Bakhtinian Dialogic and Vygotskian Dialectic: Compatabilities and contradictions in the classroom?

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Introduction

This paper offers, for debate, a consideration of Bakhtinian dialogic as an oppositional epistemologic and ontologic position to that of Vygotsky's dialectic. As such I suggest that there are several assumptions being made and applied to contemporary education that are unproblematically congealed into a monologic application of 'sociocultural theory'. This application, I argue, privileges the work of Vygotsky which is less concerned with philosophy beyond Marxist ideals (which are arguably a philosophy in their own right). I make the claim that Vygotsky's ideas are encased in the notion of dialectical materialism. I suggest that the underpinning philosophical tenets of dialogism are currently subsumed within this dialectic terrain. As a result, the opportunities Bakhtinian dialogism has to offer education are unrealized and key features of dialogism misunderstood. I therefore present an overview of the philosophical underpinning of both in order to develop my argument that there are fundamental irreconcilable differences that need to be considered if the pedagogical fruits of each are to be fully exploited. I conclude by suggesting that dialogism offers a potential pathway to a fuller integration of a philosophy of education beyond current constructions, since its focus is less concerned with science and logic, per se, than with the life of meaning (Pechey, 1998). As such, I purport that dialogism holds potential to provide a means of engaging with philosophical ideas in education and possible pedagogies accordingly.

I focus my argument on the provocations of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) and Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) as posthumous protagonists in contemporary applications of education. Although dialectics and dialogism are by no means exclusive to these men, their specific interpretations influence education across the world today. While both are frequently cited in educational texts internationally the sociocultural tenets of Vygotsky hold a prominent place in the way contemporary education is theorised and enacted while Bakhtinian dialogism is seldom invoked in its own right. Instead, as Sullivan (2010) suggests, Bakhtin is viewed as offering an extension of Vygotksian ideas. This is no less true for New Zealand education (see, for example, Ministry of Education, 1996; 2007). At best, Bakhtin enters this scene as a supporting actor, lending additional insights to sociocultural theories, but his dialogic emphasis, as a philosophical stance in its own right, is not widely considered. His contributions are only just beginning to be appreciated by educationalists internationally (see, for example, Matusov, 2009; White & Peters, 2011, in press). There are several practical reasons for this (several are explained by Emerson, 1993; 1997) but I suggest that the Janus-like nature of Bakhtin's work makes it potentially unsatisfying for a contemporary Western society that seeks resolution or 'truth', since Bakhtin outrightly rejects such monologic ideals. Bakhtin's attention to aesthetics is less popular in new right ideologies that monologically promote 'literacy' and 'numeracy' as valued learning outcomes whereas the more holistic, existential orientations of Bakhtin have a much lower profile.

In contrast, Vygotsky's work has been widely adopted. As Kravtova (2007, p. 8) explains "It is hard today to find a system of education that is not based, at least in theory, on the ideas of Lev Vygotsky". Vygotsky's ideas fell on fertile soil in the West, entering the scene in 1978 - in the wake of increasing dissatisfaction with the prominent work of developmental psychologist Jean Piaget, and behaviourists such as Skinner (Glick, in Vygotsky, 1997). Vygotsky offered refreshing insights that promoted potential over deficit, based on his scholarship during 1925-1934 at the Institute of

Defectology and the Moscow Institute of Psychology. From a psychological perspective, Vygotsky's work made immediate and prolonged sense to educationalists not only because it challenged previous psychological constructions of learning but his ideas were explicitly pedagogical and promoted a different role for the teacher than previously considered. From these origins, Vygotsky developed the idea that "description is possible only if we radically change our representation of child development and take into account that it is a complex dialectical process [emphasis added]" (Vygotksy, 1997, p.99). In this way, Vygotsky revolutionized pedagogy as well as psychology since not only did he address the important role of "istina' (Sullivan, 2010, p. 363) but in doing so he presented a positive view of the learner and provided a means of promoting him or her and their potential.

