is secured by Dostoevsky. Since truth is not impersonal and not readily presented from the perspective of a single authorial consciousness, the reader of a polyphonic novel is compelled to become an active participant in the novel's event. In order to make her

own judgement about the hero, the reader is obliged to listen actively to the hero. I am inclined to think that this unique and peculiar situation one finds in one's own experience as a Dostoevsky reader is what forcefully drives one to explore the conditions of this experience. The ultimate question of what kind of authorship emerges via a novel of this sort is perhaps the most intriguing and crucial question that Dostoyevsky's novels can raise. In Dostoevsky's novels, we sense and witness the author's consciousness in an extremely powerful manner, as it is aptly embedded in the whole great dialogue of the novel. Thus, Dostoevsky's voice maintains its existence as a creative principle in the independent voices of the heroes that he creates qua "free others" and without any need to show off an absolute authoritative power.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, Bakhtin's most prominent idea, dialogicality of the intersubjective relationships, is examined as to his philosophy and in its relation to the transformation of the concept of aesthetic act. I claim that the turning point of the concept of dialogue in Bakhtin's philosophy, to wit, what constitutes the break between his early and later thought, is his study on Dostoevsky. Before the first version of Dostoevsky book in 1929, Bakhtin's main interest is in the architectonics of the self and the conditions of the individuality and unrepeatability of the individual act. After *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*, he starts to concern the interrelationships between particular subjects and the internal nature of this relationship. His philosophy has always been intertwined with literature since he deals with the individual self and particular act of this self. He never refers to an indefinite, abstract or universal consciousness, but rather to a consciousness as uniquely situated in Being. Literature provides him a field that he can observe unique selves in the novel. Speaking subjects are *sine qua non* for any novel and so the discourse is the medium that he can delve into the consciousness of concrete subjects in interaction with each other. Based on this framework, in this study, I focus on the conditions of internal dialogical relationships between different concrete consciousnesses, and I mainly argue that Bakhtin sets forth different possibilities on this subject matter before and after his study on Dostoevsky. That is, his analysis on the construction of the self in experience radically changed through time. By taking Dostoevsky book as a breaking point in Bakhtin's philosophy, in this thesis I demonstrate that in Bakhtin's earlier writings dialogue is not the key for neither experiencing oneself nor experiencing the other, which is mistakenly taken for granted in the literature on Bakhtin studies.

Before giving a detailed analysis of this change in Bakhtin's perspective with regard to the architectonics of the self and the aesthetic act, in the second chapter, I

explain the nature of dialogic relationships. Since dialogic relationship is necessarily semantic, it is essential to understand the nature of communication and the phenomenon of language. For this reason, in the second chapter, I begin with exploring Bakhtin's understanding of language with contrast to the general linguistics. His objection against Saussurean conception of language depends on the underestimation of communicative function of language. According to him, when communication is seen as a secondary function of language, it results with the abstraction of language from the speaking subjects. In contrast to Saussure, Bakhtin claims that language is possible only through the concrete utterances of particular subjects. Accordingly, his analysis of language as a living phenomenon focuses not the units of linguistic analysis such as words, phrases or sentences; rather he studies the speech itself, oral and written. For this very reason, Bakhtin starts with defining the boundaries of the unit of his analysis. He criticizes linguistics for the notion of speech is not defined and is not turned into a definite term. However, Bakhtin always emphasize the individuality and particularity of the subject and of the speech of that subject. Consequently, he starts with the determination of the utterance, that is, the particular speech of a concrete person, which is realized in a certain space and time.

According to Bakhtin, the boundaries of the utterance is determined by the change of speaking subjects. That is to say, change of speaking subjects constitutes the beginning and the end of the utterance and distinguishes one's utterance from the others' utterances. Taken the utterance as necessarily belongs to a particular speaking subject, the emphasis on the other subject as a constitutive part of the utterance is unique. Following that, Bakhtin asserts that the relation of the speaking subject with the language does not depend on the abstract system of language. Systematic unity of language can be achieved by the abstraction of living language from particular utterances of concrete speaking subjects. Each and every utterance belongs to a certain speaking subject and any utterance is constituted in a relation with the other subjects. Hence, the concrete speaking subject constitutes the utterance with the other participants within a dialogue. For Bakhtin, speech is not a neutral repetition of the linguistic units, to wit, it does not depend on the speaker's relation to the abstract system of language. However, a speaking subject encounters the word in a living communication with others and as the other's word. For the very reason of that, Bakhtin says that when we encounter with the word, it is already populated by others'

voices; there can be no utterance that belongs to no one. The speech is the subject's relation not with the system of language but with the other's words in a sphere of communication and under the circumstances that the speech occurs.

The utterance originates from and reflects the position of the speaker in the given dialogue. Moreover, what differentiates the utterance as a unit of communication from the linguistic units is its quality of responsiveness. A word as an item in dictionary that belongs to no one turns into an utterance when it becomes a subject's word, as the subject's response to the other in the dialogue. Moreover, it must be possible to respond to it from the viewpoint of the other participant in the dialogue. The important point is that speaking subjects participate in the dialogue from their unique point of views. Any understanding of an utterance can only be responsive, that is, it is imbued with a response since understanding is not equal with the passive perception. Neither the utterance itself nor understanding of it can be neutral but necessarily depends on the unique point of views of different participants in the dialogue. Since communication is participating in a dialogue, any utterance is constituted towards the other. Since the ground of communication is not an abstract system of language but the living dialogue, speech occurs in relation with the other participants and towards the other's anticipated response. Bakhtin states that the speaking subject actively try to determine the response of the other; hence any utterance is created towards the apperceptive background of the other participant in the dialogue. Bakhtin calls this the addressivity of the utterance. Every utterance is addressed to someone and anticipates a response. This simultaneity between the anticipated response and being able to originate a response of the other creates Bakhtin's dialogic turn. That means, an utterance, as always originating from a particular subject's point of view in the dialogue, necessitates not only the speaker but also the "other" simultaneously. In the utterance itself, both participants of the dialogue, the addresser and the addressee, and their viewpoints from their unique situation in the dialogue encounter each other. That is why, being in communication with the other or understanding the other is not a solitary act of consciousness, but it is an *event*, where at least two different point of views in the dialogue must come into contact and response to each other.

