

Dialogue, Difference and Voice in the Zone of Proximal Development

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ABSTRACT. In recent years many similarities, especially centering on the notion of dialogue, have been noted in the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin and Lev Vygotsky. Although both attend to the dialogical character of speech and thought and the role of dialogue in the social constitution and genesis of mind, we argue that their understandings of dialogue are different in important ways. We consider the implications of such differences for a broader cultural-historical view of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by focusing on three issues: dialogue, otherness and voice. These issues lead us to consider extending the domain of the ZPD to incorporate Magistral, Socratic and Menippean dialogues. These dialogues constitute three regions on a continuum with centripetal Vygotskian and centrifugal Bakhtinian poles, and each emerges at a different point of development of the ZPD. This broader perspective on the ZPD provides a medium for cultural and historical change as well as for individual socialization.

KEY WORDS: Bakhtin, dialogue, voice, Vygotsky, Zone of Proximal Development

Bakhtin and Vygotsky on Dialogue

Both in the Russian (e.g. Bibler, 1984; Radzikhovskii, 1987, 1991) and North American (e.g. Kozulin, 1990; Sampson, 1993; Shotter, 1993; Tappan, 1997; Wertsch, 1991) psychological communities, the ideas of Bakhtin and Vygotsky have been compared, contrasted and integrated in an effort to construct a more radical cultural-historical model of human consciousness. Wertsch (1991), for example, draws upon such Bakhtinian notions as *voice*, *utterance*, *speech genres* and *dialogicality* to extend and elaborate foundations laid by Vygotsky. For, as Wertsch and others have noted, Vygotsky's project of a cultural-historical theory of the development of higher psychological processes was never fully realized. Vygotsky's available writings focus more on the immediate interactional precursors of intramental functioning than on the broader cultural, historical and institutional context of human experience. It is clearly the goal of many Vygotsky scholars to develop this latter aspect of his project.

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We agree that a constructive integration of the views of Bakhtin and Vygotsky holds considerable promise for the advancement of the cultural-historical project in psychology. Accordingly, the following discussion was motivated by a number of questions originating in a general concern regarding the extent to which the writings of Bakhtin and Vygotsky may truly be said to converge in their elaboration of a common notion of dialogue.

Several scholars have argued that the writings of these two thinkers rather naturally converge in their commitment to articulating a dialogical consciousness. Yet, while Bakhtin's commitment to a dialogic rendering of mind is central in his writing and beyond contention, the ambiguity of Vygotsky's remarks regarding the dialogicality of thought, and inner speech more specifically, is reflected in the lack of interpretive consensus surrounding the matter among Vygotsky scholars. There are those, for example, who argue that Vygotsky promoted a view of human mental functioning as inherently dialogic, and who thereby argue that the writings of these two thinkers find common ground in their articulation of a dialogical consciousness:

Vygotskian ideas of the dialogical nature of human thought, together with those of his contemporary Mikhail Bakhtin, provide the foundation for a philosophical inquiry into the interaction of culturally diverse forms of thinking. (Kozulin, 1990, p. 9)

For Vygotsky, dialogue was the concrete, psychological equivalent of the social nature of the mind, i.e., the totality of all social relations constituting the human essence. Thus, dialogue characterizes the human mind and consciousness. (Radzikhovskii, 1991, p. 12)

On the other hand, there are those who, acknowledging Vygotsky's own rather ambiguous references to the dialogical quality of inner speech, show greater equivocation in ascribing this quality to inner speech. 'It is unclear', writes Tappan (1997), 'whether Vygotsky viewed *monologue* or *dialogue* as the fundamental characteristic of inner speech' (p. 86). With similar equivocation, Wertsch (1980) notes that:

Vygotsky's explicit claims about dialogue seem to have been limited to external social speech. As we will see, there are compelling reasons for assuming that he also viewed egocentric and inner speech as being dialogic. However, given the absence of explicit statements by Vygotsky on this matter, we should note that what follows is an attempt to elucidate what he would have stated, had he addressed the issue. (p. 152)

More recently there has been a growing sensitivity to the differences between the dialogical views of Bakhtin and Vygotsky (e.g. Day & Tappan, 1996; Wertsch, 1991). It is in this spirit that we examine the respective positions of Bakhtin and Vygotsky on the dialogicality of speech, with a view to uncovering and explicating significant divergences on this subject. Further, we argue that there are implications of such differences for an extended notion of the Zone of Proximal Development. We will attempt to

keep before us, however, an awareness that each was pursuing his own unique project and that both were remarkably generative thinkers producing an impressive array of genuinely novel insights, few of which were pursued in detail.

