

The Polyphony of the Circle / *A polifonia do Círculo*

*Iuri Pavlovich Medvedev**

*Daria Aleksandrovna Medvedeva***

*David Shepherd****

ABSTRACT

The author focuses on newly discovered archival materials and traces the genesis of polyphony (defined as “many-voicedness”) and its development in the works of the members of the Bakhtin Circle. Polyphony is a foundational concept elaborated by members of the Circle through collaboration, especially in the dialogical relationship between Bakhtin and Medvedev. The members of the Circle shared common ground in the development of their ideas, while simultaneously adhering to differing ideological orientations and styles. The mode of intellectual discussion and personal interaction practised by Bakhtin and his friends can best be described as polyphonic. The concept of polyphony grew out of the lengthy dialogue between Bakhtin and Medvedev. The coincidence of their thinking can be seen by carefully examining their earliest publications. This article also examines hitherto unpublished documents relating to the authorship of the “disputed texts.” The authors conclude that there is no longer any basis for attributing these texts to Bakhtin. An appendix to the article contains translations of three articles published by Medvedev in 1911 and 1912.

KEYWORDS: Polyphony; Dialogue; Disputed Texts

RESUMO

O autor focaliza materiais de arquivo recentemente descobertos e traça a gênese da polifonia (definida como “múltiplas vozes”) e seu desenvolvimento nos trabalhos dos membros do Círculo de Bakhtin. Polifonia é um conceito fundamental elaborado colaborativamente pelos membros do Círculo, especialmente na relação dialógica entre Bakhtin e Medviédev. Os membros do Círculo dividem um campo comum no desenvolvimento de suas ideias, enquanto simultaneamente aderem a diferentes orientações ideológicas e estilos. O modo de discussão intelectual e interação pessoal praticados por Bakhtin e seus amigos pode ser descrito como polifônico. O conceito de polifonia se desenvolveu para além do extenso diálogo entre Bakhtin e Medviédev. A coincidência entre pensamentos pode ser vista após um exame cuidadoso de suas primeiras publicações. Este artigo examina também documentos relacionados à autoria dos “textos disputados” não publicados até o momento. Os autores concluem que não há mais nenhuma base para atribuir esses textos a Bakhtin. O apêndice contém traduções de três artigos publicados por Medviédev em 1911 e 1912.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Polifonia; Diálogo; Textos disputados

* Philologist, culture historian and Russian critic. Recently deceased (Oct 11, 2013). Cf. *Bakhtiniana*, vol. 8, n.2, at <http://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/bakhtiniana/article/view/17376/12944>.

** Russian Academy of Sciences – RAS, Moscow, Russia; medvedev@dm8920.spb.edu

*** Keele University, Staffordshire, the United Kingdom; d.g.shepherd@keele.ac.uk

One might have thought that Bakhtin studies had explored the concepts of “polyphony” and “dialogue” exhaustively. Take, for example, the detailed article on polyphony in the *Bakhtin Thesaurus (Bakhtinskii tezaurus)*, published in Moscow with the support of Université Laval, where the scholarly and philosophical definition of polyphony is compared, entirely legitimately, with musical polyphony (MAGOMEDOVA, 1997).

But there exists a polyphony that should be noted and examined before any others: the polyphony in Bakhtin’s own psychology of creativity, which points to the need, necessity even, of a “Circle” that would make it possible for Bakhtin’s capacities and creative distinctiveness to be realized. We are all familiar with what he himself said: “But I hear *voices* in everything, and the dialogic relationships between them,” Bakhtin wrote in the work that we know as *Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences* (1986 [1979], p.169; author’s italics).¹ Apart from the dialogic quality of Bakhtin’s thought within his personal purview, he was accompanied throughout his life by a variety of close-knit literary and philosophical communities that are socially relevant to his own assessment: the Omphalos circle of his youth; the Nevel circle; and, finally, the “Bakhtin Circle” in Vitebsk and Petrograd-Leningrad, by which time it had become a Circle with a capital C, because “polyphony” (notwithstanding the metaphorical character of this category for Bakhtin) was here not merely an “event,” but found its “body,” its embodiment, in landmark, epochal scholarly-philosophical works.

“There was a circle around me that is now known as the ‘Bakhtin Circle,’” Bakhtin told his interviewer Duvakin in 1973. In the course of the same conversation, speaking of another circle, that of the Russian symbolists, Bakhtin developed his idea by giving it a philosophical sense:

They were in the same camp, in the profound sense of the word. In the same camp. [...] And there has to be many-voicedness. There has to be, and there was. And this is where the strength was; the strength was in the fact that within the limits of this camp ... very different talents and very different worldviews could develop (2002, p.161, p.104).

¹ It is now known that Bakhtin’s “final work” was in fact an artificial construct: see Shepherd, 2006, p.35, fn. 9.

It is not surprising that, although *The Formal Method, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* and *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* share a common, deep-rooted conception, their authors should have had different worldviews and styles. What this tells us is that the stimulus for Bakhtin's dialogic doctrine came not only from the work of Dostoevsky, as Sergei Averintsev wrote, but also from the "multi-voicedness" of his own Circle (see Vasil'ev 1995; Medvedeva and Medvedev 2002). In our view this is the basis on which study of the Bakhtin Circle should be approached. Bakhtin himself said that the Circle first came into being in Vitebsk (2002, p.161).

It is to the Vitebsk period, and the beginning of his academic career, that Bakhtin's first known assessment of the Circle dates: "The voice can *sing* only in a *warm atmosphere*, only in the atmosphere of possible choral support, where *solitariness* of sound is in principle excluded" (1990a [1924], p.170; emphasis in original). Here, as in what he said towards the end of his life, lie the sources of the philosophical and aesthetic polyphony that must be comprehensively explored before Bakhtin's terminological repertoire or "thesaurus" can be considered to have been adequately investigated. An essential part of these sources is the religious level examined by Ivan Esaulov in his article (1997) on Polyphony and *sobornost'*, dealing with Bakhtin and the symbolist poet and theorist Viacheslav Ivanov, as well as the interesting work by the Tomsk literary scholar A. A. Kazakov on Polyphony as Living Concept (1998).²

There are now a number of articles that identify a contradiction between "polyphony" and "dialogue," but the "multi-voicedness" of the Circle's work makes their unity and non-contradictory character plain to see. Without this "event" in Bakhtin's life and work, his philosophical polyphony cannot be properly understood. In the same way the work of the Russian Symbolist poet Aleksandr Blok, autobiographical through and through - as the poet himself acknowledged when he described his works as a diary - cannot be completely understood in isolation from its creator's life and psychology. But if the (avowedly monologic) example of the work of a lyric poet is not sufficient for our purposes, then let us listen to other "voices," for example that of Nietzsche, who interested Bakhtin greatly: Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* was especially important in connection with Bakhtin's polyphony. As Pavel

² For a brief discussion of the implications of *sobornost'* (spiritual community), see Kelly and Volkov, 1998.

Medvedev wrote in the Petrograd journal *Protiv techeniia* [Against the Current], Nietzsche's "autobiography" (*Ecce Homo*) is the prolegomena to his philosophy: "Here and only here does Nietzsche take his listeners into account and, descending from the mountain heights where Zarathustra had preached, explain to them its burden and symbolic significance" (NIETZSCHE, 1911, p.4). This is confirmed by Friedrich Seifert, who writes: "[Nietzsche] identified himself with Zarathustra, who embodied consciousness that had breached the bounds of human possibility. This identification produced an astonishing fusion between Nietzsche's personal destiny and his particular philosophical conception" (1954, p.875).³

Bakhtin lectured on Nietzsche's philosophy in Vitebsk (see Brandist, Shepherd, and Tihanov 2004, 259; Medvedev and Medvedeva 2008, p.198).

The "Vitebsk Renaissance," as this period in the history of Russian culture is customarily referred to, was one in which the Circle played a major role. The town's creative atmosphere was dense with a conspicuous variety of problems and principles of creativity, both collective, as in the Champions of the New Art (UNOVIS [Utverditeli novogo iskusstva]) and the school of Kazimir Malevich, and individualistic, as in Marc Chagall. There were lectures on these themes: The right to solitariness (by Chagall, December 1918), Collective creation (UNOVIS, 6 April 1920), and The *ego* and the collective (by Malevich on 3 May 1920). The idea of "collective reason" was foundational not only for the future Formalists Viktor Shklovskii, Iurii Tynianov, and Roman Jakobson, but also plain to see in the polyphony of the Bakhtin Circle: "We worked in the very closest creative contact," Bakhtin would say later (1992 [1961], p.145), although those who assert Bakhtin's authorship of the "disputed texts" have unfortunately long since ceased to heed his opinion.

The notion of the Bakhtin Circle as a dialogue of sovereign consciousnesses acquired currency while Bakhtin was still alive. Usually, it is applied to those who were involved in elaborating what Bakhtin termed the "*shared* conception of language and discursive production" (1992 [1961], p.145; emphasis in original) marking the works of

³ Text in original: "Er wurde identisch mit der Figur von Zarathustra, der Verkörperung eines über menschliches Maß hinausreichenden Bewußtseins. [...] Persönliches Schicksal wie bestimmte philosophische Konzeptionen Nietzsches stehen mit dieser Identifikation in erschütternd nahem Zusammenhang."

Medvedev, Voloshinov, and Bakhtin who, in his words, remained true to its fundamental principles. This notion was introduced into Bakhtin studies in Russia by the Academician Sergei Averintsev, the only literary scholar of the new generation with whom Bakhtin entered (in his so-called “final work”) into a dialogue of agreement. This was not a chance event, but evidence of how close and precisely comparable were the spiritual and scholarly purviews of the two men. This is why Averintsev’s assessment of the Circle has greater significance and authority. For instance, assessments by the so-called Nevel School of philosophy, with which supporters of the Bakhtin canon seek to fill the lacuna that formed around Bakhtin after their de facto abolition of the Circle, become irrelevant, once one subscribes to the view that Bakhtin was sole author of the disputed texts. Averintsev, by contrast, took the view that either the *Collected Works* currently being published in Russia should be given “the overall title *Bakhtin and his Circle*,” or the works of Medvedev and Voloshinov should be published separately as an “appendix” to the multi-volume edition of Bakhtin (AVERINTSEV, 1988, p.259).

In response to a direct question about his contribution as an author to the works of the Circle, Bakhtin told Vadim Kozhinov (referring to the Circle’s three major books of the 1920s): “I must especially note that the presence of creative contact and collaborative work does not diminish the autonomy or originality of any of these books” (1992 [1961], p.145).

To attempt a definition, however partial and provisional (in view of the extremely fragmentary character of available archival material) of the ideational and scholarly potential of the Circle’s members, their contribution to the “event” of polyphony, the “body” of this metaphorical, yet entirely social and creative, category, to its founding dialogue, is an intriguing and important challenge for Bakhtin studies. But this challenge can be successfully met “only in the mirror of absolute sympathy,” not only for the man who wrote these words, Bakhtin, but for each member of the Circle. But “sympathy” for Bakhtin’s kindred spirits and co-authors is still in short supply nowadays, even though the whole of Medvedev’s extensive archive was confiscated and destroyed by the NKVD,⁴ and no one showed any serious concern for the preservation of Voloshinov’s archive after his death from tuberculosis in 1936. However, let us turn to the published record.

⁴ See Blum, 2003, pp.288, 290, 310.

