

Novelization and Serialization: Or, Forms of Time Otherwise / *Romancização ou serialização: ou diferentes formas de tempo*

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ABSTRACT

This article explores Bakhtin's notion of novelization in relation to his theory of time and serialization. For Bakhtin, the novel is historical without history. He traces the novel's history to ancient Greece, without giving it a fixed identity, seeing it in terms of tendencies and crises. Novelization, for Bakhtin, is a means of opening up literary history to a more dialogic analysis of form and a discursive mode to critically assess ideologies. He underlines the novel's destabilizing ability, its decentralizing of discourse, and its accommodation of unofficial and alien voices. Bakhtin's suggestive historical account of the novel's development allows us to extend his thinking and sketch an outline of novelization as a future conditional, rather than a generic law. Bakhtin offers a problematic version of modernity, in which the novel activates time's purchase on the present. But because of modernity's propensity for crisis, time is suspended. The article also examines a chronotope of the novel about which Bakhtin has little to say: the time/space of nation. Benedict Anderson and Etienne Balibar, whose interests include the themes of comparatism, multiculturalism, and postcolonialism, question the idea of nation through their analyses that privilege the novel genre.

KEYWORDS: Novelization; Serialization; Ideologies; Modernity; Nation

RESUMO

Este artigo explora a noção bakhtiniana de romancização no que se refere à sua teoria de tempo e serialização. Bakhtin, para quem o romance é histórico, mas sem história, remonta à Grécia antiga para traçar a história do romance. Sem dar a ele uma identidade fixa, compreende-o em termos de tendências e crises. A romancização, para Bakhtin, é um meio de tornar a história literária acessível a uma análise mais dialógica da forma e um modo discursivo para avaliar ideologias criticamente. Ele enfatiza a habilidade desestabilizadora do romance, sua descentralização do discurso e sua acomodação de vozes não oficiais e estrangeiras. Seu sugestivo relato histórico do desenvolvimento do romance nos permite estender seu pensamento e esboçar a romancização mais como uma condição futura do que uma lei genérica. Bakhtin oferece uma versão problemática de modernidade, na qual o romance ativa a influência do tempo sobre o presente; no entanto, por causa da propensão à crise da modernidade, o tempo é suspenso. O artigo também examina um cronotopo do romance sobre o qual Bakhtin tem pouco a dizer: o tempo/espaço da nação. Benedict Anderson e Etienne Balibar, cujos interesses incluem temas relacionados ao comparatismo, ao multiculturalismo e ao pós-colonialismo, questionam a ideia de nação por meio de análises em que o gênero romanesco é privilegiado.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Romancização; Serialização; Ideologias; Modernidade; Nação

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In a notable exchange in *PMLA* in 1994 Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (1994) express doubt about Gary Saul Morson's essay for the same journal in 1992 in which he argues, "[t]he idea that Bakhtin was a Marxist or that his concept of dialogue somehow offers support for dialectics seems truly weird" (MORSON, 1992, p.228). Bakhtin, in Morson's essay, provides incontrovertible evidence to the contrary (the usual tactic is to deploy Bakhtin's brusque and rather thin contrast of dialogue and dialectics from his notes made in 1970-71) and Morson opines, instead, that for Bakhtin, Marxism and socialism – these are never distinguished by Morson – are examples of "theoretism" that close off time and choke individual creativity. Morson solemnly proclaims, "To Slavists, Marxism seems anything but progressive or liberating; its record in practice marks it as the antagonist, rather than a natural ally, of freedom; and its history of ethnic repression and genocide casts it as the very opposite of American progressive ideals" (1992, p.227). Slavists are also probably familiar with the fact that although America has many progressive ideals, they have had to be argued in the face of a founding genocide (of Native Americans) and an ethnic repression that continued well beyond the Emancipation Proclamation. History appears to mingle opposites.

Hirschkop and Shepherd read Morson's intervention as poorly-disguised White Liberal absolutism - a position more explicitly elaborated in their timely translation of some of Morson's published Russian correspondence – although sometimes the difference with conservative absolutism is not entirely clear – yet more mingling.

In his reply, Morson claims to have been quoted out of context, and that the positions they ascribe to him are actually ones he ascribes to others. (Interestingly, the others are usually Slavists with whom both the essay and the reply are strongly allied). The point of Hirschkop and Shepherd's response was not to reclaim Bakhtin for Marxism, but to suggest that Morson's representation of Slavists, and Bakhtin in particular, was no less political in its outlook and intentions, and that the conspiracy of leftism in American universities that Morson describes – like the wholesale assignment of radical theory to "theoretism" – was something less than dialogic where a politics of criticism is concerned.