Vygotsky: Inner Speech as Dialogue and Monologue

How is the dialogical quality of speech represented in Vygotsky's writings? How, in particular, does dialogue figure in his understanding of inner speech? Wertsch (1980) offers the suggestion that a close analysis of Vygotsky's writings concerning egocentric and inner speech reveals 'that more appropriate terms for what he was studying would be "egocentric dialogue" and "inner dialogue"' (p. 151). Wertsch argues that although 'Vygotsky never made claims that were as specific about the dialogic nature of inner speech as [Bakhtinian claims] . . . a detailed examination of some of his writings reveals that he was thinking along very similar lines' (p. 152).

When the notion of dialogue is invoked by Vygotsky, it is most often to describe face-to-face oral-aural speech and only rarely and ambiguously with reference to inner speech, writing and thinking. Significantly, many of Vygotsky's limited references to dialogue appear in his discussion of the syntactic characteristics, predication in particular, that define inner speech and differentiate it from other speech forms. On these differences Vygotsky (1987) was quite clear: 'Written speech and inner speech are monologic speech forms. Oral speech is generally *dialogic*' (p. 271). 'Inner speech', Vygotsky explains, 'is speech for oneself. External speech is speech for others' (p. 257). Moreover, we are told that adults' inner speech and pre-schoolers' egocentric speech 'are divorced from social speech which functions to inform, to link the individual with others' (pp. 71–72). For Vygotsky, egocentric and inner speech serve a radically different function from outer speech: namely, the individualized activity of self-mastery. Just as action becomes transformed into thought under internalization (Vygotsky & Luria, 1994), so too does language. Speech for oneself becomes isolated, functionally and structurally distinct from speech for others, such that it is difficult for inner speech to find expression in social speech. 'Speech for oneself is very different in its structure from speech for others. It simply cannot be expressed in the foreign structure of external speech' (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 261). This is entirely consistent with Vygotsky's (1981) more general genetic law of cultural development, on which he comments that 'it goes without saying that the internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions' (p. 163).

Hidden Dialogicality and Quasi-social Inner Speech

Notwithstanding Vygotsky's views on the transformations wrought by internalization, Wertsch (1991) has argued that aspects of Vygotsky's

account of the genesis of higher mental functions may be recast in a Bakhtinian dialogism. In particular, he has argued that intrapsychological functioning bears an affinity to Bakhtin's notion of *hidden dialogicality*.

Imagine a dialogue of two persons in which the statements of the second speaker are omitted, but in such a way that the general sense is not at all violated. The second speaker is present invisibly, his words are not there, but deep traces left by these words have a determining influence on all the present and visible words of the first speaker. We sense that this is a conversation, although only one person is speaking, and it is a conversation of the most intense kind, for each present, uttered word responds and reacts with its every fiber to the invisible speaker, points to something outside itself, beyond its own limits, to the unspoken words of another person. (Bakhtin, 1984b, p. 197)

That a dialogicality of this sort may be predicated of intramental functioning follows, according to Wertsch (1991), from Vygotsky's ideas concerning 'the ways in which the dialogic organization of speech on the intermental plane is mastered, thereby shaping the intramental plane of functioning' (p. 86). Wertsch and Stone (1985) argue that the dialogical structure of external transactions is retained in the realm of egocentric and inner speech, albeit implicitly, as the Bakhtinian term *hidden dialogicality* suggests. Although in such inner speech only one person is actually speaking, the effect of the invisible other's presence, of his or her unspoken words, can still be sensed in the speaker's utterances.

Wertsch (1991) offers an ethnographic analysis of a series of three interchanges between a two-and-a-half-year-old child and her mother during a puzzle-copying task to illustrate the hidden dialogicality of intramental functioning. Wertsch was interested in the degree to which, over the course of the problem-solving session, the child came to internalize her mother's directives and questions and, consequently, to perform the task in the absence of her mother's explicit regulative utterances. The first two episodes were characterized by the presence of overt, external mother-child dialogue in which the mother responded to the child's question about the proper placement of a puzzle piece by directing the child's attention to the model puzzle. By the third episode, however, the child was consulting the model independently of the mother's explicit directives. In the first two episodes, the child's consultation of the model represented a rejoinder first to the explicit and then to the implicit utterance of the mother. The self-guiding utterance of the child is taken to be a response to the 'invisible presence' of the mother's utterance. By the last episode in this series 'the child's egocentric and inner speech (intramental plane) guided this process' (Wertsch, 1991, p. 88). As Wertsch remarks, in the third episode

... the child did not produce a fully expanded question about where a piece should go ... and more important, when she looked at the model puzzle ... it was not in response to an adult's directive in overt social dialogue.