Medvedev's Toward a theoretical grounding of neo-impressionism, a hitherto unknown article, published in 1912, reviewing a book by Paul Signac brings us closer to meeting our challenge by destroying the persistent misconception that the Circle's critical approach to the fundamentals of "material aesthetics" belonged originally to Bakhtin. The proof adduced for this misconception is Bakhtin's article The problem of content, material, and form in verbal artistic creation, written in 1924 (but first published only in 1975), which, as its commentators are at pains to stress, deals with "questions of methodology of the aesthetics of verbal creation" (NIKOLAEV, 2003, p.707 and passim). But with respect to its methodological premise, Bakhtin's article coincides with that of Medvedev's 1912 article, in which he wrote:

The significance of form is, of course, great and, without any doubt, the artist is obliged to know the laws of his material. But all this, like René Guille and [the Russian Symbolist] Valerii Briusov's doctrine of scientific poetry, constitutes, as it were, the *lowest level* of creative sorcery. Higher and above [...] there is the whirlwind of [the] individual taking flight, of [an] intoxicated reaching for the sky, with which *any great and true art is blessed* (1912a, p.15; emphasis added).⁵

In 1924 Bakhtin also writes that

Material aesthetics does not comprehend with sufficient methodic clarity its own *secondary character*, and it does not carry through to the end the preliminary *aestheticization* of its object. That is why it never has to do with the aesthetic object in its absolute purity, and is in principle incapable of understanding the distinctiveness of the aesthetic object. In accordance with its fundamental premises, material aesthetics cannot go beyond the work as organized material. (1990b [1924], pp.267–268; emphasis added; translation modified)

We should note in passing that, in a number of respects, references to works of Western European (in this specific case French) art scholarship, comparison of the problematics of pictorial and verbal art, the nature of the evaluation of the contribution made by Western art scholars to theory of creativity, and, by its very tone, Medvedev's early article anticipates *The Formal Method*. This is natural enough: dominant themes and ideas recur throughout the lives and work of their authors. Later the metaphorical

⁵ This and other works of 1912 by Medvedev are the first publications by the Bakhtin Circle listed in Adlam and Shepherd, 2000, p.3, items 1-5.

and religious formulations of his 1912 article give way in Medvedev to aesthetic formulations—as is clear, for example, from the (now published) outline of his lecture courses in Vitebsk in 1919–20 (MEDVEDEV, 2005 [1919–1920]; MEDVEDEV, MEDVEDEVA, 2006, pp.197–198), in which he deals with the “aesthetic object,” or from his article Scholarly Salieri-ism (1924), which anticipates *The Formal Method* (1985 [1928]). Here Medvedev expresses an idea echoing his 1912 article: “such is the theoretical basis of the Formal method. It is not difficult to recognise here the fundamental positions of the material aesthetics that is fairly widespread in modern European art studies” (MEDVEDEV, 1983 [1925], p.53; translation modified).

This change of code, experienced personally by Medvedev and explicitly noted in an article of January 1917 (republished in 2003) on Berdiaev’s *Meaning of Creativity* (1917b; 2003), could not fail to leave its mark on Bakhtin, sensitive as he was to the voice of his interlocutor - and Medvedev was, as Bakhtin put it, “my ve-ery close friend at that time” (2002, p.215).

In the Poetry and prose section of the outline of Medvedev’s Vitebsk lecture series, we encounter the notion of “poles of the word.” Medvedev’s theses on “material aesthetics” in his article on Signac, like the shift from religious to aesthetic concepts in his early work, are, figuratively speaking, one of the “poles” of the Bakhtinian “double-voiced word” that, as Liudmila Gogotishvili puts it, formed the linguistic basis of Bakhtin’s polyphony (2004). This hypothesis is a productive one in the light of the dialogic contact between Medvedev and Bakhtin. It becomes clearer why *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* was written in Vitebsk and not in Nevel, and why Medvedev, who had himself been through the shift from religious to aesthetic categories, actively expressed support for Bakhtin’s work in the journal *Iskusstvo [Art]* which he, Medvedev, had founded. This expression of support came in a notice that constitutes the only evidence we have of where and when *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* was written (MEDVEDEV, 1921a). Finally, there is the nature of the problem itself: at the time, it was not only aesthetic - in the post-symbolist period, for example, religious aspects of the theory of monodrama had also been aestheticized (EVREINOV, 1909) - but now the new age itself demanded to be approached in a new way, and to be given new expression in signs (*znakovoe oformlenie*). Here Bakhtin’s position, which had coincided with Medvedev’s on “material aesthetics” seems to coincide again. But this

time, the consonance is with Medvedev's ideological position, which inclined towards philosophical materialism. Speaking in early 1929 to his interrogator, whom he treated with a trust that is difficult to explain,⁶ Bakhtin put it in the following way:

My lecturing work and that of my friends was an expression of a certain intellectual searching and intellectual unease produced by the necessity of developing a materialist worldview that was new for us and that was compatible with the social reality of anxieties and a materialist worldview. For us, as individuals who were intellectually mature and in possession of significant and varied theoretical knowledge, the process of doing so could not be one of passive and easy assimilation of elements of a ready-made worldview, but inevitably took on the character of a difficult, challenging re-evaluation and verification of all our knowledge and convictions (Archival materials, 1929).

This testimony recapitulates fairly precisely if not Bakhtin's own evolution, then at least that of the Circle to which he belonged at the time.

Another recently discovered work by Medvedev is a brief bibliographical article of 1911, dealing with two new translations published in Moscow that year: the Nietzsche "autobiography" mentioned earlier, and Gustave Lanson's *Method in Literary History*, translated by Mikhail Gershenzon. Here Medvedev wrote:

Literary history as a science or at least as a 'science-like' discipline, with precise subject boundaries and its own method, is something that has begun to be talked about only in the last few years under the influence of works from the Potebnia and Veselovskii school" (1911, p.4).

As though on the threshold of works by members of the Bakhtin Circle, and indeed by the Formalists, famous for their commitment to "specification," it was the nineteen-year-old law student Pavel Medvedev, who, in 1911, spoke about the need for literary scholarship to establish "precise subject boundaries and its own method."⁷ And Medvedev, replying to an Institute for the History of the Arts questionnaire in 1924,

⁶ It was this interrogator, Stromin, who proposed that Bakhtin be sentenced to three years in corrective labour camps, but handing out much shorter sentences for other members of the Resurrection (Voskresenie) group. See Iu. Medvedev, 1999.

⁷ It is worth noting in passing that, in an encyclopaedia of literary terms published in Moscow in 2003, the author of the entry on "method" identifies the notion of "method in literary scholarship" as first and foremost a Soviet contribution to poetics, making no mention of Lanson's work, which does not even appear in his bibliography. See Skvoznikov, 2003.

stated that his “ideas most often resonated with those of Aleksandr Veselovskii, Oskar Walzel (the nineteenth-century conservative literary critic), Apollon Grigor'ev, Gustave Lanson and Viktor Zhirmunskii” (1924). In Medvedev’s Vitebsk lecture course outline, these “subject boundaries” had already assumed clear outlines (“artist as creator,” “aesthetic object,” “counteragents of creativity”) (MEDVEDEV; MEDVEDEVA, 2006, p.198), while his manuscript *Methodological Premises for Literary History*, written at the same time (HIRSCHKOP, 1999, p.146), offers a preliminary but logical summing up of a particular stage in the construction of what Bakhtin called the “*shared*” theory of verbal creation on which the Circle had begun to work.

These facts give us every reason to suggest, with no less certainty than Gogotishvili in her brilliant philosophical and linguistic arguments, that Bakhtin the philosopher switched to the study of literary theory in Vitebsk after interacting “in a warm atmosphere” with, and not without the “choral support” of, the literary scholar and critic Pavel Medvedev. This is clear from Bakhtin’s letters, after he had made the shift, to Kagan in early 1921: “Lately I have been working almost exclusively on the aesthetics of verbal creation” (20 February 1921); “I am working a great deal, especially on aesthetics and on psychology” (March 1921); “at present I am writing a study of Dostoevsky that I hope to finish soon; for the moment I have put ‘the subject of morality and the subject of law’ to one side...” (18 January 1922) (KAGAN, 1992, pp.66, 68, 72).

These were new topics and problems that had not been discussed in Nevel. As early as September 1919, when at Medvedev’s invitation Bakhtin, Kagan and Pumpianskii all gave philosophical papers under the title *The role of the personality at the Proletarian University and People’s Conservatoire*, Medvedev had given his own lecture on Herzen’s personality the day before (SHATSKIKH, 2001, p.236). From the outset, the philosophical discourse of the Nevelites’ presentations came up against Medvedev’s literary-critical and aesthetic discourse. Almost a year before the appearance of the issue of the Nevel almanach *Den’ iskusstva (Day of Art)*, containing articles by Bakhtin (Art and responsibility, usually translated as Art and answerability) and Kagan on the relationship between life and art, Medvedev, in November 1918,

devoted a presentation with his characteristic dual focus, Turgenev as individual and writer, to the same theme (SHATSKIKH, 2001, p.229).⁸

Their constant encounters and conversations meant that the Medvedev context became increasingly established in the work of Bakhtin and Voloshinov, taking the form of practical work on literary theory, just as the philosophical context did in Medvedev's own work. In 1921 Medvedev gave "the Marburg philosopher" Kagan a photograph of himself (still preserved in the Kagan family archive) with the inscription "To a dear friend and teacher." This period was an invitation to Bakhtin and Voloshinov to engage in dialogue on the major themes of literary theory. And the person who issued the invitation was the founder of a number of the methodological premises and theoretical foundations of their *shared* conception of verbal creation, so it was not for nothing that in his conversations with Duvakin Bakhtin referred to Medvedev as a "theorist of literature" (2002, p.222). The Clark and Holquist biography of Bakhtin describes the relationship between the two in terms of Medvedev's "patronage" (1984, p.50) of Bakhtin, but omits the philosophical-aesthetic, the "polyphonic" aspect of the relationship.

In a ground-breaking work on Pavel Gaideburov and Nadezhda Skarskaia's Travelling Theatre and its journal, the *Zapiski Peredvizhnogo teatra*,⁹ Valerii Tiupa, who has worked on Bakhtin's historical aesthetics, identifies in the journal an important context for Bakhtin's thought: "The intellectual atmosphere in which Bakhtin's thought matured was saturated with ideas about aesthetic 'life-creation' [*zhiznetvorchestvo*]." In general, just as "Rabelais's images are completely at home in the millennia of development of popular culture" (BAKHTIN, 1984 [1965], p.3; translation modified), so many of "Bakhtin's own problems, ideas, concepts and terms," even his usages (architectonics, artistic task, aesthetic object, and external work, the Renaissance body of the people, the incompatibility of Dostoevsky's poetics with established aesthetic ideas, the typology of narrative methods as discursive masks of an author permanently

⁸ Incidentally, one of the most important theoretical conclusions of *The Formal Method* is arrived at with reference to examples from Turgenev. See Medvedev, 1985 [1928], pp.21–23. It is worth noting that Bakhtin's Art and responsibility (*Iskusstvo i otvetstvennost'*) has now been translated for the first time into French by Patrick Sériot (BAKHTINE, 2008).

⁹ Tiupa points out (1997, pp.189, 191) that the journal was kept going in its final years by Medvedev right up to the point when it was closed by the censors in 1924. This fundamental work contains a number of inaccuracies about Medvedev's creative biography, since at the time of writing the author did not have access to the full range of relevant information.