Contrary to popular trends in the Western world that suggest Bakhtin merely enhances Vygotsky inspired theory (see, for example, Cazden, 1993; Daniels, 1994; 2005; Ghazsamsadeh, 2005; Lee,2005; Wertsch, 1985) , I argue that Bakhtinian dialogism is diametrically opposed to dialectic theoryand that this position represents a rejection of those claims. In taking this stance I join a small groupof educationalists (see, for example, Matusov, 2010; Shotter, 1993) and philosophers (Brandist,2007, De Man, 1989; Pirog, 1987) writing in this field who argue that there are fundamental andirreconcilable differences between the interpretations of Bakhtin and Vygotsky on the basis of theirphilosophical orientations. I also support the work of Derry (2004) who suggests that "thephilosophy informing Vygotsky's work has not been fully appreciated in contemporary interpretations and that this shortcoming has affected the way his work has been interpreted in relation to practical educational questions" (p. 114). Such a view is consistent with writers who argue similarly in relation to Bakhtin (see, for example, Gardiner, 2000; Matusov, 2007; Tihanov, 2000; 2004; Brandist, 2000; 2003; 2007), suggesting that his ideas are frequently misrepresented. Brandist (2007) calls for an interpretation of both Vygotksy and Bakhtin that takes cognissance of their historical influences. Doing so, he suggests it is "impossible to integrate Bakhtin's ideas about monologic and dialogic discourse into a perspective found by Vygotskian psychology without farreachingand structural revisions of one or the other" (p. 93). For both Bakhtin and Vygotksy, it seems, there remains a great deal yet to be understood as a result of further interpretation in this vein.

Broadly speaking, the essential differences between Bakhtinian and Vygotskian approaches to education can be located within the overarching stance each took in relation to their interpretations of dialogic or dialectic philosophy. Although a full embellishment of dialectics and dialogism is beyond the scope of this paper, I begin this dialogue by outlining the philosophic influences of dialectics and dialogism on Bakhtinian and Vygotskian thought. From this basis I articulate their philosophical and empirical differences based on their own writings and those of others, as well as historical liaisons of each. I then attend to the interpretation of each in contemporary educational practice, outlining their current and possible contemporary and future locations in education.

Dialectics

Dialectics has a well established history in philosophical thought and is manifest in the writings of many famous philosophers. In its various guises I tentatively describe dialectics as a quest for one-ness through processes of conflict or contradiction in order to explain concepts of the universe. Dialectics, at least that which informed Vygotsky's work, has its genesis in the philosophy of Spinoza (1632-1677) who sought to distinguish clearly between pure reason and imagination, privileging the clarity and certainty offered by the former in the pursuit of knowledge as science through the route of logic. Spinoza's dialectic influence on Vygotsky can be seen in his emphasis on knowledge as a self determining force, since for Spinoza freedom is granted only through such

understanding or "the discovery of the 'true good'" (Hampshire, 1959, p.13). His approach to consciousness gave rise to Vygotsky's identification of the dialect between affect and intellect which "draws our attention to the dynamic interplay between different dimensions of consciousness and to consciousness as an organisational system" (Sullivan, 2010, p. 365).

Zinchenko (2010, p. 113) cites the profound influence of Hegel (1770-1831) on Vygotsky's theories, suggesting that Vygotskian dialectics is especially concerned with action and is therefore activity oriented. Hegel's claimed seperation of dialogue from dialectic was criticised by existentialists who took a distinctly dialogic turn (see, for example, Buber). It is important to note that during the Marxist period of Russian history productivity was paramount, associated with the activity of labour as a fundamental Marxist tenet. In his dialectic philosophy Hegel emphasized self-consciousness, self-cognition and self-reflection – concepts which underpinVygotsky's work (Cote, 2000). Since Vygotsky came to focus on education through psychology in the latter part of his short life, during this same period, it is hardly surprising that his emphasis was also on learning and development as a contributing outcome within this framework.

More specifically Vygotsky drew on a strand called 'dialectical materialism' which emerged out of Marxist Russia as a deviation from Hegelian dialectics. This is an important distinction because dialectical materialism sought to overthrow idealism and maintain a single philosophical framework that would satisfy the populace. Not only did this 'philosophy' seek to explain the world in materialist terms, but additionally Marx wanted to reconstruct society by attempting to position philosophy as a separate science, rooted in history, with revolutionary characteristics (Frolov, 1984). Marxism held a prominent place in the Russian education curriculum from 1925 onwards (Matthews, 1982) and contributed to Vygotsky's attention to labour, and, latterly, activity (Fleer, 2002).