In the third chapter, I analyse Bakhtin's understanding of being in the world among the others. According to him, being is being in relation with the other. He never

discusses consciousness only from within the category of the “I”. Rather, he starts with asserting that in consciousness there are two categories, both the “I” and the “other”. The “other” is concrete just as the “I”; the “other” exists independently from the “I”. Bakhtin says that being for consciousness is co-being, co-existence or being-with-others (*sobytie*). He differentiates the world of things (*byt*) and the world of consciousness. He claims that being (*byt*) for consciousness has necessarily the character of an event (*sobytie*) and so the world of consciousness is Being-as-event (*sobytie bytiya*). What constitutes the eventness of Being is the co-existence of the “I” and the “other”. In *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, Bakhtin examines the uniqueness of the “I” and the “other” depending on that each particular and concrete consciousness occupies a unique situation in Being-as-event. Only *I-for-myself* can constitute a standing point for *me* in the event of Being and all the other I’s are “others” for me. Both “I” and the “other” are participants in the Being-as-event from their unique situatedness. The situatedness in Being as unique participants is the origin of being outside the other and differentiates the “I” from the “other”.

Starting from being uniquely situated in Being and necessarily being outside of the “other”, Bakhtin explores the difference between self-experience and experiencing the other. His conception of the aesthetic act plays an indispensable role in terms of being experienced as a whole. According to him, “I” cannot experience itself since its situatedness in Being results in a limited view. It is not possible for the “I” to experience itself from outside the position that it occupies. Hence, “I” can experience itself only from within as *I-for-myself* and can experience the other as *other-for-me*. Just as the “I” the “other” has a unique and limited view and cannot experience itself from outside itself. Bakhtin means by the architectonics of the self as the constitution of the self as a whole in relation with the other. More precisely, only from the viewpoint of the “other” the experience of the “I” can be completed. Form within the “I”, experiencing the “I” in time and in space from the outside is impossible. Accordingly, Bakhtin defines the three constitutive moments of the wholeness of the self as *I-for-myself*, *I-for-others*, and *others-for-me*. I cannot experience myself as others experience me. Therefore, the “other” becomes a constitutive of the “I”.

At this point, we must separate Bakhtin’s participative and dialogic understanding of intersubjective relations. Before and after the Dostoevsky book, Bakhtin always insists the categorial difference between the “I” and the “other”;

however, the role of the “other” in relation with the “I” radically changes after he analyses author-hero relationship in the polyphonic novels of Dostoevsky. In his participative understanding of intersubjective relationships, the constitution of “I” as a whole totally depends on the “other”’s artistic seeing of the “I”. In “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity”, Bakhtin states that the aesthetic act depends on contemplating and consummating the other, namely, experiencing the other from the outside in a way that the other cannot experiencing him/herself.

The act of contemplation of the “I” is productive since it is from a viewpoint that is inaccessible from the standpoint of the “other”. The “I” from a position outside of the “other” has a new evaluative standpoint that makes possible to consummate the “other”’s experiencing of the self. Since a subject cannot experience oneself from the outside, there always remains some features transgradient to oneself. One cannot experience oneself in front of a background or in an environment as a part of it like other objects. Similarly, any consciousness can experience itself from outside of its lived life, that is, one cannot experience one’s own birth and death. Only the other’s excess of seeing, seeing from the outside of oneself, can produce a view of a person as a whole both spatially and temporally. For that reason, Bakhtin defines the aesthetic activity as form-giving activity. Only through aesthetic seeing, the “I” can be encapsulated in time and in space, and so recreated as a whole.

Bakhtin defines aesthetic act as a movement and calls it sympathetic co-experiencing. According to him, experiencing the other can only be co-experiencing since occupying the other’s position in Being-as-event is not possible. “I” must be reach out of oneself and experience the “other”. Since pure empathizing, namely, experiencing the “other” as the “other” experiences oneself is not possible, “I” must turn back to its own position and must evaluate the other’s experiencing of oneself from its own position. By this way, the other’s inner experiencing gains a new meaning from the viewpoint of the “I”. By sympathetic co-experiencing, “I” can complete/consume the other from the standpoint that the “other” cannot experiencing itself. Moreover, the act of co-experiencing can be aesthetically productive only if the “I” relates itself to the “other” with love. If we do not notice the Christian overtones of his understanding of sympathetic co-experiencing, the notion of love might seem naïve. However, he makes an analogy between Christian understanding of love, loving the other as Jesus does, and the aesthetic act. That is to

say, loving the other, for him, means to co-experience the other's suffering and to save the other's soul. He says that one cannot love and forgive oneself. Aesthetic seeing is akin to forgiving the other's soul and giving peace to other's soul by lovingly evaluated the other.

In “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity”, Bakhtin examines the relation between the “I” and the “other” through the author-hero relationship in the novel. In the novel, author creates the hero from a standpoint outside the hero. That point of view from outside the hero provides the author the excess of seeing against the hero's inner experiencing of him/herself. Author can see the whole of the hero whereas the hero experiencing him/herself as always not completed/finished yet. The crucial point is that whereas the hero/other can become a whole in the eye of the author/I, the hero/other can never become a whole for him/herself. The reason is that aesthetic consummation of the hero/other is a *self*-activity of the author/I. Sympathetic co-experiencing is a way the author/I relates oneself to the hero/other independently of hero/other's active participation of this activity. I claim that the notion of aesthetic consummation or aesthetic self-activity is not dialogical in character. It presupposes only one active consciousnesses and the “other” includes in this activity of the “I” in relation to the “other” only as an object of the aesthetic seeing. The author/I in this case does not anticipate any response, that is, it is not a relationship between two points of views but the way “I” relates itself to the “other” without the active participation of the “other” in that activity. For this reason, Bakhtin says that the hero in the novel is finalized/consummated/completed; the chance of the hero to response to the author is taken away. The author says the final word about the hero without being in a dialogue with the hero. The author sympathetically co-experience the hero's inner experience/soul and recreates the soul of the hero in his/her own self-activity with love. Since the hero is silent, Bakhtin says that we can hear a tone of a requiem throughout the novel. That is to say, the hero is not alive in the novel as another consciousness alongside with the author. Bakhtin equates being dead to being not be heard. In the “Author and Hero” the necessary condition of aesthetic consummation is defined as finalizing the hero both in space and in time in the aesthetic self-activity of the author and from the outside of the hero.

