

Mikhail Bakhtin, Vyacheslav Ivanov, and the Rhetorical Culture of the Russian Third Renaissance

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Although Mikhail Bakhtin figures centrally in multiculturalism, community, pedagogy, and rhetoric (Bruffee 1986; Welch 1993; Zebroski 1994; Zappen, Gurak, and Doheney-Farina 1997; Mutnick 1996; Halasek 2001, 182; see also Bialostosky 1986) many of his major ideas remain enigmatic and controversial. The elusive aspects of Bakhtin's theories exist in part because rhetoricians know little about Bakhtin's own rhetorical culture. Theorists recognize this problem and call for a reworking of Bakhtin more on his own terms. This call has been made to resolve concerns about Bakhtin's ambivalence toward rhetoric. Since Bakhtin disliked rhetoric, any use of Bakhtin in rhetorical theory is largely a hybrid synthesis of his distinct ideas on poetics, prose, satire, the epic, the novel, and so forth. John Murphy proposes a reconception of Bakhtin closely built around his ambivalence and guided by the question, "what do we [rhetoricians] mean by the concept of a rhetorical tradition?" (2001, 259). The suggestion encourages rhetoricians to take Bakhtin more on his own terms than has been done in the past. Unfortunately, as the word "we" indicates, Murphy reworks Bakhtin primarily in terms of Western ideas about rhetoric. Slavists and "Bakhtinologists" in Russia argue that when talking about Bakhtin, "we" has often meant Western, obscuring the Russian cultural roots of his theories (Kozhinov 1993; Miller and Platter 1993, 118). The privileging of Western perspectives has also been criticized by scholars of other discourse cultures. Discussing American Indian rhetoric, Malea Powell argues that "we" means a Rhetorical Tradition that begins "with the Greeks, goes Roman, briefly sojourns in Italy, then shows up in England and Scotland, hops the ocean to America and settles in" (2002, 397). Differences in interpreting Bakhtin also proceed from translation difficulties between Russian and English. The Russian reader views Bakhtin in more essentialist ways as opposed to the "post-modern give-and-take" theorist of many Western

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interpretations (Emerson 1990, 113). Read in the Russian language and from that cultural context, Bakhtin's vocabulary contains "conspicuous" elements of Orthodox Christianity and Slavic nationalist ideas (Kozhinov 1993; Mihailovic 1997) that reveal a Russian theological subtext to his ideas about community and dialogue.

In this essay, I provide a reading of Bakhtin against the background of his own rhetorical culture. More specifically, I offer an analysis of an intertextual dialogue about language and community between Bakhtin and the symbolist writer Vyacheslav Ivanov. Scholars identify Ivanov as a poet, philosopher, and teacher who profoundly impacted Bakhtin (Mal'chukova 1992, 55). The Russian symbolists upheld strong nationalist ideals and a linguistic theory rooted in metaphysics (Mirsky 1972, 188). Many Slavists and Russian readers of Bakhtin suspect that Ivanov strongly influenced Bakhtin's rhetoric even though, for reasons unknown but that are suspected to be political, Bakhtin understates his debt to him (Ivanov 2001, 3). Bakhtin was not unlike his contemporaries in sharing an interest and vocabulary that addressed the major threads of symbolism. Read side by side with Ivanov's essays in Russian, Bakhtin's rhetoric displays a mixture of the European, Slavic, and Christian ideals that were in parlance among many Russian theorists in early twentieth-century Russia. Bakhtin and Ivanov give us a glimpse of this rhetorical culture. More specifically, they help us to better understand our appropriations of Bakhtin based on an elucidation of the meaning of specific terms as they existed among Bakhtin's contemporaries.

The method that I use requires translation of specific Russian passages into English. Terms and phrases are interpreted against the usage background of others in early twentieth-century Russia. Bakhtin's Slavic-theological connections become evident through the elucidation of these intertextual references. Through this method, a common and accepted practice in Slavic literary studies, the use of key words and phrases are traced in and among texts to identify a discourse among authors and explicate its meaning.¹ As Steven Mailloux points out, a "rhetorical hermeneutics" focuses on "the historical sets of topics, arguments, tropes, ideologies, and so forth" that give meaning to rhetoric (1988, 15–16). The approach is necessary due to the unique political and artistic circumstances during the early part of Bakhtin's career, a period called the "Third Renaissance" of Russian and European culture (Makhlin 1995). This period began around the time of the 1917 revolution and lasted through the end of the 1920s (Terras 1985, 152).