Bringing Marxist, Spinoza and Hegelian dialectics to bear, Vygotsky's quest then was to emancipate the learner to higher psychological through processes through the dialectic of everyday and scientific levels of thought as a pathway to freedom and by paying attention to social context and history. Coupled with influences such as Vagner (1849-1934) who introduced Vygotsky to the social evolutionary state of human language (Brandist, 2007) and other 'borrowed' concepts (such as Marx and Engel's (1976) description of human labour and tool use, which was partly developed by Hegel before them) I suggest that Vygotksy's emphasis is therefore politically driven and cognitively oriented. As a researcher and developer of psychological thinking the thrust of his work was to explain ways of learning and teaching through language in order to promote knowledge acquisition based on these philosophical and ideologic influences (Veresov, 1999). His theories, in themselves, are not new but his application in education, through psychology, offers much to pedagogical practice today.
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Dialogism

Dialogism, on the other hand, is less well known and seldom found in philosophy dictionaries even today. In general it can be described as between-ness – a philosophical stance also evident in theories of dialogue (see, for example, the work of James (1890), Mead (1934), Buber , Levinas and Gadamer). Linell (2000) suggests that dialogism is a framework characterised by "theoretical and epistemological assumptions about human action, communication and cognition" (p. 1) and framed by interaction, context and linguistic-communicative construction. Gardiner (2000) describes key departure points from dialectics in terms of the emphasisplaced on everyday symbolic experience (as opposed to everyday-scientific concept formation); arefusal to close off, finalise or pre-determine outcomes (where dialectics seeks a resolution); and afocus on the boundaries in between dialogue (whilst dialectics is concerned with the individual asobject). Bakhtin (1985), however, does

not dismiss the influence of dialectics on his thinking,describing it as "the very soul of all movement " (p.12). Brandist (2007b) explains the similaritiesbetween Voloshinov, a member of Bakhtin's circle, and Vygotsky's work in this regard, stating that:Voloshinov stood between them, reading the same works and engaging in the same type ofcollective, institutional research programmes as Vygotsky, but under the ongoing influenceof a philosopher wedded to a very different worldview (p. 92).

While Bakhtin does not ignore the central tenet of dialectics, in the spirit of his dialogic principles, he exploits the ideas to develop a counterclaim. Bakhtin's outright rejection of dialectical materialism, in particular, is clearly expounded in his later writings where he describes it as "the dialectic of certain actual material forces, reflected in the mind, ideologically refracted and distorted" (ibid, p. 12). For Bakhtin, the tenets of dialogism offered an antidotal means of retaining the aesthetic aspects ofsociety that he considered had been eroded through the material and political emphasis of Marxism(Todorov, 1984). To this end he found inspiration in the work of Russian Dosteovsky, a novelist (and philosopher in his own right) who had constructed a polyphonic means of writing about alternative ideas that provided a means of writing outside of Marxist ideology (Carroll, 1974). This polyphony can be described as a novelistic device - best captured in Doestoevksy's (1968) employment of 'underground man's 'crystal palace' metaphor in which he highlights the ironic use of double-voiced-ness in text to convey philosophical ideas.

Drawing on this inspiration Bakhtin (1984) believed that freedom was only possible when people could "be a personality…[which] comes into collision…with accepted convention of any kind" (p 11-12). As such there is always a loophole in speech which "accompanies the utterance like a shadow" (Bakhtin, in Dostoevsky, 1969, p. 211) and holds potential for alternate meaning. For Bakhtin, though, absolute finalization represented the death of ideas. His vehement opposition to such acts, I suggest, represents a direct challenge to Vygotsky's sole quest for intersubjectivity as the educational endpoint. A stance, I suggest, that is widely favoured in educational activity today. Dostoevksy's philosophical location was closely aligned to what Caroll (1974) describes as anarchonovelisation.

In a similar vein, Holquist (2010) describes Bakhtin as "the last of the German idealists" (p. 13) because of the unlikely influences of a combination of philosophers such as Kant , Cassirer and Nietzshe on his thinking. While still heavily influenced by Marxism, an inevitable position as a member of a society that had no toleration for alternative views, there are strong indications that Bakhtin rejected[1] Marxist ideals in favour of the unusual combination of Kantian ethics, Russian