Contrarily, in and after the Dostoevsky book, Bakhtin claims that understanding the other means being in a dialogue with the other. Moreover, taking

the other as a given, as a silent object, is not aesthetically productive. Bakhtin later equates the finalizing activity of the author with the monological approach. In the monologic novels, the author is the only active consciousness that has the authority over the event of the novel, over the hero's self-experience of him/herself and the hero's relation with his/her exterior. It is the outside position of the author that makes possible this all-encompassing point of view against the hero and his/her world. In the monologic novel, the author's word and the hero's word do not come across in a single semantic level that would make possible the dialogue between them. The author does not represent the multi-centered nature of the living dialogue. For that reason, Bakhtin sees the monological approach as less productive.

What Bakhtin finds out in the novels of Dostoevsky is the author's unique perspective against the hero that makes possible a dialogue between the hero and the author. I claim that Bakhtin not only discovers a brand new way of aesthetic relationship with the other but his understanding of human existence as being-with-other and his conception of communication has greatly changed.

In the fourth chapter, I explain the distinctive character of Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel in terms of the author's internally dialogic relationship with the hero. Bakhtin defines the characteristic of Dostoevsky's novel as the co-existence of different unmerged consciousness and voices of the heroes that are not suppressed by the author. In Dostoevsky's novel's each hero participates in the ongoing event of the novel from his/her own unique point of view. The author does not contemplate and represent the event from outside the event and so from an abstract standpoint; rather each hero is presented through the unique position that s/he actively orient her/himself to the ongoing event in the novel. The hero is not framed from the outside as an already lived and ended life. On the contrary, the hero's life has not yet ended since the author does not say the last word about the hero but give a chance to the hero to say his own word with his own voice. The hero is represented not as an object of the author's all-encompassing consciousness but as another subject standing against the author's consciousness. The author in the polyphonic novel, represents the heroes' voices and does not judge the heroes from the outside. The author does not recreate the hero's inner life/soul with love by sympathetic co-experiencing; rather, listens to the hero's own voice and creates the environment that the hero reveals him/herself in the unity of the event. The hero in the polyphonic novel is always in dialogue with the other

consciousnesses. Dostoevsky uses the plot in literature in order to juxtapose different worldviews of heroes and he organizes the time and the space to make them collide in conflict. The hero experiences and evaluates the event from his/her unique position in the event and as an active participant. Without active participation of the hero in the event, it would not be possible to represent the hero as another point of view independently from the author's position.

After the examination of Dostoevsky's internally dialogic relation with the hero, Bakhtin's understanding of being in relation with the other consciousness turns into being in a dialogue with each other. Formerly one-sided relation to the other evolves into a mutual relationship in which both participants are actively evaluate the other. Dialogic relationship is not relating oneself to an object, but it is being evaluated by the other subject mutually and simultaneously. That is why, in participative thinking the "other" is given as an object not answering the "I", but in a dialogic relationship every word is two-sided, both toward oneself and the other.

To conclude, in this thesis I analyse Bakhtin's philosophy by putting the Dostoevsky book in the center as a breaking point in Bakhtin's works. I strongly believe that without understanding Dostoevsky's polyphony, or more precisely, without being able to hear the plurality of voices in his novels, it is not possible to grasp the core idea of Bakhtin's philosophy, the dialogic relationships. At the same time, it is Bakhtin, who teaches us how to listen to the other's voice in the polyphonic novel and in the living communication. In Bakhtin's philosophy, understanding the "other" presupposes being watchfully listening to the other, just like in the creative activity of Dostoevsky by listening to heroes and orchestrates their voices.

Understanding the nature of dialogic relationships, in its contrast with the participative understanding of being in relation to the other, gives us a clear conception of the whole trajectory of Bakhtin's philosophy. At first, Bakhtin presents us a phenomenology of self-experience, being a participant in the event-of-Being. However, his phenomenological conception of being in the world has a unique character since he presupposes the "other" alongside with the "I" as equally valid point of view in the event-of-Being. The essential point is that it is not an I-other dichotomy. Both the "I" and the "other" is in need of an outside standpoint of evaluation to become completed. Each concrete subject in the event is dependent on an-other consciousness for being experienced from the outside. In this mode of participative thinking, each "I"

can be active towards the “other” nevertheless they cannot be active towards their own selves, cannot consummate themselves. Once become consummated, it is not for the “I” who is consummated but only for the other active consciousness. Consequently, experiencing a consciousness as a whole is possible only for another consciousness. The wholeness of the “I” resides in the “other” and it is only for the other; “I” cannot reach its own image in the “other”’s experience.

It is Dostoevsky’s invention that being in communication with the other is being in struggle with our own image in the other’s eyes. Dostoevsky represents the consciousness in a living interaction with the other and within that struggle. Accordingly, Bakhtin’s conception of dialogic relationship means that without the “other”, which is not the negation of the “I” but another fully valid consciousness, “I” cannot experience itself. Consciousness is not alone in its existence but its very being is being in an internal dialogue with the other. I think that Bakhtin’s most intriguing remark is his understanding of consciousness as co-existence. His position within the phenomenological tradition is unique for he explores the world of life and the self-experience from a dual perspective. Bakhtin’s conception of consciousness populated by the others’ voices calls for re-evaluating the whole phenomenological tradition from a dialogical perspective.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez başlangıçta Dostoyevski'nin Bahtin felsefesi üzerine etkisini açıklamaktansa Bahtin'in Dostoyevski'yi anlamamıza etkisini açıklayacak bir çalışma olarak planlanmıştı. Dolayısıyla Bahtin'in geriye kalan tüm eserlerini okumaktaki ilk amacım Bahtin'in *Dostoyevski Poetikasının Sorunları* metnini daha iyi anlamaya yönelikti. Dostoyevski çalışmasını merkeze alan bu Bahtin okuması bana şunu gösterdi: tüm Bahtin felsefesi Dostoyevski'den önce ve Dostoyevski'den sonra şeklinde ikiye ayrılabilir ve hatta ayrılmalıdır. Bu tezde açıklanan temel iddia Bahtin felsefesinin Dostoyevski çalışması öncesinde diyalojik olarak tanımlanamayacaktır. Diyalog kavramı ancak 1929'daki ilk Dostoyevski çalışması sonrasında Bahtin'in düşüncesinde temel bir kavram halini alır.