For philosophical, poetic, and political reasons, the period fostered intertextual codes among writers that are not easily grasped by Western readers. Our rhetorical culture encourages “telling it like it is,” “reaching the bottom line,” and “getting to the point.” Because of these beliefs, Western rhetoricians may have difficulty seeing connections among Slavic identity, religion, and dialogism (McClellan 1990, 234; Farmer 1998, 200). By contrast, Russian rhetoric has often been characterized as elusive and “aesopian” (Visson 1996). To illustrate the situation from a more familiar perspective, imagine that, after our death, someone discovered in our writings about multiculturalism and communication that we substituted the words “sermon” and “communion” for “speech” and “community.” Many American readers would interpret these terms in religious ways, but people unfamiliar with American culture and the English language may miss their meanings. In addition, a foreign reader may not know whether our use of the terms is literal or synthetic. For example, we may have developed special meanings for certain readers due to philosophical reasons or perhaps to protect friends and family during a politically unstable situation. A foreign reader of our work would not only have to consult dictionaries but also examine how these terms emerge in other works by us and others who may have inspired us, and find clues of influence from rhetorical correspondences. Third Renaissance thinkers frequently utilized varying approaches of what some theorists call “distanced reiteration” or the “recurrent words, phrases, figures, motives, and themes” in texts (Ronen 1983, viii). For example, the Russian Acmeist poets developed a very dense and polysemic vocabulary that “formed complex and extended strings of shifting, expanded or restricted, parallel, complementary or contrastive meanings which link together pieces belonging to various genres and periods, poetry and prose, original compositions and translations, and create such a network of intertextual relations that the entire literary heritage of the poet emerges as an integral structure” (x). For Bakhtin, the lexical interrelations reflected a “dialogue” among independent voices that found its apogee in the author-hero relations and textual dynamics of the Slavophile writer Fyodor Dostoevsky.

When interpreted on these terms, we learn that we cannot always make claims about Bakhtin based on the assumption that a “smoking gun” text exists somewhere. Bakhtin’s own characterization of rhetoric as having a “propensity to lie” suggests that he may not have regarded that type of persuasion highly.² What we must do instead is look at how words were used in Bakhtin’s specific culture and try to ascertain the political and in-

tellectual circumstances that gave them their meanings. When we compare rhetorical terms between Bakhtin and Ivanov, we find that they share a material religious terminology to describe how words mediate individualism and communalism.

The objective of my analysis is not to evangelize any particular religious belief. Neither do I prove that Bakhtin was a religious person, as this task is best left to biographers and historians.³ My purpose is to show that when it comes to specific ideas appropriated in rhetorical studies, Bakhtin's own rhetoric suggests that he uses theological concepts in metaphorical ways that have been overlooked and require attention. Other theorists have shown that Bakhtin uses theological discourse to explicate literary theory. Graham Pechey refers to Bakhtin's writings as either "a theologically inflected aesthetics or an aesthetically inflected theology" (2001, 47), and Charles Lock (2001) argues that what makes Bakhtin's work original concerns how Bakhtin reworks philosophy in religious terms particular to Russian culture.⁴ My focus is directed toward certain ideas in Bakhtin's philosophy of language that eventually become important in Western rhetorical theory. This article will identify and explicate specific terms and ideas of Bakhtin and Ivanov against the Russian rhetorical background of the Third Renaissance and demonstrate how Ivanov's ideas about the eucharistic word emerge and are reworked by Bakhtin into a concretized and sacramental framework. Let us begin by looking more closely at the cultural context of Bakhtin's vocabulary, a culture known as the Third Renaissance.

A brief glimpse of the Third Renaissance

The Third Renaissance has two rhetorical histories. The first takes place in the beginning of the period approximately when Bakhtin began his career. The spirit of the time was marked by an exuberant anticipation of a new age, subversive attitudes toward established creeds, and an adventurous intellectual spirit (Gasparov 1979). Third Renaissance thinkers wanted to generate a unique Russian response to the post-Kantian crisis in European philosophy concerning theoretism, art, and metaphysics (Bonetskaia 1995, 33). Many people saw themselves as the vanguard of what Boris Gasparov calls a "new world" and new "world culture, before which fades all that came before" (1979, 111). The historic nature of language—that is, the

potential of the word to be a carrier or avatar of past culture—was a central concern and gave rise to many distinct approaches. In part, theorists were motivated to respond to European philosophies. According to Aleksandr Pigalev, “the very essence of ‘dialogical thinking’ is closely related to the general mind-set” of this period based on “a dissatisfaction with European metaphysics” (1997, 119). This dissatisfaction was expressed through a rejection of fixed subject-object sociologies and skepticism of a Platonic universe via critique of metaphysics of an “Absolute” from which meaning radiates (119). At the same time, a very common feature of Third Renaissance rhetoric is the mingling of religion, art, and national identity (Emerson 1990, 110–11). In part this continued a nineteenth-century tradition in which the figure of Jesus Christ was upheld as the ideal “intellectual,” a figure who “strives to be righteous” (Shalin 1996, 85–86).

Dialogists insisted on the integral participation of actors as equals in the creative process, but many wove religious metaphysics in unorthodox ways to demystify symbolism and “sacralize” Platonism (Gachev 1999). For Bakhtin, this participation takes the form of answerability (*otvetstvennost'*), the idea that each participant in a dialogue occupies at once a unique position that exists by virtue of being responsive to another (1993). For some theorists, the spirit of the time encouraged a liberal give-and-take of the words of others (see Brostrom, qtd. in Emerson 1990, 114). In part this practice fulfilled the ideal, common in postrevolutionary circles, that anyone could become a “carrier of culture” and that it should not just rest in the hands of one speaker or elite group (Gasparov 1979, 112). Many writers developed theories of dialogue modeled on Russian Orthodox theology (Mihailovic 1997), but most of them did so in heterodox ways that upset clergy and bureaucrats alike. Nevertheless, they were careful readers of their predecessors and contemporaries and developed intertextual vocabularies from which they worked out new theories.

