**THINKING SPACE**
Edited by Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift
London and New York
-iii-

---

**MIKHAIL BAKHTIN**
**Dialogics of space**
 By Julian Holloway and James Kneale, p. 71-88.

**3**
**MIKHAIL BAKHTIN**
**Dialogics of space**
Julian Holloway and James Kneale

**Introduction**
The aim of this chapter is twofold. Firstly we seek to describe and delimit the ways in which the Russian thinker Mikhail Bakhtin 'thinks' space: to draw out and exemplify ways in which he understood and wrote about space and spatial relations. Through delineating Bakhtin's 'geographical imagination' the second aim of this chapter can be achieved. Specifically this involves taking steps towards a thoroughly dialogical theory of space. In embarking tentatively toward this goal we have found that the path is difficult to traverse. In particular, journeying towards a dialogics of space means encountering difficulties arising from Bakhtin's differing notion of context. The recognition of this varying conception of context is significant as it structures the argument and the organisation of this chapter. In other words, this chapter travels from the material and phenomenological to a wider social notion of context in Bakhtin's work, and in doing so we move towards a dialogical theory of space.

Yet crucially the travels presented here do not seek to arrive at a pre-ordained destination. To arrive in such a place and to understand its contours fully, in terms of the limitations of a chapter of this length, would be nothing short of miraculous. Second, to arrive at such a place would mean abandoning the fundamental tenets of Bakhtinian thought. As we shall see Bakhtin's philosophy is one of open-endedness and becoming. To reach a point where the opportunity for further travel, or more precisely for continuing dialogue, is denied is a position that does not exist in Bakhtin's thought.

A useful point of departure is the remarkable biography of Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975), since a brief outline of his life illustrates some of the overriding notions of dialogism. For example the Russian towns of Vilnius and Odessa where he spent his pre-university days are noted by Holquist (1990:1) to be 'unusually heterogeneous in their mix of cultures and languages', thus reflecting and inspiring Bakhtin's interest

in many-languagedness, or in his terminology, heteroglossia. After leaving St. Petersburg University in 1918 in the aftermath of the revolution he settled in the towns of Nevel and Vitebsk until 1924. This period is often denoted as the first significant period in Bakhtin's oeuvre, characterised by his engagement with neo-Kantianism and thus more (traditional) philosophical works, many of which have been published posthumously (for example Toward a Philosophy of the Act, 1993).

Here Bakhtin became a member of a group of intellectuals with whom he shared many conversations, debates and dialogues. Included in what has come to be known as the 'Bakhtin circle' were Voloshinov and Medvedev. These two figures are of utmost importance in Bakhtin's biography and work, not only in terms of their exchanges, but because of the two works attributed to them: Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (MPL, 1973, originally 1929) and The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship (FMLS, 1985, originally 1928) respectively. It has been alleged that these texts are not the work of the authors named on the original manuscript, but of Bakhtin himself. Commonly known as the 'authorship dispute', this controversy persists and is unlikely to be resolved—Bakhtin never affirmed or denied his authorship of the 'disputed texts'. In our opinion the debate over original authorship, and thus who owns the words in these texts, is exemplary of Bakhtin's dialogism: these texts can be seen as the products of dialogical encounters and interactions between Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov and others in the 'Bakhtin circle'.

In 1929 Bakhtin was arrested and exiled in Kazakhstan. This signalled a shift in the orientation of his work to cultural history and the evolution of the novel, yet with the metaphysical questions of his early years still very much in mind. Many of Bakhtin's more well known works, especially his treatise on Rabelais, were written during and just after this exile period, some of which were lost, destroyed or even, with cigarette papers in short supply, smoked by the author himself! After the war Bakhtin taught at Saransk University, until he moved to Moscow in the 1960s, where his prominence as a thinker dramatically soared with the publication of the second edition of Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics [PDF] (1984a, originally written in 1929), and his 'discovery' and promotion by three scholars at the Gorky Institute. In his final years Bakhtin's writing returned to the philosophical focus of his earlier work. This focus, as well as the task of rewriting and editing older manuscripts, marks the third period of his oeuvre.

From this time on Bakhtin's thought has been drawn upon, utilised and extended in a variety of different fields and disciplines. 1 Yet it is both the applicability and appropriation of Bakhtin's concepts and ideas in such a multitude of arenas that makes, in part, the aim of describing his work a difficult task. Thus, in order to represent his thought, and elucidate its geography, we must enter a dialogue not only with a thinker of enormous breadth and variety, but with a host of interpreters from across the social

sciences and humanities. We have been made constantly aware that a Bakhtin does not exist, and thus any attempts to draw his work into one overriding category of description tells of a centripetal force that he sought to challenge through revealing, and often championing, those centrifugal forces of diversity and heterogeneity. Once again the aims of this chapter run the constant risk of going against the arguments that Bakhtin himself developed.