Bahtin felsefesi hakkındaki ikincil literatürde Dostoyevski öncesi ve sonrası dönemlerdeki bu temel fark tamamen göz ardı edilmiştir. Bu durumda rol oynayan iki farklı etmenden bahsedilebilir. Bunlardan ilki Bahtin'in eserlerinin yayılanmasındaki kronolojik düzensizliktir. Bahtin'in erken dönem olarak adlandırılan 1929 öncesi eserleri, yazılma sıralamasının tam tersi olarak, en son yayınlanan eserleri olmuştur. Bu erken dönem eserlerinde Bahtin "diyalog" ve "diyalojik" terimlerini hiç kullanmadığı gibi tariflediği özneler arası ilişkilenme biçimini de diyalojik bir karakter taşımaz. Yine de Bahtin'in diyalojik düşünme ve anlayış kavramlarıyla hâlihazırda tanışmış olan okur için bu erken dönem eserlerindeki "katılımcı düşünme" kavramının diyalojik olmaması gözden kaçmıştır. İkinci bir neden ise Dostoyevski öncesi metinler ve Dostoyevski çalışmasının İngilizceye yapılan çevirilerindeki tutarsızlık olarak gösterilebilir. "Estetik Etkinlikte Yazar ve Kahraman" metninde tamamlanmışlık (*consummated*) olarak tercüme edilmiş orijinal sözcük olan "zaveršennost", *Dostoyevski Poetikasının Sorunları*'nda olumsuz formda "nezaveršennost" olarak

kullanılır. Fakat bu ikinci metinin çeviririsinde tamamlanmamış (*unconsummated*) olarak değil nihaleştirilmemiş (*unfinalized*) olarak tercüme edilmiştir. Farklı isimler tarafından yapılan bu çevirilerin devamlılık oluşturmaması da yanlış bir okumaya neden olmuştur. Bu durum, Bahtin'in erken dönem felsefesi Dostoyevski sonrası diyalojik anlayışın ışığında geriye dönük olarak okunduğunda, kahramanın nihaleştirilmeden tamamlanabileceği yanığısına neden olur. Oysa Bahtin bu iki farklı eserde estetik etkinliğin özsel zorunlu koşulunu farklı belirler. "Estetik Etkinlikte Yazar ve Kahraman" eserinde kahramanın dışarıdan tamamlanması estetik olayın zorunlu koşulunu teşkil ederken *Dostoyevski Poetikasının Sorunları*'nda yazarın kahramanı karşısındaki bu yaklaşımı "monolojik" olarak adlandırılır ve ikinci plana atılır.

Bahtin'in Dostoyevski çalışması öncesi düşüncesinin diyalojik anlayışından farkını ortaya koymak için ilk önce diyalojik ilişkinin ne olduğu iyi anlaşılmalıdır. Bu nedenle de bu çalışmanın ilk bölümünde yaşayan özneler arasındaki günlük diyalog üzerinden Bahtin'in diyalojik ilişki ve diyalojik anlayış kavramları açıklanarak başlanmıştır. Bahtin felsefesinde dil ve konuşma fenomenleri belirli özneler, belirli sosyal gruplar ve belirli dünya görüşleri ile bağlantılı olarak ele alınır. Bunun için de Bahtin dilin soyut bir sistem olarak ele alınmasına karşı çıkar. Bahtin'in araştırmasında dil, belirli özneler tarafından gerçekleştirilen ve deneyimlenen dildir; yani söylemdir.

Bahtin, belirli bir zaman ve mekan içinde belirli bir özne tarafından dile getirilen ve daima öteki özne ya da özneler ile ilişki içinde ortaya çıkan dilin yani sözcenin (*utterance*) araştırmasına girişir. Genel dilbilimine eleştiri ise dili hem onu konuşan öznenin bağımsız hem de dilin kullanıldığı koşullardan bağımsız ele alması, yani dili deneyimlenen hayattan soyutlayarak ele alıyor olmasına yöneliktir. Bahtin'in bu soyutlamadan kastının anlaşılmasına için Saussure'ün dil anlayışına daha yakından bakiyamız gereklidir. Saussure'e göre dil yalnızca konuşmadan bağımsız soyut bir sistem olarak ele alındığında bilimsel araştırmayı dışında bırakılmalıdır. Konuşmanın kendisi ise heterojen yapısı nedeniyle bilimsel araştırmayı dışına bırakmalıdır. Buna göre dil ancak dilsel göstergeler (*sign*) üzerinden konuşmadan kopuk olarak çalışılabilir. Dilsel göstergeler ise sentetik bir yapı olarak tanımlar ve ses imgesi (*sound image/signifier*) ve kavram (*concept/signified*) olarak iki farklı parçanın rastlantısal bir araya gelişlerinden olduğunu iddia eder. Sonuç olarak Saussure'e göre dil, ses imgesi ve kavramın rastlantısal bir araya gelişlerinin oluşturduğu dil göstergelerinin ve bu

göstergelerin birbiriyle ilişkilerinin incelenmesi üzerinden çalışılabilir. Toplumun bireyleri ise bu sistemin varlığında ve devamlılığında bireysel olarak hayatı bir rol üstlenmezler. Konuşma fizyolojik, psikolojik ve fiziksel süreçlerden oluşur ve her bir gösterge konuşma içinde birden çok kez tekrar edilebilir. Konuşan özneler bu süreçlerin birbirini izlemesi ile konuşma edimini gerçekleştirir ve dinleyici de aynı süreçler sonucunda söyleneni anlayabilir. Bu şemada, konuşan özne toplumun herhangi bir bireyi olarak tasarlanır ve kendi istenci doğrultusunda dilsel göstergelerin içsel yapısına etki edemez. Yani anlam özneye verilidir ve göstergeler aynı anlama gelecek şekilde tekrar tekrar kullanıma sokulabilirler. Bu yüzden çalışılması gereken bu göstergelerin soyut sistemidir.

Bahtin ise genel dilbiliminin birimleri olan göstergeleri değil ama söylemin birimini yani sözceleri inceler. Bahtin'e göre dil ancak konuşan öznelerin sözceleri aracılığıyla hayatı gelir ve özneden ve konuşmanın gerçekleştiği koşullardan bağımsız olarak ele alındığında anlambilimsel bütünlüğünü yitirir. Bahtin üstdilbilimsel (*metalinguistics*) analizin yeni araştırma biriminin, yani sözcenin, sınırlarını dilbilimsel birimlerden, yani kelimeler ve cümlelerden, farklı olarak yeniden belirler. Bununla ilgili olarak dilbilimin konuşmayı tanımlamadan önce konuşmacının sözünü bir ilkeye dayandırmaksızın kelimeler ve cümleler olarak parçalara ayırmamasına dikkat çeker. Öyle ki, Bahtin'in eleştirisine göre, dilbilimi, konuşmanın kendisinin ne olduğunu sormaz ve başlangıcı ile bitişinin ilkelerini belirlemez. Dolayısıyla konuşmanın bütünlüğünün ilkesini ortaya koymaksızın dilbilimsel birimleri bu sınırları belirlenmemiş bütünden ayırır. Bunun en temel nedeni ise konuşma ediminin tek başına bir özenin etkinliği sınırları içinde tamamlandığı yanlığısıdır. Dilbilimin bakış açısından ele alındığında konuşma sadece tek bir konuşmacının varlığını gerektirir. Dinleyicinin karşılıklı diyalogdaki rolü edilgen bir algılayıcıya indirgenmiştir. Yani konuşan özenin konuşmayı hayatı geçirebilmesinde diyalogdaki diğer katılımcının etkin rolü tamamen göz ardı edilir.