[1] There are conflicting views on Bakhtins Marxist affiliations. This is largely due to the work of Voloshinvo and Medvedev – both known Marxists who were part of Bakhtin's Circle slaughtered in 1930's for their political views. It is my contention that both writers interanimated the work of Bakhtin himself and influenced his early views on chronotope, but did not share the same philosophical views in all respects. This view is consistent with an analysis of differences between Voloshinov's text (1973) and Bakhtin's endpoint on dialogism (1984). Several writers (see for example Morson, & Emerson, 1990) argue that Voloshinov's Marxist orientations in texts are at odds with Bakhtin's writings during that same era while others (see, for example Bernard-Donals, 1994) suggest that Bakhtin needed Marxist theory to make important contextual distinctions. Tihanov (2000) purports that it is Hegel, not Marx, to whom Bakhtin turns in this regard. (See Pirog 1987 and Brandist, 2007, for a fuller discussion), but clearly there is no consensus between writers. Compelling arguments for this distinction are offered by Brandist (2007) who suggests that key differences are found in Vygotsky' evolutionary influence by Vagner and his rejection of neo-Kantian urges to divide the world – a concept Bakhtin embraced in his development of the concept of 'heteroglossia'

formalism, Dostoevksian polyphony and Rabelian carnivalesque which are central to his ideas (White, 2009).

According to Hirshkop (1999) Bakhtin's early work (published last) emphasises the ethical relationship between self and community and is metaphorically captured in notions of authorship, morality and aesthetics. Following his exile in 1930's Bakhtin made a shift from ethical philosophy to philosophy of discourse. At this point he made a distinct shift away from Marxist origins, suggesting that true realism could not be found in science or the labour process, but instead through the bringing together of art and life – a further move away from the dialectics of his time. In this locale Bakhtin believed it was possible to distance oneself from the immediate activity while remaining focused on everyday acts, their orientation (achieved through paying attention to genre and voice) and their social and philosophical significance. It was at this juncture that Dostoevsky's polyphonic influence became evident since his novelist genius offered a means of engaging in authorship with others while not speaking on their behalf (a concept some neo-Bakhtinians have described as ventriloquism).

The fact that Bakhtin's thesis on laughter (eventually published in 1968) was rejected in the 1950's called a temporary halt to his academic life but his work was eventually discovered by Russian scholars during 1961-1975. As part of this discovery and the subsequent timing of each manuscripts entry into the academic world it became possible for Russian scholars to see the connections between each phase of Bakhtin's work – an important consideration in appreciating its fuller contribution to education and largely outlined in Bakhtin's final text (1986) which attempted to make manifest his philosophical ideas in methodology. His Rabelain emphasis (Bakhtin, 1968 introduces a dialogic that embraces a renewed kind of dialectics – but one that does not finalise since there are no authorities in carnivalesque. Taken together, I propose that Bakhtin 's writings over his lifetime constitute a dialogic philosophy that emphasises ontologic notions of becoming and draws attention to forms of validity that are constructed within the community in which the dialogue takes place. Bakhtins work, and the way each philosopher has spoken into it, represents the very essence of his dialogic ideals. From this stance, I concur with several writers who suggest that, despite its influence on his thinking, Bakhtin openly rejects the type of dialectics Vygotksy employed. This rejection is not only determined by an analysis of his philosophical informants and ideas but also evident in text written at the latter part of his career where he writes: "Take a dialogue and remove the voices…remove the intonations…carve out the abstract concepts and judgments from living words and responses, cram everything into one abstract consciousness – and that's how you get dialectics." (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 147). Bakhtin, therefore, rejected Spinoza's dialectic to suggest that "being and validity were mutually exclusive and that knowledge of the empirical world is impossible" (Brandist, 2007, p. 84). As such, Bakhtin's emphasis is on "pravada" or "lived knowing" as a central epistemological tent (Sullivan, 2010, p. 363).

Key points of difference

Based on this contextual overview it becomes possible and, I suggest, necessary to articulate fundamental differences between Vygotskian and Bakhtinian philosophical orientations which influenced the theories they produced. It is also important to point out their similarities which were based on the social, philosophical and political contexts in which they lived. Both, for example, emphasise the social nature of experience - seeking to explain the wider context of history and culture in terms of sociohistorical theory (for Vygotsky) and chronotope (for Bakhtin). Brandist (2007b) further explains that both viewed dialogue as central to human consciousness. In doing so both recognize the significance of time and space on the present, as well as the role of language on

thought, and were undoubtedly influenced by Marxist philosophy in this regard. At these junctures both writers share an appreciation of complexity, thereby sharing a rejection of reductionist approaches and embracing language as central to meaning (Kubli, 2005).