It would seem anachronistic, in the second decade of the new millennium, to resuscitate an old debate about the politics of criticism and Bakhtin, but aspects of this exchange have become more, rather than less, prescient in the intervening years and, as

I will argue, they can sharpen our sense of the temporal logic that Bakhtin espoused. Indeed, it is Bakhtin's theorization of time that finds time for precisely the schism enacted in the *PMLA* "dialogue." This does not mean we are doomed to repeat the divisions expressed, but rather that we must pay more attention to the serial connections that link and distinguish the temporal eventness which Morson, among others, privileges in Bakhtin's work. Nevertheless, if my own reading remains inconsistent with the exchange - and to some extent with Bakhtin - this is also a measure of present distance, or heterochrony which, in contrast with Morson, is a politics of difference in and of time. This, for instance, rather than generic supremacy, is what I find interesting in Bakhtin's conception of novelization.¹

Politics does not interfere with the aesthetic proclivities of novelization: it is novelization itself that will not leave political discourse alone. Novelization has always signified a crisis in genre and in particular canons of genre: the question is whether it is itself symptomatic of crisis or an explanation of the same? For all those who bristle when political economy seems to poach on the literary, one should remind ourselves that Bakhtin conceived of novelization as the poacher *par excellence* and, significantly, that the concept of novelization was itself born of crisis, both personal and socio-economic in the widest sense. Indeed, it is the crux of this conjunction that will lead later to our discussion of serialization and the nation, the latter a specific victim of capitalist globalization.

Bakhtin warned against ideological approaches, although his view of ideology was overdetermined by a sensitive dependence to obfuscating the meaning of ideology very much at one with a desire to bemuse those who could choose his life or death. For those who identify in Bakhtin "unremitting attacks on Marxism," for instance, it is worth remembering that dialogism would have demanded a more subtle strategy in Soviet Russia. At the root of ideology is a political suasion that does not have to name itself as such. However, novelization is not just a means of opening up literary history to a more dialogic and heteroglottic analysis of form - which is how it is most used - but it is also a discursive mode, one that might assess the ideological or the ruling ideas of any one time without necessarily endorsing, decrying or even naming them. The novel might be Bakhtin's hero, but no specific novel need stand in for its heroism. This is

¹ This theory is redolent in the essay collection *The Dialogic Imagination* (BAKHTIN, 1981).

what places Bakhtin's assessment of the novel at odds with F.R. Leavis, or Forster, or even Lukacs, although the latter is, like Bakhtin, less interested in canons and more in understanding the logic of canonicity and its discontents. Pointedly, when considering Bakhtin and Lukacs, the line between a good dialogician and a bad one appears perilously thin, as is the reverse. The good dialogician, for instance, will castigate Lukacs for hypostatizing the epic rather than providing the novel's prehistory. The bad dialectician in this schema might overrate the epic, but still has the advantage of having more than the epic and novel at her or his disposal. The bad dialogician will merely repeat the errors of the bad dialectician in the service of a pure novel (another oxymoron), whereas the good dialectician must account for the prehistory of everything, or at least that which serves totality's demand. Bakhtin, the dialogician may not have always been in command of his thinking on the subject - or the dialectician, here the content goes beyond the phrase - but novelization opens up the study of literary endeavor by taking generic interference as both a force of change and of profound specificity. Bakhtin says, "each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases" (1981₂ p.267), a wonderful insight into the heteroglottic profusion of discourses at any one moment, but not necessarily the key to understanding their adjudication.

By taking up the generic markers of the novel, Bakhtin is able not only to distance himself from novelistic naysayers like Shpet, but also more complementary theorists of rhetorical discourse like Vinogradov. The difficulty is that the centripetal and centrifugal forces that rage in the sign's sea of specificity dialogize the terms of theory themselves. We need not make a virtue of endless regression or some of the flightier versions of deconstruction to gainsay this; but it does mean that novelization might not be beyond its own creative reaccentuation. This, of course, is the dialectician's desire to read time into concepts themselves. We are most at home when novelization is happily ensconced in this novel or that, whereas we are a tad more wary with Bakhtin's insistence on novelization's prehistory as romance in ancient Greek culture. The concept clearly exceeds the novel in both its prehistory and in its future, so we might see it now in everything from a blog to a symbol in an avatar's shopping list. The difficulty, then, is not just novelization's profligate past, but the exponential shift in discursive realms that saturate the *socius* from one moment to the next. If we call all of

this genre mixing, bending, blending, and hybridizing “novelization,” then discourse has become a rather forbidding morass. Surely novelization attacks the elitist move to close form to heteroglottic change, but that rousing call to democratize discourse threatens all manner of discernment, so that one dare not distinguish the wheat from the chaff. Could it be that the truth of novelization as concept is that it veritably ends the novel with modernity, but paradoxically finds its edginess edged out by that superadequation? This is what I refer to as the time of difference.