“clothed in silence,” and much else besides) “are ‘at home’ on the pages of the *Zapiski Peredvizhnogo teatra*” (TIUPA, 1992, pp.37–38).¹⁰ We should also note that these and many other apparently “purely Bakhtinian” usages, rather like Cohen’s “not given but posited,” are to be found in texts by Medvedev written between 1911 and 1917, many years before he met Bakhtin.¹¹

The systematic critique of “material aesthetics” embarked upon by Medvedev even before the collections of works by the Petersburg Formalist grouping OPOIaZ began to appear, and his elaboration of the conception of the sign even before Russian semiotics¹² came on the scene¹³ both continued: in his lectures at the Academy’s Pushkin House (Pushkinskii Dom), at the Herzen Institute, at the Institute for the Comparative History of the Literatures and Languages of the West and East (*Nauchno-issledovatel’skii institut sravnitel’noi istorii literatur i iazykov Zapada i Vostoka*, ILIaZV), and later at the Leningrad Institute of Philosophy, Literature and History (*Leningradskii institut filosofii, literatury i istorii*, LIFLI), University and Academy for the Study of the Arts (*Akademiia iskusstvoznaniia*), where he taught a postgraduate seminar, and in the criticism section of the All-Russian Union of Writers (Vserossiiskii Soiuz pisatelei), of which he was elected bureau chair in the late 1920s, and which was dissolved following concerted attacks in the press (see L.V. 1931).¹⁴

Agniia Vasil’evna Desnitskaia, a prominent philologist and corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences who was a student of Medvedev’s, recalled his lectures and seminars with great interest. It is entirely logical that Medvedev’s most important and profound work, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, should have been an organic expression and development of the scholarly positions and principles that had fascinated the nineteen-year-old literary critic in 1911, at the very outset of his career. Further evidence for this is provided by the detailed

¹⁰ For more on the Travelling Theatre, see Medvedev and Medvedeva, 2004, pp.40-42.

¹¹ See Iu.P. Medvedev, 2000.

¹² It would be remiss not to note the scholarly character of the bibliographical information in the “Literature” section of Viacheslav Ivanov’s *Essays in the History of Semiotics in the USSR (Ocherki po istorii semiotiki v SSSR)*, published online in 2006 (with an indication that “reference should be made to the electronic original”). Ivanov refers to the original publications of works by Voloshinov and Medvedev’s book (as well as a letter to Medvedev from Boris Pasternak), which sets the book apart from others that give distorted bibliographical information. See Ivanov, 1996.

¹³ Medvedev’s insistent call for a study of the actuality of the sign in the life and work of the artist can be found in his article on Pushkin of 1917 (1917a).

¹⁴ The author, identified only by initials, writes: “Medvedev did not even consider it necessary to provide a critical analysis of the latest erroneous contributions to the section’s latest meetings... ‘I have no intention,’ he said, ‘of continuing the week of repentance (!)’”

notes, in Medvedev's own hand, on two works written in 1915 and 1917 by V. Chudovskii, a talented critic on the Symbolist journal *Apollon (Apollo)*, where Medvedev's interest was caught by ideas close to his own.¹⁵

The Petrograd period of the Bakhtin Circle was marked by close contact with ILIaZV, where most of the major Petrograd–Leningrad philologists and literary scholars of the day worked, virtually simultaneously, either in established posts or on an external/freelance basis. At ILIaZV, Medvedev gave a number of presentations on theory and methodology of literature, as a result of which sociological poetics emerged as one of the Institute's leading programmes; Medvedev himself, a grade-one research fellow on the external payroll, together with V.F. Shishmarev, a salaried member of the Institute, was tasked by its Collegium with organizing and heading up a Sociological Poetics Section that included Ieremei Ioffe,¹⁶ M.A. Iakovlev, V.N. Voloshinov, and a number of other researchers at the Institute (Archival materials undated a).

In September 1928, in a letter dated April 1928, the Collegium recommended Medvedev's *Formal Method*, written in the scholarly ambience of the Bakhtin Circle and the research environment of ILIaZV, for publication by Gosizdat, the state publishing house. *The Formal Method* inaugurated a new ILIaZV series on "Questions of methodology and theory of language and literature." In 1929, shortly after the book's appearance the previous year, the acting director of ILIaZV, L.P. Iakubinskii, sent 15 copies to overseas research organisations with which the Institute had established publication exchanges. Victor Erlich's study of Russian Formalism, which was first published in the 1950s and quotes extensively from *The Formal Method*, and evaluates it in many respects competently from a sympathiser's standpoint, was probably a direct result of this initiative on the part of Iakubinskii; the same may be true of the republication of the book on microfilm in the 1960s.¹⁷

Medvedev was highly thought of as a scholar by his ILIaZV colleagues, among them such exacting scholars as Lev Iakubinskii, Viktor Zhirmunskii, Vladimir Shishmarev, Mark Azadovskii, Boris Eikhenbaum, Ieremei Ioffe, Izrail' Frank-Kamenetskii and others. Most notable in this list was V.A. Desnitskii, chair of the bureau in ILIaZV's Literary Methodology section, of which Medvedev was also a

¹⁵ See Iu. P. Medvedev, 1996, pp.68-70.

¹⁶ Ioffe's works have recently been republished (2006).

¹⁷ See Erlich, 1955; Medvedev, 1964 [1928].

member. In a letter of support for Medvedev sent to the NKVD, Desnitskii expressed the view that *The Formal Method* was “Medvedev’s most valuable work” and that it was “carried out and completed to a large extent with reference to my suggestions and advice” (cited in MEDVEDEV and MEDVEDEVA 2003, pp.215-216). This is not to say that Leningrad’s academic literary milieu was without individuals who opposed Medvedev, envied him, or simply wished him ill. This was a researcher and critic who had begun by opposing the Formal Method, and following the publication of his book became famous as its destroyer - “himself the destroyer of the Formal Method,” as Erikh Gollerbakh summed up the prevailing opinion in literary circles in early 1930 (pp.11-12; 1990, pp.11-12; 1993, pp.35-36) - the person who gave Shklovskii himself cause to doubt the correctness of his theory, as is clear from a letter written by Shklovskii to Iurii Tynianov in early 1929.¹⁸

We must just remember that all this was going on before the notorious “break” in state policy and the official ideological campaign against Formalism. One of the first victims of the unfolding campaign against Formalism was Medvedev himself, shortly after the appearance of *The Formal Method*. Recent work by researchers at the Russian Academy’s Pushkin House has uncovered pertinent information in the archives—in particular, the records of a meeting of the criticism section of the Leningrad branch of the All-Russian Union of Soviet Writers in February 1932, at which Medvedev was obliged by the militant Russian Association of Proletarian Writers to confess the error of his ways,¹⁹ two years after Shklovskii had of his own free will (but also, of course, under coercion) published in *Literaturnaia gazeta* [*Literary Gazette*] his recantation of Formalism, “Monument to a scholarly error.” This statement, which as V.P. Muromskii says “leaves a sad impression” (2002, p.42), explains how *The Formal Method* became *Formalism and the Formalists*, the considerably harsher critique of Formalism published in 1934.²⁰ But even in a statement conforming to the recantation genre,

¹⁸ See Grigor’eva, 1995, pp.201-202.

¹⁹ See Mikhailov, 2006.

²⁰ Muromskii is mistaken when he writes that Medvedev was a member of the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia proletarskikh pisatelei, known universally by its Russian acronym RAPP). Medvedev belonged to the All-Russian Union of Writers (Vserossiiskii soiuz pisatelei) and was a member of its ruling board and chair of its criticism section. But shortly before the first Congress of writers in 1934, the decision was taken to amalgamate all existing major writers’ organisations into a single body, the Federation of Soviet Writers’ Unions (Federatsiia ob’edinenii sovetskikh pisatelei, or FOSSP). This is why Medvedev was called to account at a meeting of RAPP.) Attempts to find profound philological reasons for the transformation of *The Formal Method* into

Medvedev went on the attack, saying that he understood his own mistakes better than his accusers did, and that he did not renounce his critique of Formalism, but acknowledged that he had conducted it on their territory.

the very principle of immanency, compounded by the mistakes of a general methodological character that I made, constrained [...] my critique of Formalism. All the problems that go beyond the borders of the “immanent” - *problems of the class nature of Formalism, its philosophical roots and so on* - remained unelaborated (1934, p.12; emphasis added).

Mikhailov omits from his catalogue (2006, pp.105-106) of attacks on Medvedev the most important, one that carried with it the threat of prohibition to publish and inevitable arrest: the planned personal attack by the then head of RAPP, the writer Aleksandr Fadeev, at a “critics’ production meeting” of the organization, in which Fadeev branded Medvedev, alone among critics, as “liquidator of proletarian art” (1932, p.5). We should recall, however, that as soon as Medvedev (mistakenly) felt that the immediate danger had passed, he returned to his major book: his monograph *In the Writer’s Laboratory*, published in 1933, refers once again to *The Formal Method* (1933, p.22).

In the early 1930s perturbations began in ILIaZV, which was resubordinated to the Volodarskii Institute of Agitation (*Institut agitatsii imeni Volodarskogo*). This is probably why Voloshinov was unable to defend his dissertation, despite being highly regarded as a researcher. But Voloshinov, first a graduate student, then a researcher on the staff of ILIaZV, was required to write regular reports on his work: the archives contain the report on his work as a graduate student, first published by Nikolai Pan’kov and subsequently translated into English in 2004 (VOLOSHINOV, 2004 [1927–1928]), and the key points of his presentations in the Sociological Poetics Section, referred to by Dmitrii Iunov in a paper at the Third International Bakhtin Readings in Vitebsk in 1998.²¹

These add to our picture of the Circle’s “shared conception,” indicating the direction taken by the Circle’s collective thinking, as does Bakhtin’s so-called “last

Formalism and the Formalists are inappropriate in scholarly terms and historically illiterate. See Tamarchenko, 2008 and the rebuttal in Iu.P. Medvedev, 2009.

²¹ See Zdol’nikov, 1998, pp.178–179.

work,” Toward a methodology for the human sciences. A brief Voloshinov manuscript, his plan for An essay in sociological poetics, (published for the first time this year in Russian and English by Craig Brandist) contains a number of pithy working definitions:

Artistic form as a system of social evaluations. Forms of social evaluation that do and do not shape form. The technique of form conditioned by the nature of the linguistic material. Homological factors of form (rhythm). The problem of the interrelationship of form and content. *Form as evaluation of content* (VOLOSHINOV, 2008 [1925-1926], p.195; emphasis added).

Thus the category of “social evaluation” first given its grounding by Medvedev (1985 [1928], pp.118-128 and subsequently), and the problematic of “the interrelationship of form and content” that formed the basis of the first volume of a work on this theme, confiscated when Medvedev was arrested,²² are addressed in Voloshinov’s reports in his own particular way, although they also reflect the Circle’s *shared* view.

The Formal Method presents what we might call an apophatic variant of sociological poetics: this is expressed in a rejection of the principles of the Formal School that Medvedev had studied so exhaustively and that had occupied stable, not to say dominant, positions in literary scholarship; it is also expressed in scholarly opposition to the Formal Method on the basis of a conception that had already begun to emerge in Medvedev’s earlier articles. And if Hansen-Löve organises Russian Formalism’s methodological and theoretical discourse “on the foundation of the principle of defamiliarisation” (1978; KHANZEN-LEVE [HANSEN-LÖVE] 2001), then the Bakhtin Circle’s discourse of sociological poetics can be reconstructed on the foundation of the deep-seated, axiologically-oriented principle of “social evaluation.”

Papers given by Medvedev and Voloshinov at ILIaZV and discussed by a highly-qualified, exacting audience not only testify to the autonomy of their authors, but also exemplify the aspects of theory that each member of the Circle was principally concerned with elaborating. Medvedev’s papers (as listed in the incomplete records of the Institute) were Methodological premises for a theory of artistic creativity and On the Formal Method (Archival materials undated b) (these two papers, synthesizing Medvedev’s new observations, were also given elsewhere). Voloshinov’s were The

²² See Iu. P. Medvedev, 1998, p.31.

sociological structure of poetic form, akin to an anticipation of structuralism—at the same time that he was writing this paper, Voloshinov prepared his translation of the introduction and first chapter of Cassirer’s *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*—and The genre and style of the artistic utterance (Archival materials undated b).