Although the first rhetorical history of the Third Renaissance is one of liberation and adventurousness, the second history is one of repression and fear. Toward the end of the 1920s the political situation in Russia became such that many intellectuals capitulated to the authorities to protect both themselves and their families. From this time forward, it is believed that Bakhtin sublimated his theological ideas in the language of literary criticism in order to avoid political problems (Il'inskii 1988, 60). While Bakhtin carefully distinguishes among the genres of poetics, prose, the epic, and so forth, his own rhetorical sublimation evokes a process common in Russian history in which rhetoric becomes integrated with philosophy or

art. In the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, when Bakhtin was developing many of his major works on dialogue, literature became for many people a rhetorical defense against the “capacity [of the state] to paralyze people’s constructive thinking through an induced mixture of terror, apathy, confusion, and ‘doublethink’” (Hosking 1985, 410). Bakhtin admitted to “prevaricating” about “the really important issues” while developing the book about Dostoevsky (Bocharov 1993). One example of how Bakhtin edited his earlier ideas to conceal biblical references is marked by his different discussions of Platonic discourse. In the 1963 edition of *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, Bakhtin characterizes Platonic dialogue in terms of Socrates. However, the earlier 1929 edition compares Dostoevsky’s artistic developments not in terms of Socrates but in terms of the biblical Job:

[A]lthough it [Platonic dialogue] is not a thoroughly monologic, pedagogical dialogue, the plurality of voices is stifled in the idea. The idea is understood by Plato not as co-being, but as being.... A comparison of it [Dostoevsky’s dialogue] with biblical and gospel dialogue is more vital. The influence of the dialogues of Job and several gospel dialogues on Dostoevsky is unquestionable, whereas Platonic dialogues simply layed outside the sphere of his interest. The dialogue of Job in its structure is internally unending, for the opposition of the soul to God—combative or meek—is understood in it as irrevocable and eternal. (239–40)⁵

The “unending” character of dialogue shares a link with the incomplete perspective of reality expressed in a set of Bakhtin’s workbooks called “Toward a stylistics of the novel [*K stilistike romana*]” in which Bakhtin writes, “The zone of contact with unfulfilled reality. Analysis of the Socratic dialogue and the image of Socrates” (1996a, 138).⁶ Bakhtin’s other notes show the theological influences for the Socratic personification of dialogue. Bakhtin writes that “God can get along without man, but man cannot get along without Him. The teacher and the disciple (Socratic dialogue)” (1984, 341).⁷ The statements bring to mind the book of Job, who must have God even if that God seems unresponsive. Yet the editors of the fifth volume of Bakhtin’s *Collected Works* suggest a different interpretation. They say that Bakhtin modified his text because Bakhtin envisioned God as “a partner in dialogue” rather than a transcendent or indifferent third party (Bocharov and Gogotishvili 1996, 660). In spite of these different interpretations, the workbooks suggest that although Bakhtin puts Socrates in Job’s place, he did not necessarily intend to divorce the theological subtext from his paradigm.

A further rhetorical and theological puzzle arising from Bakhtin's interest in Socrates concerns the nature of truth. The Socratic dialogue, Bakhtin writes, makes people into "ideologists" who participate "in the purely ideological event of seeking and testing truth" (1984b, 111) not as something imposed on them, but as something discovered collaboratively. That is the essential function of philosophical dialogue. But what exactly does Bakhtin mean by truth? What is the "dialogic nature" of truth? (109). Here we must consider that the Russian language has two words for truth: *pravda*, which means something like "justice, righteousness" and *istina*, a word derived from the term *est'* or "is" and means something like "faithfulness to one's being" (Boym 1994, 96) and in some cases "the Truth." Svetlana Boym links the terms to Bakhtin's appreciation of Dostoevsky, who praised sincerity at the expense of legality. Dostoevsky speaks about a natural utopia, not an artificial reality of rhetorical clichés and eloquence. For Dostoevsky, the Western jury trial was a theatrical spectacle, a game of lying. Dostoevsky proposed a solution in which truth was uncovered "simply by truth," a didactic process in which "artificial exaggeration will disappear from both sides" and everything "appears sincere and truthful and not merely a game in uncovering truth" (99). This explains why Dostoevsky's heroes are "devoid of rhetorical and oratorical skills and [yet] often appear as spokesmen for the authorial Russian truth" (99).

In "Toward a Philosophy of the Act," Bakhtin distinguishes the two terms for "truth" (1993, 37, 40–45). For Bakhtin, *pravda* means "the unique and unitary truth" found in each person, whereas *istina* means a truth composed of universal repeatable and constant moments, a type of theoretical or universal truth that disseminates responsibility among everyone (Poole 2001, 160–62). Frank Farmer adds that *pravda* refers to the "particular" and *istina* to the "architectonics" that resist theoretism yet suggest a loose conceptual model (2001, 12). Bakhtin opposed "theoretism" and an ethic applicable to a "general person" (Morson 1997, 64–65). The English translation of the Dostoevsky text implies that the truth revealed in each person is *pravda* (i.e., the truth unique to the diverse cultural experience of each person). The multicultural appropriations of Bakhtin rely on the idea that each person occupies a unique cultural position that must be brought into tolerant balance through dialogic rhetoric. "Truth," Bakhtin writes, "is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth" (1984b, 110).