Bahtin'e göre bu temel yanlış dilin iletişimsel işlevinin dikkate alınmaması ile ilgilidir. Sadece Saussure değil Humboldt ve Vossler gibi farklı düşünürler de iletişim ve dilin zorunlu birlikteliğini göz ardı etmiştir. Dil, konuşmadan bağımsız olan zihnin bir işlevi olarak ele alındığında veya özenin öteki özneler olmaksızın kendi kendini ifadesinin bir aracı olarak kabul edildiğinde de aynı hataya düşülür. Dilin özsəl olarak iletişimsel olduğu ve özenin tek başnalığının ancak bir yanlış olabileceği kabul

edilmediğinde, konuşmanın gerçekleşmesi için tek başına bir özne, yalnızca konuşmacı, ve konuşmanın nesnesinin varlığı yeterli görülür. Bu durumda da konuşma, herhangi bir konuşmacının herhangi bir sözü anlamına gelir yani sınırları ve kuralları belirsizdir.

Bahtin'e göre sözcenin sınırlarını öncelikle konuşan öznelerin değişimi belirler. Bir diğer deyişle, sözcenin başlangıcını ve bitişini belirleyen konuşan somut öznelerin değişimidir. Bu da sözceyi her zaman somut bir özneye ait kilar. Ancak Bahtin'in söylediklerindeki kilit nokta sadece sözcenin her zaman belirli bir özneye ait olması değil, sözcenin sınırlarını tek başına konuşmacının belirlemiyor oluşudur. Belirli bir durum ve bağlamda ve belirli bir özne tarafından dile getirilen sözcenin sınırlarını diyalogdaki katılımcılar birlikte belirler. Yani sözcenin sınırlarını belirlemede hem konuşan hem de dinleyen katılımcılar aktif rol oynarlar.

Deneyimlenen bir diyalogda, sözcenin anlaşılması her zaman diyalojik bir olaydır. Konuşma eyleminin kendisi her zaman öteki özneyi de içerir çünkü her bir sözce belirli ya da varsayılan bir öteki özneye yönelik kurulur. Bahtin'e göre bir sözceyi dilbilimsel birimlerden ayıran onun daha önceki sözelere bir cevap teşkil edebilir ve aynı zamanda da cevap verilebilir olmasıdır. Aynı anda hem bir karşılık olan hem de karşılık verilebilir olan sözcenin varlığının koşulu birden fazla belirli özneden diyalog içinde olmasıdır. Bir diğer önemli nokta ise Bahtin'in konuşma ve cevap verme eylemlerini birbirinden bağımsız ve ardışık olarak tasvir etmemesidir. Sözce dinleyicinin muhtemel cevabına yönelik kurulduğundan ve konuşmacı diyalogdaki bu diğer katılımcının karşılığını henüz bu karşılık dile getirilmeden önce aktif olarak belirlemeye çalıştığından, dinleyicinin varlığı pasif bir alımlayıcı olmaktan çıkar, aktif bir katılımcı haline gelir. Diyalojik ilişkide farklı belirli özneler birbirini eşzamanlı ve karşılıklı olarak belirler. Dinleyicinin muhtemel karşılığı konuşmacının sözünü konuşma eylemi sırasında aktif olarak belirler. Bununla birlikte, dinleyicinin aktif rolü konuşmacının sözcelemi üzerindeki etkisi ile sınırlı değildir. Anlama ediminin kendisi her zaman bir değerlendirmedir; anlama özneden edilgen olduğu bir deneyim değil fakat etkin bir değerlendirme edimidir. Bir sözceyi anlamak, belirli bir diğer özneden sözünü değerlendirmek demektir. Yani en az iki farklı belirli özneden varlığını ve aynı anda birbirlerine yönelik etkin değerlendirme içeren bir konum seçimlerini zorunlu kılar. Bu nedenle sözceyi anlama edimi her zaman diyalojiktir.

Bir kelimenin ve ya cümlenin dilbilimsel anlamı ise bu birimlerin sözce içindeki işlevlerine dayanır. Tek bir kelime belirli bir özne tarafından dile getirildiğinde ve konuşmacının içinde bulunduğu durumda söylemek istediklerinin tamamını yansittığında, tek bir kelimededen oluşan bir sözce halini alabilir. Aynı şekilde bir sözce tek bir cümleden oluşuyor da olabilir. Fakat kelimeler ve cümleler belirli bir özne tarafından, belirli bir zaman ve mekanda bütün bir ifade olarak dile getirilmekçe dilbiliminin tekrar edilebilir birimleri olarak kalırlar. Bir kelimeyi sözce yapan, onun bir öznenin anlamca bütün bir ifadesi olması ve diyalogdaki tekrar edilemez konumudur. Hiçbir sözce anlamına yeni bir şey katılmaksızın ne aynı konuşmacı ne de başka bir konuşmacı tarafından tekrar edilemez. Çünkü sözcenin ifadesini bulduğu dil-dışı koşullar tekrar edilemez ve sözce bu yeni arka planda kaçınılmaz olarak yeni bir anlam kazanır.

