Dialogical aspects of the technologies of the self in organizational analysis

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ABSTRACT

Organizational evolution is presented in lieu of the concept of change, revolution, revitalization, etc. in that one can assert that organizations can only evolve, they cannot develop a new structure and paradigm from nonexistent precursors, elements, structures, etc. One year is action science based with the executives diving off of logs into the arms of their vice presidents, the next is playing games and doing puzzles to determine the company's cognitive centre, more recently its not been about expressing feelings and defenses, or understanding perception, but about being appreciated. In short, all of these evangelically based approaches which view an organization through a single lens fail

INTRODUCTION

In a survey of the Organizational Behaviour and Industrial Organizational literatures, Nord and Fox (W. R. Nord & S. Fox, 1996) conclude that a viable notion of the "individual" has been killed off in a field that has become context dominated. Their detailed account is convincing in its conclusion but leaves the door open for alternatives in what they see is the diminishing concern with agency in organization studies. That is the starting point of this paper – an exploration of the notion of self in organization through a critical reading of the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981; M. M. Bakhtin, Holquist, & Emerson, 1986; M M Bakhtin & Medvedev, 1991).

Recent years have seen a rising increase in interest in the philosophy and thought of Mikhail Bakhtin, particularly in his notion of the dialogical self (Cunliffe, 2001, 2002; Cunliffe, Luhman, & Boje, 2004; H. J. Hermans, 1987; Hubert J M Hermans, 1996; Hubert J.M. Hermans, 2001). Hermans (2003: 123-124), for example, sees in Bakhtin's work the possibility of the self that goes beyond Cartesian individualism "by taking the fundamental notions of `voice' and `dialogue' into account". This leads Hermans (2003: 124) to conclude that the self can be conceived as lying "on the borderline between oneself. The self is half somebody else's".

Drawing on Bakhtin's work, this paper attempts to spark interest in a non-essentialist theory of the self that returns action to the actor and makes him and her morally responsible for their actions. As anyone with even cursory knowledge of Bakhtin will understand his work did not suggest that the self had pure free will and determination. One could say Bakhtin chose to tread the bumpy middle road between the hermeneutics and social constructivists of his era and the followers of Kant. However, describing Bakhtin's work simply as the middle ground fails to tell the full, or even an accurate story of his work. As has been oft noted in the literature there appears to be something in Bakhtin that does not lend itself directly to the works of his contemporary peers (Morson & Emerson, 1990). Even more often commented upon is that Bakhtin's works are dependant upon one another for wholeness while at the same time unable to lend themselves to any schools of thought that could be defined as Bakhtinian theory (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990). As a result, we are forced to pick over the remains of these works for the pieces that do fit together to

provide a reincarnation of his ideas in a usable form.

The second part of this paper discusses a possible integration of the discussed aspects of Bakhtin and the later works of Michel Foucault. The ideas presented in Foucault's `Technologies of the Self' (Foucault, 1988a; Hutton, 1988) will be explored from a Bakhtinian perspective, and an attempt is made to draw out the parallels between the two: the dialogic approach of Bakhtin, and the knowing of thyself via dialogue of Foucault. Herman's' Self Confrontation method (Hubert J. M. Hermans, 2003) is proposed as a practical technology of the self in regard to critical theory . If it can be shown that this approach is of value, it would return responsibility, agency, and morality back into the domain of the (organizational) actor. Agency, as Nord and Fox (1996) demonstrate, has been wanting in organizational analysis some time in, and has proven highly problematic to reconcile with context the critical perspective due to the rise of postmodernism.

THE SELF IN BATKIN

The search for the character of the self is one of the fundamental questions throughout the history of the human race. This paper does not presume to propose the answer to this question, nor would be suggesting "the" answer be necessary or appropriate. Rather, using the works of Bakhtin, Foucault, and their intellectual descendants, we will attempt to propose the first steps in providing a way of looking at the self which allows for us to understand the cultural and socio-political contextual nature of the self as well as the act of acting through engaging in dialogue with other subjects that inhabit the world in which we reside.