Neither Bakhtin nor Lukacs believes the novel is an essentially bourgeois form but, as Galin Tihanov (2000) has pointed out, this takes them to two very different versions of modernity. Unfortunately, we no longer have the privilege of choosing between them - like the famous Lukacs/Brecht debates, they can be ventriloquated but not reproduced as is. Deep down, one hopes that together dialogism and dialectics together represent general relativity and quantum mechanics when it comes to human endeavor; but modernity, let us say, has strings attached and novelization has more hubris than hope. Nevertheless, let me sketch an outline of novelization as a future conditional, rather than a generic law, before connecting it to the pedestrian material of temporality itself.

In the 1930s, while the United States’ economy was tanking and Western Europe was beginning to register the rise of national socialism in Germany, Stalinism in the Soviet Union was producing severe crises of its own. The collectivization program had reaped some benefits, but also disastrous consequences. The murder of so-called kulaks is well known; some were merely peasants who disagreed, but Soviet policy also facilitated devastating famine in the Ukraine and Kazakhstan that cost several million lives. While Kustanai (where Bakhtin lived in exile) was largely spared this level of deprivation - plenty of ethnic Russians lived there - collectivization still produced significant hardships and resistance. Clark and Holquist note it is ironic that Bakhtin’s only publication of the period was an essay that drew on his bookkeeping abilities and training of farmers in collectivization (CLARK; HOLQUIST, 1984). The essay, “Experience Based on a Study of Demand among Kolkhoz Workers” is described as a “nonserious venture into print” for an otherwise banned writer (1984, p.257). If, as Clark and Holquist contend, Bakhtin was profoundly upset by the effects of collectivization in Kazakhstan, this was a very odd way to express it. The 1932 Law of

the Wheat Ears, for instance - a collectivization policy against the hoarding of even the smallest amounts of grain - became a veritable death warrant which placed a question mark over the whole movement. Bakhtin's "nonserious" support must then be seen in light of a more general strategic quiescence among the intelligentsia, the negative capability, in effect, of dialogism.

Stalinism also reinforced a specific hermeticism among literary scholars. Even the famous 1934-35 Moscow conference on the novel that Tihanov carefully explores offered disputes that were largely pre-scripted. Lukacs tinkered with his theory of the novel; others gave the novel a role in the communist homogenizing of culture, and a few others gave *recherché* accounts of bourgeois extravagance. On the whole, however, such events confirmed that all criticism of official discourse should sound a lot like official discourse, lest one find oneself subject to a short, brutish extraordinary rendition, a black site, from which one might exit horizontally. Bakhtin knew this to be true; his exile was a reprieve from certain death in a prison camp; and so, like others of his generation, sacralizing the word was both a professional and prophylactic endeavour. Aesthetics was revered, especially of the past. But if one wanted to address the present, either a perspicuous opacity was in order or a forthright commitment to given truths. We should not underestimate this culture of fear, just as future historians should take note of the muzzle which the war on terror has fashioned - except when it comes to adventure time; we can have as many of those hours and days as we wish.

How might this inflect the concept of novelization? Beyond Bakhtin's by now obvious purloining from Cassirer's treatise on symbolic forms, his notion of generic modification and hybridization has an open-endedness that frees him from any judgment on specific novelistic art of the present. If Lukacs' Russian novel reading list was short, Bakhtin conveniently and justifiably felt that deep critical exegesis was possible only up to Dostoevsky, with the rest of world literary output beyond reach - often literally so, despite his prodigious memory. Novelization, from this perspective, is an idea at once coruscatingly historical, while synchronically absent in the present. Yet today, one might adduce the opposite tendency, the presentist hangover of the end of history argument in which the heteroglotic "now" is the only one perceptible. The interruption of the future must disturb this cruel reversal.