Bahtin'in üstdilbilimsel çalışmasında vurguladığı şey dilin öznesinden bağımsız, içinde ifade edildiği dil-dışı koşullardan bağımsız ve diyalogdaki diğer özneler ve sözcülerden bağımsız ele alındığında konuşmanın anlambilimsel bütünlüğünün anlaşılamayacağı ve farklı özneler, sınıflar ve toplumlar arasındaki ilişkilerin gözden kaçacağıdır. Söylem, yaşayan dildir ve durağan değildir. Zamanın herhangi bir kesitinde dil her zaman farklı katmanlar halinde vardır ve kendi içinde bir çatışma halindedir. Dolayısıyla zamanda ve mekânda var olmayan, konuşan öznelerce hayatı var edilmeyen ve özneler arası ilişkilerde diyaloga girmeyen dil, durağan ve öznelere aşıkın bir sistem olarak kabul edildiğinde, anlambilimsel bir bütünlük içinde çalışılamaz. Bunun yerine dilbilimsel bir çalışma için dil hayattan soyutlanmıştır. Bahtin'e göre dilbiliminin bu soyutlaması, dil bu soyutlanmış hali ile dil fenomeninin tamamı olarak kabul edilmediği sürece meşruder. Bahtin'e göre ortak bir araştırma nesnesi olan dilbilimsel ve üstdilbilimsel çalışmaların sınırları iyi belirlenmelidir. Dilbilimi sözceye uygulanabilir değildir ve belirli bir öznenin bütünsel bir ifadesi ancak üstdilbiliminin metodu ile yani diyalojik bir yaklaşım ile çalışılabilir. Bahtin'in üstdilbiliminde sözce her zaman belirli bir özneye aittir ve sözcüler arasındaki ilişkilere ve sözcülerin barındırdığı öznelerarası ilişkilere bakmanın yolu bu ilişkilerin diyalojik esaslarını tanımayı gerektirir. Bahtin'e göre söz varsa ses de vardır. Birinin ifadesi haline gelmeyen ve tarafsız bir sözce yoktur. Hem konuşma hem anlama edimi ancak birden fazla belirli öznenin varlığı ve birbirine yönelik oluşu ile mümkün olabilir.

Bahtin'in Dostoyevski kitabı öncesi eserlerinde ise öznelerarası ilişki farklı tanımlanır. *Bir Eylem Felsefesine Doğru* adlı eserinde Bahtin şeylerin varlığını ve bilincin varlığını fenomenolojik olarak ayırır. Şeylerin varlığı kayıtsızdır fakat bilinç asla kayıtsız olamaz ve bilinç için varlık her zaman bir olay niteliği taşır. Yani bilinç için varlık kaçınılmaz olarak birlikte-varolma demektir. Varlık kendini bilince her zaman bir olay olarak gösterir ve bu nedenle Olay-olarak-Varlık (*Being-as-event*), şeylerin varlığından (*being*) fenomenolojik olarak farklıdır. Bahtin'in düşüncesinde bilinç sadece yönelimsel olarak tasarlanmaz. Bilinç, Husserl'in fenomenolojisinin aksine nesnenin bilinci değildir; kendi sınırlarını deneyimin nesnesine ulaşmak için aşan ve onu belirleyen bir varlık değildir. Bahtin için nesnelerin bilinç tarafından nasıl belirlendiği sorunu ya da bilgi sorunu hiçbir zaman araştırmasının odağında yer almamıştır. Bunun yerine Bahtin öznenin kendini nasıl deneyimlediği ve bilincin kendini deneyimlemesiyle bir öteki bilinci deneyimlemesi arasındaki farkı ve ilişkiye araştırır. Bilinç her zaman diğer bilinçler arasında bir bilinçtir ve varlığın olay niteliği taşıması da bu nedenledir.

Bir Eylem Felsefesine Doğru'da sadece soyut olarak kavranan değil fakat deneyimlenen dünyada bilincin eylemi konu edinilir. Bahtin öncelikle bu iki alanı deneyim dünyası ve kültür dünyası olarak birbirinden ayırrı. Buna göre kavramanın (cognition) nesnesi ile deneyimin (experience) kendisi birbirinden tamamen farklıdır. Fenomenolojik olarak farklı bu iki dünyanın yan yana gelip birlikte anlam kazanabileceğinin tek alan ise somut öznenin bireysel eylemidir. Ancak bu dünyada var olan belirli bir bilincin eyleminden yaşam ve kültür dünyası karşılıklı olarak sorumlu hale gelebilir. Çünkü eylemin kendisi süregelen Varlık olayın dolayısız bir katılımcıdır. Asla tekrar edilemez, geri alınamaz ve içsel bütünlüğü ihlal edilemez. Yani eylemin üzerine düşünülmesi Varlık'ta bir olay değildir fakat ancak yaşamda gerçekleştirilen eylem bir olay niteliği taşır. Tekrar edilemez ve biricik eylem, bilincin bertaraf edemeyeceği sorumluluğunu oluşturur. Çünkü bilinç için var olmak demek Varlık-olayına kendi biricik konumundan katılmak demektir ve eylemin sorumluluğunu bu kendine özgü konumdan gerçekleştirmek zorundadır.

Bahtin tarafından bilinç hiçbir zaman soyut, aşkinsal ya da metafizik bir varlık olarak ele alınmamıştır. Somut her bir özne kendi konumundan kendisi için bir değer merkezi oluşturur; bilinç sadece kendisi için "ben" olabilir ve diğer tüm "ben"ler bu bilinç için "öteki"dir. Dolayısıyla her bir bilinç kendi biricik konumundan birbirine

dışsal hale gelir. “Estetik Etkinlikte Yazar ve Kahraman” metninde Bahtin bilincin öz-deneyimi ve öteki bilinci deneyimlemesi arasındaki farkı inceler. Bahtin’ın fenomenolojisini diğerlerinden ayıran ise “ben” ve “öteki”nin öz-deneyimdeki bir aradaklığıdır. Yani bilincin kendini bir bütün olarak deneyimlemesi her zaman öteki bilinç ile mümkündür.

