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RUSSIAN AND
EUROPEAN
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The Contexts of Bakhtin

**Philosophy
Authorship
Aesthetics**

EDITED BY
DAVID SHEPHERD



The Contexts of Bakhtin

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EDITED BY

DAVID SHEPHERD

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

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CONTENTS

Introduction to the Series	vii
Preface	ix
Acknowledgments	xiii
Abbreviations	xv
Transliteration and Translation	xix
About the Contributors	xxi
 Life, Philosophy, Philosophy of Life.	 1
People Not of Our Time	
<i>Iudif' Kagan</i>	3
Two of a Small Fraternity? Points of Contact and Departure in the Work of Bakhtin and Kagan up to 1924	
<i>Ruth Coates</i>	17
The Nevel School of Philosophy (Bakhtin, Kagan and Pumpianskii) Between 1918 and 1925: Materials from Pumpianskii's Archives	
<i>Nikolai Nikolaev</i>	29
 Authorship	 43
"The Author" According to Bakhtin ... and Bakhtin the Author	
<i>Giovanni Palmieri</i>	45
Carnival in Theory and Practice: Vaginov and Bakhtin	
<i>Tony Anemone</i>	57
Author and Hero in Russian Literature of the Soviet Period	
<i>Marietta Chudakova</i>	71

Form and Image	81
Bakhtin's Aesthetics as a Logic of Form	
<i>Natal'ia Bonetskaia</i>	83
The Architectonics of Aesthetic Discourse	
<i>Valerii Tiupa</i>	95
Bakhtin and Valéry: Towards a Poetics of Dialogism	
<i>Angela Biancofiore</i>	109
"We Are the Real": Bakhtin and Representation of Speech	
<i>Alastair Renfrew</i>	121
 A Time and a Place	 139
Bakhtin's Concept of "Chronotope": The Kantian Connection	
<i>Bernhard F. Scholz</i>	141
Modernity and Chronotopicity in Bakhtin	
<i>Graham Pechey</i>	173
Is Dialogism for Real?	
<i>Ken Hirschkop</i>	183
Chatter, Babble, and Dialogue	
<i>Anthony Wall</i>	197
 Index	 211

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

Change and difference have become the clichéd watchwords of Slavic studies in recent years. There is surely no need for further cataloguing — whether celebratory or cautionary — of the transformations in the practices and potential of our discipline wrought by the political, social, and economic turmoil of the former Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, not to mention the sweeping changes in interpretive practices within the study of the humanities in Western countries.

A series such as *Studies in Russian and European Literature* must in large degree be a response to those transformations; it cannot, however, be reduced to their mere product or reflection, and does not set out to impress by superficial novelty. In seeking to promote a comparative approach, with particular emphasis on the ties between Russian and other European literatures, and on the relationship between Western and Eastern European cultures, the series will extend long-established paths of inquiry. There will also be continuity in the embrace it offers theory, to which Russia and Eastern Europe are no strangers.

At the same time, such a venture must recognize that much of what passes for change and difference is all too often nothing more than an exchange of negative for positive which leaves old categorizations and oppositions in place, their valencies inverted by a mechanical operation of a kind characteristic of a world and a system which are supposed to have been discredited. The demise of one conceptual framework and the concomitant vindication of another might well hold out the prospect of rapid and dispiriting ossification. *Studies in Russian and European Literature* will resist this possibility. Like its global counterpart, literary history has not yet come to an end.

Peter I. Barta
David Shepherd

PREFACE

An important impetus of much Bakhtin scholarship in the 1990s has been the realization of an apparent irony: that a body of scholarly work so tenacious in its insistence on the importance of context (historical, social, institutional, intellectual) was itself, in the course of appropriation in the 1970s and 1980s by ever-increasing numbers of self-styled “Bakhtinians”, decontextualized in a manner and to a degree that represent a betrayal of Bakhtin’s true significance and originality. This position has recently been articulated with characteristic directness and vigour by Caryl Emerson in her introduction to a volume edited by Amy Mandelker and entitled, symptomatically, *Bakhtin in Contexts: Across the Disciplines*. Reproving some Western scholars for their “brand of ‘hurrah-collectivism’ that incorporates Bakhtin’s ideas into one or another suprapersonal theory”, Emerson speaks approvingly of “Russian Bakhtinists” who “have long been easing out of their master’s legacy a sort of neohumanism, usually liberal in spirit and often religiously informed” (Emerson 1995, 2). Further, “a full picture of ‘Bakhtin in contexts’ is gradually and belatedly coming to include an intellectual exchange with a scholarly community in Bakhtin’s own homeland that, in the past half decade, has become unprecedentedly diverse” (5). This exchange will help reveal the key to a proper, contextualized understanding of Bakhtin and his full potential: sensitivity to “the insight — or corrective — offered [to various disciplines] by Bakhtin’s profoundly antitheoretic mode of thought” (2).