Novelization, for Bakhtin, is historical without history. The novel can be traced to ancient Greece, but has less generic identity than it does tendencies. These refer to the destabilizing ability of the novel, its decentralizing of discourse, its accommodation of unofficial and alien voices, and its will to power vis-à-vis other genres. Importantly, the principle of struggle is emphasized, albeit one shorn of distinct social stratification. Yet these novelizing tendencies are the impress of a veritable beneficent emperor as novel: “Know thee other genres that ye shall prosper from my energetic colonization;” and this space has no coordinate in time - it is immanent to generic interaction, but offers no quintessence in canonization. Think of this as Deleuzean intensity, or even chaos theory’s pivot on homeostasis, but it will not secrete normative literary history, and this is why Bakhtin resembles more the great philologists, Cassirer, Vossler, or Auerbach than he does theorists of the novel like Lukacs, Frye, Watt, or, more recently, Moretti.

When Bakhtin, in his summary to *Epic and Novel*, writes: “[t]he present, in all its open-endedness [...] is an enormous revolution in the creative consciousness of man,” he merely underlines that novelization cannot speak to it. He can aver the novel is plasticity itself, (1981, p.39), but to say more than this might separate the revolution he has in mind from the revolution before him. I am not saying Bakhtin’s theory of novelization was merely the product of a surveillance society - although I understand each time I proudly display my toiletries to Homeland Security, I introject, precisely, a totalitarian paradigm of self-policing and understand anew the unfreedom that secures me. But if novelization bespeaks a genre that “structures itself in a zone of direct contact with developing reality” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.39), one can only bemoan the fact that Bakhtin was inclined not to detail this contact zone in a systematic way. (Contrast this with the 1930s writing of Walter Benjamin, whose work seethes with the discourse of emergency). If one combines novelization’s pastness without a past with its present as silence, one is not sure whether the logic of the novel is at stake or some other nostrum, say, that of the commodity; and therein lies a classic antimony of modernity.

In part, Bakhtin attempts to overcome this antimony by squaring a Kantian emphasis on the axiomatic with a Hegelian critique on the developing consciousness of time, or what I have noted as the difference of time. The effort is laudable, yet even as time is foregrounded in the chronotope, the present is emptied of verifiable content, the

actual coordinates of progress that prove the epistemological claims of novelization as process. Before the utopian synthesis of being for itself and being in itself, Hegel's consciousness of time is one of pain; this logic, with its corresponding suppression or deferral of the present, is not the monopoly of gulag epistemology. We are thus offered an intriguing and problematic concept of modernity, in which the novel activates time's purchase on the present, but, because of modernity's structural propensity for crisis, the difference of time is cruelly suspended. Politics is not the realm that reconnects the cut between diachrony and synchrony; after all, it is quite willing to promote an alibi of timelessness in the face of the timeful, yet there is good reason to believe that if novelization is consanguine with progress in modernity's sweep, then politics might return society and nature to the equation and open up an understanding of the novel as modernity's endgame, the revolution of the revolutionary. And thus it is to the time of difference that we should turn.

The most significant chronotope of the novel is the one about which Bakhtin has almost nothing to say: the time/space of nation. This statement might come as a surprise from someone who has contributed to a volume called *Bakhtin and the Nation* but as the editors aver, Bakhtin must to some extent be overreached in order for the question to be adequately evoked.² In the same volume, Tihanov describes Bakhtin's theory of the novel as a latent theory of nation and nationalism to which I would reply, better latent than never. Lukacs - when he was a good dialectician, of course - never failed to link the intricacies of the novel to consciousness of nation and his studies on Goethe, Mann, and Dostoevsky are replete with such analysis. Auerbach, perhaps the preeminent philologist of the twentieth century, could not array his critique of Stendhal and Balzac without the formative force of France to the fore. But Bakhtin, who lived through the most tumultuous years in the life of the Russian nation, did not think deeply about the imbrication of novelization and nationness. This may be the strategic silence of a man who has been called a xenophobe, one who did not even like to meet foreigners, or it may be because the temporality of nation disturbs the time of novelization enough to force content into its present.

For comparatism, multiculturalism, and postcolonialism in particular, questioning the nation through the novel is de rigueur, and so, by extension, we find

² See Hitchcock (1999); see also the editorial collective's introduction (pp.11-30).

Bakhtin conducive to that endeavour. The difficulty, however, is that to problematize the nation for theories of the novel, one must have a fairly precise sense of what constitutes a nation, linguistically, geographically, historically, ethnically, politically and even technologically. One cannot merely state that the novel transcends national boundaries, as if this frees the critic from responsible explanation of the fact. One has to say, however, that defining a nation is no easy task, and has as its corollary the forbidding practice of defining the novel. Hence, the emphasis on process: novelization for Bakhtin, and for me here, serialization. Process, in a sort of Hegelian exegesis of becoming, permits measure without measurement—at least if measurement is read as purely quantitative. By taking novelization and nation as the interrupted and interrupting space of politics, the time of difference requires a supplementary concept that interrogates the absent present in Bakhtin’s theory.