The focus in this section will be to uncover some of the less well discussed concepts of Bakhtinian thought. Polyphony, and Carnival key concepts in Bakhtin's work have been discussed extensively in the literature (for examples see, Boje, 2001; Bonetskaia, 2004; Hirschkop & Shepherd, 1989; Morson & Emerson, 1990) and further illumination at this stage is perhaps unnecessary. Fundamental to any Bakhtinian inspired theory of the self is the proposition that the actor is able to engage in strong moral actions and is ethically responsible for those actions (M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). It is in this proposition that the subject of Bakhtin assumes responsibility for their actions and subjugation. It is in this premise that the work of Bakhtin has its most abrupt break from the current postmodern theories (Steele, 1997).

Alternatively, there is recognition of the constraints on free will. When an actor acts or engages in dialogue, the understanding and meaning of the dialog is dependant upon the shared culture of both the actor and the observer. Culture to Bakhtin, "… consists of discourses retained by collective memory... discourses in relation to which every uttering subject must situate himself or herself." (Todorov, 1984) This is shown clearly as Bakhtin explores the misinterpretation of the Rabelais by modern and enlightenment literary critics (M. M. Bakhtin, 1968).

Bakhtin's thought as it pertains to the self has best been described as "radically perspectival" (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990). The actor perceives himself or herself differently than they perceive others. To the actor the other is a wholly visible subject to which the actor responds as though they are responding to a whole and complete being. The actor's perception of himself or herself is quite different. They are unable to see their whole selves, and as a result engage in a dialogue with the other in order to form themselves (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990). The self does not exist independently. Only through dialogue does the self form.

The perspectival aspect of Bakhtin's work is paramount in understanding how the self reacts to others. When we are reacting or thinking about another person, we do not react to the fullness of their being but rather the fragmented aspects of that person that we are forced to interact with on a practical basis (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990: 5). Other people are able to

see us in the context of our environments directly; we are unable to experience ourselves in the context the same way. While cognition allows us a proxy or simulacra of the experience we cannot see ourselves as others do (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990: 15). However, we shall always see in the other human being parts which they cannot see. The self experiences the body from within itself. The body only collects fragmented sense information (vision, auditory, touch) and it is not until the inner-self makes sense of this information, through translating them into its own unique inner language. Bakhtin describes this as being "situated on the boundary, as it were, of the world I see." (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990: 28). It is at this boundary of the self and the outside world at which perception exists.

The concept of morality and ethics plays a large, but as yet relatively unexplored, part in Bakhtin's works. Morality and ethics are not reified and universal. Rather the self makes "ethical leaps" as dialogue proceeds as the self internalizes the utterances of the other. This internalization occurs as the self holds an internal dialogue, by which the others utterances are examined, weighed and if deemed worthy, accepted (or changed) by the self. The self is formed by taking the utterances of the other and putting them in the self's own words (M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). Cognition allows the self to recreate the world from any perspective. Through cognition people are convertable; one could imagine what it would be like to be the other. However, cognition is simply a representation of reality and cannot be directly perceived and experienced. (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990: 13). Ethical action cannot be abstracted through cognition as a disembodied universal ideal, it is inseparable from the unique perspective of the body in question. (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990: 24). The self is constantly referring to the outside world in hopes of seeing a reflection of the self in the gaze and actions of others, and also weighing ourselves by judgement of others, or as Bakhtin refers to it, as the "others unique and distinctive value-coefficient of the other (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990: 16). Under normal circumstances, the value coefficients of others do not become consolidated in the determination of the self, but in some cases, these reflections may become incorporated by the self in totality and become 'dead points as obstructions of any accomplishments'. A person has limited and partial information on the process of the authoring of the self "they experience their object and experience themselves in their, object, but they do not experience the process of their own experience." (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990: 7) As a result, when we ask them to relate back the experience the information may be quite unreliable.