And, of course, the categories that Bakhtin was working with at the time are very familiar: “author and hero,” “double-voiced word,” “theory of dialogue,” “polyphony,” etc. These themes and aspects of theory constitute the theoretical “nucleus” both of the Circle’s “*shared* conception” and of the three major books of the 1920s, and exemplify the contribution made by each member of the Circle to its “*shared* theory of language and verbal artistic creativity.” This is not to say that other aspects of the “*shared*” theory were not also shared. For example, in Medvedev’s 1917 article on Tolstoy’s diary we find a stress on the future category of “intercourse” (*obshchenie*), as well as orientation towards the idea of “dialogue” (between Tolstoy and the Russian intelligentsia) (2004 [1916]). One of Medvedev’s early reviews, of the poetry of Nadson, was even written in the form of an inner dialogue (1912b).

There is also another set of correspondences important for understanding the work of the Circle. Medvedev and Bakhtin both spoke at an evening dedicated to the work of Blok (BAKHTIN 2000 [1920s]; MEDVEDEV 1921c). At the time when Medvedev was conducting a seminar on Dostoevsky at the Vitebsk Institute of Popular Education, Bakhtin was writing his book about Dostoevsky, as Medvedev informed the readers of a Petrograd journal (1921b; 1922). Medvedev was the moving force behind the Circle’s 1924 articles on material aesthetics: his own Scholarly Salieri-ism, and Bakhtin’s The problem of content, material, and form, which was commissioned from him, on Medvedev’s recommendation, by the journal *Russkii sovremennik* (*Russian Contemporary*).

After Bakhtin was arrested, and while he was under investigation, he worked intensively with Medvedev to complete and prepare for publication his *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art* (*Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo*), which Medvedev ensured was published rapidly by the Priboi state publishing house in Leningrad in early 1929. In the second edition of this book, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (*Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*), Bakhtin eschewed the sociological terminology he had used, under Medvedev’s guidance, in the first edition, employing instead the concepts of historical

poetics, which corresponded more closely to the revised content of the 1963 version. This list of “correspondences” could and should be extended, but that would be a topic in its own right.

In a word, it would be strange, to say the least, to consider those whom Sergei Zemlianoi has wittily termed the “artel [or cooperative] of intellectuals” (1999, p.3), who subscribe to the belief that Bakhtin was the sole author of the “disputed texts,” to be more competent than the individuals who were involved in ILIaZV’s Literary Methodology Section, renowned for their original works, and not only for their personal acquaintance with Bakhtin and their - in this case dubious - privilege of “outsideness.” Randall Collins, who in his *Sociology of Philosophies* singled out “Mikhail Bakhtin and Pavel Medvedev” for achieving “a new level of reflexive sophistication,”²³ did not, of course, have the opportunity to become acquainted with Voloshinov’s manuscripts, but the archival record confirms Collins’s assessment and Voloshinov’s right to be placed alongside Bakhtin and Medvedev.

We have tried to examine the psychological, social and creative “identity” or “face” of Bakhtin’s polyphony within the framework of his Circle. We have also found the counterpoint: the authors of the three major studies of the 1920s, notwithstanding the extent of their common ground, had different ideological orientations and styles. This is especially palpable when we compare works that Bakhtin himself wrote within the Circle with those that he wrote outside of it, in particular his two studies of Dostoevsky. Bakhtin’s phenomenological orientation, his philosophical breadth, and the depth of his talent do of course distinguish his own works from the works of Medvedev and Voloshinov, which are more transparent to the reader; but all are marked by a high standard of execution set by, in Collins’s term, the “intellectual leader” of the Circle, and appropriate to the conception that links all three authors. The counterpoint was also expressed in polemics within the Circle: in *On the boundaries of linguistics and poetics*, for example, Voloshinov takes issue with Medvedev on a number of points (one of the first to draw attention to this polemic was Irwin Titunik (1984, p.543). Writing in 1961, the late Bakhtin was also polemical about Medvedev’s and Voloshinov’s books of the 1920s, and about his own book from the late 1920s:

²³ See Kollinz [Collins], 2002, p.37; Collins, 1998.

The conception of language and discourse that was set out—not as thoroughly as it might have been, and not always coherently—in those books is one that I still hold to, although of course in the thirty years since, it has gone through a certain evolution (BAKHTIN, 1992 [1961], p.145).

The written works and scholarly activity of the Circle display clearly the features identified by Ludwik Fleck and Randall Collins in their studies of the social character of scholarly and philosophical work. To disregard the founding positions of these studies (on which we have relied both here and in previous work) would be to impoverish contemporary study, to use Fleck's term, of the "thought collective" that is the Bakhtin Circle.²⁴ But on the other hand the dialogic phenomenon of the Bakhtin Circle, by virtue of a whole series of the ways in which its psychology and creativity were expressed, confirms and even enriches the positions of these fundamental studies. Take, for example, Bakhtin's conclusion, constitutive for any "thought collective": "Dialogue bears the imprint of not one, but several individualities" (1996 [1952], p.211).

Substantial studies of the Bakhtin Circle include A.S. Shatskikh's *Vitebsk: The Life of Art 1917–1922* (2001), which devotes a whole chapter to the Circle and provides a detailed timeline of its members' public activity in the town. Also worthy of inclusion in this category is Professor Vladimir Zakharov's article, first given as a paper at the 2005 Bakhtin conference in Jyväskylä, The problem of genre in the Bakhtin 'school' (2005; 2007). Zakharov examines the treatment of the category of "genre"²⁵ alongside those of plot (*siuzhet*) and story (*fabula*) in the works of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov. His comparative analysis of their use of these terms leads Zakharov to affirm the intellectual autonomy of each author.

Similar conclusions have been reached, on the basis of different material, by Vladimir Alpatov, Tat'iana Shchittsova, Georgii Fridlender, Sergei Zemlianoi, Irwin Titunik, Gary Saul Morson, Caryl Emerson, Ladislav Mateika, Nina Perlina, Tzvetan Todorov, Ken Hirschkop, Craig Brandist, Galin Tihanov, Boris Gasparov, Nikolai Vasil'ev, Patrick Sériot and others, including the authors of a recent timeline of the

²⁴ See Medvedev and Medvedeva, 2006.

²⁵ Bakhtin explained his understanding of genre in the course of discussion of the paper The novel as literary genre, which he delivered at the Institute of World Literature (Institut mirovoi literatury, IMLI) in Moscow: "since the question of genre has come up, then I refuse to give a definition, but it is my view that the problem of genre, which is an extremely important problem, should be worked through in connection with the more serious problem of what is known as compositional stylistics" (see PAN'KOV, 2007, p.297).

Bakhtin Circle's work (BRANDIST; SHEPHERD; TIHANOV, 2004),²⁶ as well those responsible for the latest translations of *The Formal Method* into Finnish (Tapani Laine and Mika Lähteenmäki),²⁷ and French (Bénédicte Vauthier and Roger Comtet).²⁸ But in some quarters there still reigns the conviction that Bakhtin was the author of these and other texts by Medvedev and Voloshinov. Take, for example, the following uncompromising statement by the editor of the latest issue, no. 5, of the *Bakhtinskii sbornik (Bakhtin Miscellany)*:

The tendency, particularly in foreign works about Bakhtin, to oppose Medvedev and Voloshinov to him as supposedly autonomous thinkers and theorists who made a contribution to Marxist scholarship, strikes me as a deliberate aberration, not entirely unmercenary and utterly unproductive for the analysis of Bakhtin's agenda (MAKHLIN, 2004, p.336 fn. 21).

And Averintsev's formulations strike him as "morally outdated" (MAKHLIN, 2004, p.336). Only in the Soviet and post-Soviet consciousness could genuine history be a barrier to the study of Bakhtin. This is the reasoning of a manager, not a researcher, while the accusation of mercenariness on the part of overseas researchers is at the very least a source of bewilderment. Somewhat earlier, in the journal *Voprosy literatury (Questions of Literature)*, Makhlin had reproached Tzvetan Todorov for making of Bakhtin a pension fund (2005, p.19): truly a case of the pot calling the kettle black! He then moved on to criticize Averintsev, demonstrating in doing so that not only "Bakhtin's agenda," but Averintsev's, too, was beyond him. This is reflected in the language of many of his writings. The literary scholar and critic Rodnianskaia has already pointed out, also in *Voprosy literatury*, the inappropriateness of Makhlin's piece on Averintsev (2007, pp.106–112). But for those of us who are familiar with his commentary on *The Formal Method* as published in the piratical series "Bakhtin Masked" ("Bakhtin pod maskoi"), none of this is unexpected. The scholarly inadequacies of this commercially-motivated series have been commented on by many,

²⁶ This is an important source for Zakharov (2007, fn. 19): "On the current state of research and problems of the 'Bakhtin Circle,' see Brandist et al., 2004 and Medvedev and Medvedeva, 2004, pp.194–206."

²⁷ See MEDVEDEV, 2007 [1928].

²⁸ See MEDVEDEV, 2008 [1928].

even by Bocharov. But, apart from Professor V. Belous (1994),²⁹ few have offered any public assessment of the quality of the editorial apparatus. Here is one especially significant example of the problems with that apparatus.

In the second century, Jews and Christians alike decided to exclude a number of disputed books in the Old Testament from Holy Scripture, while reaffirming the sacred status of others. It was determined that the books belonging to Holy Scripture were “canonical” texts *of divine inspiration*, i.e., “dictated” by the Holy Spirit. The corpus of the Bible as a historically formed compilation of texts continued to contain, in addition to the canonical, those that were considered devout but *not of divine inspiration*, and which were thus termed deuterocanonical. By analogy, Sergei Averintsev termed “deuterocanonical” those books that formed part of the Bakhtin Circle’s corpus, but *were not written* by Bakhtin himself. Makhlin, however, in editing the “Bakhtin Masked” series, refers to “Bakhtin’s deuterocanonical texts,” thus revealing a merely approximate understanding of the term (1993a, p.118). As in Soviet philosophy textbooks, everything is precise to the point of being its own polar opposite—a not uncommon feature of “Bakhtinology.”

In an article about the disputed texts, a lecturer in literary theory from a provincial university, Aleksei Korovashko, quotes one of the most famous articles dealing with the disputed texts issue, where Sergei Bocharov contends that the testimony of Bakhtin’s contemporaries and interlocutors, although it “cannot be definitive *proof*,” “must still be worth something” (BOCHAROV, 1993a, p.73; 1994, p.1014). The trouble is, says Korovashko, that “the percentage of sub-standard material in this testimony is intolerably high”:

For example, what exactly are the stunning discrepancies between the respective descriptions by Vadim Kozhinov, Georgii Gachev and Sergei Bocharov of their first visit to Bakhtin “worth”? Kozhinov testifies that Gachev fell on his knees before Bakhtin; Bocharov’s evidence is that Gachev did not fall on his knees; Gachev’s own version is that he fell on his knees before Bakhtin mentally (2001, pp.64–65).

²⁹ This review carries the initials V.B., but only because it is preceded by another work by Professor V.G. Belous in which his name is given in full.

Korovashko goes on to offer a very precise analysis of the whole “disputed texts” question.³⁰

Essentially, the only reliable source, apart from Bakhtin’s letters, are the recordings of his conversations with Duvakin. Here we hear Bakhtin telling Duvakin - we can hear his voice on the tape - that Medvedev was his “ve-ery close friend at that time,” his intonation reinforcing the point. But Vladimir Turbin assures us in print that the two were not even close (1989). Kozhinov refers disparagingly to Medvedev as a literary journalist, whereas Bakhtin, as we have seen, calls him a “theorist of literature” (KOZHINOV 1995, p.145).