Benedict Anderson’s articulation of the nation as an imagined community is often taken to mean that the imaginary of both literature and nation are synonymous. Thus, writers like Jose Rizal and Pramoedya Ananta Toer (his primary touchstones) are not only exemplary in narrating nation, but are always coincident with its expression (ANDERSON, 1991). In *The Long Space* I argue that Anderson, in fact, does not make this assumption, because language first figures the authors’ possible expressivity; thus, it is through the study of language that the imagined characteristic of nation can be glimpsed, whether in Pramoedya’s “national language,” Bahasa Indonesia, or Rizal’s anti-colonial Spanish.³ The prevailing problem that authors are too often taken as cultural representatives of the nation is one that Anderson attempts to unpack and reformulate. The complex sinews of modernity may instantiate the nation state and require the ideological and cultural architectonics of national stories, but writers are notoriously untrustworthy spokespeople for the state, something that the topos of exile in modernism underlines – a phenomenon that Bakhtin, obviously, would have appreciated. Thus, nation is not the fixed point against which the writer’s affiliation can be measured but rather, like language, is a living substance of identification moving unevenly with the writer’s own dynamism. An extant state wants the cultural imprimatur of national writers in order to justify its being as itself a recognizable and stable way of living. (If states promote literacy, it is also in the hope that the literate will

³ See Hitchcock (2010), especially Chapters One and Four.

repay through expressive affiliation). For Anderson, then, writers like Rizal and Pramoedya permit a deeper engagement with the writing of nation, especially those states written out, as it were, through decolonization.

But this phenomenology of nation itself requires further qualification in order to understand the parameters of its narration. Etienne Balibar, for instance, distinguishes the nation from the nation form: the former can be read as nations and nationalities that produce an identification through reproduction or repetition (the work of state alluded to above); the latter, however, is a combinatory mode, a social formation whose hegemony is itself unevenly developed among other formations, dominant or otherwise (BALIBAR, 2004). Nation form, then, is “the concept of a structure capable of producing determinate ‘community effects’” [but] “is not itself a community” (BALIBAR, 2004, pp.20-21). It is a principle that moves across nations and structurally is their absent cause, the constraining concept that paradoxically enables the form to appear. This is also the time of difference between novelization and novel, I would argue. Thus, the nation appears in serialization but its form is the ward of novelization.

There is more to Balibar’s supplement to nation through nation form than that, especially in his explicit references to Anderson’s model, which he associates with “mere discourses of the community (mythical, historical or literary grand narratives),” the stuff of novelization. Now Balibar’s point is to assert the structural significance of the formation; yet it is important to note that culture is never a question of principle alone, as state hegemony well knows. Balibar also suggests that “historicity itself has a history,” a pertinent reminder (to Bakhtin, among others) that histories include methodologies. On its own, this is not revelatory, but in the case of the nation form underlines that it may become unrecognizable from the point of view of a defining profile. Again, this speaks to the difference between novelization and the novel. Thus, while Balibar concedes that “all historical communities are primarily ‘imagined communities’” (2004, p.130), he will discuss neither the actual history nor the use of imagination in that formula. This is essentially Bakhtin’s position regarding novelization and nation, although it is mediated through Bakhtin’s experience of Russia, rather than through a structural analysis of state form.

Similarly, Anderson’s silence on the deep structure of nation form is not produced by beginning from the novel or literary lives as cultural evidence of nation or

nationalism, but by his belief that he has discovered this logic in the symbolic and its attendant tropes. In the end, we could suggest that Anderson and Balibar approach the same problem, the nation and exigencies of nationness, through related metaphors: for Balibar, ambiguity, ambivalence, and oscillation; for Anderson, a kind of spectral non-equivalence. This would permit a correspondence between their respective institutional critiques: Balibar's from a position that sees hegemony in a fluctuating logic of constraint and multiplicity, Anderson's from the no less secure supposition that there might be something other than the authentic at either end of his methodological "telescope." Bakhtin acts as a heuristic link between the two, using a third metaphor, openness, the way in which, perhaps, novelization offers form to nation without naming it.