While the post-modern subject is a helpless victim, the self of Bakhtin has the ability to make ethical choices and act strongly on the basis of these choices. Although, in the thought of Bakhtin the individual does not have "free will" the self tends to make strong value-judgments which result in the outward expression of behaviour. Consider Bakhtin's discussion of Rabelais. In this work he emphasises the connection between the physical freedom of expression (eating, drunkenness, sex, urination, defecation) and the process of acting out the internal dialogue to create a harmonious human being (M. M. Bakhtin, 1968). As Bakhtin points out, it is not gluttony and debauchery which is idolized here, but rather the importance that these physical acts have (such as the crediting of the Maw with the invention of agriculture, transportation, military etc.). Authority in modern culture is used to govern behaviour. Consider the myriad laws around drunkenness, defecation, sex etc. that abound in civilized society. To a certain extent each of these actions is controlled by the state (society, culture, etc.). Mainly in that they are starkly divided from the public life. The insane are kept in asylums for expressly that purpose. They often do not control or differentiate between what is allowable in public, and what is allowable in private. As a result, society has incarcerated them to ensure that these inappropriate behaviours are kept private.

There is a clear distinction in Bakhtin's work between our own self-knowledge and our knowledge and the other. The other can be known in its place in the world, while the self knowledge requires the addition of a filter, the mind must force, artificially create through, the own self in the world. As a result, we cannot see the self as accurately as we can see the other. This unnatural bending of the self, moving to an almost surreal plane is, as described by Bakhtin, unfulfilling (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990). Simply through the act of cognition we cannot "see" ourselves as others see us. When we attempt to see ourselves in the context of the world, we are creating a shallow model of reality populated by doppelgangers and simulacra, bereft of their humanity. Thus, one cannot create for oneself a satisfying virtual reality, as those we imagine to be interacting with are not acting on their own volition but rather acting through ours (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990).

There is a fundamental rejection of the rationalist paradigm by which all knowledge can be made known through the power of human cognition as it pertains to the human subject (M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). However, a key gap between Bakhtin and the postmodernism is that rational science can know some truths about the material world. To the post modernist there can be no truth in the material world (everything that we know we know through the artificial lens of rationalism and empirical science). To Bakhtin, there is a clear distinction between the Natural sciences (those sciences in which reality can be measured directly) and the human sciences which can not be scaled onto the notches of a slide rule. Rather than rejecting the rational functionalist paradigm as a whole, Bakhtin would rather point out the slipperiness of the human subject and our inability to know about ourselves and others (M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981).

One aspect of postmodernism that has earned it much dismay from both the radical and rational perspectives is its inability to allow for action. The sheer inertia and ineptitude of action in postmodernism has been soundly criticized from both the Marxist tradition (Bulavka & Buzgalin, 2004) and the functionalist perspective (Gross & Levitt, 1998). Even Foucault admitted there was great difficulty in having faith in a philosophy in which social action, or even the planning of action, was inconceivable in the modern world as any action, no matter how radical, would be co-opted by the ruling regime of modernity (Foucault & Kritzman, 1988). In contrast, ethical action from Bakhtin's perspective leads from the context and from the world as it is understood by the subjects.

Whereas in postmodernism the world and self knowledge is delivered in an authoritarian form and is imposed externally on the Subject and Bakhtin's subjects are participants in their co-creation of the world. Culture is the shared understanding and meaning created from the ongoing dialog of the masses of individuals (Hirschkop & Shepherd, 1989). They do not subsume themselves. There is no death in the formation of the creation of this collective identity but rather there is a rebirth of life and new possibilities in action and thought. As Bakhtin suggests, creation occurs on the boundaries (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990) where the friction of culture (self and national, ethnic etc) can result in new dialogues. This is one area where Bakhtin and postmodernism are allies in a way. By telling the stories, speaking for the other autobiographically, the post-modern author forces the dominant modern culture to engage in dialogue with the other subjected culture. This new story, the seeing of ourselves from the biographical view of the other, creates a dialogical process by which the self both accepts the authoritarian voice and forms it into itself or a rejection of the authoritarian voice. In either event a new dialogue has been unfolded.

SOME TROUBLING ASPECTS IN BATKIN'S EPISTEMOLOGY

The Bakhtinian theoretical framework sits somewhere in the murky middle ground between the oppositional viewpoints of realism and social constructivism. Considering

Bakhtin's thoughts on opposition, it is perhaps unsurprising that we see opposites in the work more characteristic of the Heraclitean approach rather than that of Aristotle. As a result, where exactly Bakhtin's works fit is a matter of some debate. In addition, there is some evidence of debate of which parts of Bakhtin's theories should be removed or ignored in order to advance the arguments of various perspectives (eg. Brandist, 1999).