Bakhtin wrote to Kozhinov from Saransk that he was very familiar with Medvedev’s and Voloshinov’s books and that they were written by his former colleagues (1992 [1961], p.145). By contrast, Turbin claimed that when he brought *The Formal Method* to show to Bakhtin, this was the first time that Bakhtin had seen the book.³¹ There is a nice Russian saying: “He is lying like an eyewitness.” But it is this and similar “revelations” that formed public opinion at the time, especially at numerous conferences and colloquia, from Moscow to Makhachkala. Moreover, all this unreliable information was presented and perceived as coming from Bakhtin himself.

Should we be surprised, then, that at roughly the same time the famous linguist Reformatskii cheerfully told his colleague Agniia Desnitskaia: “You know, Voloshinov didn’t actually exist, He’s just a carnival character!” To which Desnitskaia replied, not quite so cheerfully: “What do you mean? I remember him well, he was one of my father’s graduate students; he used to bring a cake when he came to see him...”³²

And in Robert Barsky’s recent article for the internet Gallery of Russian Thinkers, run by the International Society for Philosophers, not just anyone, but Vitalii Makhlin is named as a very close friend of Bakhtin.³³ But how could it be otherwise, if this same Makhlin (not without a touch of humour, of course) put into circulation a

³⁰ Korovashko refers the reader to the following accounts of this notorious first encounter with Bakhtin: Kozhinov, 1992 and Bocharov, 1993b.

³¹ See the account in Makhlin, 1993b, p.206.

³² This exchange was recounted to Iurii Medvedev by Desnitskaia herself.

³³ “The theories of Bakhtin and his Circle touch upon virtually every aspect of everyday life, and V. Maklin [sic], a personal friend of Bakhtin and the head of the Bakhtin Center in Moscow, recently revealed that Bakhtin was trying to establish a philosophy of discursive action for each of the principle [sic] speech situations” (BARSKY, n.d.).

joking remark that was flattering to him: “Makhlin is the Bakhtin of today” (see PAN´KOV 1998, p.136, fn.1).

But if an unbiased overseas author can be said to be deceived or simply mistaken, Russian authors who promulgate false versions are more often than not deliberately untruthful. Take, for example, a review of Carol Any’s study of Boris Eikhenbaum, *Voices of a Russian Formalist*, in the respected journal *Novyi mir* (*New World*). In writing her work, Any acquired detailed knowledge of Eikhenbaum’s archive and his life, speaking, *inter alia*, to members of his family. She made a point of insisting that what she had learned led her to conclude that Medvedev was the author of *The Formal Method*, which was attributed to Bakhtin quite improperly [ANY, 1994, p.240 (n. 30 to p.57)]. But in the review there is no reference to this opinion, and Eikhenbaum is presented as having engaged not with Medvedev, but with Bakhtin (GROMOV-KOLLI, 1995, p.250). It is difficult to suspect the reviewer of a book in English of not knowing the language; so it is much more likely to be a matter of needing to get published, defend a dissertation, and gain the approval of a still-influential “artel of intellectuals.”

But there are also cases in which scholarly honesty has overcome the opinion of the disoriented majority. In the 1970s, Georgii Fridlender, who wrote one of the first articles about Bakhtin’s work, campaigned for him to be elected to the Academy of Sciences, and petitioned for him to be awarded a state prize, brought from those around Bakhtin in Moscow the “reliable” news that Bakhtin was the author of certain texts, and officially shared these tidings at a meeting of the Academic Council of the Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House) in Leningrad. But conscience and scholarly ethics troubled an academician who still remembered Medvedev’s lectures and other presentations in LIFLI and Leningrad University. After looking into the matter, he acknowledged, this time in writing, that Bakhtin, “notwithstanding a widespread belief,” was not the author of “P.N. Medvedev’s book *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, attributed to Bakhtin by many researchers in this country and abroad” (1993, p.198).

In one of his publications Turbin described himself as “Bakhtin’s valet” (1990, p.9), thinking that he was making an elegant joke, though this joke turned out to be a Freudian slip. One thing is for certain: the daughter of Iurii Andropov (then the all-

powerful head of the KGB), a graduate student of Turbin's who did much to help Bakhtin in everyday domestic matters, unwittingly found herself also a cover for the unlawful acts that those assigned his literary rights permitted themselves. It was not only medication from the Kremlin pharmacy that was prescribed "by personal order" (an unfailingly effective Kremlin formula "declassified" by Bocharov (1993a, p.70; 1994, p.1011), but illegal publication rights. Here, for example is a quotation from a document issued by the Russian Society of Authors (Rossiiskoe avtorskoe obshchestvo, RAO) in Moscow:

In response to your request of 16 April this year concerning the publication overseas of the book *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* we hereby confirm:

This book was indeed published in Czech, Japanese and Polish translations on the basis of contracts negotiated by the former All-Union Agency for the Protection of Authors' Rights [Vsesoiuznaia agentstvo po okhrane avtorskikh prav, VAAP]. In these cases the book was published under the name of M.M. Bakhtin, as it was presented by his legal assignees. Royalties for these editions were paid to S.G. Bocharov and V.V. Kozhinov on the basis of official documents presented by them and certifying their inheritance rights to the works of M.M. Bakhtin.

As has previously been communicated to you, Pavel Nikolaevich Medvedev's authorship of the book entitled *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, published in Leningrad by the Priboi publishing house in 1928, has never been a matter of dispute.

This document tells us that those with an interest in the matter will continue to insist on their rightness by all available means, including, as the commentaries cited above testify, pseudoscientific means, in order to preserve their own historical renown; and we must be prepared for this.

But they are unlikely to succeed, since what has been carried out is an act of academic forgery that has set worldwide Bakhtin studies on a false path. Here is the text of a letter about a proposed contract between VAAP and the French publisher Payot for an edition of Voloshinov's *Freudianism* under Bakhtin's name:

Bakhtin, Mikh. Mikh.
Contract
(under the name Voloshinov, V.N.)
Freudianism (A study in philosophy, aesthetics and literary scholarship)

Moscow-Leningrad, Gosizdat, 1927, c. 15 author's pages [an author's page is approximately 40,000 characters]

Gr[anted] in France to the publisher Payot . . . that in the event that a contract is concluded the Literature and Art Directorate of VAAP will make available for the Fr[ench] edition an intro[ductory] note intended by the author to be included in all foreign editions of those of his works that were published under the names of Voloshinov and Medvedev.

14 July 1976 06.08.1976 19.10.1977 [Signatures] V. Panov,
A. Kabanov

Bakhtin died in March 1975, but this document operates with much later dates that show that there was still the intention to prepare an “introductory note” for VAAP, allegedly signed by Bakhtin. The first Russian edition of *The Formal Method* under Bakhtin's name was published by the émigré publishing house Silver Age in 1982, on the firm assumption that VAAP held such a document. As the author of the editorial preface wrote:

In his preface to the American edition of *The Formal Method* A.J. Wehrle quotes Kozhinov's statement that before he died Bakhtin signed a document, currently held in VAAP, where he affirms his authorship and requests that any republications of the works concerned should be published under his name (EDITORS, 1982, pp.5-6).³⁴

Bakhtin's resolute refusal to sign a falsified document came to light later, when there were already precedents for such republications. The document published here explains why this was the case.

In his much later correspondence with Gary Saul Morson, whose justified polemic with Clark and Holquist's attribution to Bakhtin of his colleagues' texts caused such a sensation (MORSON, 1985, p.32), the editor of the *Bakhtinskii sbornik* series assured Morson, and all who read their exchange, that, at the right time, the right document would make its appearance (MAKHLIN; MORSON, 1991, p.42). The disorientation of the scholarly community thus received if not new, then fresh reinforcement.

³⁴ Cf. Wehrle, 1985, xxxii.

We have deliberately not rushed to make public the RAO and VAAP documents, and indeed much additional evidence,³⁵ in the hope that those who believe Bakhtin to have been the author of the disputed texts would think better of their position, that Bakhtinian ethics and morality would triumph, and that a scholarly approach to the dialogic phenomenon that is the Bakhtin Circle would restore everything to its proper place. But the appearance in 2003 of volume 1 of Bakhtin's *Collected Works* (the most recent of the four volumes that have appeared to date), with its nonsensical, and in tone thoroughly inappropriate, commentary on his colleagues' verbal and other "borrowings" from Bakhtin, struck us as a step too far. The loose talk of those - like the character Teptelkin in Vaginov's 1928 *roman à clef* about the Bakhtin Circle, *Kozlinaia pesn'* (*The Goat Song*), who, in Bakhtin's words, like to philosophize but are no philosophers, as well as the monstrous accusation of mercenariness directed at overseas scholars seeking to get objectively at the truth, compel us, finally, to name the true source of disinformation and mercenariness by making public the documents cited above.

The literary scholar V.V. Zdol'nikov, reviewing the outcomes of the Third International Bakhtin "Readings" held in Vitebsk in 1998, wrote:

It seems strange to say this about the humanities, but the question of professional honesty in scholarship, the question of intellectual looting hung [over the whole conference]. Like the call to make Medvedev and Voloshinov academic adventurers feeding on the crumbs from a genius's table. They were sufficiently outstanding and talented individuals to be on the level of Bakhtin's Circle, to be of interest not only to Bakhtin but to us [...] Bakhtin and his Circle cannot be understood from a perspective of baseness, of conformist time-serving—this was an idea running through many of the papers (ZDOL'NIKOV, 1998, p.191)

So as we see, the issue that we have raised here is one that has exercised many others, and for a long time. Researchers do not wish to be hostages of over-simplified scholarship or to participate in a campaign that, in its nature and consequences, recalls Marrism and Lysenkoism, and is conducted using the methods of the witch-hunt.

³⁵ We have at our disposal a number of additional examples of plays in relation to the authorship question, but space constraints prevent us from going into detail.

As Ken Hirschkop rightly said, “For a long time we knew very little about Bakhtin’s life. Thanks to the efforts of post-*glasnost* Bakhtin scholarship, we now know even less” (1999, p.111).

Bakhtin’s *Conversations with Duvakin* probably remained unpublished for so long so that the fundamental positions of the Bakhtin canon could become firmly established in Russia and elsewhere. And it was only in the 1990s that Bakhtin’s 1961 letter to Kozhinov came to light, at a time when public opinion had been prepared and shaped by unlawful editions, particularly those of the newly-fledged Labyrinth publishing house, which flooded the Russian book market with its Bakhtinian “masks” and “half-masks.” And this, despite the fact that the foremost specialist in the history of philological movements, Vladimir Alpatov, brought by Labyrinth into the editorial team for one of their publications in order to reinforce its image—and in the hope that he would offer his unqualified support for its position—unexpectedly wrote that “there can be no grounds for the now virtually dominant [...] view that Bakhtin was the sole author” (1998, p.517).³⁶ Despite the fact, moreover, that another well-known philologist, Professor V.N. Zakharov, asked by the Vitebsk journal *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop* to respond to a questionnaire about Bakhtin’s works on Dostoevsky, suddenly ended his interview with comments that were not directly relevant to the questions raised:

[...] And another thing. We should not attribute others’ works to Bakhtin. What has been said up to now about works by Voloshinov and Medvedev provides no grounds for acknowledging even Bakhtin’s co-authorship (let alone his authorship!)... Truth is dialogic, and the first to sense this were the great Russian philosopher’s friends and interlocutors (ZAKHAROV, 1994, p.10).

Notwithstanding the objections of highly competent individuals, the campaign to discredit Voloshinov and Medvedev continues, and through inertia, their books are listed in reference works by indiscriminating editors as works by Bakhtin.

Why, indeed, were Bakhtin’s conversations with Duvakin—the most valuable documentary source of information about Bakhtin and his Circle—published only 20 years after they were recorded? While in the meantime, the whole world had no choice

³⁶ In response, Alpatov was declared to be a non-Bakhtinian.

but to refer to the only available biography of Bakhtin, published in 1984 by American authors - who, incidentally, had they been aware of the conversations, would probably have corrected their version of his academic biography and avoided a number of inaccuracies and errors. Those around Bakhtin could not have failed to know of the conversations: some of them, as is clear from the text itself, were there when they took place.