By eschewing any structural analysis of the nation form for phenomenological content, the nation as structural address, Anderson misses an opportunity to reveal the shortfalls of the former as a dialogic counter to the misinterpretation of the imagined community of nation as an unproblematic serial structure, one simply reproduced within the artful homogenous time of the now, crossed between Benjamin's "Jetztzeit" and Auerbach's "meanwhile." This has a tendency to reinforce the reduction of nation to a mimetic faculty, whereas this imitative moment also has a diegetic facility that questions the logic of time at stake (and also its realism). Again, this is not because Anderson himself skips over institutional critique, but because he trusts his literary eye more than his sense of social science. This has proved a boon for literary criticism in particular, and, if it is inadvertent, it has been reinforced by Anderson's more recent introduction of a spectral economy of difference into comparative studies. Let me be clear, the solution is not simply to reconnect the nation form and nation via Bakhtin, Balibar, and Anderson, but to understand the logic of separation itself, a critical mode that is too often at one with the institutional reproduction of nation as a given, even, or especially, in hypostasis. The tension between nation form and nation must be preserved in cultural analysis to register the structural ambivalence in both as enabling of a seriality that unbinds nation in a specific logic of transnationalism.

Serialization, at this level, is time's writing system of nation. However we characterize its deep structure, Anderson permits an understanding of nation formation as a process that is at once institutionally repetitive and inscribed. If Balibar's

intervention reminds us that the nation form is not itself a community (2004, p.20), then Anderson's thoughts on seriality attend to community practices that are not themselves a form, yet appear to be. This is what Pheng Cheah refers to as "part of the grammar of every nation," and may be the absent cause in the process of its narration, especially in a thinker like Bakhtin (CHEAH, 1999). Anderson advances the notion that "the origin of nationalism... lives by making comparisons," a brilliant formulation given the spectral aura in which this "living" takes place. As Cheah points out, comparison here is the cause of restlessness, but is not just the ward of metropolitan elites or cosmopolitan exiles: it is itself caused by the peripatetic flux of capitalist social relations which, if it sounds like Althusser's absent cause, does not carry the precise structural imperative of causality, a series without seriality.

Anderson supplements his thesis on the importance of calendrical time for imagining nation with two types of seriality, bound and unbound.³ The latter maintains the now-time of the newspaper, but adds to this the newspaper's condition of worldliness, that its time assumes a world with which it is coterminous, and a degree of standardization in journalistic language. Together, these give the impression that the newspaper governs the terms of expression for simultaneity, and their seriality is symptomatic of "new serial thinking" in general, which could run "diachronically up and down homogenous, empty time, as well as synchronically, on the newspaper page." Thus: "It was from within this logic of the series that a new grammar of representation came into being, which was also a precondition for imagining the nation" (ANDERSON 1998, p.34). In addressing seriality, Anderson assumes another precondition in his prior discussion of print capitalism which is suppressed here, but remains questionable as a form of technological determinism.

The second manifestation of seriality is bound, depending on the categorical assertions and data accumulation processes of the census. Both the categories (never far from ideology) and the numeration bind the series by suggesting a totality girded by the acceptable practice of anonymous counting - while what counts, of course, confirms the self-image of the state. To prove unbound seriality in motion, it will surprise no one that Anderson returns to fiction; indeed, one might be forgiven for thinking that the truth of discerning nation is precisely in the unbound seriality of fiction. The lessons are

³ See Anderson (1991;1998).

numerous but two in particular are salient: first, Anderson does make the case that seriality is the complement of simultaneity in national belonging; but second, it is never clear in Anderson's critique that the logic of seriality is the only or even a primary precondition of nation. One can accept the premise of imaginary identification, but still doubt the degree of its force and the shared nature of its categories. Would the logic of seriality be more persuasive in another register, one that did not claim causality so insistently, but, in fact, was imbued with the same ambivalence as its object?