She did not rely on the adult to provide a regulative utterance but presupposed the utterance that would have occurred on the intermental plane and responded in egocentric and inner dialogue. (p. 89)

The microgenetic change of particular importance here is the increasing degree of hidden dialogicality embodied in the child's speech over the course of the mother-child interaction. By the final episode the mother's directive questions were partially presupposed in the child's egocentric speech and entirely presupposed, later on in the interaction, in inner speech. In other words, the question and answer structure that characterized the external social dialogue between mother and child, that is, their dialogue on the intermental plane, was now taken to be a feature of the child's intramental functioning.

That, for Vygotsky, intramental functioning has its origins in social interaction, in the realm of interpsychological functioning, is central and undeniable. On this point, he writes:

It is necessary that everything internal in higher forms was external, i.e., for others it was what it now is for oneself. Any higher mental function necessarily goes through an external stage in its development because it is initially a social function. This is the center of the whole problem of internal and external behavior. . . . When we speak of a process, 'external' means 'social.' Any higher mental function was external because it was social at some point before becoming an internal, truly mental function . . . the composition, genetic structure, and means of action [of higher mental functions]—in a word, their whole nature—is social. Even when we turn to mental processes, their nature remains quasi-social. In their own private sphere, human beings retain the functions of social interaction. (Vygotsky, 1981, pp. 162–164)

Wertsch (1991) goes further and argues that the dialogicality explicitly informing Bakhtin's conception of the utterance is also at play in Vygotsky's account of intermental functioning. A full understanding of Vygotsky's construal of dialogue may be achieved, however, only through a consideration of the role and status of the other in dialogue.

Vygotsky (1987) also refers to inner speech as a unique mode of internal collaboration with oneself. Of course such speech for self might well be taken as monologue, for what else could monologue be but discourse with oneself? However, there is a fundamental reason why Vygotsky could take the self to be the recipient of inner speech and still hold a dialogical view of inner speech. This follows from a central and quite explicit assumption he makes about the relationship between interlocutors, between self and other, in dialogue. According to Vygotsky (1987), what enables dialogue is 'the commonality of the interlocutors' apperceptive mass' (p. 269) concerning the matter at hand. The notion that there is a need for common presuppositions among interlocutors is quite commonly accepted and has been discussed under various rubrics, such as the given-new (topic-comment) distinction

(Steiner, 1982), mutual knowledge (N.V. Smith, 1982) and intersubjectivity (Trevarthen, 1979). 'When the thoughts and consciousness of the interlocutors are one,' Vygotsky (1987) argues, 'the role of speech in the achievement of flawless understanding is reduced to a minimum' (p. 269). Vygotsky draws on the following highly romantic exchange between Kitty and Levin in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* to illustrate this notion of shared apperception:

'Here,' he said and wrote the initial letters: 'W, Y, A, M, I, C, B, D, T, M, N, O, T.' These letters meant: 'When you answered me, "It cannot be," did that mean never or then?' It seemed impossible that she would understand this complex phrase. Blushing, she said, 'I understand.' (cited in Vygotsky, 1987, p. 268)

Commenting on this rather far-fetched example, Vygotsky notes that: 'Here the shared orientation of consciousness is complete' (p. 275). The common apperceptive mass that guarantees the success of dialogue among interlocutors is, in the case of dialogue with oneself, amplified in that it refers to the self-certainty that comes with the identity embodied in a single consciousness. 'This shared apperception is complete and absolute in the social interaction with oneself that takes place in inner speech' (p. 274). The predicativity that characterizes inner speech in Vygotsky's analysis is a reflection of this self-same certainty. The common apperceptive mass is, for Vygotsky, a prior achievement that has reduced *difference* to a minimum. Why Vygotsky takes a very strong stand on this issue becomes clear when one considers his emphasis on development and on the notion of internalization, which is nothing less than the acquisition and interiorization of the culturally common apperceptive mass.