It is now more than thirty years since Bakhtin passed away. For all that time he has been in the power of what Morson has termed the “Bakhtin industry,” in which no small number of genuine, honest works have been lost. The Thirteenth International Conference bearing Bakhtin’s name, at which the paper on which this article is based was delivered, was an opportune moment to draw some conclusions. But these conclusions suggest, in our view, that a true comprehension of Bakhtin and his Circle is still in the future, that it harbours new scholarly perspectives, and requires an influx of new forces. Bakhtin’s unchanging greatness as a thinker lies in his being as interesting and enigmatic as before. As before, he provides stimulus for the work of the “other” and “others,” our shared intellectual “we.”

His Circle, too, remains alive. New translations of its members’ works are appearing; their scholarly activity is the subject of new research and presentations at international conferences. Hitherto unknown manuscripts and documents are being published. Research into the works and activity of the Circle is broadening the scholarly and philosophical purview of Bakhtin studies, promoting understanding of the “Bakhtinian paradigm” in culture, giving new impetus to the study of scholarly and artistic creativity. Bakhtin’s “first philosophy,” Medvedev’s “sociological poetics,” and Voloshinov’s “sociolinguistics” are all links in the same chain.

In the words of the poet Osip Mandelstam’s widow Nadezhda:

A true community (“we”) is unshakable, indubitable, and enduring. It cannot be broken up, pulled apart, or destroyed. It will remain inviolable and whole, even when those who call themselves by this name are in their graves (MANDELSTAM, 1974 [1972], p.29; translation modified)

REFERENCES

- ADLAM, C.; SHEPHERD, D. (Eds.). *The Annotated Bakhtin Bibliography* (MHRA Bibliographies, 1). London: Maney, 2000.
- ALPATOV, V. Lingvisticheskoe soderzhanie knigi *Marksizm i filosofiiia iazyka*. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Tetralogiia*. Moscow: Labirint, 1998, pp.517-529.
- ANY, C. *Boris Eikhenbaum: Voices of a Russian Formalist*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994.
- ARCHIVAL MATERIALS. Sledstvennoe delo “Voskreseniia.” Arkhiv FSB po Leningradskoi oblasti [Leningrad Regional Archive of the Federal Security Service], d. 14284, t. 3, l. 7, 1929.
- _____. Undated a. Arkhiv RAN, filial SPb, fond 302, opis´ 1, ed. khr. 14, l. 28, 1929.
- _____. Undated b. Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk, Sankt-Peterburgskii filial, f. 302, op. 1, no. 15, l. 25; no. 49, l. 67, etc., 1929.
- AVERINTSEV, S. Mikhail Bakhtin: Retrospektiva i perspektiva. *Druzhba narodov*, n. 3, pp.256-259, 1988.
- BAKHTIN, M.M. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by H el ene Iswolsky. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984 [1965].
- _____. Letter to Vadim Kozhinov of 10 January 1961. In: Pis´ma M. M. Bakhtina. *Literaturnaia ucheba*, pp.5-6:144-153, 1992 [1961].
- _____. Iz arkhivnykh zapisei k rabote “Problema rechevykh zhanrov.” Dialog I. Problema dialogicheskoi rechi. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, vol. 5, *Raboty 1940-kh–nachala 1960-kh godov*, ed. S.G. Bocharov and L.A. Gogotishvili. Moscow: Russkie slovari, 1996 [1952], pp.209–218.
- _____. [Lecture on Aleksandr Blok]. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, vol. 2, “*Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo,*” 1929; *Stat´i o Tolstom,* 1929; *Zapisi kursa lektsii po istorii russkoi literatury, 1922–1927*, ed. S.G. Bocharov and L.S. Melikhova. Moscow: Russkia slovari, 2000 [1920s], pp.343-355.
- _____. *Besedy s V.D. Duvakinym*. Moscow: Soglasie, 2002.
- BAKHTINE [BAKHTIN], M. M. L’Art et la Responsabilit e. In: S EROT, P.; FRIEDRICH, J. (Eds.) *Langage et pens e: Union Sovi etique, ann ees 1920–1930 (Cahiers de l’ILSL, 24)*. Lausanne: Universit  de Lausanne, 2008 [1919], pp.281-83.
- BARSKY, R. Mikhail Bakhtin. *Gallery of Russian Thinkers*. Available at: [http://www.isfp.co.uk/russian_thinkers/mikhail_bakhtin.html], n.d. Accessed on: 2 November 2008.
- BELOUS, V. G. [Review of *Bakhtin pod maskoi*. Moscow: Labirint, 1993]. *Voprosy filosofii*, , pp.9, 214–215, 1994.
- BLIUM, A.V. *Zapreshchennye knigi russkikh pisatelei i literaturovedov. 1917–1991. Indeks sovetskoi tsenzury s kommentariiami*. St Petersburg: Sankt-Peterburgskii gosudarstvennyi universitet kul´tury i iskusstv, 2003.
- BOCHAROV, S. G. Ob odnom razgovore i vokrug nego. *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 1993a, pp.2-70-89.

- _____. Primechanie k memuaru. *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*. 1993b, pp.3, 209-10.
- BRANDIST, C.; SHEPHERD, D.; TIHANOV, G. The Bakhtin Circle: A timeline. In: BRANDIST, C. et al. (Eds.) *The Bakhtin Circle*, 2004, pp.251–275.
- BRANDIST, C.; SHEPHERD, D.; TIHANOV, G. (Eds.). *The Bakhtin Circle: In the Master's Absence*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004.
- CLARK, K.; HOLQUIST, M. *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, MA, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1984.
- COLLINS, R. *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998.
- EDITORS. Ot izdatel'stva. In M. M. Bakhtin, *Formal'nyi metod v literaturovedenii*. New York: Serebrianyi vek, 1982, pp.3-7.
- ERLICH, V. *Russian Formalism: History, Doctrine*. 's-Gravenhage: Mouton & Co., 1955.
- ESAULOV, I. A. Polifoniia i sobornost' (M.M. Bakhtin i Viach. Ivanov). In: TAMARCHENKO, N.D. (Ed.) *Bakhtinskii tezaurus*. Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 1997, pp.133-37.
- EVREINOV, N. N. *Vvedenie v monodrama*. St Petersburg: Izdanie N. I. Butkovskoi, 1909.
- FADEEV, A. A. Ob odnom spore vseмирno-istoricheskogo znachenii. Zakliuchitel'noe slovo na proizvodstvennom soveshchanii RAPP 29 ianvaria 1932 g. *Na literaturnom postu*, n. 5, pp.1-5, 1932.
- FRIDLENDER, G. M. Nasledie M.M. Bakhtina vchera i segodnia. *Russkaia literatura*, n. 3, pp.198-206, 1993.
- GOGOTISHVILI, L. A. Dvugolosie v sootnoshenii s monologizmom i polifonieii. In: MAKHLIN, V. L. (Ed.). *Bakhtinskii sbornik*, 5. Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2004, pp.338-410.
- GOLLERBAKH, E. *Gorod muz: Detskoe selo kak literaturnyi simvol i pamiatnik byta*. Leningrad: n.p., 1930. Reprints: Moscow: Kniga, 1990; St Petersburg: Art-Liuks, 1993 [1930].
- GRIGOR'EVA, G. G. (Comp.). "Razzhimaiu ladoni, vypuskaiu Vazira": Iz perepiski Iu.N. Tynianova V.B. Shklovskomu (1927–1940). *Soglasie*, n. 30, pp.178-214, 1995.
- GROMOV-KOLLI, A. [Review of Any 1994]. *Novyi mir*, n. 6, pp.250-251, 1995.
- HANSEN-LÖVE, A. A. *Der russische Formalismus: methodologische Rekonstruktion seiner Entwicklung aus dem Prinzip der Verfremdung*. Vienna: Verl. d. Österr. Akad. d. Wiss, 1978.
- HIRSCHKOP, K. *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- HOLQUIST, M.; LIAPUNOV, V. (Eds.). *Art and Answerability*. Translated by Liapunov. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990.
- IOFFE, I. I. *Izbrannoe: 1920-30-e gg*. St Petersburg: ID "Petropolis," 2006.

- IVANOV, V. V. *Ocherki po istorii semiotiki v SSSR*, 2006. Available at: [http://philologos.narod.ru/semiotics/ivanov_lit.htm]. Accessed on: 18 October 2008.
- KAGAN, Iu. M. O starykh bumagakh iz semeinogo arkhiva (M. M. Bakhtin i M. I. Kagan). *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop*, n. 1, pp.60-88, 1992.
- KAZAKOV, A. A. Polifoniia kak zhivoe poniatie. *Bakhtinskie chteniia* (Vítebsk) III, pp.104-115, 1998.
- KELLY, C.; VOLKOV, V. *Obshchestvennost', sobornost': collective identities*. In: KELLY, C.; SHEPHERD, D. (Eds.) *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution: 1881–1940*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp.26-7.
- KHANZEN-LEVE, O. A. [Hansen-Löve, Aage A.]. *Russkii formalizm. Metodologicheskaia rekonstruktsiia razvitiia na osnove printsipa ostraneniia*. Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 2001.
- KOLLINZ, R. [COLLINS, R.]. Predislovie k russkomu izdaniiu. In: *Sotsiologiiia filosofii. Global'naia teoriia intellektual'nogo izmeneniia*. Translated by Collins, 1998. Novosibirsk: Sibirskii khronograf, 2002, pp.32-38.
- KOROVASHKO, A.V. Zametki ob avtorstve spornykh bakhtinskikh tekstov. *Vestnik Nizhegorodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Serii: Filologiiia*, n. 1, pp.62-66, 2001. Available at: [<http://www.unn.ru/?main=issues&sub=vestnik>]. Accessed on: 2 November 2008.
- KOZHINOV, V.V. Kak pishut trudy, ili Proiskhozhdenie nesozdannogo avantiurnogo romana: (Vadim Kozhinov rasskazyvaet o sud'be i lichnosti M.M. Bakhtina). *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop*, n. 1, pp.109–23, 1992.
- _____. Kniga, vokrui kotoroi ne umolkaiut spory. *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop*, n. 4, pp.140–7, 1995.
- L. V. Aktivizatory burzhuaznoi kritiki razoblacheny. Kriticheskaia sektsiia LO VSSP raspushchena. *Krasnaia gazeta* 302 (23 December), 3, 1931.
- MAGOMEDOVA, D. M. Polifoniia. In: TAMARCHENKO, N. D. (Ed.) *Bakhtinskii tezaurus*. Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 1997, pp.164-74.
- MAKHLIN, V. L. Kommentarii. In: *Bakhtin pod maskoi. Maska pervaiia*: V. N. Voloshinov, "Freidizm." Moscow: Labirint, 1993a, pp.111-18.
- _____. Kommentarii. In: *Bakhtin pod maskoi. Maska vtoraiia*: P.N. Medvedev, "Formal'nyi metod v literaturovedenii." Moscow: Labirint, 1993b, pp.193–206.
- _____. Nezasluzhennyi sobesednik (II) (Opyt istoricheskoi orientatsii). In: MAKHLIN, V. L. (Ed.) *Bakhtinskii sbornik* 5. Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2004, pp.315–37.
- _____. Bez kavyчек. *Voprosy literatury*, n. 1, pp.12–21, 2005.
- MAKHLIN, V. L.; MORSON, G.S. Perepiska iz dvukh mirov. In: MAKHLIN, V. L. et al. (Eds.) *Bakhtinskii sbornik* 2. Moscow: n.p., 1991, pp.31-43.
- MANDELSTAM [Mandel'shtam], N. *Hope Abandoned: A Memoir*. Translated by Max Hayward. London: Collins & Harvill Press, 1974 [1972].