This is the terrain and time of the serial novel, the cultural logic where novelization and serialization entwine. The serial novel is dependent on the historicity of history, so much so that its logic of time/space, the chronotope, cannot be adequately apprehended outside the institutions, literary categories, and imagined communities in which it is conceived. It bears this burden of embeddedness with all of the optimism that socialization infers. But this can only problematize its identity, even when it is reedited for a rather different "bound" seriality in the novel between two covers. The topic of the serial novel and its logic of history - forms of time that differ considerably between, let us say, Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and Kou Fumizuki's *Aoi Yori Aoshi* - has not been adequately theorized within literary studies.⁴ I take it as axiomatic, however, that Bakhtin's concept of novelization is bound to serialization in modernity and requires rethinking temporality in that regard. The novel of which Bakhtin writes is closely allied to serialization, whether one considers the five volume series of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, the serialization of Dostoevsky's works in the *Russian Messenger*, or both the epistolary sequence in Goethe or the diptych on *Wilhelm Meister*. *Madame Bovary*, *War and Peace*, *The Ambassadors*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Kim*, *Tender is the Night* and, of course, Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine* also reveal a great deal about this symbiosis. Serialization instantiates the present for these works, and it is only through analysis of such identification that the future of the novel and modernity's cousin, the nation, can be glimpsed. It is entirely symptomatic that Morson, in an otherwise trenchant analysis of temporality in Bakhtin, overlooks the implications of seriality in such a critique, even when discussing Bakhtin's own missed opportunity before Russia's best devotee of open time, Tolstoy.⁵ If, as Morson claims, serialization was "essential" to *War and*

⁴ With few exceptions, for instance, such as David Payne's *The Reenchantment of Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (2005).

⁵ See Morson (1991).

Peace, this is not just because Tolstoy did not want to go back to change anything; nor, indeed, because he did not wish to end the text, but because in serialization the time of history in the novel exceeds the capacity of individual consciousness to finalize its expression. This does not exclude the individual exigencies of the author, especially when it comes to economic prerogatives - as is often the case with Dickens, for instance - but it does not cede the time of difference to volition, temporal perception, or any personal whim. While not endorsing Sartre's case for seriality and the collective, in part because he begins from the queue as a measure of the practico-inert, Sartre nevertheless cogently permits a role for the other in the process of connection or disconnection. This, in its own way, may be closer to a Bakhtinian model of socialization.

A few characteristics of novel serialization are relevant to the analysis of nation seriality here. For instance, its emergence owes much to the economies of print capitalism which Anderson discusses. In Britain, this would find serial fiction filling pages of extra space opened up when newspapers went to a large-sheet format, intent on avoiding a tax levied on smaller sheets. Newspaper publication inevitably changed the both the kind of storytelling deployed and the readership. If Anderson is right that the newspaper facilitates an experience of unbound seriality in nation discourse, then serial fiction participates in this expansive simultaneity. But this does not necessarily secure identification in the name of nation, unless one limits its definition to that which is coextensive with a market. All fiction projects a community or communities; one task in analyzing serial novels is always to understand the extent to which this is overdetermined by the peculiarities of serialization itself. The main link here is not the newspaper as such, but what I would call serial engagement: the process by which narration frames a readership and a desire to involve oneself in its story over an extended period of time. In the newspaper correlative, there are at least two forms of contractual obligation faced by the writer: the more obvious financial bond to the publisher, and the expectation that the next installment will be delivered to the reader as scheduled. Yet the fact of serialization does not do justice to the function of time in the design, which considers extension as a determinate link to the experience of time that is the substance of the narrative. This is the link between serial novels and the novel in series: in the latter, the obligation to the regulative interval of publication is minimal; but this tends only to intensify the obligation to time itself and its conflictual modalities.

These extend in a variety of ways that give an alternative sense to seriality and its relation to nation: the historical parameters that appear to identify space as meaningful for the novel; the lived experience of place and distance, a movement we associate with migration, exile, and errantry of various kinds but which here are a direct consequence of a specific identification with place (that Anderson characterizes as a “specter of comparison”); the time of writing as shot through not just with that Benjaminian memory in a moment of danger, but with extant conditions changing in time: shortening, lengthening, causing text to appear and disappear, and not simply as a function of editing, but by the creative and destructive forces that attend nation form as a lived experience in different spaces and compositions; and the quandary of closure: how best to enfold narrative when its series is unbound by a logic of time that necessarily exceeds it, which for Bakhtin is expressed as novelization, but here is more narrowly defined as the open seriality in serialization. In reading Rizal, Anderson suggests that “the novel as literary genre [...] permitted the imagining of ‘Las Filipinas’ as a bounded sociological reality” (1998, p.251). Yet in its extended form, what is bound in its collocation of different social markers, of dress, speech, location, everyday practices in profusion is serially undone by elaborating time’s process as duration and disjunction. Just as Anderson elucidates the nation at the expense of the structural logic of the nation form, so, in his otherwise profound critiques of Rizal and Pramoedya, he proffers “bounded sociological reality” without considering seriality as a formal logic of narration. All of his other themes obtain: translation, circulation, a worldly simultaneity. But time is also the spectre *in* comparison, and its role in chronotope may be something other than comparative: it is the temporal imperative of persistence against persistence, the struggle to write when that which curtails expression quietly lives on (and can include the nation itself as a condition of subjugation). On this level, the novel in series may find itself in other modes of seriality (re-readings, re-translations, adaptations, canon formations, posthumous additions, etc.), none of which need provide the content of nation, yet may permit it a patina of consistency. This is not the difference between describing a nation and participating in it; all I am suggesting is that seriality is a narrative mode of time whose specificity is historically concrete. Bakhtin attends to this through novelization: in the move from the novel’s struggle with other forms to the novel’s struggle with itself. Serialization, however, as the time of difference, can specify