This hazard, wherein we '"monologize" the singer of "polyphony"', has not been heeded by many in the social sciences and humanities (Clark and Holquist 1984:4). Thus, all too often we have Bakhtin defined as only a theorist of literature, a folklorist or social critic. As such 'the last few years have witnessed…a kind of posthumous wrestle over the political soul of Bakhtin' (Stam 1988:117). Therefore, entering into an analytical and theoretical dialogue not only with the work of Bakhtin himself, but also his appropriators and interpreters, we run another risk of reifying one type of Bakhtinian thought. With this pitfall in mind we fully admit to have taken two (Western) versions of his thought as central to our argument. The first half of the chapter is informed by the overview provided by Holquist (1990). His is a liberal reading of Bakhtin, seen through the ethical and epistemological themes of Self and Other, which for Pechey (1989), denies the socio-political themes and ramifications of his work. To incorporate the latter, the second half of this paper moves from the phenomenological to the social, with the notion of social speech genres and carnival taking precedence. Here a more 'left' Bakhtinianism is utilised, particularly that of Hirschkop (1989). Moreover, the mutual articulation, or again more precisely the dialogue, between these two Bakhtins furnishes the possibility of a dialogical theory of space, or at least the initial steps on that journey. Here we begin these travels where Bakhtin began his: the notion of Self and Other.

**Self and Other in Bakhtin**

The philosophy of Self and Other in Bakhtin's work holds central significance for his thinking. One of the most succinct and revealing statements on this topic comes from The Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics:

I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another. The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness (toward a thou)…The very being of man (both external and internal) is the deepest communion. To be means to communicate…To be means to be for another, and through the other for oneself. 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…I cannot manage without another, I cannot become myself without another.

(Bakhtin 1984a:287, emphasis in original)

The emphasis here upon visuality and sight reveals the first way in which Bakhtin thinks space. For Bakhtin, drawing upon neo-Kantianism and post-Newtonian revelations in physics, particularly Einstein's relativity theory, the categories of time and space are fundamental to our perception of the world. I organise the world through time and space categories from my unique place in existence. This organisation of the world through the categories of space and time are unique to me in that no-one else can inhabit the (physical) place that I do: no two bodies can occupy the same space. This is known as the law of placement. However, this unique placement I have in existence is shared, since everyone else also has a unique place in existence. In other words, we are presented with the paradoxical and almost contradictory idea of differences in simultaneity, that is best summed up in Bakhtin's phrase 'the unique and unified event of being'. As Holquist (1985:227) puts it, the 'resulting paradox is that we all share uniqueness'.

To further explain the law of placement we must utilise Bakhtin's concrete example of two people facing each other. It is here that the emphasis of seeing and vision in the above passage allows us to begin to articulate the relation between Self and Other. If I face you there are certain things that I can see that you are unable to see and vice-versa: the wall behind your back, the clouds in the sky, your own forehead. We both possess a 'surplus of seeing'. Thus, I place you as a whole in a certain position in space, as you do to me. However, as I cannot see myself as a whole (I cannot see my own forehead), I am unable to position myself without the assistance of your sight. This example organises Bakhtin's notion of the Self/Other relation. Stated simply I need the Other in order to create a sense of Self. The Self therefore is nothing in itself. Self means nothing without the alterity or outsideness that is provided by the Other: 'I cannot become myself without another'. Being in Bakhtin's thought is in effect co-Being. In turn this refutes the possibility of a monadic and privileged centre to the Self, denying the possibility of a static, immutable, least of all transcendental essence: there is 'no internal sovereign territory' to the Self. Yet this does not mean that the Self merges with the Other, in some sort of Hegelian dialectical synthesis: the law of placement precludes this. Being is unique and unified, different and simultaneous. There is a fundamental non-coincidence between Self and Other, and thus the two never merge.

The potential of positing some form of (humanist) centre or interior to the Bakhtinian Self arises from the unique perceptual place it has in space and time, in which no Other can exist. Again, however, I cannot see every-

thing from this position. Because of this we are always responsive and answerable to this outsideness. As Bakhtin puts it 'there is no alibi in existence'. Alterity is fundamental to the 'not-I-in-me'. The implication of this is that for self-authorship through outsideness to proceed, in order to discover the 'not-I-in-me', in some way the Self must complete the Other. In other words, it must fix or better still objectify the Other in time and space. For Bakhtin the Self attempts an architectonics (the ordering into wholes) of the Other. As mentioned above we see them and temporally and spatially position them as wholes in relation to other people and different objects.

The recognition of this difference through the performance of such an architectonics is precisely the significance of alterity and outsideness. Yet while the Self completes the Other, the Self will never be brought into stasis and fixity. The Self will always exceed that which it necessarily derives from alterity, precisely because its place in existence is unique. In addition this place is an event. The ontology of the Bakhtinian Self is one which is characteristically always open and in a constant state of Becoming. Put differently, the Self can know no limits; it is not after all a locus of primary meaning, it has 'no alibi'. 2 In overview we must conceive of the Bakhtinian Self 'as a multiple phenomenon of essentially three elements (it is—at least—a triad, not a duality): a centre, a not-centre, and the relation between them' (Holquist 1990:29). Bakhtin's therefore is very much a relational approach to ontology and philosophy—an approach which we now substantiate further.