Bakhtin's use of the word *istina* in the Russian edition of the Dostoevsky text suggests a more unified concept than what emerges from

a multicultural juxtaposing and testing of ideas. It is unlikely that Bakhtin would equate Socratic with authoritative truth or a truth exclusively owned by someone (that is, a property-rights version of truth and identity common in Western cultural theories; see Epstein 1995). Bakhtin's discussion of the "authoritative word" dates from the mid-1930s when, Nina Perlina writes, "the authoritative word was everywhere" in the form of party slogans that muted opposing voices (1984, 20). In addition, under such circumstances, it is understandable that people would seek out alternative means of interaction to establish reliable communication. Writers in Bakhtin's time knew well the political realities, and so they dialogued through rhetorical vocabularies that often eluded the grasp of the authorities and rarely came to the point except through implication and a "faith" that the reader could fill in missing conclusions through semantic context and history. In certain ways, Socrates may have provided Bakhtin with an experimental model to test various ideas and, as James Zappen suggests, remain "minimally persuasive" (2000). Or perhaps it reflects Bakhtin's own interest in the incommensurability of truth and the role of faith as an integral component of dialogue. In "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," Bakhtin writes that faith and trust are required to nurture an aesthetic relationship rooted in dialogue, a faith that best finds expression in one's being the "other for God" (1990, 145). Bakhtin is not interested in promoting a tiered or distanced idea of faith or perhaps theological faith at all. Rather, Bakhtin wants to suggest that *istina* may emerge through the incomplete and un-finalized interconnectivity of dialogue much like the unspoken yet implied conclusion in a syllogism. In this scenario, truth is not monologically imposed but rather emerges somewhat mysteriously through a series of intertextual exchanges that gradually acquires a retrospective unity. Other theorists have linked this idea to Russian Orthodox theology that views religion not as a "theological system, but rather a living relationship with God. The faithful are oriented not toward a cognition of God but rather toward a connection with him" (Babkina 1992, 319). The use of *istina* suggests a kind of universal truth that individuals participate in from unique situations. This view strongly echoes the work of an influential figure among Third Renaissance writers, Vyacheslav Ivanov, to whom we now turn.

Bakhtin and Ivanov in Third Renaissance culture

In a passage from “Supplements and Changes to Rabelais,” Bakhtin wrote, “love toward the happiness of the people’s public square [*ploshchad*]” in Pushkin, Griboedov, and others. . . . The social character of laughter, collective laughter (parallel to the prayer of the entire church)”⁸ (1996a, 114). The Russian word that Bakhtin uses for “collective” is *sobornyi*, an ecclesiastical term meaning “communal” that is the adjectival form of *sobornost’*, a word coined by nineteenth-century Slavophile Alexei Khomiakov. Slavophiles saw Russia as unique, at odds with the “occidental” tradition, and ordained with a historical destiny loftier than that of the West (Shalin 1996, 13). Nikolai Gogol and Fyodor Dostoevsky, two writers in whom Bakhtin showed great interest, were Slavophiles. Khomiakov celebrated the peasant commune as an ideal form of *sobornost’*, characterizing it as a “free unity of the faithful, a unity brought about by their common understanding of truth and their common love of Christ” (Terras 1985, 224). *Sobornost’* conjures up a different social arrangement than the Western “political” or “rhetorical community” or “public sphere,” or any type of gathering in which a plurality of individuals with competing interests debate (Slutskaya 1998). Svetlana Boym defines *sobornost’* as a group opposed to authority, one that is “radically anti-iconographic, antirhetorical, and anticonventional” (1994, 87). The interest in *sobornost’* comes about as a special response to post-1917 revolutionary activities that wove together Christian and Marxist ideologies and postulated that Marxism in Russia could become a revolutionary “Judaean-Christian” idea, a “superior social order” not unlike the early church communities rooted in the idea of *sobornost’* (Frank 1990, 22). Shortly before and then during the Third Renaissance, many thinkers developed an idea that Russia should create a *sobornost’* of some kind that would restore the modern person to spiritual integration and serve as a unique Russian “counter-idea” (Makhlin 1995, 147–48).

In 1918, Vyacheslav Ivanov published “Legion and Organic Community [*Legion i sobornost’*],” a text that integrates nationalism, messianism, and spirituality into a linguistic ontology. Like other turn-of-the-century writers, Ivanov believed that Russia had a special calling to make manifest a society based on Christianity (Terras 185, 205; Bird 2001) through a “sacralization of aesthetics” that would culminate in *sobornost’* (Bird, xiv). The following extract from Ivanov’s text links the individual and community through the word:

The ideal of sobornost' is, on the other hand [as opposed to legion], the ideal of a type of union where the uniting individuals [*lichnosti*] attain complete openness and definition of their singular, unrepeatable and original essence, of their completely-ransomed⁹ creative freedom, which makes each individual a word that is verbalized, new and necessary for all. In every individual the Word took on flesh [*plot'*] and dwells within everyone, and in everyone it sounds different, but the word of each finds an echo [*otzvuk'*] in everyone, and everyone is one free consent, for everyone is one Word [*Slovo*].