MEDVEDEV, Iu. P. Vítebski period zhizni P. N. Medvedeva. In *Bakhtinskie chteniia I: Materialy Mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii. Vítebsk, 3–6 iunia 1995 g.* Vítebsk: N.A. Pan'kov, pp.63–86, 1996.

_____. Na puti k sozdaniiu sotsiologicheskoi poetiki. *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop*, n. 2, pp.5-57, 1998.

_____. “Voskresenie.” K istorii religiozno-filosofskogo krúzhka A.A. Meiera. *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop*, n. 4, pp.82-157, 1999.

_____. Bakhtin dlia bednykh. (Dve retsenzii v vide pis'ma s primechaniiami). *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop*, n. 1, pp.110–26, 2000.

_____. Zhertvy “vnenakhodimosti.” *Voprosy literatury*, n. 6, pp.163–203, 2009.

MEDVEDEV, Iu. P.; MEDVEDEVA, D. A. Pavel Medvedev, Liudvik Flek, Mikhail Bakhtin i drugie (K teorii myslitel'nogo kollektiva). *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop* (special issue: *M.M. Bakhtin v kontekste mirovoi kul'tury*), n. 1-2 (2003), pp.200-233, 2003.

_____. The scholarly legacy of Pavel Medvedev in the light of his dialogue with Bakhtin. In: BRANDIST, C. et al. (Eds.). *The Bakhtin Circle*, 2004, pp.24-43.

_____. Krug M.M. Bakhtina kak “myslitel'nyi kollektiv.” *Zvezda*, n. 7, pp.194-206, 2006.

_____. Krug Bakhtina: khronograf [translation of Brandist, Shepherd and Tihanov 2004]. *Zvezda*, n. 7, pp.192-210, 2008.

MEDVEDEV, P. N. [Review of Fr. Nittsshe [F. Nietzsche], *Avtobiografiia (Ecce homo)*, Translated from the German and with a Preface by Iu. M. Antonovskii. St Petersburg: *Protiv techeniia* 7, 1911.

_____. K teoreticheskomu obosnovaniiu neoimpressionizma. *Kniga Polia Sin'iaka. Novaia studiia*, n. 9, pp.14-15, 1912a.

_____. O Nadsone. *Dialog. Protiv techeniia*, n. 20, p.2, 1912b.

_____. Ob izuchenii Pushkina. *Bessarabskaia zhizn'*, n. 29 (January), 1917a.

_____. Russkii Brand. *Bessarabskaia zhizn'* (31 January), n. 2, 2003 reprint to mark the 110th anniversary of Medvedev's birth: *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop* (special issue: *M. M. Bakhtin v kontekste mirovoi kul'tury*), n. 1-2 (39–40), pp.193–199, 1917b.

_____. Khronika. *Iskusstvo* (Vítebsk), n. 1, p.23, 1921a.

_____. O literaturnom nasledii Dostoevskogo. *Iskusstvo* (Vítebsk), n. 4-6, p.49, 1921b.

_____. Umer Al. Blok. *Iskusstvo* (Vítebsk), n. 4-6, pp.2-3, 1921c.

_____. Teatral'no-literaturnaia khronika. *Zhizn' iskusstva*, n. 33, p.4, 1922.

_____. [Response to Institute for the History of the Arts questionnaire]. *Rukopisnyi otdel IRLI (Pushkinskii Dom)*, f. 172, n. 550, l. 1, 1924.

_____. *V laboratorii pisatel'ia*. Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1933.

_____. *Formalizm i formalisty*. Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo pisatelei, 1934.

_____. *Formal'nyi metod v literaturovedenii: Kriticheskoe vvedenie v sotsiologicheskuiu poetiku*. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1964 [1928].

_____. The Formal (Morphological) Method, or scholarly Salieri-ism. Translated by Ann Shukman. In: SHUKMAN, Ann (ed.). *Bakhtin School Papers*. Oxford: RPT Publications, 1983 [1925], pp.51-65. (Russian Poetics in Translation, 10).

_____. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. Translated by Albert J. Wehrle. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1985 [1928].

_____. Russkii Brand. *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop* (special issue: *M.M. Bakhtin v kontekste mirovoi kul'tury*), n. 1–2, pp.39–40 and 193–99, 2003.

_____. Tolstoi's *Diary*. In: BRANDIST, C. et al. (Eds.) *The Bakhtin Circle*, 2004 [1916], pp.188-92.

_____. Outlines, in Russian and English, of lecture courses on the history of twentieth-century Russian literature, theory of poetry and prose, and theory of artistic creativity (1919–1920). In *Proceedings of the XII International Bakhtin Conference, Jyväskylä, Finland, 18–22 July 2005*. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2005 [1919–1920], pp.19–22 (Russian), pp.31–33 (English).

_____. *Formaali metodi kirjallisuustieteessä: Kriittinen johdatus sosiologiseen poetiikkaan*. Translated and edited by Tapani Laine and Mika Lähteenmäki. Tampere: Vastapaino, 2007 [1928].

_____. *La méthode formelle en littérature*. Translated and edited by Bénédicte Vauthier and Roger Comtet. Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2008 [1928].

MEDVEDEVA, D. A.; MEDVEDEV, Iu. P. “Iskusstvo i zhizn'—ne odno, no v predele ...” P.N. Medvedev. In: *Znamenitnye universanty: Ocherki o pitomtsakh Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta*, vol. 2. St Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 2002, pp.383–403.

MIKHAILOV, A. I. Pokaiannoe vystuplenie P.N. Medvedeva na soveshchanii kriticheskoi seksii Leningradskoi assotsiatsii proletarskikh pisatelei (20 fevralia 1932 g.). Publikatskiiia A.I. Mikhailova. In: MUROMSKII, V. P. (Ed.), *Iz istorii literaturnykh ob'edinenii Petrograda–Leningrada 1920–1930-kh godov: Issledovaniia i materialy*, kn. 2. St Petersburg: Nauka, 2006, pp.103-16.

MORSON, G. S. Two voices in every head. In: *New York Times Book Review*, 32 (10 February), 1985.

MUROMSKII, V. P. Literaturnye ob'edineniia 1917–1932 gg. v Rossii (Problemy izucheniiia). In Muromskii, ed., *Iz istorii literaturnykh ob'edinenii Petrograda–Leningrada 1910–1930-kh godov: Issledovaniia i materialy*, kn. 1. St Peterburg: Nauka, 2002, pp.5–46.

NIKOLAEV, N.I. Commentary on Bakhtin's works of the 1920s grouped under the editorial title “On questions of methodology of the aesthetics of verbal creation” [“K voprosam metodologii estetiki slovesnogo tvorchestva”]. In: BOCHAROV, S. G.; NIKOLAEV, N.I. (Eds.). *M. M. Bakhtin, Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh*, vol. 1. *Filosofskaia estetika 1920-kh godov*. Moscow: Russkie slovari, 2003, pp.707–878.

- PAN'KOV, N. A. Zashchita Makhlina (ogon', voda i mednye trubny perioda "liminal'nosti." *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop*, n.2, pp.134-136, 1998.
- PAN'KOV, N.A. M. M. Bakhtin i teoriia romana. *Voprosy literatury*, n. 3, pp.252-315, 2007.
- RODNIANSKAIA, I. B. Ob'ekt VL: chelovek slovesnyi. *Voprosy literatury*, n. 3, pp.95-112, 2007.
- SEIFERT, Friedrich. C. G. Jungs Lehre von Unbewußten und den Archetypen. *Universitas*, n. IX/8, pp.867-77, 1954.
- SERIOT, P.; FRIEDRICH, J. (Eds.). *Langage et pensée: Union Soviétique, années 1920–1930* Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, 2001. (*Cahiers de l'ILSL*, 24).
- SHATSKIKH, A. S. *Vítebsk. Zhizn' iskusstva: 1917–1922*. Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 2001.
- SHEPHERD, D. A feeling for history? Bakhtin and the problem of 'great time.' *Slavonic and East European Review*, n. 84/1, pp.32–51, 2006.
- SKVOZNIKOV, V.D. Metod. In: NIKOLIUKIN, A.N. (Comp. and ed.). *Literaturnaia entsiklopediia terminov i poniatii*. Moscow: NPK "Intelvak," 2003, pp.534-36.
- TAMARCHENKO, N.D. M. Bakhtin i P. Medvedev: Sud'ba "vvedeniia v poetiku." *Voprosy literatury*, n. 5, pp.160-84, 2008.
- TITUNIK, I.R. Bakhtin and/or Vološinov and/or Medvedev: Dialogue and/or doubletalk? In: DOLEŽEL, L.; STOLZ, B. A.; TITUNIK, I. R. (Eds.). *Language and Literary Theory*. In Honor of Ladislav Matejka. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1984, pp.535-64. (*Papers in Slavic Philology*, 5)
- TIUPA, V. I. V poiskakh istoricheskoi estetiki (uroki M.M. Bakhtina). In: KONKIN, S.S. et al. (Eds.) *M. M. Bakhtin: Problemy nauchnogo naslediia. Mezhvuzovskii sbornik nauchnykh trudov*. Saransk: Izdatel'stvo Mordogskogo universiteta, 1992, pp.34-45.
- _____. V poiskakh bakhtinskogo konteksta (*Zapiski Peredvizhnogo teatra*). *Diskurs*, n. 3–4, pp.189-208, 1997.
- TURBIN, V.N. M.M. Bakhtin: Buenos-Aires-Kemerovo. *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, n. 5, p.8, 1989.
- _____. Karnaval: Religiiia, politika, teosofiiia. In: MAKHLIN, V.L. et al. (Eds.). *Bakhtinskii sbornik 1*. Moscow: Prometei, 1990, pp.6-29.
- VASIL'EV, N.L. Biograficheskii ocherk. In: IUNOV, D.A. (Comp. and ed.). V.N. Voloshinov, *Filosofiiia i sotsiologiiia gumanitarnykh nauk*. St Petersburg: Asta-Press, 1995, pp.5–22.
- VOLOSHINOV, V. N. Archival materials. In: BRANDIST et al. (Eds.). Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press. *The Bakhtin Circle*, 2004 [1927–1928], pp.223–50.
- _____. Opyt sotsiologicheskoi poetiki/An essay in sociological poetics. Published as supplement to Brandist, Craig. 2008. Sociological linguistics in Leningrad: the Institute for the Comparative History of the Literatures and Languages of the West and East

(*ILJaZV*), 1921–1933. *Russian Literature* LXIII/II/III/IV, 171-200 (Russian 190-192; English 193-95), 2008 [1925–1926].

WEHRLE, A. J. A note on the translation. In: BAKHTIN, M.M./MEDVEDEV, P.N. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. Translated by Albert J. Wehrle. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1985, p.xxv-xxvi. [1928].

ZAKHAROV, V.N. [Response to questionnaire]. *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop*, n. 1, p.10, 1994.

_____. Problema zhanra v “shkole” Bakhtina (Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov). In: *The XII International Bakhtin Conference. Jyväskylä, July 18-22 2005*. Programme 58, 2005.

ZAKHAROV, V.N. Problema zhanra v “shkole” Bakhtina. *Russkaia literatura*, n.3, pp.19-30, 2007.

ZDOL'NIKOV, V.V. Koleblemye trenozhniki zhretsov. *Dialog. Karnaval. Khronotop*, n. 3, pp.174-191, 1998.

ZEMLIANOI, S. Chto takoe ezotericheskii marksizm? “Zolotye 20-e” v tvorchestve Bakhtina i ego shkoly. *Ex libris NG* (28 January), 1999.