It seems to the authors that the traditional essentialist theories are, to use a Bakhtin terminology out of context, an attempt to poeticize or to create an epic conception of the self. In the epic version of the self, everything that can be known about the hero is known and the hero is removed completely from any real context. Rather than the hero (self) being a dynamic self, we rather attempt to put the hero into a box and say here is yourself, we have isolated, dissected, and discovered all you are. This is radically opposed to the dialogical self, which is a fundamentally unfinished self, about which not all can be known. The dialogical self, being a dynamic self, fits poorly into the positivist framework due to the fundamental unpredictability of a self that is constantly in motion, changing from event to event, dialogue to dialogue, and time to time. The positivist functionalist paradigm is focused on experimental repeatability (be it laboratory or observation) which is impossible when the self you attempt to measure at step one is a different and unique self from that measured in step two. The self, unlike material forms, cannot be taken stock of in totality, and even if it could, it would represent but a snapshot of the ever changing "I". Any discussion of the nature of the self tends to take what seems to be a rhetorical turn for the most part. This is due to the nature of the dialogical subject. There is no experimental model in the tradition of empiricism which can capture (a word choice chosen by design) the dialogical self.

The current thrust of Bakhtin studies in the west has resulted in an acceptance among postmodern scholars of an interpretation that is more in line with the relativistic theories of social constructivism. This interpretation has been popularized by the influential works of Morson and Emerson (1990) and Michael Holquist in his introductions to several Bakhtin translations (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990; M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). This interpretation has been seized upon due to obfuscation of the influence of modernist philosophy that permeate the writings of Bakhtin (Dop, 2000) thereby making Bakhtin's work more digestible to the current incarnation of critical theory. This viewpoint however, ignores Bakhtin's own warnings of the reverse, of ignoring the subjective truth in favour of the objective truth, of which he thought modernist philosophy was guilty of (Dop, 2000).

To Bakhtin, there was a clear distinction between the proper methodology of the natural and social sciences. While acknowledging that there is a weak discourse in the natural sciences (words of predecessors, judgement of critics), fundamentally research in the natural sciences is not dialogic:

> "The entire methodological apparatus of mathematical and natural sciences is directed to a mastery over *mute objects, brute things*, that do not reveal themselves in words, that do not *comment on themselves*. Acquiring knowledge here is not connected with receiving and interpreting words or signs from the object itself under consideration." (M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981: 351)..

This is contrasted harshly with the humanities where the "…speaking person and his discourse is the fundamental object under investigation." (Ibid.). In this type of investigation there are two approaches that are possible. Words can be perceived solely as an object (with the associated inadequacy of such a treatment) or can be explored dialogically, in which the living utterance can be understood. Bhaktin considers this second approach to be obligatory in the study of language and literature

(M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981: 352). This obligation lends itself as well to the other humanities as ideological meanings of actions and words must be taken into consideration. This is something that cannot be accomplished in the positivist framework (Ibid.).

According to Dop (2001) dialogical truth in Bakhtin is of a twofold nature. First there is the "nature of truth itself" and the nature of "thinking about truth". The first involves the universals of the object, those qualities which are immutable while it remains the given object. The second involves the perception of the particulars of the object by the subject and defines the object's difference. Bakhtin's original critique was that both the social sciences and natural sciences were guilty of disregarding the particular in the pursuit of the understanding of the universal. The pendulum swings both ways and constructivist theories and discussions of Bakhtin are cutting out the universal in focusing solely on the importance of the particular (Dop, 2000).

Any understanding or comprehension of the world is dialogically negotiated. Our examinations of the real are conducted through a constructed lens. We are unable to directly perceive the world and understand it without verbalising it. Any attempt to study the social sciences takes place at a removed state of the world. For example an examination of corporate strategy is a fourth level map. The first level is the physical structure of the world, the second is the language which describes the world, the third is the social relationships and living utterances of the participants in the constructed corporation, and finally at the fourth level the framework of corporate strategy is superimposed in an effort to simplify and explain (Grandy & Mills, 2004). This analysis is similar for all other paradigms as well. Every analysis is laden with ideology, methodology and epistemology, all of which are "tools" used in the seeking of a truth, be it the functionalist's universal or the postmodernists particular. Even the basic assumption of critical theory of reducing human suffering (Jay, 1973) has an impact on the approach used. What we are left with are "maps of maps" and "ways of knowing about ways of knowing about the world" (Scollon, 2003).