the novel's process in nationness, caught as it is between the nation as lived and the nation form as unrepresentable. In my research, this has already led to the elaboration of extended fiction, novels in series, as postcolonial chronotopes, as a "long space." It is clear, however, that the temporal consequences of serialization inflect the difference of time in other modalities, as likely to deracinate nationness as an experience of community as they are to confirm it. It is not connection that is the key, but struggles in temporality itself both as measure and measurelessness.

While there is no space here to consider these formations, fictive permutations of bound and unbound seriality have real foundations in everything from transnational capitalist circulation to digital messaging. Together, they constitute both logical and techno-logical alternatives to normative simultaneity. An obvious danger in coupling temporality and nation with seriality is the emphasis on chronology and a concomitant teleology, both of which would seem, once more, to privilege forms of time and of chronotope that burden narrative, if not with ghostly comparisons, then certainly with the originary actions of Europe. Partha Chatterjee's response to Anderson's framework underlines both the problems of boundedness versus unboundedness in seriality (particularly the diminution of ethnic identity that attends Anderson's critique of the census) and the limits of liberation in the concept of empty, homogenous time (CHATTERJEE, 1999). Although I do not think Anderson's argument comes down to judging unbound seriality and national identity as good, and bound seriality and ethnic identity as bad, Chatterjee is right to question the degree of distinction between the two when the rhetoric of universality at stake seems tied either way to Enlightenment philosophy with its own logical series. This necessitates still greater attention to the "time of capital," that which forges its specific calendar printed in abstruse simultaneity. What Benjamin sees as a contradictory chronos, one which provides for messianic moments that break the plodding continuum of capital as stasis, Chatterjee chides as "utopian," because "empty homogeneous time is not located anywhere in real space" (1999, p.131). Precisely. The reason we can historicize capitalism and one of its complex symptoms, the nation-state, is because time's abstraction cannot absolutely suture capital relations from moment to moment. Narratives of progress and linearity might appear as the healing balm for time's abstraction in the now, but this is only ever a monologic alibi for what is actually a real contradiction. Capital cannot revolutionize

in timelessness, but neither can it revolutionize without timelessness. It is in capital's will to universality that the substance of its history appears, and there too, measure without measure, the bell chime of expiration. This is the temporality which capital, despite itself, attempts to end, while preserving the faculty of utopia in its finitude.

Novelization responds to time's crisis by studying generic change as symptomatic. Serialization pours content into the moment of such change, but finds temporality itself problematic, a crisis in time in a crisis of time. In this essay, I have read this difference of time and time of difference into a specific antimony of modernity, nationness as belonging in a world of circulation, and would suggest that it relates Bakhtin's theorizing in Kustanai to modernity's endgame today in provocative ways, all of which are a response to novelization's inexorable interpellation of the political. I am not sure we are witnessing the withering of the state foretold by Lenin, although I am quite willing, as Zizek puts it, to see Lenin "reloaded"⁶ - a matrix that includes his penchant for Hegel's *Logic*, as it is the philosopher Hegel, more than Sartre, with whom the knot of seriality must be undone. Because this is schematic, I have left out most of the content (a true Bakhtinian!) but also some of serialization's prehistory: in addition to Hegel, for instance, in Aristotle on plot, in Augustine on temporality, in Heidegger on *Dasein*, or of course in Ricoeur's three volume series on *Narrative and Time*. For some, novelization remains a pleasant vocation far removed from the subject and subjection of nation. But because it is serially bound to modernity, it is compelled to perform its contradictions. If culture speaks to modernity in this way, it can be reaffirmed by dialogizing novelization with temporality's content. I have given serialization a role in this project not just because it maintains a critical tension between the novel and the novel as form, but because it is a way of reading literary history "present, in all its openendedness" to the socio-political content of time. This, I would argue, is the real difference in the *PMLA* exchange with which I began, and it remains a challenge in Bakhtinian scholarship and beyond.

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⁶ See Budgen et al. (2007).

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