Vygotsky appropriated from linguistic studies the broad conceptual differentiation of speech into dialogic and monologic forms and applied it to an analysis of the more specific functional varieties of speech. He illustrates how abbreviated speech and simplified syntax may result either in mutual understanding, typically the case when the interlocutors' thoughts concerning the matter at hand are connected, or in failed and potentially 'comic misunderstandings'. These latter outcomes are most likely to occur when the interlocutors' respective views diverge or when a common focus is mistakenly assumed. Complete unity of the interlocutors' perspectives, on the one hand, and complete divergence of views, on the other, define

... two extremes ... between which the abbreviation of external speech moves. Where the thoughts of the interlocutors focus on a common subject, full understanding can be realized with maximal speech abbreviation and an extremely simplified syntax. Where they do not, understanding cannot be achieved even through expanded speech. Thus, two people who attribute

different content to the same word or who have fundamentally different perspectives often fail to achieve understanding. As Tolstoy says, people who think in original ways and in isolation find it difficult to understand the thought of others. They also tend to be particularly attached to their own thought. In contrast, people who are in close contact can understand mere hints which Tolstoy called 'laconic and clear.' They can communicate and understand the most complex thoughts almost without using words. (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 269)

For Vygotsky the ideal speech situation is one in which the shared 'given' is maximal and misunderstanding is minimized. This is a view of dialogue in which the task is a faithful replication by a listener of the information contained in the speech of the speaker. Each interlocutor is an 'insider' to the other's world. This requirement is premised on the assumption that dialogue is basically a cooperative enterprise overcoming miscommunication and the fallibility of language and that it is aimed at ever greater agreement. Such a view appears to be the current orthodox view of the 'social psychology of language' (Giles & Weimann, 1993). Implicit in this view is a commitment to what, following Bakhtin, we call *monologism*.

In its broadest philosophical connotations, monologism reflects a particular stance toward the other and, most generally, toward difference. Monologism is a feature of any form of thinking that values unity over diversity, sameness over difference. Monologism, in this broad sense, characterizes any effort, philosophical, linguistic, political or other, that strives for elimination of differences in, and, ultimately, a fusion of, voices, ideas, consciousnesses, and so forth. The formalization of this press to synthesis found its most obvious and self-conscious expression in Hegel's idealism. However, monologism may be seen to be a foundational assumption in: the defense of the Enlightenment of an abstract, disembodied 'consciousness in general' (Bakhtin, 1984b); Mead's (1934) ideal of a 'universal community' in which all social interests are shared and discourse reflects and achieves a perfect communion of minds; and, as intimated above, Vygotsky's requirement of a shared apperceptive mass as the ground or goal of dialogue. In each of these cases, otherness is conceived as a condition to be overcome and superseded by a more encompassing unity of mind.

Dialogism in the broad sense, on the other hand, valorizes difference and otherness. It is a way of thinking about ourselves and the world that always accepts non-coincidence of stance, understanding and consciousness. In dialogism, the subversion by difference of movements towards unity and the inevitable fracturing of univocality into multivoicedness represents the fundamental human condition. These qualities are, as we hope to demonstrate, inherent in Bakhtin's theory of the utterance, in his understanding of the otherness of the other, and in the forms of dialogue that follow from such understanding.

Bakhtin: The Dialogical Nature of the Utterance

For Bakhtin, dialogue constitutes a key conceptual pivot in all his writings (e.g. Clark & Holquist, 1984), one that informs his epistemology, ontology and theory of language.

The dialogic nature of consciousness, the dialogic nature of human life itself. The single adequate form for *verbally expressing* authentic human life is the *open-ended dialogue*. Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium. (Bakhtin, 1984b, p. 293)

For Bakhtin, the situated act of dialogic discourse, the *utterance*, is where the being of language resides. 'Language', writes Bakhtin (1984b), 'lives only in the dialogic interaction of those who make use of it. . . . The entire life of language, in any area of its use . . . is permeated with dialogic relationships' (p. 183). The utterance, in Bakhtin's view, is neither a unit of a system of language, on the one hand, as in the tradition of Saussure's *langue*, nor simply a matter of free individual instantiations of language (*parole*), on the other. Rather, the notion of utterance emphasizes the historical event of speaking. There are, moreover, a number of features associated with the utterance that reflect this historicity and serve to distinguish it from conventional linguistic units (such as word, proposition, sentence, etc.). Here we consider two closely related aspects that mark the fundamental sociality or dialogicality of the utterance for Bakhtin: (1) the relation of each utterance to preceding utterances; and (2) the *addressivity* of the utterance, that is, its orientation to the other, and, in particular, to the other's responsive understanding.

For Bakhtin, an utterance is constrained by a dialogical relation with other utterances handed down through a tradition of discourse. Each utterance, however monologic or univocal in its external presentation, is characterized by an 'internal dialogism' (Bakhtin, 1981), that is, inescapably responds to utterances that have come before it such that it 'refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account' (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 91). Our utterances are thereby inhabited by the voices of others. An utterance, however, not only reaches backwards to preceding utterances in the chain of speech communion, but also speaks to future possible utterances. This is because, 'from the very beginning, the utterance is constructed while taking into account possible responsive reactions, for whose sake, in essence, it is actually created' (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 94). Bakhtin is referring here to the utterance's 'quality of being directed to someone, its addressivity' (p. 95). We construct

our utterance in anticipation of the other's active responsive understanding. The other constitutes not a passive listener, nor a receiver of a ready-made message and whose communicative task is one of decoding—as assumed in conventional communication models—but rather a co-participant simultaneously creating and created by the utterance in the event that is the utterance, and a factor in its content, structure and style. Moreover, this addressee will vary depending on the sphere of human activity in which the utterance is situated.