Sobornost' is a task [*zadanie*] and not a given [*dannost'*]; it has never fulfilled itself on earth completely and lastingly, and it can never be found here or there, like God. But, like the Spirit, it breathes where it wants and always gives life hourly in kind human unions. (45)¹⁰

This passage connects two ideas to sobornost' that were of enormous interest in Third Renaissance culture: the individual personality (*lichnost'*) and the potential of the "word" (*slovo*). *Lichost'* is a Russian term best translated as "personality," but it is perhaps the closest word in Russian for "person" or "individual." *Lichnost'* is Bakhtin's operative concept for *ethos* as it entails the reality that no utterance is private property (McClellan 1990, 241), but rather, all language is part of a marketplace of dialogized, heteroglossic discourses. *Lichnost'* is connected to the Russian word *litso* meaning "face," and for Bakhtin, it has something to do with the idea of seeing one face-to-face. Bakhtin has in mind not a Platonic idea of the person but rather the "transcendent" potential of a concretely embodied *lichnost'* (Mihailovic 1997, 102).

This usage suggests that Third Renaissance thinkers had a much different idea of individualism than the self-sufficient paradigm that predominates in Western multiculturalism (Epstein 1995, 303). Many wanted to develop a socialized model of the individual. In *Philosophy of Language* by Voloshinov, we read that "the 'social' is usually thought of in binary opposition with the 'individual,' ...[but] notions of this sort are fundamentally false.... The individual, as possessor of the contents of his own consciousness, as author of his own thoughts, as the personality responsible for his thoughts and feelings—such an individual is a purely socioideological phenomenon" (1973, 34). In his untranslated notes about rhetoric in the fifth volume of *Collected Works*, Bakhtin counters this socioideological position when he writes, "Faith in an adequate reflection of oneself in the higher other, God is simultaneously within me and outside of me, my inner infinity and unfinishedness is completely reflected in my image, and its [my image's] outsidedness is also fully realized in him [God]" (1996b, 68).¹¹ According to Vitaly Makhlin, Third Renaissance theorists wanted to

develop the idea of a highly socialized personality into a collective and organic conception of *lichnost'* through which the social could be understood as "non- and outside- the official church of the body of Christ" (1995, 139). More specifically, *lichnost'* meant to be "outside this body in reality and prosaically, [yet] a member of it, from it, [but] acting your 'I' freely" (139). One way to do so was through a social ontology of *lichnost'* that emphasized the "going beyond the experience of the I" and the development of an understanding of what might be called the "creative difference" between oneself and an "other" (139).

Bakhtin shares with Ivanov the idea that *sobornost'* involves the presence of "singular" and "unrepeatable" individuals (*lichnosti*). Bakhtin, like Ivanov, is not really interested in a "swallowing-up" type of *sobornost'*: he stresses the preservation of individuality through his development of "answerability" (*otvetstvennost'*) and the "non-alibi in Being," which postulate that "everyone occupies a unique and never-repeatable place" (1993, 40–45). That is why, as Ivanov writes, *sobornost'* is not a given (*dannost'*) but rather a creative task (*zadanie*). Bakhtin also uses derivatives of Ivanov's vocabulary to argue that in dialogue the project of language and identity is not "given" (*dan*) but created (*zadan*) (Bakhtin 1986, 120). Michael Holquist argues that for Bakhtin, the "I" takes a self that is given (*dan*) and "makes something that is conceived (*zadan*). [The I] imposes this transformation by imposing time/space categories appropriate to the other on what is happening" (1990, 25). In Russian Orthodox Christianity, these same terms characterize the transformation of "*etovost'* (existence)" or "that which is given" as the result of another's "surplus of vision" into a future "project" or "modus of the future" (Bakhtin 1992, 318).

Although Bakhtin's conception of *lichnost'* also synthesizes the ideas of Ivanov with other theorists, the one common theme is its basis in certain precepts of Russian Orthodox Christianity. Alexandar Mihailovic traces Bakhtin's description of *lichnost'* to Church Slavonic rather than modern Russian (1997, 115). According to Mihailovic, Bakhtin's use of *lichnost'* owes a debt to Pavel Florensky and Vladimir Soloviev, who put forth tripartite conceptions of the individual similar to the model of the Holy Trinity in Christian theology (99). The socialized individual in Bakhtin's thinking borrows from the Trinitarian model of "indwelling" that characterizes the three persons of the Orthodox Christian God. In this model, God is composed of three distinct yet indwelling and interanimating individuals: God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Florensky secularized the model to characterize human life into three interanimating spheres: the

corporeal, the emotional, and the spiritual. Bakhtin adapts the Trinitarian model of the person into the domains of science, art, and life (100). Unlike Florensky, however, Bakhtin's tripartite personality is externally oriented and inexorably driven both toward "all-oneness" (Bakhtin's term is *vseedinstvo*) and toward *sobornost'*. For both Bakhtin and Florensky, *lichnost'* acquires a "transcendent" potential via "the full activation of the subject over existence," that is, an actor capable of transforming "mere existence" (100). One of the things Bakhtin and other Third Renaissance writers resisted was the Platonism that was characteristic of Russian religious culture of the time. Bakhtin is against an overarching, tiered, or deterministic type of metaphysics (117).