The present volume, for all that its title is similar to, and no less symptomatic than, that of Mandelker’s, has a somewhat different emphasis. The contributions, most of which began life as papers written for the Fifth International Bakhtin Conference held at the University of Manchester in 1991 (where the first faltering steps towards “intellectual exchange” between Russian and Western approaches to Bakhtin were taken), are concerned not only with the uses and abuses attendant upon the “appropriation” or “application” of Bakhtin, but also with the contexts to which we might need to refer

in order to achieve a better understanding of where Bakhtin “came from” and where he might take us: contexts both immediate and oblique, personal and impersonal, intellectual and, crucially, theoretical. The arrangement of articles in four separately titled sections is thus intended to imply not rigid demarcation of themes, but rather shifts in dominant within a more or less constant preoccupation with Bakhtin’s philosophical (especially (Neo-)Kantian) and aesthetic affiliations.

The first section, “Life, Philosophy, Philosophy of Life”, opens with Iudif’ Kagan’s moving account of Bakhtin’s personal and intellectual relationship with her father Matvei Kagan. The overview of Kagan’s published and unpublished works is broadened and deepened by Ruth Coates’s consideration of the similarities and differences between Kagan’s and Bakhtin’s thought. Nikolai Nikolaev shows how Kagan’s exposure to, and subsequent exposition of, the Marburg School was important for the “Nevel School”. Nikolaev’s painstaking scrutiny of Lev Pumpianskii’s archive suggests that that “small fraternity”, notwithstanding its seeming ephemerality, was sufficiently coherent to be unprovisionally designated a “School”, and that its deliberations on, *inter alia*, *Lebensphilosophie* and psychoanalysis were a vital factor in shaping Bakhtin’s early thought.

Nikolaev’s article includes some arguments in favour of Bakhtin’s authorship of the “disputed texts”, arguments for which support and refutation may be found in other Russian work published in the 1990s — and, no doubt, in work yet to appear. The section “Authorship” is concerned not with this intractable problem, but with the Bakhtinian understanding of what it is to be an author. Giovanni Palmieri explores the connections between Bakhtin’s approach, principally but not exclusively in “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity”, and Romantic and phenomenological accounts, concluding that through Bakhtin it is possible to arrive at a “*metaphysics of the author*”. Tony Anemone’s focus is on the relationship between Bakhtin’s theories of authorship in the 1920s and the literary practice of the poet and novelist Konstantin Vaginov, and in particular his *roman à clef* *The Goat Song* and remarkable metafiction *The Works and Days of Svistonov*. Careful reading of these novels, Anemone suggests, leads one away from the notion that they are simply an implementation of Bakhtinian theory towards a position that assumes a dialogical relationship between two members of the Leningrad Bakhtin Circle. Marietta Chudakova, although not seeking to make a case for direct influence or interaction of theory and practice in her account of Russian writers’ attempts to come to terms with new (mis)understandings of authorship before, during and after the cultural revolution of the late 1920s, nevertheless sketches in a compelling “dialogizing background” to Bakhtin’s work.

The dominant of "Form and Image" is Bakhtin's contribution to the problematics of representation. Natal'ia Bonetskaia, returning our attention to Bakhtin's connections with Western philosophical aesthetics, contends that his *oeuvre* (or at least the greater part of it, for, revealingly, certain works have perforce to be dismissed as "unrepresentative") is best understood as a "logic of form". Valerii Tiupa's modelling of the "aesthetic object" in terms of both creative and receptive aesthetics is predicated on a rejection of any similarity between Bakhtinian theory and Derridean deconstruction. However, the possibility of common ground with another French theorist and practitioner of the representation of language, Paul Valéry, is forcefully argued by Angela Biancofiore. And, although like Tiupa he insists upon the Platonic and Aristotelian context of Bakhtin's thinking on representation, Alastair Renfrew is less unforgivingly negative about the role that might be played by theorists such as Derrida or Barthes in the elucidation of that thinking.

In the final section, "A Time and a Place", representation is still very much to the fore, although the spotlight shifts, initially, to the chronotope, which so often seems to mark the point at which Bakhtin crosses into the comparatively infertile territory of narratology. Bernhard Scholz seeks to enrich this ground by pursuing the Kantian connection fleetingly signalled in a footnote to "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope"; as a result it becomes possible to identify a burgeoning poetics of the fictional representation of time and place immeasurably more nuanced and sophisticated than Formalist or Structuralist models predicated on oppositions of *fabula* and *siuzhet*, *histoire* and *récit*. In Graham Pechey's article the scope of the discussion of chronotope is expanded to embrace nothing less than the "history of realism", which it was Bakhtin's ambition to outline; here the context of implicit and explicit polemic with Brecht and Lukács is very much of Bakhtin's own time and place.