This addressee can be an immediate participant-interlocutor in an everyday dialogue, a differentiated collective of specialists in some particular area of cultural communication, a more or less differentiated public, ethnic group, contemporaries, like-minded people, opponents and enemies, a subordinate, a superior, someone who is lower, higher, familiar, foreign, and so forth. And it can also be an indefinite, unconcretized *other*. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 95)

Thus, the quality and productivity of dialogue depend upon many aspects of the other and of the relationship between the utterance and the other. On the face of it, much of the foregoing seems, by and large, not much at variance with a monological stance. Once again, however, a closer consideration of the nature and role of the other may prove to be quite revealing.

Bakhtin's Other

Within the Bakhtinian framework, all speech, including inner speech, is structured dialogically in that it always presupposes an addressee. Indeed, as noted earlier, in Bakhtin's view the utterance is permeated with presuppositions. To this extent, Vygotsky and Bakhtin are in agreement. For Bakhtin, moreover, the utterances of inner speech are permeated also with the evaluations of actual and potential addressees (Voloshinov, 1981). On the other hand, a leitmotif running through Bakhtinian discussions of dialogue is the distinctiveness of the *other*. Indeed, it is the very *otherness* of the other, the fact that the other speaks from a different horizon, that constitutes the enabling condition for the productivity of dialogue. Here Bakhtin and Vygotsky may be seen to diverge considerably. Bakhtin (1990) asks:

In what way would it enrich the event if I merged with the other, and instead of *two* there would be now only *one*? And what would I myself gain by the other's merging with me? If he did, he would see and know no more than what I see and know myself; he would merely repeat in himself that want of any issue out of itself which characterizes my own life. Let him rather remain outside of me, for in that position he can see and know what I myself do not see and do not know from my own place, and he can essentially enrich the event of my own life. (p. 87)

This passage constitutes an explicit rejection of the notion of a shared apperceptive mass as either ground or goal of communication. Similarly, the

Bakhtinian dialogical mind does not itself constitute a common apperceptive mass, but rather a community of different and often conflicting voices that cannot be resolved into one comprehensive self. Dialogical thinking is each voice speaking in anticipation (often with misguided and misdirected presuppositions) of the answering voice of another. Thus, in our view, the fundamental difference between the Bakhtinian and Vygotskian notions of dialogue hinges on the status of the other and of the relationship between self and other. For Bakhtinian dialogism, the distance and difference of the other is not only always retained but deemed essential. It is from differences in understanding that dialogue and thought are productive; moreover, productivity is not necessarily measured by consensus. Vygotsky, on the other hand, emphasizes the need for interlocutors to occupy the same epistemological space and for communication to strive for congruence. This emphasis is entirely consistent with Vygotsky's seminal notion of the Zone of Proximal Development, a region of growth (of nearest or most proximal development) for the child to incorporate the knowledge structure of her culture so that she may occupy the same epistemological spaces as her compatriots.

For Bakhtin, self–other differences, rather than impeding communication, motivate and generate dialogue. There is, nonetheless, a recognition of a strong psychological need to achieve understanding and legitimization from others. One particularly important instantiation of the other, in this regard, is that of the *superaddressee*. In addition to the other who is the *second* person, that is, the interlocutor whom we are addressing in any particular instance, there is, Bakhtin (1986) suggests, a *third* person implicit in dialogue. The superaddressee stands above the particularity of dialogue as a kind of reference and authority 'whose absolutely just responsive understanding is presumed, either in some metaphysical distance or in distant historical time' (p. 126). This 'ideally true responsive understanding assume[s] various ideological expressions (God, absolute truth, the court of dispassionate human conscience, the people, the court of history, science, and so forth)' (p. 126). In subsequent sections, we argue that the notion of the 'third person', or 'third voice', of the superaddressee is an absolutely essential, though implicit, feature of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. This must be so because the goal of dialogue within this zone is not merely the creation of a common apperceptive mass for two interlocutors but something more broadly shared among members of communities.

