

Proceedings from
the Second International
Interdisciplinary Conference on
**Perspectives and Limits of Dialogism
in Mikhail Bakhtin**

Stockholm University, Sweden

June 3–5, 2009

Editors: Karin Junefelt, Pia Nordin



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Preface

Interest in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin among Western scholars has been particularly and increasingly evident since the 1980s. His ideas about dialogism have been and continue to be a source of inspiration for various approaches across scientific fields because they are versatile, multidimensional and open. Bakhtin's original concepts have widened both theoretical and empirical approaches in a wide range of scientific fields. These include most notably anthropology, art, education, economy, gender studies, history, linguistics, literature, medicine, technology, pedagogy, philosophy, political science, psychoanalysis, psychology, rhetoric, religion, semiotics, sociology, speech pathology, and theatre.

This conference focused on the core of Bakhtin's theory, which concerns dialogue and dialogicality. The conference themes reflected his notion that the "I" and the "self", the "you" and the "other" are embedded in each other so that each affects the other and as a whole they create a centrifugal force around which communication and life circle. The choice of the two-faced Janus figure as the symbol of the conference reflects the inward and outward aspects of communication's inherent dialogue and dialogicality. As an ancient Roman god of beginnings and doorways, of the rising and setting sun, looking in opposite directions, Janus has been associated with polarities, that is, seeing different and contrasting aspects and characteristics. As a metaphor it describes Bakhtin's view on dialogues and dialogicality within or between "selves" and "others". As a metaphorical symbol it captured the intent, purpose and outcome of the conference as reflected in this collection of papers.

The Second International Interdisciplinary Conference on Perspectives and Limits of Dialogism in Bakhtin took place at Aula Magna at Stockholm University, Sweden, June, 3–5, 2009. The conference was opened by the vice-chancellor of Stockholm University, professor Kåre Bremer. One hundred and sixty four participants from 22 countries attended the conference. The countries represented were: Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Ukraine.

Five keynote speakers framed the presentations and discussions of the conference.

- Michael Holquist, professor emeritus at Yale University, USA, and doctor honoris causa at Stockholm University, Sweden, is in the Western world known as the introducer of Bakhtin. He is also the researcher who most thoroughly has interpreted and developed Bakhtin's ideas thus making him the acknowledged world expert. Professor Holquist talked about: "Chronotope's central role in dialogue."
- Ragnar Rommetveit, professor emeritus in psychology at Oslo University, Norway, is one of the most prominent researchers in the world on dialogism and intersubjectivity. His notion of the concept of intersubjectivity has been extensively quoted by researchers dealing with the concept of dialogue and dialogicality all over the world. Professor Rommetveit talked about: "A transdisciplinary dialogical paradigm as a fight against dichotomies."
- Hugo Lagercrantz, professor in pediatrics at The Karoliska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden, is a world-famous researcher on newborn children. His research is extensive. It spans medical problems from within the newborn to interaction between child and caregiver. During the last years his research has focused on consciousness in the newborn child. Professor Lagercrantz talked about: "The making of the human brain."
- Per Linell, professor at Linköping University, Sweden, is one of the most prominent world scholars in the study of spoken language. Using dialogue and dialogicality as the point of departure, he challenges the predominant grammatical view of

linguistics, which for decades has been based on written language. Professor Linell talked about: “Taking Bakhtin beyond Bakhtin: Some trends in contemporary dialogical theories.”

- James V. Wertsch, professor at Washington University, St. Louis, USA, and doctor honoris causa at Linköping University, Sweden, is known worldwide as the researcher who developed Vygotskian and Bakhtinian ideas by integrating them into sociocultural theories about action and mind. Professor Wertsch’s paper was entitled: “Text and dialogism in the study of collective memory”.

A series of presentations were held within the following topics within the perspectives of dialogue, and dialogism. These concerned: clinical and medicine issues with regard to dialogism; dialogue with regards to classroom, pedagogy, and writing from the perspective of dialogism; linguistics: interaction; language, and thought, and identity, based on Bakhtinian theory.

The social programme of the conference provided participants with opportunities to informally discuss and expand on ideas and materials in the formal presentations. This started in the evening on June 3, with an invitation from the city of Stockholm. All the participants were invited to the City Hall, the place where the Nobel festivities are held. Stockholm City offered not only a magnificent Swedish smörgårdsbord but also an excellent guided tour of the City Hall. The social programme ended with a dinner at Elfviks gård, a place connected to Bellman, which was connected to the most glorious epochs of Sweden, and our former king, Gustav III.

The three key components of the conference, specifically, the keynote talks, the contributions of the participants from around the globe, and the social programme resulted in a highly successful experience. The general consensus was that the quality of the presentations at the conference was high. This was based on initial review of the submissions and participant comments at the end of the conference

The organizers of the conference would like to acknowledge the financial support provided by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond; Kungl. Vitterhetsakademien; and Henrik Granholms stiftelse.

We would also like to thank those who worked continuously to make the conference possible. This includes those who presented papers and have sent their articles in for this book of proceedings.

On behalf of the organization committee,

Karin Junefelt
Stockholm, June 2010

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