This realization is of consequence to both the empirical and constructivist programmes. To the empiricist, they must constantly be reminded that the map is not reality and the constructivist is to be reminded that reality is not just the map. This pragmatic approach suggests that there are various paradigms in which some version of the truth can be uncovered – such as the synergy between neurophysiology and social constructivism (Hubert J.M. Hermans, 2001) whereby knowledge of the physical working of the brain has led to support of the polyphonic theory of the self. The suggestion contained herein is that the different approaches to knowledge are dependant upon the type of object being researched. This recognizes both the importance of material needs while allowing for the dialogic construction of the social realm in which the actor negotiates their way through life.

FOUCAULT'S TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF

The later writings of Michel Foucault in which he conducted his examination of the technologies of the self are sadly left in an unfinished state due to his demise while these works were still in progress. As such, the interpretation of these works is made difficult as we do not have access to the completeness of his thinking as we do with the other technologies he had identified, those of production, signs, and power (Foucault, 1988b). As a result, we are left with the perhaps unsavoury task of taking the writings available to us and attempting to explore them through the lenses of other theoretical approaches.

Fundamental to Foucault's theory is a rejection of the possibility of universal solutions, knowledge or ethical codes, as he stated "It is one of my targets to show people that a lot of

things that are a part of their landscape – that people think are universal- are the result of very precise historical changes. All my analyses are against the idea of universal necessities in human experience." (Martin, 1988: 11) Unsurprisingly, as in such a situation there can be no appeal to a higher authority, Foucault's technologies of the self are very personal in nature and focus on the ethics of the individual and small communities, and a result, resistance and agency is located primarily at the level of the individual.

The purpose of the technologies of the self were to examine the history of how an individual acts upon themselves to effect some change on themselves and the interaction between oneself and others (Brewis, 2004; Foucault, 1988b). He does this through the analysis of the techniques used by ancient philosophies of self-improvement in Greece, Roman stoicism, and early Catholicism in the late Roman Empire. Of particular importance is the concept that none of the ethical practices discussed were thought, at the time, to be universally applicable to all and were utilized by only a small portion of the population (Foucault & Kritzman, 1988). Rather, the choice of ethical practice was voluntary and "Morality was a matter of individual choice." (Foucault & Kritzman, 1988, p.245). The technologies of the self provide an interesting counterpart to Foucault's works on the other technologies by suggesting that individuals can overcome the burden of the dominant framework of disciplinary power and achieve their own goals and desires through a function of "self-discipline and self-knowledge" of their own design (McKinlay & Starkey, 1997). Foucault himself spoke of it perhaps being a mistake that he focused so much of his attention on the technologies of power (Foucault & Kritzman, 1988).

Foucault argues that in the modern era, philosophy has focused almost exclusively on the maxim "know thyself" while forgetting that at the time the maxim was coined it was also fundamentally associated with (and subordinated to) taking care of ones-self (Foucault, 1988b). Foucault's technologies of the self can be roughly broken down into three general streams: ethical self care, aesthetic self stylization, and critical self awareness.

Ethical self care involves the use of techniques of "moral practice based on societal laws" (Markula, 2003). These practices are directed toward the concept of taking care of one's self as opposed to morality imposed or reinforced by political and social systems. This is a practical system of ethical concern wherein one's ethics are always in reference to the particular culture of the group who come together with shared modes of thinking (McKinlay & Starkey, 1997). A spectacular example of this is that of the practitioners of exomologésis who recognized themselves as sinners and undertook an onerous burden of self-discipline and stigma in an effort to achieve self-revelation (Foucault, 1988b). Other practices discussed by Foucault involve letter writing, dialogue, active self examination (thus described by the first metaphor of the moneychanger), and the physical pursuits of the gymnasia. It must be noted that it is not the practice itself that is good or bad but rather the direction to which it is put which determines the ethical value (Markula, 2003). Foucault gives us no specific direction on what types of activities would be best pursued by the inhabitants of modernity and has been pointed out, any technology can be dominating or liberating depend upon its use and purpose (Burkitt, 2002).