Bahtin deneyimdeki üç farklı duraktan bahseder, kendim-için-ben (*I-for-myself*), başkaları-için-ben (*I-for-others*) ve benim-için-başkaları (*others-for-me*). Kendim-için-ben hiçbir zaman “ben”e verili değildir çünkü süregelen varlık olayında bilinç daima kendini gerçekleştirmekle yükümlüdür ve bilinç var olamaya devam ettikçe bu süreç sonlanamaz. Varlığın hiçbir anında kendim-için-ben sonlanmış, son halini almış olamaz. Bu nedenle Bahtin bilincin tamamlanmasını (*consummation*) üretici bir etkinlik olarak tanımlar ve bu etkinliğin doğasını araştırırken kendisine seçtiği gözlem alanı da romandır. Romanda yazar ve kahraman arasındaki ilişkiyi yaşamda ben ve öteki arasındaki ilişki ile benzerliği üzerinden ele alır. Böylece estetik, Bahtin’ın felsefesinin temel araştırma alanlarından biri haline gelir. Yazarın estetik etkinliğini kahramanın kendisi-için bilincini, dışarıdan tamamlama (*consummation*) olarak tanımlanır. Bu edim estetik olarak üretkendir çünkü kahramanın kendi içinden kendisi için tamamlanamaz olan öz-deneyimi dışarıdan yazar tarafından tamamlanır. Bu tamamlama ediminin zorunlu ön koşulu ise yazar/ben ve kahraman/ötekinin estetik olaydaki bir aradaklığı ve birbirine dışsal konumlarıdır. Bu dışsal konum sayesinde yazar/ben kahramanın kendi deneyiminin dışında kalan öğeleri tamamlayabilir. Bahtin buna görme fazlalığı (*excess of seeing*) adını verir. Ancak kahramana dışsal bir konumdan ve bu konumun sağladığı farklı bakış açısından kahramanın kendi deneyimi dışarıdan zenginleştirilebilir ve böylece kahramanın bilinci tamamlanabilir. Dışarıdan tamamlamanın gerçekleşebilmesi “ben”in “öteki” ile olan ilişkisinde belirli bir yaklaşımı hayatı geçirmesine bağlıdır ve Bahtin buna sempatiye dayalı birlikte deneyimleme (*sympathetic co-experiencing*) der. “Ben” kendi estetik etkinliğinde “öteki”nin içsel deneyimini dışarıdan birlikte-deneyimler.

Sempatiye dayalı birlikte deneyimlemenin dayanağı her bir bilincin zaman ve mekanda sınırlı doğasıdır. Hiçbir özne kendi doğumunu ve ölümünü deneyimleyemeyeceği gibi kendi bedenini onu çerçeveleyen çevre içinde bir bütün olarak kendi bakışının nesnesi haline getiremez. Bu da öznenin bedenini çevresi ile bütünlük içinde ve tamamlanmış bir hayatı içерiden deneyimlemeyi olanaksız hale

getirir. Hayatın bir bütün olarak deneyimi “ben” için değil ancak “öteki” için mümkündür. Estetik etkinlik “öteki” bilincin kendisine dışsal olan öğelerinin sevgi ile yeniden deneyimlenmesi olarak tanımlanır ve bu etkinlikte en az iki bilincin varlığı zorunludur. Bununla birlikte iki bilincin de bu etkinlikte etkin oldukları söylenenemez, aksine her bir “ben” kendi bütünlüğü açısından “öteki”nin varlığına ihtiyaç duyar. Yani bilinç öz-deneyiminde estetik olarak edilgendir; kendisini dışarıdan tamamlayamaz çünkü kendisine karşı bir görme fazlalığı olamaz. Estetik etkinlikte dışarıdan tamamlanan bilinç, etkin olan ve estetik edimi gerçekleştiren bilinç karşısında da edilgendir. Yani Bahtin estetik etkinliği bir bilincin kendi etkinliği (self-activity) olarak tasrarlar ve “öteki” bu edimin yani estetik bakışın nesnesi haline gelir.

Erken dönem düşüncesinde Bahtin estetik etkinliği yani “ben” ile “öteki” arasındaki üretken ilişkiyi *görmek* eylemi üzerinden tasarlamıştır. “Öteki” bilincin “ben” tarafından estetik olarak tamamlanması, “öteki”nin bu etkinlikte etkin bir katılımcı olmasını gerektirmez. Bahtin estetik deneyimi sevgi ile ilişkilendirir ve özneden kendini sevmesinin imkansız olduğunu ileri sürer. Kişi kendini sevemez ancak başkası tarafından sevilebilir. Benzer olarak kişi kendine karşı estetik olarak üretken olamaz fakat başkasını estetik olarak görebilir. “Ben” kendini “öteki” nin içsel deneyimi ile ilişkilendirdiğinde bu “ben”in kendi etkinliğidir ve “öteki”nin bu ilişkide etkin bir rolü yoktur. Böylelikle Bahtin bir bilincin kendine asla verili olamayacağını fakat bir diğer bilincin etkinliğinin nesnesi haline gelebileceğini, “öteki”nin bilincine bir bütün olarak verili hale gelebileceğini ileri sürmüş olur. “Ben” anlamsal bir bütün olarak ancak ötekinin etkinliğinde ve öteki için tamamlanabilir. “Öteki”nin gözünde estetik olarak tamamlanan bilinç, kendisi-için öz-deneyiminde her zaman tamamlanmamış kalmaya devam eder.

Bahtin bilinç olmayı Varlık olayına katılmak olarak ele alır. Estetik olayı ise birbirinden bağımsız iki bilincin varlığına dayanan, sempatiye dayalı birlikte deneyimleme ile ancak dışarıdan gerçekleşebilecek bir tamamlama edimi olarak açıklar. Yani kendim-için-ben “öteki”nin içsel deneyimine dışarıdan katılır, aktif olarak kendinde yeniden deneyimler. Bilincin kendi için merkezden (“ben”) ötekinin konumuna doğru bu hareketi, bilinç kendi konumuna geri döndüğünde estetik bir edim halini alır. Romanda da aktif olan yazarın bilinci ve edilgen olan kahramanın bilincidir. Kahraman yazar tarafından, yazarın kendi estetik etkinliği içinde, bir bütün olarak ele alınır ve sevgi ile dışarıdan deneyimlenerek tamamlanır.

Dostoyevski öncesi dönemde Bahtin felsefesinde öteki bilinç ile kurulan ilişkide sadece bir etkin katılımcı varsayılmıştır. “Ben”in “öteki”ni estetik olarak tamamlaması “öteki”nin etkin bir katılımcı olması koşulunu barındırmaz. Hatta “öteki” bu tamamlama etkinliğinin nesnesi halini alır. Bilinç dışarıdan bir bütün olarak görülebildiğinde onun kendi etkinliği de sona erdirilmiş olur. Yani bu ilişkide tamamlanan bilinç yaşayan bir bilinç değildir çünkü bilinç her zaman olay-olarak-Varlıkta etkin bir katılımcıdır. Sonuç olarak denebilir ki Bahtin’ın erken dönem felsefesindeki öznelerarası ilişki diyalojik değildir çünkü karşılıklılık niteliğini taşımamaktadır. “Ben”in “öteki”ne yönelsiz olması bu ilişkiyi tarafların eşzamanlı olarak etkin rol oynadığı diyalojik bir haline getirmez.