In my view, that is where their philosophical alliance ends. Bakhtin drew on Marxism as a base rather than a theory and introduced the idea of Russian formalism to his thinking in order to juxtapose art with life (Brandist, 2004) alongside neo-Kantian philosophy and Russian formalism – a combination which earnt Bakhtin his description as an eclectic thinker or "two-faced Janus". During this Stalinist period Brandist (2003) explains that a split grew between language as a means of communication and language as ideology, and this led to Bakhtin's subsequent writing of centrifugal and centripetal forces "leading towards linguistic centralization (edinyi iazyk) and discursive plurality (raznorechie)" (p. 221). Bulavka (2007) explains that the Stalinist era of Soviet Russia dissolved man as a subject of history so the only way for him to retrieve this identity was through aesthetics, a concept central to Bakhtin's ideas. Emerson (1997) explains that Bakhtin rejected "the binary logic at the base of most successful revolutionary thinking of his time. That is, the Marxist-Lenin model…[because]….it taught its converts that in order to make sense out of a change, one must analyse it into a system" (p. 70). In contrast Vygotsky clearly grounded his work on Marxist principles. Drawing on Kristeva's interpretations, Moi (1986) points out that dialogism should not, therefore, be confused with Hegelian dialectics because "dialogism replaces these concepts by absorbing them within the concept of relation" (p. 58). In the sections that follow I attempt to illuminate these differences with specific reference to Bakhtinian and Vygotksian treatment of consciousness and language. I then apply these concepts to pedagogical concepts and the way they are employed today.

A key difference between both philosophical positions is evident in their respective treatment of consciousness. Vygotsky's position that knowledge leads to freedom is reversed by Bakhtin for whom there is no such thing as individual freedom or personal emancipation. For Bakhtin, freedom exists through multiple layers of analysis in relation with others since he argues that the word is always half someone elses and there is no one truth to be sourced as a conceptual whole. Hence, for Bakhtin meaning comes about only when dialogue is exchanged with other (explained by Emmerson, 1997, as self-other; other-self; self-other's creation and self-own creation); while for Vygotksy superconsciousness, as a graspable quest, is attainable through self reflection (Karasavvides, 2007). Bakhtin's aversion to scientific rationalism was largely because he believed it separated being from becoming - a notion that, in the tradition of his German counterparts, was central to his philosophical position (Gardiner, 2000). While both men emphasized personality, they meant very different things. For Bakhtin, personality was associated with the perpetual relationship between spirit and soul while, for Vygotsky (1997), personality was concerned with cultural mastery "the correlate of personality will be the relation of primitive and higher reactions" (p. 242).
A further point of difference lies in their interpretation of language. For Bakhtin the interpretation of symbolic structures cannot be achieved through science while for Vygotsky the opposite is true, although Gardiner (2000) reminds us that Vygotsky hints at the affective function of words in his later writing. Hasan (2002) suggests that, as a result of this position, Vygotsky dismissed types of less audible language that take place in everyday acts as inferior or 'primitive'. Bakhtin, however, paid detailed attention to the subtle nuances of communication and, more specifically, its wider location in discourse by emphasising genres as a means of interpreting the intentions behind dialogue as well as the dialogue itself. Bakhtin makes it possible to view private speech as social since, in his view, all language is interanimated by others even when there is no one else immediately present. Vygotksy, on the other hand, saw private speech from a developmental perspective, as a precurser to social language, and did not consider the notion of addressivity, or discourse, in his work.

For Vygotsky all higher mental functions are interiorized relations of social order, while for Bakhtin there is no such thing as an inner life. He believed that the word only has meaning when it is given form in dialogue. Outside of this location it has no life and constitutes monologism. In contrast, Vygotsky argued that the word was acquired through developmental means. In other words language was passed over, transferred or taught by the linguistic expert to the novice; while for Bakhtin, word in all its many forms had an alteric nature that embraced the potential of other as well as interpreted multiple meaning(s). While for both men interpretation should take place in social settings, the purpose and nature of language can be seen to hold a very different place in education for both. In seeking to appreciate language and its communicative role then, a Bakhtinian teacher might look for subtle gestural cues and nuance in embodied forms of communication that convey potential meaning and promote dialogue while a Vygotskian might focus on seeking buds of oral language with a view to further promotion of learning. While a Vygotskian teacher seeks to bring about abstract knowledge, a Bakhtinian recognises the contestability of truth as central to their pedagogical quest (Sullivan, Matusov & Smith, 2009).

Pedagogical implications

Based on these views it is not difficult to assert that Vygotsky and Bakhtin held radically different positions on the status of each partner in the learning process. Coming from a developmental perspective Vygotsky adopted an object-subject stance; while Bakhtin's moral principle upheld a view of the subject-subject relationship. Hicks (2000) explains:

The more conceptual or intellectual rationality depicted by theorists like Vygotsky, as rooted as this might be in the social world of activity and discourse, would not be compellent enough for Bakhtin. What some might refer to as subjective truths make social experience for Bakhtin more fully rational in the special ways true of human subjects – especially those who lived their lives by acknowledging their unique face and those of others (p. 232).