It is the time and the place of our readings of Bakhtin that are the central concern of the final two articles in this section by Ken Hirschkop and Anthony Wall. Hirschkop takes issue with the widespread conflation of Bakhtin's dialogism with cosy, liberal notions of dialogue, a conflation that strips Bakhtin's theorizing of its radical potential, reducing it to little more than a comfort-blanket for anxious critics. Similarly, for Wall the principal problem besetting Bakhtin studies is the paradox whereby a growing tendency to see Bakhtin as a "philosopher of the ideal speech situation", "a philosopher of agreement", is leading to a cacophony or babble of conflicting critical voices in which there is no proper intellectual engagement or exchange.

We have returned, then, to our starting point: conflicting, perhaps even irreconcilable versions of Bakhtin. It might be tempting to take refuge in platitudes about desirable or inevitable pluralism; but that would be to take an “antitheoretic” approach to a messy (if logical) extreme. Far better, surely, to take refuge in an oft-quoted Bakhtinian opposition, and to suggest that the contexts of Bakhtin, and of Bakhtin studies, should not be abandoned to critical anarchy, should be seen as not merely given, but actively posited. It is hoped that this volume might make a small contribution to that ongoing project.

WORK CITED

- Emerson, C. 1995. “Introduction: Dialogue on Every Corner, Bakhtin in Every Class”, in A. Mandelker (ed.), *Bakhtin in Contexts: Across the Disciplines* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press), 1–30.

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Ken Hirschkop's article was first published in *Social Text*, 30 (1992), 102–113: permission to reprint the article here is gratefully acknowledged.

Natal'ia Bonetskaia's paper was published in Russian as "Estetika M. Bakhtina kak logika formy", in K.G. Isupov et al. (eds.), *Bakhtinologiia: Issledovaniia, perevody, publikatsii* (St Petersburg: Aleteiia, 1995), 51–60.

The article by Iudif' Kagan was published in Russian as "Liudi ne nashego vremeni", in *Bakhtinskii sbornik*, 2 (Moscow, 1992), 87–98.

Nikolai Nikolaev's article appeared in Russian as "Nevel'skaia shkola filosofii (M. Bakhtin, M. Kagan, L. Pumpianskii) v 1918–1925 gg.: Po materialam arkhiva L. Pumpianskogo", in K.G. Isupov et al. (eds.), *M. Bakhtin i filosofskaia kul'tura XX veka (Problemy bakhtinologii*, 1, pt. 2) (St Petersburg: Obrazovanie, 1991), 31–43.

Valerii Tiupa's paper was published in Russian as "Arkhitektonika esteticheskogo diskursa", in K.G. Isupov et al. (eds.), *Bakhtinologiia: Issledovaniia, perevody, publikatsii* (St Petersburg: Aleteiia, 1995), 206–216.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used throughout to refer to works by Bakhtin and other members of the Bakhtin Circle. Page references are to the English translations only; in cases where contributors have chosen to use their own translations, references are in the style 1/83, where the first reference is to the English translation, the second to the Russian edition listed here.

Works by Bakhtin and members of the Bakhtin Circle not available in English appear in the "References" list of articles in which they are cited.

- AA** "Art and Answerability" [1919], in *Art and Answerability*, 1–3. Russian: "Iskusstvo i otvetstvennost'", in *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva*, 5–6.
- AH** "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" [c. 1920–23], in *Art and Answerability*, 4–256. Russian: "Avtor i geroi v esteticheskoi deiatel'nosti", in *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva*, 7–180.
- BSHR** "The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel)" [1936–38], in *Speech Genres*, 10–59. Russian: "Roman vospitaniia i ego znachenie v istorii realizma", in *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva*, 188–236.
- DLDP** V.N. Voloshinov, "Discourse in Life and Discourse in Poetry: Questions of Sociological Poetics" [1926], in *Bakhtin School Papers*, 5–30. Russian: "Slovo v zhizni i slovo v poezii", in *Zvezda*, 6 (1926), 244–267.