Dialogues in the Zone of Proximal Development

It is in Vygotsky's emphasis on the social-interactional origins of individual mental functioning that the notion of dialogue figures most prominently for him. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) has proven to be among the

most useful, both theoretically and practically, of the many productive concepts he advanced. The ZPD serves as a connecting concept in Vygotsky's work, bringing together in a single construct the various strands of his thought pertaining to the sociogenesis of specifically cultural forms of thought (Bruner, 1986; Cole, 1985; Moll, 1994). The ZPD is defined as '*the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers*' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). The ZPD represents, in particular, a concrete and programmatic manifestation of Vygotsky's broader theoretical contention regarding the genetic relationship between interpsychological and intrapsychological functioning.

Practically, the construct was introduced also as a critical response, and alternative, to received approaches to instruction and psychological testing. With respect to the latter, Vygotsky polemicizes against the use of static, individual forms of assessment. He argues that, in their tendency to rely exclusively on the analysis of a child's independent intellectual activity in some task setting, traditional methods of psychological testing uncover only the presence in the child of those mental functions that have already matured, functions that constitute the 'fruits' or 'end products of development' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Competencies or mental functions that are still developing or that are yet to develop, emerging *in vivo* as it were, remain hopelessly beyond the methodological purview of this traditional, individualistic approach to psychological assessment. The notion of the ZPD, in contrast, was formulated precisely to reflect the presence of these competencies *in potentia*, the 'buds' or 'flowers' of development. This dynamic, emergent aspect of mental functioning is reflected more specifically in the child's assisted performance on a task, in the joint, collective activity of child and more competent other. Here we have the most significant role of the other within the Vygotskian framework, that of the tutor.

The emergence of specific cognitive processes is not an invariable or self-evident consequence simply of the opportunity to engage in joint problem solving with a more capable other. Joint activity with a more competent adult or peer, in other words, is not in and of itself a condition sufficient to create a ZPD or to promote independent task mastery. Accordingly, much research on the ZPD attempts to determine the nature and quality of the more competent other's assistance that is most conducive to the development of strategic, self-regulated thought and action (Díaz, Neal, & Amaya-Williams, 1990).

The metaphor of the *scaffold* has proven particularly useful in this effort. Scaffolding is described as a 'process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts' (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976, p. 90). In other words, the developmental *telos* of scaffolded instruction is independent task mastery or,

in terms of the metaphor, functioning with the external instructional scaffold withdrawn. Scaffolded instruction within the ZPD is informed by the tutor's constant appraisal of, and sensitivity to, the learner's level of functioning. More specifically, the successful scaffolding of instruction requires that the teacher perform a number of functions, among which are the selection, organization and presentation of suitable tasks. These tasks must also allow for: the teaching of emerging skills; ongoing evaluation of the task's suitability to its purpose; the generation and maintenance of the learner's interest in the task; the use of modeling, questioning and explanation to clarify the goals of the task; and the presentation of approximations and appropriate approaches to the task (Palincsar, 1986; Wood et al., 1976). Sensitivity is important here because of the need to detect, and respond to, emerging capacities and critical absences. Both the detection of, and the response to, appropriate child characteristics depend upon the character, abilities and, above all, the agenda of the tutor. It is through this agenda that a third party enters into the socialization of the child. The tutor, by definition, must have an agenda, or curriculum, however implicit. That curriculum, to be effective, must have some force of authority that goes beyond the tutor. The tutor, teacher and even parent, ultimately, as it were, serve in *loco communis*.

The scaffolding literature suggests that a major feature of the ZPD is its broadly monological goals. Tutor and learner are engaged in an exchange that aims to create a consensus regarding, among other things, the goal-structure of the problem at hand and the actions most apposite to the problem's solution. Ideally, the teacher's utterances are aimed at ensuring the learner's maximal involvement in completing the task at hand, even in the absence of the latter's full understanding of the task situation. In this way, the teacher nudges the child 'from one level of competence to the next and eventually to independent application of the instructed skill' (Palincsar, 1986, p. 74). This requires an attentiveness to the child's performance, an attentiveness that will be reflected in the teacher's dialogical utterances. Indeed, Palincsar (1986) is most explicit in considering dialogue the very means by which directive support in the ZPD is provided and modified, the means, in other words, by which children are provided with scaffolded instruction. But more specifically, what we want here to argue is that this is a dialogue of a particular kind, one with clear monological goals.