Tam tersine, Dostoyevski çoksesli romanında kahramanın bilincini yazarın bilincinin nesnesi haline getirmeden, yazarın bilincinden bağımsız bir özbilinç olarak temsil eder. Yani öteki bilinç yazarın estetik bakışının nesnesi değildir. Çoksesliliğin koşulu kahramanın/ötekinin bilincinin tamamlanmamış olmasıdır. Yani yaşamda somut öznelerin kendilerini daima gerçekleştirmeleri gerektiği gibi yazar da kahramanı zaman ve mekanda kuşatmayarak ona kendini gerçekleştirmeye olanlığı tanır. Elbette kahramanın bağımsızlığı tam bir bağımsızlık değildir, yani kahraman yazarın yaratısıdır. Bu nedenle de Bahtin’ın odak noktası yazarın estetik etkinliğinde kahramanına karşı tutumudur. Diyalojik yaklaşımda ötekinin sözü nesneleştirilmez ve karşılıklı cevap verilebilirlik ilkesi ihlal edilmez. Bu nedenle de kahraman çoksesli romanda kendi sözünün öznesi halini alabilir, yani romanda bağımsız bir özbilinç olarak temsil edilebilir. Bahtin bu yeni sanatsal tahayül biçiminin Dostoyevski’nin keşfi olduğunu ve ötekini anlamanın tek yolunun da diyalojik ilişkiden geçtiğini iddia eder. Dostoyevski’nin keşfi öteki bilinci nihaleştirmeden anlamanın yolunu gösterir. Böylelikle Bahtin’ın öznelerarası ilişkiyi görme şekli Dostoyevski önceki tek taraflı “katılımcı” etkinlikten her iki katılımcının da birbirine yönelik olduğu, birbirini karşılıklı ve eşzamanlı olarak belirlediği “diyalojik” ilişkiye evrilir.

Dostoyevski’nin çoksesli romanı yaratmasının önkosulu kahramanla kurduğu içsel diyalojik ilişkidir. Bahtin Dostoyevski’nin adeta kahramanların seslerini dinlediğini ve onları bir orkestra şefi gibi bir arada yeniden düzenlediğini söyler. Yani bu yeni ilişkilenme biçimini “öteki” hakkında konuşmaya değil “öteki” ile konuşmaya benzetilir. Karşılıklı bir diyalog halini alan bu ilişki biçiminde anlamak dinlemek ile yanyana düşünülür ve dışarıdan görme yerini diyalog içinde olmaya bırakır. Bahtin’ın

felsefesini kökten değiştirenin Dostoyevski çalışması olması bu açıdan şaşırtıcı değildir.

Dostoyevski öncesi ve sonrası eserlerde öznelerarası ilişkilerin detaylı bir incelemesi yapıldığında katılımcı düşünmenin (participative thinking) diyalojik olmadığı açıkça görülür. 1929 sonrası eserlerine bakıldığında, Bahtin'e göre bilincin varlığı iletişim içinde olmaktadır ve ötekini anlamak ancak diyalojik olarak mümkündür. Genel kabulün aksine 1929 Dostoyevski çalışması öncesinde ise diyalog kavramı ile karşılaşmıyoruz. Bunun yerine bir bilincin diğer bilinci dışarıdan deneyimlemesinin olanaklılığını açıklandığını söyleyebiliriz. Bahtin felsefesinde “ben” ve “öteki” her zaman farklı fakat birlikte, birbiri ile ilişkili biçimde düşünülmüştür. Yine de bu ilişkinin doğası erken ve geç dönemlerde farklılık gösterir.

Bu ayrimın gözden kaçırılması “diyaloji” kavramı ile çokselsiliğin aynı kabul edilmesi gibi yanlış okumalara da yol açmıştır. Buradaki yanlış anlaşılmaının iki çehresi vardır. İlk, iletişim ancak diyalojik olarak mümkün olduğu için hem çokselsli hem monolojik romanda yazar-kahraman ilişkisinin diyalojik olacağının gözden kaçırılmasıdır. Ayrıca, çokselsilik ve diyalojinin aynı olması monoloji ile çokselsilik arasındaki Bahtin'in çokça vurguladığı farkın ortadan kalkması anlamına gelirdi. İkincisi ise çokselsiliğin ve çok-merkezliliğin yaşamda kaçınılmaz fakat romanda özel bir durum teşkil ettiğine dikkat edilmemesidir. Bahtin öznelerarsı ilişkileri romanda yazar-kahraman ilişkisi ile örnekleyerek açıklar fakat yaşamı ve kurmaca alanını bir tutmaz. Monolojik yaklaşımda “ben” “öteki”nin sesine kulak vermez ve bir karşılık beklemez; onunla konuşmaz fakat onun hakkında konuşur. Dolayısıyla da diyalojik ilişkiler en aza indirgenir. Bahtin'in bu yaklaşımı üretken bulmamasının nedeni de budur. Son olarak, “diyaloji” tek başına soyut bir kavram değildir fakat “diyalojik ilişki” birden fazla somut bilincin bir arada ve karşılıklı olarak birbirini etkilediği bir ilişki biçimidir.

Bahtin'in felsefesindeki katılımcı ve diyalojik ilişkilenme biçimleri arasındaki farkın ortaya konması hem Dostoyevski'nin Bahtin üzerindeki etkisini açıkça göz önüne çıkarması hem de Bahtin felsefesinin temel kavramlarının doğru anlaşılması açısından büyük önem taşımaktadır. Dahası, Bahtin'in erken ve geç dönem eserlerinin bu dönüşüm izlenerek birlikte değerlendirilmesi bize yeni bir tür fenomenolojik analizin imkanını sunar. Öznenin deneyiminin araştırılması sadece “ben” kategorisi ile sınırlandığında, bilincin bu dünyadaki varlığının sadece bir yönü ele alınmış olacaktır.

Bahtinci bir bakış açısıyla bu türden bir fenomenolojik analizin, “ben”in “öteki” ile kaçınılmaz, iç içe geçmiş, üretken ilişkisini tek bir merkeze indirgediği ve “ben” ile “öteki” arasındaki farkı sildiği için monolojik olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Oysa Bahtin “ben”i “öteki” ile ilişkisi içinde, “ben”i “öteki” ve “öteki”ni “ben” açısından değerlendирerek bizlere öznenin dünyadaki varlığı hakkında çok daha kapsayıcı bir fenomenolojik çalışmanın mümkün olduğunu gösterir.

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