**The (dialogical) utterance**

In the above quote Bakhtin states that 'to be means to communicate'. In other words, once we stop responding to the world, if we cease being addressed by the environment and the others around us, we simply cease to be. 3 At this point we must ask how does this (co-)Being manifest itself? In what form does this communication occur that is so central to our ontology? Bakhtin answers this question by endowing the sign with central and overriding importance: 'consciousness itself can arise and become a viable fact only in the material embodiment of signs' (Voloshinov 1973:11, emphasis in original).

Consciousness, thought ('inner speech'), experience and understanding, all of which pertain to the (infinite) addressivity and responsibility to the world, only exist through the semiotic material of the sign. In order to express outwardly an experience or an understanding in this ongoing event of perpetual addressivity we must objectify it in the sign. Thus, the 'potentialities of expression' are the potentialities of the sign, and the 'possible routes and directions' that this expression may take are always social in their forms (Voloshinov 1973:91). For Bakhtin it is crucial to take communication or language in its concrete socio-historical context. The emphasis of

linguistics should be the situated and concrete speech performance: the historically generative process of everyday discourse rather than a hypostatical set of self-identical norms. 4 In other words, language, in what Stewart (1986:43) calls Bakhtin's 'anti-linguistics', should be taken in its dynamism and mutability: the 'living impulse' of language.

From this Bakhtin's social semiotics takes the utterance as its basic unit of analysis. The boundaries of the utterance are delimited by the 'change of speaking subjects, that is, a change of speakers' (Bakhtin 1986:71). This 'relinquishing of the floor' gives the utterance, in its variable size (from the 'single word rejoinder' to the 'scientific treatise') a beginning and an end. Yet because of its very situatedness the utterance can never be analysed or understood in isolation, as it is never in of itself. The utterance is always situated in a relation, it is always shaped by the relationship it has with other utterances: its boundaries while being recognisable are never impervious. Therefore, the work of signification or meaning always occurs as part of a dialogue between (at least) two utterances.

We would like to illustrate this in two ways, that subsequently develop what has gone before and introduce another aspect of Bakhtin's thought. Firstly, the dialogical utterance can be exemplified through the communicative act between Self and Other as two situated interlocutors. The articulated utterance of the Self from its inception is always placed in a relation to that of the Other via the referencing, understanding and awareness of the Other's past, present and potential future utterances. The utterance is 'double voiced' in the sense that both the Self's and Other's voices interpenetrate the utterance: the utterance is thus 'internally dialogized'. The subjects' own utterance meets the (alien) word of the other, as the latter is always anticipated and/or incorporated into the former (Danow 1991). 'Any utterance—the finished, written utterance not excepted—makes response to something and is calculated to be responded to in turn. It is but one link in a continuous chain of speech performances' (Voloshinov 1973:72).

The second useful way of illustrating the dialogical utterance is through introducing Bakhtin's concept of novelness. Novelness refers to the potential for dialogue latent in all art but which is most often found in particular examples of the novel. For Bakhtin the work of Dostoevsky and Rabelais (and here we concentrate on the former) possesses 'novelness' in abundance because it is open to dialogue (not closed like the monological novel where the author has the final word), and as such these novels can be seen as textualisations of Self-Other relations. Thus, Dostoevsky's novels contain relations between various consciousnesses (author and hero, one character and another) which remain 'unmerged…with equal rights and each with its own world' (Bakhtin 1984a:6). Moreover, the communication between these different consciousnesses takes the form of dialogized utterances. Thus, Bakhtin traces those utterances which answer others, which take up

and transform other points of view, those which are 'double-voiced' or which contain a 'sideward glance' at the position of the Other. Taking Dostoevsky's Poor Folk as an example, Bakhtin states:

Discourse here is double-voiced...Not only the tone and style but also the internal semantic structure of these self-utterances are defined by an anticipation of another person's words...In Poor Folk Dostoevsky begins to work out the 'degraded' variety of style—discourse that cringes with a timid and ashamed sideward glance at the other's possible response, yet contains a muffled challenge.

(Bakhtin 1984a:205)

Through the 'orchestration' of different and multiple co-existing voices, Dostoevsky produces polyphony and achieves novelness. The polyphonic novel, then, is characterised by the articulation of many voices that remain unmerged. Yet through dialogical utterances these voices glance sideways at each other, thus recognising the need for the other's voice in the production of meaning.

**The speech genre**

What arises from a discussion of the dialogical utterance is the need for a way of understanding how the other's voice (or more precisely their past, present and future utterances) is recognised and registered into the utterance. The answer to this has been hinted at above, but let us take a step back to fully achieve this. The utterance as the basic unit of speech communication is always situated in the context of social time and space: 'Each rejoinder, regardless of how brief and abrupt, has a specific quality of completion that expresses a particular position of the speaker, to which one may respond or may assume, with respect to it, a responsive position' (Bakhtin 1986:72, our emphasis).