In at least one discussion of internalization Vygotsky (1981) invokes the master-slave or supervisor-subordinate relationship. The social relationship that stands as a model for Vygotsky is markedly asymmetrical, hierarchical, and organized around the developmental goal of instrumental control. Moreover, the master-slave, supervisor-subordinate relationship is itself a social transformation of the worker-tool relation, and hence it is easy for Vygotsky to recover, through reciprocal transformation, the tool-like instrumentality of inner speech from such social relationships. Social relationships

are based on the same labor–production instrumentality as action–tool relations. All of this is organized around the issue of control, which, through ontogenesis, becomes transformed from that of an external agent over a subordinate to one of an internal agent over self and ultimately to a principle over an instance. ‘A major step in the evolution of labor is that the work of the supervisor and that of the slave are united in one person’ (Vygotsky, 1981, p. 160). For Vygotsky, the leading edge of cultural-historical development is the progressive evolution and internalization of control and mastery of action and production. He focuses on the technical, principled, hierarchical and paradigmatic in the ontogenetic (and ontological) assimilation of the person into the cultural. The guiding interests for Vygotsky are clearly technical and epistemic. As we have noted, Vygotsky was particularly focusing on the development of scientific-technical thought. Vygotsky’s metaphor also highlights another significant ingredient of such dialogue: power. Like Bourdieu (1984), Vygotsky, at least in his view of the ZPD, clearly portrays a knowledge differential as power differential. That differential brings into focus the role of the other in the ZPD.

The other enters into dialogue in many ways. We need to consider ‘multiple others’ just as we recognize that there are ‘multiple selves’. Yet it just seems obvious that there are multiple others. Indeed, there is less of an illusion of unity in the other than in the self. There is a multiplicity in the other, however, that exceeds the mere plurality of the multiple persons and roles. Most often in speaking of the other, we are thinking of our interlocutors, concrete and implied, and these are legend. The notion of a third voice in dialogue raises what might be called the question of the *other* other of dialogue, not an interlocutor, but an implicit third presence: an authoritative voice.

Three Dialogical Genres for the ZPD

To pursue the respective implications of the different social perspectives of Vygotsky and Bakhtin, we will be drawing distinctions among several dialogical genres relevant to an extended view of the ZPD. We begin with a discussion of the *Magistral dialogue*, which we consider as the prototypical and ‘official’ dialogical genre of the ZPD. The functioning of the Magistral dialogue depends upon an asymmetry of interlocutors, based, in turn, on an asymmetry of cultural and technical knowledge, and, hence, of power. This asymmetry arises, as we have intimated, from a third factor, beyond self and other, from which knowledge and power flow: an authoritative *third voice* implicit in dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986; Jauss, 1989). Alternative forms of dialogue ultimately grow out of the ZPD, we will argue, as a progressive reaction to that asymmetry.

Magistral dialogue: the authoritative other. The structure of Vygotsky's ZPD bears a remarkable similarity to the theological tradition of the Magistral dialogue. A Magistral dialogue is characterized by a superiority of the *first* (Magistral) voice over the *second* (novitiate) voice: the parent over the child, the teacher over the student, the tutor over the apprentice. The maintenance of this asymmetry requires a *third* voice, an authoritative and institutional third party upon which the first voice may draw. The sacred text, the word of the prophet, the received view of science, the democratically constituted government, the school curriculum, 'what everybody knows' about child development, medical or 'Aesculapian' (Sarbin, 1995) authority, or even rationality itself, are all common enough exemplars of the third voice of Magistral dialogue. The Magistral discussion centers itself on a deficit or an absence (*quaestio*) on the part of the second voice (child/pupil/apprentice) that is responded to by the first voice (parent/teacher/mentor/tutor) that interprets (*interpretatio*) the third voice in the given situation (Jauss, 1989). The third voice might be said to 'inhabit', or speak through, the first voice as an instance of ventriloquation (Bakhtin, 1981). This may be signaled by certain conventions in the discourse of the tutor, such as the use of indirect or reported speech to signal the remote source, and authority, of the utterance (Morson & Emerson, 1990; Parmentier, 1994). The tutor does not act as such in a vacuum but out of a cultural and historical context. 'In each epoch,' Bakhtin (1986) writes, 'there are always authoritative utterances that set the tone—artistic, scientific, and journalistic works on which one relies, to which one refers, which are cited, imitated, and followed' (p. 88).

In the Magistral dialogue the first and third voices authoritatively formulate meaning in reaction to the perceived deficit in the second voice. The second voice occasions the dialogue but the first and third voices guide the conversation to its proper end. There is thus a *telos* (developmental endpoint, educational goal, skill to be acquired, character to be formed, etc.) implicit in the Magistral dialogue that is given by the third voice. The productivity of the Magistral dialogue depends, as we have noted above, upon the appropriate sensitivity to the *quaestio*. Nonetheless, the openness of the Magistral dialogue is constrained by the authority of the third voice that serves as both a stabilizing and directing force. The first and third voices presume to know where the dialogue is heading. Deviations from the proper trajectory are noted and corrections initiated.