For this reason Vice (1997) aligns Bakhtinian philosophy to Menippeaic traditions where there are no hierarchies and dialogue is characterized by extremes, hyperbole, metaphor and humour. Sullivan, Matusov and Smith (2009) draw on earlier interpretations of Socrates to suggest that his 'elenchos' (p. 328) strategies are also dialogic. Menippea is the Greek mother of carnivalesque, described by Bakhtin as "the true feast of time" (Bakhtin,1968, p. 10) in which all hierarchies are suspended. As such, "Carnival is steeped in the everyday"(Wall & Thomson, 1993, p. 66, in Gardiner, 2000, p. 65) and emphasizes the act rather than its aftermath. Holquist (in Bakhtin, 1990) suggests that Bakhtin's early assumption of 'equality' was a potential weakness in Bakhtin's theories since, like Vygotksy, he paid little attention to relationships that are characterized by power and control. His subsequent treatment of authorial discourse (Bakhtin, 1984) goes some way to address this but Bakhtin does not provide a solution to this dilemma except to highlight the important moral role of the author in his earliest works and to introduce notions of discourse in latter writings. Vygotsky on the other hand, provides specific pedagogical strategies that will lead towards intersubjectivity and positions the novice as one who receives the world by more knowledgeable others (Karasavvides, 2007) thus rendering the teacher as complete authority on their subject. This epistemological thrust may explain the popularity of Vygotsky theories in education since he provides satisfying answers to pedagogical questions that seek outcomes; unlike Bakhtin whose ontological focus poses only questions and views dialogic agreement as only one of many possible components of learning. Referring to the work of Dostoevksy, Bakhtin explains his inspiration and, in doing so, his clear position on dialectics:

In every voice he could hear two contending voices, in every expression a crack, and the readiness to go over immediately to another contradictory expression; in every gesture he

detected confidence and lack of confidence simultaneously; he perceived the profound ambiguity, even multiple ambiguity of every phenomenon. But none of these contradictions or bifurcations ever became dialectical, [emphasis added] they were never set in motion along a temporal path or in an evolving sequence: they were, rather, spread out in one plane, as standing alongside or opposite one another, as consonant but not merging… (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 30).

While he did not dismiss the significance of past on the present, as is evident in his socio-historical entreaty, Vygotsky believed that inner speech was a developmental mechanism for the individual to learn how to 'be' in the world. This view is starkly different from Bakhtin who suggested that all language was directed towards somebody – even if they were not present in the moment – and was always interanimated by others in a process of 'becoming'. For Bakhtin the clues to such language were to be found in the genres that were employed in their delivery whereas for Vygotsky the emphasis was always on the individual's language in activity as the prime locale for oral acquisition and learning intervention. As Holquist (1990) explains:

Objective psychology studies the relation of inner to outer speech in specific instances. It differs from conventional social psychology in that dialogism presumes all perception, including the higher forms of it which we call thinking, is accomplished through sign operations. And since signs can mean only if they are shared, it follows that the traditional individual/society opposition is best conceived not as a duel of mutually exclusive categories but rather as a continuum in which differences between the two poles may be charted as varying ratios of intelligibility (p. 51).

The place of learning outcomes

Bakhtin's Kantian influence, that the 'thing in itself' can never be fully known, is hugely significant in appreciating Bakhtin's contributions. However, Bakhtin was opposed to Kant's ideas of formalism because they implied a shared truth whereas Bakhtin was more concerned with perspectives on truth and their role in authorship (Nielson, in Bell & Gardiner, 1998). As such, Russian formalism held more promise for Bakhtin in this regard, and he exploited his philologic understanding of linguistics to develop an aesthetism comprised of both appreciation and architectronic analysis retrievable through utterance (where utterance is described as "a border phenomenon. It takes place between speakers and is therefore drenched in social factors" ,Holquist, 1990, p. 61). Seen in this light the intended outcome of education for Bakhtin can be viewed as a quest for alterity – the transgradient relations between self and other that constitute aesthetic activity and are manifest in utterance of this nature. Knowledge is therefore recognized as experienced gestalt rather than a neatly packaged set of goals to be achieved.