- DN** "Discourse in the Novel" [1934–35], in *The Dialogic Imagination*, 259–422. Russian: "Slovo v romane", in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki*, 72–233.
- EN** "Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel" [1941], in *The Dialogic Imagination*, 3–40. Russian: "Epos i roman. (O metodologii issledovaniia romana)", in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki*, 447–483.
- FCS** V.N. Voloshinov, *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique* [1927], ed. I.R. Titunik with Neal H. Bruss, tr. Titunik (New York, San Francisco and London: Academic Press, 1976) (reissued as *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987)); all references are to the 1976 edition. Russian: *Freidizm: Kriticheskii ocherk* (Leningrad and Moscow: Gosizdat, 1927).
- FM** P.N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, tr. A.J. Wehrle (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978; Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1985); all references are to the 1985 edition. Russian: *Formal'nyi metod v literaturovedenii: Kriticheskoe vvedenie v sotsiologicheskuiu poetiku* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1928).
- FMSS** P.N. Medvedev, "The Formal (Morphological) Method, or Scholarly Salieri-ism" [1925], in *Bakhtin School Papers*, 51–66. Russian: "Uchenyi sal'erizm: O formal'nom (morfologicheskom) metode", in *Zvezda*, 3 (1925), 264–276.
- FTC** "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Historical Poetics" [1937–38], in *The Dialogic Imagination*, 84–258. Russian: "Formy vremeni i khronotopa v romane. Ocherki po istoricheskoi poetike", in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki*, 234–407.
- IT** P.N. Medvedev, "The Immediate Tasks Facing Literary-Historical Science" [1928], in *Bakhtin School Papers*, 75–91. Russian: "Ocherednye zadachi istoriko-literaturnoi nauki", in *Literatura i marksizm*, 3 (1928), 65–87.

- LS** V.N. Voloshinov, "Literary Stylistics", in *Bakhtin School Papers*, 93–152. Russian: "Stilistika khudozhestvennoi rechi", in *Literaturnaia ucheba*, 2, 3, 5 (1926), 48–66, 65–87, 43–59.
- MHS** "Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences" [1974], in *Speech Genres*, 159–172. Russian: "K metodologii gumanitarnykh nauk", in *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva*, 361–373.
- MPL** V.N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* [1929], tr. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (New York and London: Seminar Press, 1973). Russian: *Marksizm i filosofiia iazyka: Osnovnye problemy sotsiologicheskogo metoda v nauke o iazyke* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1929).
- N70** "From Notes Made in 1970–71", in *Speech Genres*, 132–158. Russian: "Iz zapisei 1970–1971 godov", in *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva*, 336–360.
- PCMF** "The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art" [1924], in *Art and Answerability*, 257–325. Russian: "Problema soderzhaniia, materiala i formy v slovesnom khudozhestvennom tvorchestve", in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki*, 6–71.
- PDP** *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* [1963], ed. and tr. C. Emerson (Manchester and Minneapolis: Manchester University Press and University of Minnesota Press, 1984). Russian: *Problemy poetiki Dostoevskogo*, 3rd ed. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1972).
- PSG** "The Problem of Speech Genres" [1952–53], in *Speech Genres*, 60–102. Russian: "Problema rechevykh zhanrov", in *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva*, 237–280.
- PT** "The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and the Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis" [1959–61], in *Speech Genres*, 103–131. Russian: "Problema teksta v lingvistike, filologii i drugikh gumanitarnykh naukakh: Opyt filosofskogo analiza", in *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva*, 281–307.

- RW** *Rabelais and His World* [1965], tr. Hélène Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1968; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); all references are to the 1984 edition. Russian: *Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable i narodnaia kul'tura srednevekov'ia i Renessansa* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1990).
- TPA** *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* [1991–92], ed. V. Liapunov and M. Holquist, tr. Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993). Russian: “K filosofii postupka”, in *Filosofiia i sotsiologiia nauki i tekhniki: Ezhegodnik 1984–85* (Moscow: Nauka, 1986), 80–160.
- TRDB** “Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book” [1961], in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 283–302. Russian: “K pere-rabotke knigi o Dostoevskom”, in *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva*, 308–327.

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- Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. M. Holquist and V. Liapunov, tr. Liapunov and K. Brostrom (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991).
- Bakhtin School Papers*, ed. A. Shukman (Oxford: RPT Publications, 1983).
- The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. M. Holquist, tr. C. Emerson and Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).
- Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, tr. V.W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).
- Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1979).
- Voprosy literatury i estetiki: Issledovaniia raznykh let* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1975).

TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

Except in the case of established usage (e.g. Dostoevsky) Russian words are transliterated according to the Library of Congress system (without diacritics).

The articles by Natal'ia Bonetskaia, Marietta Chudakova, Iudif' Kagan, Nikolai Nikolaev and Valerii Tiupa have been translated from Russian by the editor.

Unless otherwise indicated, translations into English are by the authors of articles or by the editor.

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