In addition to Ivanov and Florensky, Bakhtin also incorporated the ideas of Alexander Meyer, a close mentor. Meyer developed a model of *lichnost'* that linked the individual personality to nationhood (Mihailovic 1997, 108). Like Ivanov, Meyer believed that civilization was born of a struggle between pagan and Christian forces. The pagan forces lead to fragmentation (Ivanov: *legion*) while the Christian forces lead to a "dynamically collective society" (Ivanov: *sobornost'*). Meyer believed that this dynamic solidarity should be thought of "as not with our own" but rather "with others [who are different]" (Makhlin 1995, 145). Vitaly Makhlin traces this thinking to Alexander Ukhtomsky, who wrote:

With whom you interact, thus you will be yourself; whoever your interlocutors are, that's also who you will be—interlocutors with the Church (body) of Christ cannot 'not' (that is, they must) place in you some spirit with which it lives, and you yourself will carry it into your meeting with other interlocutors—people will feel this kindness that comes to them, yet it is not from you, but proceeds through you [from some other source]. (145)

According to Makhlin, Bakhtin takes Ukhtomsky's "I" and transforms it into "a dialogic sociology of the 'I', an immanent (unofficial) 'sobornost'" of each concrete, actual word [*slovo*]. This means something completely different than unconscious authority like the deconstructed I" (145).

Makhlin's argument comes into sharper focus when we examine Ivanov's and Bakhtin's use of *slovo*. The Russian word *slovo* means "word," but Third Renaissance thinkers had what Titunik calls a "highly synthetic" use of this term (1976). In the glossary of *The Dialogic Imagination*, Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson defend their translation of *slovo* into *discourse* because "Bakhtin at times uses discourse as it is sometimes used in the West—as a way to refer to subdivisions determined by social and ideologi-

cal differences within a single language (i.e., the discourse of American plumbers vs. that of American academics). But it is more often than not his more diffuse way of insisting on the primacy of speech, utterance, all *in praesentia* aspects of language" (1981, 427). According to Mihailovic, Bakhtin uses the word at once to denote a "communality of those interacting with it and not any particular word or utterance" yet in some situations he also insists on "its capacity as a reified and embodied phenomenon" to "represent the individual utterance" (1997, 18). Bakhtin's definition has roots in ancient Greek and theological sources. Indeed, in the time of the Sophists, rhetoric was the practice of "logos" or "the word" (Bialostosky 1995, 84) and sometimes "rationality" (Schiappa 1991, 40, 97). Logos was deployed by the pre-Socratics in part to respond to a culture of "mythos" (95). In a sense, Bakhtin (who expounds at length on Heraclitus in *Rabelais* [1984a, 82, 147]) and other Third Renaissance writers are doing the same type of thing with the "mythos" of the past of Russian artistic culture: they want to demystify and concretize things. Bakhtin does this by insisting on the transformation of "merely conceived or intellected words" into ones that are "uttered and revealed" in the book on Dostoevsky. "It is in this shift toward the concretization of thought," Mihailovic writes, "that one sees the 'profound dialogism of the word' (*glubinnnyi dialogizm slova*)" (1997, 20). Thus, Third Renaissance thinkers preoccupied themselves with a concrete understanding of *slovo*. They wanted to create a new "concretized" language that would become an engaged, active, and "living word" (*zhivoe slovo*) (Annushkin 1995, 134). In "Discourse and Novel," Bakhtin characterizes the *zhivoe slovo* as a word that brushes up against thousands of "living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue" (1981, 276).

The idea of a concrete word emerges from both Ivanov and Bakhtin through eucharistic implications. In the Third Renaissance, many writers linked concretization of the "word" to "flesh (*plot*)" (Mihailovic 1997, 24). Ivanov says, "the Word took on flesh [*plot*]" and dwells within everyone." For this reason, the religious practice of communion¹² also attracted great interest among many Third Renaissance writers (Mihailovic 128). The eucharistic word emphasizes an idea of interpenetration and indwelling. One way this process was described during the Third Renaissance was through the idea of "consubstantiality with a larger whole" (130). In 1910, before Bakhtin developed the *Rabelais* text, Ivan Lapshin coined the term *perevoploshchaemost'* as "the ability to transform oneself into another

being's consciousness" through empathy (Mihailovic, 252; see also Lapshin [1922] in which he develops these ideas further). This work was influential to Bakhtin (Perlina 1989). Elsewhere, Bakhtin frequently uses the words *oplotnennyi* (strong, thick), *voploshchenie* (incarnate, personified), *oplotnennost'* (strength, thickness), and *ploshchad'* (a public square) that are derived from the root *plot'* to characterize the transformations and "permutations of style" through variations of enfleshment (Mihailovic, 45) within the novel in "Discourse and Novel" and "Forms of Time and Chronotope" (for example, "Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible" [1981, 84]). *Interpenetration* (*vzaimoproniknovenie*) is a term that Bakhtin frequently uses to characterize dialogue (Mihailovic 1997), a perspective at odds with the idea of "mixing." The theme emerges prominently in the text on Rabelais, for example, in which the "grotesque body" transgresses itself, ignoring the "smooth and impenetrable surfaces," focusing attention instead on protuberances, on ways that it stretches beyond its confines (1984a, 317). Parts of grotesque bodies can detach themselves and take on a life of their own and "lead an independent life" (317). Here Bakhtin's statements evoke Nikolai Gogol's story about a government official whose nose is cut off by a barber. The nose becomes animate, speaks, dresses in an official's uniform, and parades about town, leaving the official with a "smooth place" (*gladkoe mesto*) on his face. Other commentators have noted that Bakhtin's theme outlines a rhetorical difference "between official and unofficial culture . . . that has always existed in the Russian cultural tradition" (Ivanov 1995, 29).