Position here refers to the placing of the speaker in an ideological terrain. In other words, the speaker deploys utterances which embody a particular world-view or social interest, what we can call a positionality. The diversity and manifold variety of these different points of view or ideologies, in competition and conflict, is termed heteroglossia (many-languagedness). However, now we face the question as to how this social interest and positionality is registered in the utterance. Bakhtin answers this through the concept of the speech genre. Thus, through the deployment of certain ways of talking, the enunciator's position (in the contested ideological terrain of heteroglossia) is revealed. Speech genres are (relatively) stable and conventional forms of 'content, linguistic style and compositional structure' (Gardiner 1992:81). In the speech performance the social interest, the position of the speaker, is registered by the enunciation of

-77-

these recognisable forms of speech. Thus, the many voices, the polyphony, of the social world, are bound to the many languages, the many speech genres, of heteroglossia. Bakhtin takes a further step in his description of speech genres by differentiating between primary and secondary speech genres. This is 'understood not as a functional difference', but one of complexity (Bakhtin 1986:61-2). Primary speech genres are performed in the everyday sphere of 'unmediated speech communion', whereas secondary genres are more complex and organised forms, such as 'novels, dramas, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary' (Bakhtin 1986:61-2).

We are now able to understand how the utterance becomes 'double-voiced'. The speech performance is a process of evaluation of the Other's speaking position that becomes known through the use of different speech genres. The enunciator thus recognises the generic form the Other's utterance takes and incorporates this understanding into his or her own utterance. Put differently, the speaker's voice contains or is interpenetrated by the other interlocutors' (past, present or potential) voices through the evaluation of their way of speaking. Identification of speech genres as social languages internally dialogises the utterance. However, on close inspection of this process of evaluation and the double-voiced utterance, in the work of the Bakhtin circle, certain difficulties arise. Specifically these revolve around the notion of context.

As Hirschkop (1989) argues there are two conceptions of context in Bakhtin's work. The first is the concrete verbal situation of two speakers in dialogical interaction. This is the phenomenological context of self and other, organised according to the law of placement, that was described earlier. Yet context also appears in Bakhtin's work in the 'wider' sense of heteroglossia. Here we have a social context, replete with competing ideologies and interests, or more precisely 'the other languages against which the utterance "must define itself"' (Hirschkop 1989:15). There is then a kind of gap between the phenomenological and the social meaning of context in Bakhtin's work: 'We are thus confronted with an awkward analytical choice: do we define context as the immediate material situation… or do we define it as heteroglossia, a more spacious conception, but one which restricts the context to the stuff of language?' (Hirschkop 1989:16).

Moreover, Bakhtin often appeals to the uniqueness of the material dialogical context and the concrete utterance enunciated therein. This concrete situation is depicted as unrepeatable and distinct. Yet the notion of heteroglottic context suggests some form of repeatability. For evaluation and 'double voicing' to be possible utterances must take generic forms and thus the utterance 'tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially intense life' (Bakhtin 1981:293). The varying speech genres of heteroglossia thus form something resembling an extra-verbal structure that determine the value of the utterance. Therefore, if we are to retain any sense of the unique verbal context, the non-reiterative utterance, we

end up facing, in our opinion, the well-rehearsed problems of structure and agency in language: structure becomes the heteroglottic context and agency the material/concrete context of Self and Other in dialogue. Let us partially resolve (or probably more accurately shamelessly side-step for lack of space) this issue by suggesting that context here should be seen as a 'developed-developing' event (Shotter 1993). By this we mean that the heteroglottic context constrains the utterance by accentuating it with a socially located view on the world, but never fully determines the material/concrete utterance, which is in turn endowed with the possibility of re-defining and re-developing that very same constraining heteroglottic context. Bakhtin did retain the possibility to 're-accentuate genres' and so this we believe is still within the parameters of Bakhtin's, admittedly varying, conception of 'context' (Bakhtin 1986:78, 79). Thus, the heteroglottic context becomes the social or 'third' element 'in between' the Self and Other placed in the material/concrete context.

Indeed, this conception informs the following moves. For it is here that we suggest that the social terrain of heteroglossia can be argued to be a socio-spatial landscape. In other words, if speech genres carve up the social then they can also be seen to carve up space.

**Carnival's 'second world': space and speech genre**

It is time to discuss this wider social notion of context. Our discussions so far have discussed the ways in which Bakhtin's thought possesses a spatial dimension in terms of Self-Other relationships as relational positions. In the last section we noted that these utterances take place within, and may transform, a wider socio-linguistic context (the speech genre). We now turn to the spatial aspects of these speech genres, which are most clearly explored in Bakhtin's writings on Carnival. Bakhtin returned to Carnival again and again; apart from Rabelais and his World (1984b), significant parts of the second edition of Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics (1984a) and 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel' (in The Dialogical Imagination, 1981) also consider Carnival and its relations to literature. Here we will concentrate on those aspects of Carnival which stress the relationship between space and speech genre.