In contrast Vygotsky's quest is categorically focused on shared understanding - intersubjectivity. Taking a developmental stance, his theories suggest that there is an end point that can be achieved through mediated activity. The end point is mastery of concepts since knowledge is acquired through instrumental means. The route towards such mastery is embedded in language which is viewed as the central tool towards knowledge acquisition. While Bakhtin suggested that all forms of communication played a direct or indirect role in understanding – even those that were not present in the moment but were nonetheless influential - Vygotsky's view of language was less expansive. He believed oral language was a superior form of communication that could be achieved with development and expert intervention. Bakhtin offered no expert, but instead an 'author' whom he focussed on heavily in terms of his or her moral and aesthetic responsibilities (a point heavily debated in Matusov's writing, 2009, 2010a). While both approaches offer much to research in this field, Vygotsky's developmental thrust towards shared meaning creates a pedagogy of certainty and

individual growth (objective) while Bakhtin's social aesthetics implies a great deal of uncertainty which emphasizes mutual enrichment through difference in which the outcome is subjective. Sullivan, Matusov and Smith (2009) highlight the complexity of pedagogic activity in this regard, suggesting dialogic pedagogy is not a case of 'hands-off' approaches to teaching, but instead an opportunity to "risk genuine encounters of a multiplicity of others" (p. 375). I suggest that this may be a more ethical stance in teaching learners who do not necessarily share the same semiotic (or cultural) domains as their teacher; or the ideologies that underpin their pedagogy. Thus, while for Vygotsky consummation of another is an imperative since it is only through shared knowledge that one can be truly free, it is to be avoided outside of dialogic agreement for Bakhtin.

Contemporary applications and provocations?

Matusov (2010a) makes the important link between Vygotskian pedagogical approaches and those adopted in contemporary Russian Schools of Developmental Instruction (SDI); and Bakhtinian applications as presented in the School of the Dialogue of Cultures (SDC). It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine both in detail. Suffice to say that each approaches teaching and learning in very different ways that are consistent with the arguments made in this paper. Following on from Bakhtin's own provocations (2004) the SDC classroom is comprised of cultural dialogues that communicate among themselves within the context of contemporary culture. According to Bibler (2009) dialogue in this classroom is viewed as ongoing and takes place within and between consciousness, voices and theories as the basis of creative thinking. "Raiding parties", (p. 44) as a central feature of pedagogical design, invade dialogue across age groups, forms of thought and topics for discussion.

In contrast, the SDI classroom promotes Vygotskian principles emphasizing the instructional role of the teacher in expanding learning potential. Programmes offer support for teachers in "building the classroom community and its culture with values and behaviours that create the social context for their learning" (Vonta, 2007, p. 21). Pedagogy is strongly aligned to Vygotskian concepts of 'zpd' and cognitive development with the express purpose of supporting learners to increase their level of psychological development. The type of instruction to be applied, like SDC, is often employed in mixed age groupings but the purpose of the SDI classroom is so "older children learn to model more competent behavior, as well as provide other support for younger children" (Kratsova, 2007, p. 9). Differences between these pedagogical movements, though less explicit, can also be seen in Western pedagogies. Vygotkian inspired approaches promote the achievement of mutual understanding and agreement through 'scientific' provocation that works dialectically with everyday concepts towards learning outcomes (see, for example Fleer, 2002); while dialogism privileges the pedagogical process as an entity in itself. Matusov (2010, p. 7) argues that a dialogic pedagogy emphasises "questions of immediate concern" that may or may not be answered but will undoubtedly provoke inquiry and debate; while dialectic teaching is viewed as an activity that inevitably leads towards prescribed a priori outcomes. One values the acquisition of knowledge and development and the other values meaning-making and the various discourses that comprise learning and learner. Clearly these are very different pedagogical positions.

But what is the significance of these distinctions? In accepting the differences between Vygotsky's dialectics and Bakhtin's dialogism, and their locations both historically and in the present and local context, it is possible to conceive of different sorts of teaching experiences, and different kinds of teacher-student; student-student and student-self relations; and, indeed, different understandings of knowledge and its genesis. I argue that a dialogic approach is closely aligned to New Zealand notion of "ako" (Tamati, 2005) where the teacher accepts that they, too, have much to learn and the student is viewed as making an important contribution towards an end that cannot be realized in that moment. This concept is closely aligned to Dostoevsky's polyphonic (Lensmire, 1997) ,