The interpenetration thematics of enfleshment arise from the Johannine concept of Jesus as the "Word made flesh [who] dwelt among us" (Mihailovic 1997, 25, 38). Dialogue therefore may be the interpenetration and indwelling of the cultural horizon of another. In "Discourse and Novel," Bakhtin argues that the becoming of a human being is the gradual acquisition of other people's words or what he calls "internally persuasive discourse" (*vnutrenne-ubiditel'noe slovo*) to which one struggles to assign one's own uniqueness (1981, 341–46). Bakhtin characterizes this external or "alien" word (*chuzhoe slovo*) as "a living mix of varied and opposing voices," a rejoinder containing within itself the image (*obraz*) of another's "speech-world" [*chuzhoe iazyk-mirovozzrenie*] (1981, 46). Bakhtin also uses the term *vseedinstvo*, a religious term meaning "all-oneness," in his writings to refer to the individual in relationship to others. For Bakhtin, the sense of all-oneness is comparable to a holographic "vision of humanity as a single organism constituted by porous cells" (Mihailovic 128).

Bakhtin, as the Rabelais text demonstrates, is interested in the idea of autonomous enfleshment and interpenetration (*vzaimoproniknovenie*) to characterize how the words of others indwell within autonomous voices. But again, the experience is very much sensory and concrete. In "Discourse and Novel," Bakhtin writes, "characteristic for the novel as a genre is not the image of a man in his own right but precisely the image of a language. But in order for that language to become an artistic image, it must become speech from speaking lips, conjoined with the image [*obraz*] of a speaking person" (1981, 336). The sensory implications of the passage have a similarity to Ivanov's use of "echo [*otzvuk*]" in everyone." Both also share similarities to Florensky who wrote that the "sound [*zvuk*]" links the "outer and inner" word (Mihailovic 1997, 35). For Bakhtin, however, sound subsides to sight as a dominating metaphor, as with his ideas on the "surplus of vision [*izbytok videnie*]" (1990, 12). Bakhtin's hermeneutics of vision finds a parallel in Orthodox Christianity, which also has a highly developed theology of "vision" (Babkina 1992, 316). Caryl Emerson elaborates on the importance of this linkage for Bakhtin. Emerson argues that because the Russian word for "image (*obraz*)" also means "icon," it connotes a communal idea:

In the West, we attend primarily to the Word, but in Russian Orthodoxy the Book gives rise first and foremost to images. . . . the iconic image is not a portrait in the Western sense of the word. . . . In contrast to the rules governing linear perspective, the sacred image is not constructed to satisfy a single external viewer from a single fixed place. The syntax of the icon is based rather on a dynamic multiplicity of viewpoints, with several implied observers set inside the represented world. The many points of view coexisting within self-contained icon space constitute a paradigm for plurality of vision. (1990, 115)

The eucharistic and communal implications of Bakhtin's vocabulary resonate other Third Renaissance ideas that tried to develop a kind of Russian sacramentality rooted in *slovo*. In the religious sense, a "sacrament" is an act of "grace" by which God makes manifest God's presence in some material way. There is also a sense in which a sacrament collapses time and space limitations to do so. Third Renaissance thinkers were very interested in the relation of time to *slovo*. In one of the most celebrated passages of the period, the Acmeist Osip Mandel'shtam writes, "In the life of the word a heroic era has begun. The word is flesh and bread. . . . Whoever will raise the word and show it to time, as the priest raises the Eucharist, shall be a second Joshua of Nun" (171).¹³ For Bakhtin and Ivanov, the eucharistic

and embodied word not only facilitates communication but makes possible a unique kind of unified experience. The eucharistic word is a sacramental concept that concretizes the word in the person of Jesus, the divine logos. As theologian Michael Himes observes, “a true religious symbol does not stand for something else; it reveals that something else by being itself” (1992, 124). Just as religious sacraments are material acts proceeding from the creator, dialogue for Bakhtin is a sacramentalization of individual experiences. The *zhivoe slovo*, like a sacrament, creates a relationship, a unique awareness of the other and a communal interaction similar to that of sobornost’ in which each participant remains unmerged yet not separate. In dialogue, the person acts not as an individual but as a relationship. The process of dialogue, like the experience of a sacrament, changes individual consciousness and generates an ethics of integrating ourselves with others.

The sacramentality of dialogue complicates models of rhetoric in which a speaker will change others. Among other problems, rhetoric as Bakhtin understood it may not be dialogic because its monologic aspects freeze the I-other relations crucial for ethical dialogue. Instead, Bakhtin emphasizes the importance of grace and love as alternatives to rhetorical persuasion. In an untranslated collection of notes in which Bakhtin equates rhetoric with “lying” (1996b), Bakhtin says that “word-violence [*slovo-nasilie*]” or a “lie [*lozh*]” puts forth “an absent and silent object, that neither listens nor answers, and it [word-violence] does not turn toward it [the object] and does not require its agreement.”¹⁴ For Bakhtin, “only love can see and express the inner freedom of the object. . . . Love caresses and comforts the boundaries; the boundaries acquire a new meaning. Love does not speak about the object in its absence, but speaks about it with it itself” (1996b, 66).¹⁵ A dialogic rhetoric rooted in this idea of love would “caress” the boundaries of another and allow for the fullest and truest manifestation of that other in order to introduce a certain type of relationship. Bakhtin does not deny a dominant position in dialogue but rather develops a thematics for bringing forth a certain logical and ethical relation that appears rooted in certain Third Renaissance cultural ideas of Christian ethics. Like other Third Renaissance writers, Bakhtin renders his own vocabulary to metaphorically describe dialogue derived from the larger rhetorical culture of the Third Renaissance.