Although Carnival is presented as a set of images, retrieved from the writings of Rabelais and others, Bakhtin was concerned with the social and linguistic practices of early modern popular culture. Bakhtin wrote that Carnival creates and draws upon 'a second world and a second life outside officialdom' (1984b:6), the inevitable rejoinder to monological utterances, which attempt to deny dialogue by having the 'last word' 5 : 'No dogma, no authoritarianism, no narrow-minded seriousness can co-exist with Rabelaisian images; these images are opposed to all that is finished and

-79-

Questia Media America, Inc. www.questia.com

x

polished, to all pomposity, to every ready-made solution in the sphere of thought and world outlook.' (Ibid.: 3).

We can see how dialogue addresses the asymmetry of power relations in the way that Carnival challenged the utterances of 'official culture':

...Carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order: it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalised and completed.

(Ibid.: 10)

Further delineating the nature of this 'second world', Bakhtin described the disparate forms and practices of Carnival as aspects of 'grotesque realism', because they emphasise renewal through degradation. They invert the hierarchies of official culture in a way which expresses a cosmic philosophy, a cycle of death and rebirth which is Utopian because it is always oriented to the future. 6 As a consequence, they establish a unity between the people, setting the stage for freer social relations.

The material body is vital to this second world because all Carnival practices 'turn their subject into flesh' (Ibid.: 21), dragging high culture down to 'the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity' (Ibid.: 19-20). This process of renewal emphasises its nature as a body of becoming. Crucially, this grotesque body is 'open to the outside world' (Ibid.: 26) through its orifices and protuberances, especially those of the 'material lower bodily stratum': genitalia, buttocks, anus, belly, breasts. 7 These are points of contact with the social world, which mark it as a body open to dialogical relations, just as we have already noted that the Self is open to the words of the Other: 'It is not a closed, complete unit: it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits' (Ibid.: 26); '[it] is blended with the world, with animals, with objects' (Ibid.: 27). The classical body celebrated by the Renaissance, in contrast, is smooth, closed, finished: it attempts to monologically deny the role of Others in its own constitution. 8 Because the grotesque body is open, it is also the body of the people in more than one sense: '[The body] is presented not in a private, egotistic form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as something universal, representing all the people...a people who are continually growing and renewed' (Ibid.: 19).

Carnival's second world is built upon dialogical social relations in these ways; but is more than just a metaphorical space. 'The language of the marketplace', Bakhtin's phrase for the speech practices of the markets, streets, and public spaces of the people, is literally rooted in space. This language, translated into English by Hélène Iswolsky as 'Billingsgate', was both an important speech genre located in (and producing) a specific social

space and a dialogical answer to the monologue of the elite. These speech practices develop an important unity between Carnival's participants. In a well-known passage Bakhtin wrote 'Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all of the people. While Carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it.' (Ibid.: 7).

In this sense, Carnival created a special world of language and interaction, 'permitting no distance between those who came into contact with each other' (Ibid.: 10). The marketplace, home of Billingsgate, 'was a world in itself, a world which was one' (Ibid.: 153, emphasis added) because 'the exalted and the lowly, the sacred and profane are levelled and are all drawn into the same dance' (Ibid.: 160). It is this sense of openness and unity which creates Carnival's progressive force.

There is no room here to discuss the political efficacy of Carnival, which has been extensively discussed since the publication of Rabelais and his World in English in 1984. We hope to address this question elsewhere, but we hope that our spatial reading of Carnival avoids some of the problems identified by others (see, for example, Bristol, 1985; Burke, 1994; Darnton, 1984; Davis, 1987; Le Roy Ladurie, 1980). We would emphasise that Carnival is not an abstract 'force' but a set of practices which do not determine its consequences; that these practices are located in specific contexts; and that if we move away from seeing Carnival as an inversion of order (Davis, 1987; Sibley, 1995) we can avoid an episodic view of cultural politics, where disorder and transgression are restricted to rare, large-scale outbursts of popular feeling.

Bakhtin made it plain that Carnival was not simply to be found in revelry or riots, but also in everyday speech, conceptions of the body, and so on. As the dialogical Other of official culture, Carnival must always be present; it contaminates the supposedly monological utterances of the powerful. Carnival may be a weakened force, but its currents still run through popular culture. In this sense, we should be looking for elements of everyday life which can become 'Carnivalised', just as novelness refers to Carnivalised literature: open to the play of dialogue, resisting the 'last word'.

Once we have reconceived Billingsgate as the performance of spatialised social relations (including linguistic ones) we can see that space and speech genre can be mutually constitutive. The speech performances of Billingsgate draw upon the dialogical social relations of the marketplace. As in the novel, this speech genre has the potential to rewrite language and social space; it represents a centrifugal opposition to the centripetal, ordering attempts of monologues. As a result, we should not be looking for temporary or liminal inversions of hierarchies, but the ways that Carnival constantly attempts to undermine these monologues in all spaces. 9

**The chronotope**

We finish with Bakhtin's most obviously spatial concept: the chronotope. This is a trope of literature which governs the representation of time and space in the novel.