The concept of ethical concern seems to bear some striking similarities of Bakhtin's concept of the active unfinished self. Foucault suggests that the taking care of ones self is a constant evaluation of one self in relation to the society in which one belongs. Bakhtin's dialogic self lends itself to this quite well. Bakhtin suggests that individuals are constantly referring to the gaze of the other and the shared understanding one has with others in determining the self. In both cases the self is an active agent along with the other (be it individuals or culture) in the co creation of the

self. Foucault uses the example of letter writing as a technology of the self and a particular style of letter writing at that. The letter from Marcus Aurelius to Fronto dwells on the urbane affairs of active lived experience of an autobiographical nature. Marcus Aurelius has taken stock of the important events of the day; important because they are his own actions and tell the story of who he was. There is a polyphonic component that can be teased from this letter as well. There is Marcus Aurelius expressing his recognition of his difference from the others around him, perhaps his recognition his own asceticism without judging them "Then we went to luncheon. What do you think I ate? A wee bit of bread, though I saw others devouring beans, onions, and herrings full of roe." (Foucault, 1988b: 18). Of particular interest in this letter is the sharp contrast between the infantile speech mode used in the interaction with his mother as compared to the austere description of his dinner with his father. This letter is suggestive of the energetic type of ancient biography in which "…full existence, the essence of a man is realized not by his condition, but by his activity, his active force ("energy")." (M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981: 140).

The example of the stoic tradition is a very clear example of self reflection through dialogic activity. The stoics practiced the art of listening to and reflecting upon the teachings of the master. This was not a practice of route memorization of words, but rather a participative, active analysis of the words of the masters in which these words were weighed and verified in their quality before becoming consummated within the psyche of the student. The student, by examining and thinking upon the words of the master, and more importantly by later acting upon them if found worthy, allowed these words to come to nest within their own psyche. "The ideological becoming of a human being, in this view, is the process of selectively assimilating the words of others" (M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981: 341). Thus the self and the ethic of the self consisted of the words of others, rewritten by the self in its own tongue in relation to the gaze of the other in the act of co creation of the self.

This is an example of the open but moderated boundary that forms the essence of the dialogical self. "All this creates fertile soil for experimentally objectifying another's discourse. A conversation with an internally pervasive word that one has begun to resist may continue but it takes on another character: it is questioned, it is put in a new situation in order to expose its weak sides, to get a feel for its boundaries, to experience it physically as an object." (M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981: 348). The stoic student transmits the master's words into "ones own words" and as such forms consciousness as the alien words are committed to the self. The internally persuasive dialogue, when it is incorporated by the self, "organizes masses of out words within" (M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981: 346) and is actively applied to new situations and experiments, resulting in a contest between the new incorporated discourse and existing voices within the self. This type of dialogue, which we believe is of the type Foucault wishes us to consider is different in character and value than those reified monologues which are authoritarian in their persuasiveness. The authoritarian discourse does not encourage resistance, growth, or improvement. It demands acceptance and allegiance (M. M. Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia lends itself well to our attempted synthesis. Heteroglossia refers to the inherent multiple meanings in utterances or text due to context (Bakhtin et al., 1981: 346). These different meanings are in conflict with one another even within the self. Bakhtin identifies the concept of the "hybrid utterance" in which a single speaker can shift between different voices which can critique the dominant view of the self (ibid.). Different voices within the self allow the author of the self examine the monolithic discourse and question their acceptance of it.

In her review of the commonalities and potentials for synthesis between the archaeological and genealogical Foucauldian eras and Bakhtinian theory, Carroll & Mills

(2005) propose that Bakhtin's theories on language provide for the possibility that Foucauldian subjects have the potential for agency. They contend that "The ability for the individual to resist and react is infused through language, and the actors' opportunity to do something different in each speech genre and act." (ibid, 22). While Foucault's subject is rendered mute by the self-incorporation of the authoritarian speech, Bakhtin's "self" has the capacity to mock, subvert, render ironic and change the meaning via an internal dialogue of the self's different voices.