APPENDIX

P.N. Medvedev: Reviews of 1911 and 1912³⁷

LANSON. G. *Metod v istorii literatury*. [Method in Literary History] Translated from the French and with an afterword by M. Gershenzon. Moscow, Moscow, 1911.³⁸

We have viewed literature in various ways. It has been for us a sacred locus for serving society, a beautiful trifle, a source of heroic, heartfelt impulses and, finally (the most profound of “scientific” definitions), an aggregate of verbal products in which the spiritual life of a people finds expression. But literature as the secret of artistic speculation, oh, least of all have we sought to understand literature thus.

³⁷ The three reviews were first published in *Protiv techeniia* [Against the Current], a supplement to the Petersburg/Petrograd journal *Svobodnym khudozhestvam* [To the Free Arts], n. 7, pp.3-4, 1911.

Editor’s Note: The reviews were translated from Russian into English by David Shepherd in 2010.

³⁸ The Russian title of the first book reviewed is *Metod v istorii literatury*; the French original is *La méthode de l’histoire littéraire*, published in *Revue du Mois*, pp.385-413, 10 October 2010.

Literary history? Among the things that have passed for literary history are compilations of writers' biographies, characterizations of literary characters, and history of social thought to the extent that it is manifested in the artistic word. But literary history as a science or at least as a "science-like" discipline, with precise subject boundaries and its own method, is something that has begun to be talked about only in the last few years under the influence of works from the Potebnia and Veselovskii school.

This small book by Lanson and Gershenzon is therefore important simply for posing and addressing in a concerted manner all these questions: Lanson offers a general concept of method and a schema for its exemplary use, while in his fine afterword Gershenzon offers a re-evaluation of commonly accepted views of the essence and purpose of literary history. Of course they do not do these things exhaustively: Lanson, for example, deals too hastily with the relationship of literature to life and vice versa, while Gershenzon leaves unexamined a cardinal question: how is it possible for literary history to clarify the essence and growth of artistic intuition if this is for now merely a term that does not encapsulate a strictly, scientifically understood concept, and its growth is a mere postulate or hypothesis? Moreover, it is not possible to agree with all the positions advanced, especially by Lanson. But despite this the book is undoubtedly valuable and a fine addition to our rather sparse library of works on the methodology of literary history.

F. Nietzsche. *Autobiography (Ecce homo)*. Translated from the German and with a foreword by Iu.M. Antonovskii. St Petersburg, 1911.³⁹

"Those who can breathe the air of my writings," wrote Nietzsche, "know that it is an air of the heights, a *strong* air. One must be made for it. Otherwise there is no small danger that one may catch cold in it."

³⁹ The Russian title of the second book reviewed is *Avtobiografiia (Ecce homo)*. The quotation from Nietzsche in the first paragraph is from: NIETZSCHE, F. *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. In: *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale; *Ecce Homo*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books, 1969, pp.215–344 (218, Preface).

Russia's recent period of Nietzscheanism was just such a cold. Which is why in our country this great philosopher has either not been understood or been equated with a few elementary formulae of aristocratic egoism.

Now is a time for recovery, a moment for clear, in-depth examination of the truths whose proclaimer was Nietzsche.

For this purpose it is essential to *study* his philosophy, for which the book under review is indispensable.

Here and only here does Nietzsche take his listeners into account and, descending from the mountain heights where Zarathustra had preached, explain to them its burden and symbolic significance.

The *Autobiography* is thus a prolegomenon to Nietzsche's philosophy, the best, and virtually only, source enabling us to know its true meaning. Mr Antonovskii's translation is good, and thoroughly literary.

SIGNAC, Paul. *From Eugène Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism*. Translated from the French and with a foreword by I. Dudin. Moscow: I. Knebel', 1912. ⁴⁰ ⁴¹

Toward a Theoretical Grounding of Neo-Impressionism

If, for us, neo-impressionism is the last word in artistic revelation, and if Russian painting has still to pass through its system/structure, in the West, and in particular in France, this movement has already lived through its period of *Sturm und Drang* and irretrievably yielded up to the past those splendid years of its youth when the new

⁴⁰ The review was published in the Petrograd journal *Novaia studiia* (*New Workshop*), n. 9, pp.14-15, 1912.

⁴¹ The Russian title of the book reviewed is Pol' Sin'iak, *Ot Ezheny Delakruy k neoimpressionizmu*. The French original is: SIGNAC, P. *D'Eugène Delacroix au Néo-Impressionisme*. Paris: Henri Flour, 1911. English translation *From Eugène Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism*. Third Edition. Paris: H. Floury, Bookseller and Publisher, 1, Boulevard des Capucines, 1, 1921. Translated by Willa Silverman. In: RATLIFF, F. *Paul Signac and Color in Neo-Impressionism*. New York: The Rockefeller University Press, 1992, pp.193-285. Page references in the text are to the Russian, then the French, then the English editions (except in the case of the quotations from Delacroix, which are taken from the Signac book, but for which Medvedev does not give page references in his review; here the references are to French, then English editions).

tidings of neo-impressionism charmed and drew powerfully to them the boldest and most brilliant hearts.

In the last twenty years the turbulent, voracious stream of [artistic] inquiry has surged into new channels, the new schools of the Futurists and cubism have emerged and grown in strength, and in the life of neo-impressionism an almost “academic” phase of tranquillity and immobility has set in. At such moments what usually arises is a drive toward theoretical grounding of a school, a drive to fix the achievements of creative intuition in a precise, clear canon.

And neo-impressionism, subject as it is to this law, received just such a grounding toward the beginning of the current century in Paul Signac’s *From Eugène Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism*, which has just appeared on the Russian book market in a perfectly decent translation by I.O. Dudin. The publication of this book is a sufficiently significant event for us to draw our readers’ attention to it. Schematically, the whole history of French painting in the nineteenth century can be viewed as a struggle between, and parallel development of, two schools: academicism, beginning with David and Ingres, and the romantic school, the school of free inquiry whose members, beginning with Delacroix, were always renegades, outcasts in the grey atmosphere of the Parisian *salons*. In this second school it is not difficult to identify the slogan that unites all its supporters, the fervently desired “bright Cumae”⁴² for which their zeal burned. This zeal must be expressed as a tremulous drive to bring color to life, to pour into its wasted organism the maximum of blood and passion or - if we take into account the enormous parallelism between color and sound - to make the color resonate, sing. This drive, deepening with each new decade, gives the mighty Coryphaeus of the chorus of romantics, Delacroix, an affinity with those representatives of the strictest realism, the neo-impressionists Seurat and Signac; and the latter has done a very good thing in attempting in his book to demonstrate and reinforce this connection in the most thorough manner.

⁴² This is a reference to the Symbolist poet Valerii Briusov’s poem “Daedalus and Icarus” (“Dedal i Ikar,” 1908), in which Daedalus urges his son not to fly too close to either sea or sun, so that they might reach their destination, “bright [lit. white] Cumae.” In book 6 of the *Aeneid*, Virgil says that it was at Cumae, the home of the Cumaean Sybil, that Daedalus, following the loss of Icarus, dedicated a temple to Apollo; in other versions of the story the site of the temple is Sicily. See the Wikipedia entry on Daedalus: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daedalus> (consulted 27 March 2010).

Not only here in Russia, but in other countries too, neo-impressionism is often referred to as *pointillism*, so that its major constructive feature is seen to lie in the technique of painting in tiny, multi-coloured dots.

But from the very first pages of his study Signac shows how inaccurate and narrow is this view:

The Neo-Impressionist does not paint with *dots*, he *divides*.
This *dividing* is a way of:
Securing all the benefits of brightness, color, and harmony by:
1. *The optical mixture of uniquely pure pigments (all the hues of the prism and all their tones);*
2. *The separation of the diverse elements (local color, color of lighting, their reactions, etc....);*
3. *The balance and proportion of these elements (in accordance with the laws of contrast, gradation and irradiation);*
4. *The choice of a brushstroke which fits to the size of the painting.*
(pp.14-15;5-6;207).

Thus we see that neo-impressionism cannot be equated with an isolated technique; it is a whole scientific theory of the best use of painting materials: paint, canvas, but also the planes of the picture; it is a whole school that has set itself the task of creating harmony from the chromatic scale of the solar spectrum.

And it is astonishing how this very same task occupied and exercised Delacroix, whose best impulses were directed towards achieving precisely such a “solar” style. For the most minutely detailed, irrefutable proof of this we refer our readers to Signac’s book, confining ourselves here to just one extract from Delacroix’s notebook:

“Nature,” he wrote, “is only a dictionary, where one looks for words [...] where one finds the elements which make up a sentence or a story; but no one has ever considered a dictionary to be a composition, in the poetic sense of the word” (pp.19; 217).

Further: [214]. “style can result only from thorough research and experiment” (pp.14; 214)

Delacroix himself, of course, was hugely involved in these inquiries; and he achieved much through the discovery of his genius. Subsequent artists, who had a blood bond with Delacroix, tried to give this research and experiment systematic sweep and scientific form. Thus Jongkind, and after him the impressionists, led by Monet and

Renoir, began to make prolific use of optical rather than pigmentary mixing, and established on their palette the six pure tones of the solar spectrum. Finally, it fell to the neo-impressionists to perform one last gesture: to put pigmentary mixing aside altogether, replacing it with optical mixing, and to introduce the divided touch “which fits to the size of the painting” - completing the move from the hatching used by Delacroix to the small *point* or dot of colour.

Here is how Signac formulates the progression and results of this evolution:

DELACROIX. By repudiating all flat colors and using gradation, contrast, and optical mixing, he succeeds in drawing from the partially toned-down elements available to him a maximum of brilliance, whose harmony is guaranteed by a systematic application of the laws governing color.

IMPRESSIONISM. By composing its palette only from pure colors, it obtains a much brighter and more colorful result than that of Delacroix; but the brilliance of this result is lessened by soiled pigmentary mixtures, and its harmony is limited by an intermittent and irregular application of the laws governing color.

NEO-IMPRESSIONISM. By the elimination of all soiled mixtures, the exclusive use of the optical mixture of pure colors, a methodical divisionism and respect for the scientific theory of color, it guarantees maximum brightness, color, and harmony, a result which had previously not been attained. (pp.128–129; 92; 267)

Their color is situated in the middle of the radius which, on a chromatic circle, goes from the white center to the black circumference. And in this location it is endowed with the fullest saturation, power and beauty. (SIGNAC, pp.162–163;116; 284)

This establishment of the shared principles of neo-impressionism and its strong, visceral connection with the cherished and great names of the past concludes the most important, at times brilliant part of Signac’s book. The subsequent part, devoted to detailed analysis of *division* and the artistic education of the eye, is a compilation/reproduction/copy of contemporary doctrines of psychology and optics.

And so neo-impressionism is grounded, there can be no disputing the correctness and usefulness of its theory. But, first, neo-impressionism has not proved in practice that it and only it achieves “the fullest saturation, power and beauty.” But in art such “pragmatic” proofs are the only criterion of truthfulness; second, neo-impressionism is not a doctrine or canon capable of becoming a *ratio scripta* for the artist, but merely a set of useful advice and information. The significance of form is, of course, great and, without any doubt, the artist is obliged to know the laws of his material. But all this, like

René Guille and Valerii Briusov's doctrine of scientific poetry, constitutes, as it were, the lowest level of creative sorcery. Higher and above there is the Tolstoyan "zest" that was missing from Protasov's life,⁴³ there is the whirlwind of individual taking flight, of intoxicated reaching for the sky, with which any great and true art is blessed.

Received August 27, 2015

Accepted October 10, 2015

⁴³ The reference here is to Lev Tolstoy's play *The Living Corpse* (*Zhivoi trup*, c. 1900, but published only after his death in 1910), where the protagonist Protasov explains his infidelity by referring to the lack of "zest" in his marriage.