We will give the name chronotope (literally, 'time space') to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature…In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history.
(Bakhtin 1981:84)

Chronotopes take generic form, so that each genre displays a different conception of the relations between time and space, but Bakhtin was keen to stress the history of these conventions. Bakhtin's examples, from Greek romances of the second to sixth centuries AD to the novels of Flaubert, Stendahl, and Balzac, show a range of chronotopic arrangements of time and space, tied principally to the closing of the open Self (leading to a concern with ways of representing private, interior spaces) and changing conceptions of personal time. This 'chronotopic analysis' therefore offers great scope to geographers interested in the constitution of novelistic space. 10

There are two other ways in which the chronotope is of use to geographers. Mireya Folch-Serra (1990) perceptively points out that the chronotope offers a tool for analysing the constitution of spaces beyond literature. Folch-Serra combines Bakhtin's ideas on language and the novel to suggest, in effect, a dialogical method for the study of landscape, region, and place. Space is constructed by the constant dialogical interaction of a multiplicity of voices; at any point in space and time it is possible to see a chronotope which is more or less fixed depending upon the strength of competing centripetal (monological) and centrifugal (dialogical) forces.

The Bakhtinian conceptual landscape goes beyond the visual criteria that made the geographer an interpreter of natural conditions. It strives, rather, at ongoing historical developments that alternately 'anchor' and destabilize the 'natural harmony' of a given region through constant interaction between meanings. These meanings are spawned, of course, by conversation. A dialogical landscape indicates the historical moment and situation

(time and space) of a dialogue whose outcome is never a neutral exchange. Landscape becomes not only 'graphically visible' in space but also 'narratively visible' in time, in a field of discourses all attempting to account for human experience.

(Folch-Serra 1990:258)

Developing this idea is an ambitious exercise, and one which needs careful attention to Bakhtin's ideas of dialogue and the chronotope. Its value, though, is as a working method which does not privilege discourses or fix representations, but instead depends upon a recognition of their relative weight in dialogue.

Finally, the chronotope essay also offers the possibility of tracing the spaced and timed constitution of the self. As has already been noted, Bakhtin's 'historical poetics' illustrate changes in Western senses of time and space. 11 This broad cultural history could be used to explore the chronotopes of the Self, which is 'timed' as well as 'spaced' through its position within both the material and heteroglottic contexts.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter we have attempted to draw out the spatial aspects of Bakhtin's work, from the relations of Self and Other to the larger scale of the chronotope. This represents only the beginning of a geographical dialogue with this work, and we want to end by sketching out some of the more interesting paths others—including geographers—have taken. If we have one general comment here, it is that dialogue in the widest sense needs to be made central to Bakhtin's work. 12

The first avenue of enquiry concerns the hybridity of identities and places. Postcolonial writings on diasporas have stressed the multiple constitution of cultural identity through the figure of the migrant or exile, who falls between two worlds. This is a thoroughly dialogical notion, though we should remember that the multiple identities of the white traveller are very different from those of the exile (Cresswell 1997). The theme of movement and displacement is an important one, and it is significant that Paul Gilroy's study of Black Atlantic 'double consciousness' develops through the identification of the chronotope of the ship 'as a chance to explore the articulations between the discontinuous histories of England's ports, its interfaces with the wider world' (Gilroy 1993:17). The ship allows us to trace a number of issues: time—space representations of the Atlantic; the relationship between spaces and identities, constituted by discrete movements across the ocean; the hybrid communities of the ships themselves; and the asymmetrical dialogues between Europe, Africa, and the Americas which the ships facilitated. In fact, if we think of the ships as mobile utterances it is possible to apply Bakhtin's ideas to the way these 'conversations'

formed these places. Thinking dialogically stresses the complex processes which make up social spaces, which bind local and global together in different forms in different places. Another example here is Joseph Sciorra's (1996) study of Puerto Rican casita de modem in New York, which reads them as chronotopes of memory and national identity, grounding identity and community in space. The casitas are also hybrids, mixtures of preand post-colonial forms made by bricoleurs as part of the 'caribbeanization of Nueva York' (Ibid.: 66).

The second area of study concerns ideas of space and transgression. This has already received some attention from geographers and others writing about spaces of carnival (Cresswell 1996; Jackson 1988; Lewis and Pile 1996; Shields 1991; Stallybrass and White 1986), as well as discussions of the political meanings of historical Carnival. This work has enormous potential to enrich our understandings of cultural politics, but we feel that geographers need to be sensitive to the wider principles of dialogism, rather than interpreting Rabelais and his World as a study of inverted hierarchies and 'safety valves'.