The purpose of the above section is not to suggest that the full body of Foucault's technologies of the self can be interpreted through the theoretical writings of Bakhtin. Rather the purpose is to suggest that the dialogical self of Bakhtin can be used in the creation of "tools" or techniques which have the potential to be used as a technology of the self. The development of such tools which have the strength, when applied to the proper aim, to enable change in the self unmediated, or at least not completely compromised, by the power framework which surrounds us is a purpose which could be embraced by critical scholars. Accepting Foucault's analysis that macro change is impossible, as any change will be adopted to serve those in positions of power, we should refocus our efforts on enabling change at the individual or micro group level (Burkitt, 2002).

SELF CONFRONTATION METHOD AS A TECHNOLOGY OF THE SELF

The implications of Foucault's work the technology of the self, is that the long subjected subject of postmodernism now has the potential to enable change within themselves and as a result enable change in the organizations and frameworks in which they exist (McKinlay & Starkey, 1997). In order to do so, the universal aspects of some of Bakhtin's theory discussed earlier should be rejected in favour of the framework proposed by Foucault. If the dialogical theories based on the works of Bakhtin are to

have a lasting importance on critical theory, such appeals to universal ethics must be deemphasized (Brandist, 1999).

To date the majority of the work that is involved of putting the works of Bakhtin into practical application appears to be taking place in the school of critical psychology. Several dialogical models and methods of interpretation have been proposed, such as the Open Dialogue Approach (Seikkula & Olson, 2003) and a Jungian/Bakhtin synthesis (Jones, 2003). Of the clinical techniques which draw upon the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, the most complete is the Self Confrontation Method which is based upon valuation theory (Hubert J. M. Hermans, 1991, 1993; Hubert J.M. Hermans, 1999; Hubert J. M. Hermans, 2003; Hubert J. M. Hermans, Fiddelaers, de Groot, & Nauta, 1990; Hubert J. M. Hermans, Rijks, & Kempen, 1993).

In valuation theory the self is thought of as an "organized process of valuation" (Hubert J. M. Hermans, 1991) in which the person is living in the present but is also orientated towards the past as well as the future. The self is organized through self-reflection and moving positions within the self (Hubert J. M. Hermans, 1991). In this way the self can contain opposite positions from which it makes judgements about itself and others (Hubert J. M. Hermans, 1993). The self is able to take the role of the other and view itself from the position of the other (Hubert J. M. Hermans, 1991). The personal narrative of the self is composed of the self-important events, thoughts and goals that the person finds to be important. The relative valuation of these "events" can shift dynamically as the self moves through time and position: some may be dropped, others gain in importance, new ones may arise, and others may tenaciously remain despite other changes (Hubert J. M. Hermans, 1991). Two basic motives are assumed at a latent level: 1) that there is a striving for self enhancement, and 2) a longing for contact and union with others (Hubert J. M. Hermans, 1991). This is consistent to the Foucauldian notion that a concern with "taking care of ones self" will lead to the ethical treatment to others (Markula, 2003) and is also consistent with the works of Bakhtin where people have a need and ethical

responsibility to the other (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990). The Self Confrontation Method involves the individual exploring their own personal valuations with the aid of a psychologist through the asking of questions to generate the valuations most important to the individual at the current time (Hubert J.M. Hermans, 1999). The subject is then asked to assign through a scale the effect of a predetermined list of affects on each valuation generated.

The process is intended to be driven by the subject, who is the expert on their own experiences (Hubert J.M. Hermans, 1999), with the psychologist on hand to facilitate the process and engage the subject through dialogue thereby furthering the exploratory process (Hubert J. M. Hermans, 1991). Working from the thought of Bakhtin, Hermans describes the narrative which is drawn out in this process is polyphonic in nature and as a result the conception of the self does not contain a single "I" position but rather many positions. These "I" positions are independent and can complement one another, contradict each other, and otherwise engage in dialogue (Hubert J. M. Hermans et al., 1993). The self confrontation method is then repeated at several future dates so that the subject can come to an understanding of the changing nature of their valuation systems in a structure that allows them to effect changes (Hubert J. M. Hermans et al., 1990).