Meneppeaic dialogue (Moi, 1986) and Japanese Saitou (Miyazaki, 2010) – each of which has only recently been applied to pedagogy. Such an approach compels the teacher to engage in dialogues characterized by paying attention to the internally persuasive discourses that exist in the classroom and their interanimation with authorial ones. This includes posing and responding to philosophical questions as "points of wonder" (Beryland, 2009); promoting rigorous debate (Matusov, 2010a, 2010b), engaging in learning with a sense of fun (Lensmire, 2010), and keen attunement to the subtle cues offered by the student that may be metaphoric or conveyed through genres that go beyond spoken word (White, 2009) . This is particularly significant in terms of very young children, learners with disabilities, learners who do not share the same culture or language as their teacher and any other margins of difference that inevitably and, according to Bakhtin, always exist between and within individuals as well as societies. Indeed, several scholars have employed dialogism to enhance their ability to work effectively with difference across multiple domains since a central thrust of dialogism is to recognize and value other; and to "dialogically conjugate old and new idealizations" of culture (Bibler, 2009, p. 36). In doing so, I argue, there is much to be learnt about oneself, other and society; and consider practice as moral acts that seek to promote alterity. A such, I suggest that dialogic pedagogy offers a significant route to the teaching of philosophy in schools – not as a subject in itself, but as an *ontological attitude* towards learning as discovery and innovation.

Cheyne and Turelli (2005) suggest that the ambiguity of Vygotky's work regarding dialogicity of this nature, and more specifically inner speech "is reflected in the lack of interpretive consensus surrounding the matter among Vygotsky scholars" (p. 125). As such, I suggest that Bakhtin has much to offer that is less an extension of Vygotsky's ideas, than a philosophical contribution in its own right, and that his work should be treated as such in contemporary education. As Matusov (2010) explains:

> We propose a shift of the focus for educators from instilling the correct knowledge, skills,attitudes and dispositions into, conceived of as internal to the students; to organizing and supporting internally persuasive discourses on the subject matter, promoting the emergence and development of the students' voices in this discourse and their informed authorship of answerable replies to others (p. 197).

Such a shift suggests paying more attention on *how* to teach and learn rather than the prominent focus on *what* to learn (that is, content, curricula, standards and outcomes) by understanding better classroom processes and the complex pedagogical task of the teacher (Kubli, 2005; Matusov, 2009; White & Peters, in press). Such approaches signal a shift from exclusive epistemologies (privileging abstract, scientific concepts in many contemporary societies) to embrace ontologies in educational practice . In contemporary society, if multiple ways of 'knowing', being and becoming can be expected to thrive, such a shift constitutes a necessary pedagogical attitude for teachers and policy-makers alike.

Conclusion

Bakhtin has been described as a protomodernist (Tarbu, 2007) because he anticipates the future rather than grasping the present in his interpretive quest that takes place between people. Vygotsky, on the other hand, was a pragmatist who sought to understand individual experience by dissecting its cultural and historical significance through activity. It is little wonder that the latter has received much more attention in the Western world which demands certainty, particularly in education. Yet I conclude this paper by suggesting that the consideration of both men's pedagogical provocations – both ontological and epistemological - have more to contribute to local and international schooling when interpreted against their philosophical origins. I have argued strongly

for a consideration of their differences as more central to their application than their similarities and that, in taking this stance, there are opportunities to consider different ways of teaching and learning that recognize both cultures and individuals and which go beyond definitions of learning that are located in scientific domains, rather than trying to 'fit' pedagogy into systems that do not satisfy current and future societal needs. As Matusov (2010) suggests, "when the dust of sociocultural/cultural-historical revolutions settles down, analysis of how much exactly Vygotsky and Bakhtin were compatible and continuous becomes fruitful for the development and differentiation of the cultural-historial, sociocultural, and dialogic paradigms" (p. 2). Vygotsky has taken Western education on an amazing epistemological journey over the past thirty years but I conclude this paper by suggesting that it is time to give Bakhtin his ontologic day in the sun – not as a supporting actor, but as a protagonist in his own right. It is here where I suggest it may be possible to place philosophy at the heart of schooling since Bakhtin's attention to difference and diversity through a dialogic route has the potential to embrace multiple ways of thinking about and acting in the world; while Vygotsky's focus on developmental outcomes towards an "educated person" (Bibler, 2009, p. 35) through dialectical means does not, by its very nature, promote creative inquiry and debate that positions allparticipants in the educational process as "person[s] of culture" (ibid) – a practice I suggest has never before been as necessary for education as it is today.

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