Third, an important area of study is being opened up by feminist engagement with and criticism of Bakhtin's ideas, and particularly the gender of Carnival's grotesque body. From initial accusations of misogyny in Rabelais (see Booth 1986 and Russo 1986) feminists have begun to work through the ambivalence of Bakhtinian concepts like the grotesque body. Many of the best examples of this (for example, Ginsburg 1993) also draw upon psychoanalysis, and this is another potentially exciting area for geographical research. 13

Finally, if we can accept dialogism as a method, we can begin to think about strategies for writing and doing geography. The use of humour in writing has been briefly but thoughtfully considered by David Matless (1995b), whose starting point is Foucault's observation that 'Genealogy is history in the form of a concerted carnival' (1986:94). Although Bakhtin isn't mentioned, Matless's elaboration of the politics of humorous criticism chimes in with the former's observation that 'every act of world history was accompanied by a laughing chorus' (1984b:474). 14 There is certainly scope for a carnivalised geography beyond the more narrow concept of polyphonic writing (Crang 1992), and in fact Matless' own work offers some interesting examples (1995a:114-18). Similarly, Marc Brosseau's (1995) geographical treatment of Bakhtin aims to initiate and develop a dialogical relationship between geography and literature to examine geographies of the novel. Considered dialogically, geography and literature can be mutually articulated 'without having to melt both identities in the process' (Brosseau 1995:92). This then is more of a methodological utilisation of Bakhtin's relational approach, wherein two modes of representation can be realised together without reduction or the loss of difference. Brosseau also hints at a dialogical theory of space: for example, through revealing how

the novel expresses the ephemeral and contingent process of the (reproduction of city-spaces via dialogical encounters.

These brief reviews hopefully indicate that there are many possible directions that a dialogical study of space could take. We have written this in dialogue with many other writers beyond Bakhtin; we hope we have contributed to this ongoing discussion. And since it is impossible to have the last word in dialogue, we expect this utterance to provoke others.

**Notes**

1
For a useful bibliography see Holquist, 1990:195-200.

2
Any limits that the Self can experience that may bring it into stasis, such as death, it cannot know: I do not experience my own death, only Others do.

3
This is for Bakhtin an ethical point which is considered in depth in Toward a Philosophy of the Act (1993)—see Gardiner (1996), Morson and Emerson (1993).

4
Compare with Saussure's parole, which is rendered for the most part 'accessory' and 'random': 'a purely individual act' juxtaposed 'to the system of language as a phenomenon that is purely social and mandatory to the individuum' (Bakhtin 1986:81, see also FMLS).

5
'Official culture' is therefore a hybrid rather than a monolithic mass, 'contaminated' by its dealings with its Other.

6
It is worth noting that Bakhtin's use of the term 'utopian' is the very antithesis of those monological closed systems of rational thought associated with literary Utopias (after More), and the Utopian blueprints of modernist planning. Bakhtin's conception of the novel is anti-Utopian because it refuses to accept a final word and truth (Vice 1997:78); Carnival is Utopian because it dares to imagine a future beyond these monological certainties.

7
The gendering of the grotesque body is a complex issue which we cannot explore in full here; see the references in the final section for discussions of this theme.

8
'All attributes of the unfinished world are carefully removed [from the body], as well as all the signs of its inner life' (1984b:320).

9
One fruitful avenue to explore in this regard would be a comparison of De Certeau's 'tactics' (1984) with the playful but deadly serious performance of Carnival.

10
Many commentators on the chronotope, like Holquist (1990), tend to stress its temporal aspects. This probably reflects the importance of time in the novel; Bakhtin's essay is a radical development of the Russian Formalists' concern with fabula (story) and sjuzhet (plot). In some chronotopes space does seem to be subordinated to time—the 'adventure time' of the Greek romance is the clearest example—but even here Bakhtin's writings represent the fullest engagement of literary theory with the textualisation of space in the novel.

11
See the section on time in the classical biography and autobiography (1981:130-46) or the time-space of the chivalric romance (151-8) for examples.

12
For example, David Harvey's use of Bakhtin as part of a project towards a dialectical/relational view of time and space ironically appropriates the latter as a philosopher of Self and Other, akin to the liberal reading made by Holquist (1990). In particular the 'perspectival' situatedness of Self and Other gains ascendancy in this reading of Bakhtin, although the way in which this 'point of view' is socially interpolated does receive mention:

the perspectival view then merges into a more general relational view of space and time by virtue of the continuous shifts of social practices that put value upon both the 'I' and the 'others' by creating particular space—time nexus between them.
(Harvey 1997:271)
Similar to our endeavours, Harvey here attempts to move from the material/ phenomenological context to a more socially 'spacious' conception of context.
13
While the Bakhtin circle was explicitly opposed to Freudianism (Voloshinov 1976), it has been suggested that the encounter between Bakhtin and Lacan could be much more productive.
14
However, we should also take note of Matless's warning that humour can serve many different ends; in Rabelais' carnival, women are often the butts of masculine laughter.