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Notes

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1. For examples of this type of text analysis method, see Omry Ronen (1983) and Paula Powell (1992).

2. Bakhtin once wrote "rhetoric, in its propensity to lie, strives to evoke precisely fear or hope. This pertains to the essence of the rhetorical word (the rhetoric of antiquity also emphasized these affects)" (1996b, 63). [Ritorika, v meru svoei lzivosti stremitsia vyzvat' imenno strakh ili nadezhdu. Eto prinadlezhit k sushchestvu ritoricheskogo slova (eti affekty podcherkivala i antichnaia ritorika).] Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

3. See Turbin (1992).

4. Bakhtin elsewhere said he owed a great debt to the religious ideas of Martin Buber for developing dialogue (Frank 1990, 19–20; see also Perlina 1989, 5).

5. "[K]hotia on i ne iavliaetsia splosh' monologizovannym, pedagogicheskim dialogom, vse zhe mnozhestvennost' golosov pogashaetsia v idee. Ideia myslitsia Platonom ne kak sobytie, a kak bytie. . . . Sushchestvennei sopostavlenie ego s bibleiskim i evangel'skim dialogom. Vliianie dialoga Iova i nekotorykh evangel'skikh dialogov na Dostoevskogo neosporimo, mezhdru tem kak platonovskie dialogi lezhali prosto vne sfery ego interesa. Dialog Iova po svoei strukture vnutrenne beskonechen, ibo protivostoianie dushi bogu—boriushcheesia ili smirennoe—myslitsia v nem kak neotmennoe i vechnoe" (trans. Paula Powell Sapienza).

6. "Zona kontakta s nezavershennoi deistvitel'nostiu. Analiz sokraticeskogo dialoga i obraz Sokrata."

7. This appears in English in the appendix to Caryl Emerson's translation of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Bakhtin uses the term *oboitis* or "to go around," which Emerson translates as "get along."

8. "Liubov' k ploshchadnomu narodnomu vesel'iu Pushkina, Griboedova i dr. . . . Sotsial'nyi kharakter smekha, sobornyi smekh (parallel' k molitve vsei tserkvi)."

9. The use of "ransomed" in this context may refer to the Orthodox religious teaching that Jesus ransomed his life to save people from sinfulness.

10. (Note: This article is written in the old orthography, but it is transliterated as if written in the new.) "Ideal sobornosti est', naprotiv, ideal takogo soedineniia, gde soediniiaushchiesia lichnosti dostigaiut sovershenного raskrytiia i opredeleniia svoei edinstvennoi, nepovtorimoi i samobytnoi sushchnosti, svoei tselokupnoi tvorcheskoi svobody, kotoraiia delaet kazhduiu izglagolannym, novym i dlia vsekh nuzhym slovom. V kazhdoi Slovo prinialo plot' i obitaet so vsemi, i vo vsekh zvuchit razno, no slovo kazhdoi nakhodit otzvuk vo vsekh, i vse—odno svobodnoe soglasie, ibo vse—odno Slovo.

Sobornost'—zadanie, a ne dannost'; ona nikogda eshche ne osushchestvialas' na zemle vsetskoi i prochno, i ee tak zhe nel'zia naiti zdes' ili tam, kak Boga. No, kak Dukh, ona dyshit, gde khochet, i vse v dobrykh chelovecheskikh soedineniiaakh ezhechasno zhivotvorit'" (trans. Paula Powell Sapienza).

11. "Vera v adekvatnoe otrazhenie sebia v vysshem drugom, Bog odnovremmenno i vo mne i vne menia, moia vnutrenniaia beskonechnost' i nezavershennost' polnost'iu otrazhena v moem obraze, i ego vnenakhodimost' takzhe polnost'iu realizovana v nem."

12. The Oxford Russian Dictionary defines the word *sobor* to mean "council, synod, assembly" and "cathedral," as in "*Issaicheskii sobor*" or "St. Issac's Cathedral." *Sobornost'* is also defined in the dictionary as "communion" in the ecclesiastical sense.

13. "V zhizni slova nastupila geroicheskaia era. Slovo—plot' i khleb. . . . Kto podnimet slovo i pokazhet ego vremeni, kak sviashchennik evkharistiiu,—budet vtorym Iisusom Navinom" (trans. Paula Powell Sapienza).

14. "Slovo—nasilie predpolagaet otsutstvuiushchii i bezmolvtvuiushchii predmet, ne slyshashchii i ne otvechaiushchii, ono ne obraschaetsia k nemu i ne trebuetsia ego soglasia. . . ."

15. "Tol'ko liubov' mozhet uvidet' i izobrazit' vnutrenniuiu svobodu predmeta. . . . Liubov' miluet i laskaet granitsy; granitsy priobretaiut novoe znachenie. Liubov' ne govorit o predmete v ego otsutstvie, a govorit o nem s nim samim."

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