The self confrontation method described by Hermans is a technique. The relevant goodness of the approach is independent of the intrinsic quality of the tool itself. Obviously, Hermans technique can be as easily co-opted and used as a normative tool. It is very important that this tool not be used as a model in which people are lumped into categories as when this occurs generalizations are a dangerous likelihood. While it may be being overly critical, there does appear to be some indication that Hermans is closely treading the line on this issue with his usage of the terminology of functional and dysfunctional valuations that

"characterize normal, healthy functioning." (Hubert J.M. Hermans, 1999: 1203) and the discussion of the characteristics of typical profiles (Hubert J. M. Hermans, 1993). By incorporating Foucault's tenet, that the examination of the self be in reference to the ethical values of the individual in which they are politically and ethically involved, into the self confrontation method could reduce the probability that this tool is not used as a normalizing technology.

That warning given, Herman's self confrontation method does appear, at least on the surface, to hold potential to be a productive technology of the self. It bears several similarities with both the works of Foucault and Bakhtin that we have outlined above. Primarily the tool is subject driven. First, the subject must want to know themselves. Secondly, the tool creates a structure in which the knowledge of the self can be understood in order to effect change. The reflection process allows the subject to act as the money changer of the mind through the ordering of the relative valuations and positions that make themselves what they are, recognizing the personal validity of their multiple internal positions, and rejecting or reconfiguring those aspects which are not valued.

CONCLUSION

It is our contention that the self confrontation method has the potential to provide us with a rigorous methodology for a useful technology of the self. This methodology appears to be consistent to the works of Foucault and Bakhtin. In the case of Bakhtin this is unsurprising as Hermans drew upon Bakhtin's work on the polyphonic novel in the progressing formulation of the Self Confrontation Method. By drawing upon the work of Michel Foucault's on the technologies of the self, we have identified a critical application for the self confrontation method and emphasized the importance of not using it for universalistic and empirical modelling purposes. By stressing the importance of the self confrontation method not being used to force the normalization of the subject it has the

possibility of being a useful methodology in the study of human agency while recognizing the polyphonic and self-directed ethical concern with taking care of ones self.

Traditionally, the essentialist theories of the self have tried to take what can be called a snapshot of the self, frozen in time and bereft of its context (Richardson, Rogers, & McCarrol, 1998). Much like a photograph taken by a skilled photographer, the results tend to be sharp, focused, detailed and clearly interpretable. Yet the photograph can never show the full and rich textual and contextual self as it stands in relation to the other, the culture, and the political realm in which it stands. As Bakhtin state, "…it is fortuitous, artificially received, and does not express our essential emotional and volitional stance in the ongoing event of being. It is only raw material, completely incapable of being incorporated into the unity of my life experience…" (M. M. Bakhtin, 1990, p. 34).

An alternative metaphor that may be more appropriate is that of a smear. On the surface the smear is an ugly thing. It is loosely defined, has no clear boundaries that can be delineated, does not conform to the anticipated measurements we had prepared for it in advance, and is insufferably different in exactitude to the other smears we have collected. The smearing of the self can be thought of as reflecting what empiricists would call errors. The smear is the result of the error involved in the application of any technique to take measure of something. When multiple measures are made, the instrument will by the nature of the impossibility of it capturing truth (it is after all just a map of a map) will return different, though small, measurements of the phenomena it is attempting to calculate.

The smearing of the self also occurs due to the dynamic nature of the self. The self is always an uncompleted project, and changes constantly as it moves through time and space. This motion will result in the smearing of any photographic image, no matter how quickly the shutter may click. So

we are left with the smear. As we have stated, an unsightly and poorly defined thing. But when we bring in the concept of polyphony we suddenly see that in fact there are many smears within the smear we were looking at. Each different, each pointing in a different direction and seemingly directed towards seemingly different events. Some appear to rub against each other, while others are remote, and others appear to bold and bright while others are seemingly sallow. Yet as we, the other, watch we begin to see an ordering of these smears into something whole. In an instant we realize that our presence, our alien gaze, is the driver of this organizing. Like a master artist, wielding a fine brush, we are working with the smears in the project of co creating a portrait of the self.

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