**References**
b
Bakhtin, M.M. (1981) The Dialogical Imagination, edited and translated C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press.
Bakhtin, M.M. (1984a) Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, edited and translated C. Emerson, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Bakhtin, M.M. (1984b) Rabelais and his World, translated H. Iswolsky, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Bakhtin, M.M. (1986) Speech Genres and Other Late Essays, edited C. Emerson and M. Holquist, translated V W. McGee, Austin: University of Texas Press.
Bakhtin, M.M. (1993) Toward a Philosophy of the Act, edited V Liapunov and M. Holquist, translated V Liapunov, Austin: University of Texas Press.
Booth, W.G. (1986) 'Freedom of interpretation: Bakhtin and the challenge of feminist criticism', in G.S. Morson (ed.) Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on his Work, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
Bristol, M. (1985) Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority inRenaissance England, New York: Methuen.
Brosseau, M. (1995) 'The city in textual form: Manhattan Transfer's New York', Ecumene, 2, 1:89-114.
Burke P. (1994) Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, Aldershot: Scolar Press.
c
Clark, K. and Holquist, M. (1984) Mikhail Bakhtin, London: Harvard University Press.
Crang, P. (1992) 'Politics and polyphony: Reconfigurations of geographical authority', Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 10:527-49.
Cresswell, T. (1996) In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Cresswell, T. (1997) 'Imagining the nomad: Mobility and the postmodern primitive', in G. Benko and U. Strohmayer (eds) Space and Social Theory: InterpretingModernity and Postmodernity, Oxford: Blackwell.
d
Danow, D.K. (1991) The Thought of Mikhail Bakhtin: From Word to Culture, London: Macmillan.
Darnton, R. (1984) The Great Cat Massacre, and Other Episodes in French Cultural History, New York: Vintage.
Davis, N.Z. (1987) Society and Culture in Early Modern France, Cambridge: Polity.
De Certeau, M. (1984) The Practice of Everyday Life, translated S. Rendall, Berkeley: University of California Press.

f

Folch-Serra, M. (1990) 'Place, voice, space: Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogical landscape', Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 8:255-74.

Foucault M. (1986), 'Nietzsche, genealogy, history', in P. Rabinow, The Foucault Reader, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

g

Gardiner, M. (1992) The Dialogics of Critique: M.M. Bakhtin and the Theory of Ideology, London: Routledge.

Gardiner, M. (1996) 'Alterity and ethics: A dialogical perspective', Theory, Culture AndSociety 13, 2:121-143.

Gilroy, P. (1993), The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness, London and New York: Verso.

Ginsburg, R. (1993) 'The pregnant text. Bakhtin's ur-chronotope: the womb', in D. Shepherd, Bakhtin: Carnival and Other Subjects, Amsterdam and Atlanta, Georgia: Rodopi.

h

Harvey, D. (1997)Justice, Mature, and the Geography of Difference, Oxford: Blackwell

Hirschkop, K. (1989) 'Introduction: Bakhtin and cultural theory', in K. Hirschkop and D. Shepheiu (eds), Bakhtin and Cultural Theory, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Holquist, M. (1985) 'The carnival of discourse: Bakhtin and simultaneity', CanadianReview of Comparative Literature, 12, 2; 220-34.

Holquist, M. (1990) Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World, London: Routledge.

j

Jackson, P. (1988). 'Street life: the politics of carnival', Environment and Planning D:Society and Space 6:213-27.

l

Le Roy Ladurie, E. (1980) Carnival: A People's Uprising at Romans,1579-1580, translated M. Feeney, London: Scolar Press.

Lewis C. and Pile S. (1996) 'Woman, body, space: Rio carnival and the politics of performance', Gender, Place and Culture 3, 1:23-41.

m

Matless, D. (1995a) 'The art of right living: landscape and citizenship, 1918-39', in S. Pile and N. Thrift (eds), Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation, London: Routledge.

Matless, D. (1995b) 'Effects of history', Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 20, 4:405-9.

Medvedev, P.N. (1985) The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introductionto Sociological Poetics, translated A.J. Wehrle, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

Morson, G.S. and Emerson, G. (1993) 'Imputations and amputations: reply to Wall and Thomson', Diacritics 24, 4:93-9.

p

Pechey, G. (1989) 'On the borders of Bakhtin: dialogisation, Ddecolonisation', in K. Hirschkop and D. Shepherd (eds) Bakhtin and Cultural Theory, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

r

Russo, M. (1986) 'Female grotesques: carnival and theory', in T.de Lauretis (ed.) Feminist Studies/Critical Studies, Bloomington: Indian University Press.

s

Sciorra, J. (1996) 'Return to the future: Puerto Rican vernacular architecture in New York city', in A. King (ed.) Re-Presenting the City: Ethnicity, Capital and Culturein the 21st Century Metropolis, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Shields, R. (1991) Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity, London and New York: Routledge.

Shotter, J. (1993) Conversational Realities: Constructing Life Through Language, London: Sage.

Sibley, D. (1995) Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West, London and New York: Routledge.

Stallybrass, P. and White, A. (1986) The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, London: Methuen.

Stam, R. (1988) 'Mikhail Bakhtin and left cultural critique', in E.A. Kaplan (ed.), Postmodernism and its Discontents: Theories, Practices, London: Verso.
Stewart, S. (1986) 'Shouts on the street: Bakhtin's anti-linguistics', in G.S. Morson (ed.), Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on his Work, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
v
Vice, S. (1997) Introducing Bakhtin, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
Voloshinov, V N. (1973) Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, translated L. Matejka and I.R. Titunik, London: Harvard University Press.
Voloshinov, V N. (1976) Freudianism: A Marxist Critique, translated I.R. Titunik, New York: Academic Press.