Magistral dialogue is thus a pedagogical technique for promoting the initiate's acquisition of institutionally constituted cognitive strategies. As such this dialogue affords the means by which scaffolded instruction takes place in the ZPD (Palincsar, 1986). Through dialogue, the helplessness of the *quaestio* is replaced by the self-mediated autonomy of the child's own *interpretatio*. In principle, the Magistral dialogue pays homage to what we have called monologism, a stance within which, according to Bakhtin

(1984b), 'the genuine interaction of consciousnesses is impossible, and thus genuine dialogue is impossible as well' (p. 81). It is a dialogue in which a single form of interaction prevails: 'someone who knows and possesses the truth instructs someone who is ignorant of it and in error; that is, it is the interaction of a teacher and a pupil, which, it follows, can only be a pedagogical dialogue' (p. 81). The Magistral dialogue assumes the progressive and deterministic trajectory of a traditional growth curve homing in rheostatically on a set-goal. Significantly, the final phase of the Magistral dialogue is the *communio* in which the Magistral voice strives to draw the participants together consensually in the third voice that they now share, jointly striving to create, in essence, Vygotsky's goal of a shared apperceptive mass.

It should be noted that Bakhtin did not focus on nor provide a systematic view on the ontogeny of what he viewed as the dialogical imagination. In contrast, Vygotsky provides precisely this by placing the child in a concrete apprenticeship within the Magistral dialogue of the ZPD. One might even imagine the ZPD as Vygotsky's quite serious answer to Bakhtin's rhetorical question: 'And what would I myself gain by the other's merging with me?' The gain for the child is enculturation.

Socratic dialogue: the questioning other. Dialogue is always open-ended and may be turned at any moment against any participant, including the third voice. The power of dialogue, as Foucault (1978) has argued, does not simply flow from above but is distributed and heteronomous, potentially available to all who enter into the discursive practices of a culture. Although the Vygotskian tradition has focused on socialization and enculturation in the ZPD as internalization, contemporary interpretive scholars have attempted to treat socialization as a developing *participation* in social networks (e.g. Corsaro, 1992). The child not only gets something *out* of the ZPD but also gets *into* the dialogical context. For the apprentice there is an '*assimilation*—more or less creative—of others' words' (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 89). The apprentice may 'rework and re-accentuate' the words of the other. Eventually, the Magistral dialogue becomes transformed into a Socratic dialogue as the pupil takes a more active role in the educational process and children become more sensitive to ambiguity and more skilled at negotiating meaning (Bruner, 1986). If enculturation were simply a matter of internalization, presumably the dialogue would be enhanced and the productivity of the ZPD would grow with the developing child. Indeed, to a considerable extent that is what appears to happen, but the increasingly active and empowered second voice does entail some interesting complications.

Two important features of the Socratic dialogue are that, first, it is forever suspicious of consensus, and second, it often eludes the *telos* of the third voice. It resists the constraints of the scaffold. The *quaestio* of the second voice (now a Socratic questioning voice) is no longer so easily silenced by

appeals of the first voice to the authority of the third voice. Under the increasingly informed voice of the apprentice, the tutor's voice may become confused, lose its way in the conversation, become rather meandering 'until it finally produces a meaning that is the result of a mutual inquiry, and that emerges out of a knowledge of one's lack of knowledge' (Jauss, 1989, p. 210). Yet this meandering may be more than a result of an individual lack of knowledge and rather reflect substantive differences in understanding and, in the limiting case, an exploration of the limits of received knowledge. Moreover, in the Socratic dialogue, there is no guarantee of resolution and consensus. Indeed, many of the original Socratic dialogues (e.g. *Lysis*) end in general disarray and confusion (C.P. Smith, 1980).

It should be noted that this account of the Socratic dialogue differs from many accounts of 'Socratic method' as proposed, for example, to characterize certain forms of psychotherapy (e.g. Friedberg & Fidaleo, 1992; Moss, 1992; Overholster, 1994). A close examination of the so-called 'Socratic method' as used in these contexts reveals that what is being promoted is a Magistral dialogue in which clients are taught to ask the 'right' questions for self-discovery and certainly not to enter into social critique. In education, the work of Corsaro (1992), for example, reveals that teachers are often willing to allow children to take a leading role and to make adjustments just to the extent that the children's activities incorporate educational and developmental goals. This is a risky business, however. While these adjustments are typically made with a view to maintaining a Magistral dialogue, they may quickly develop into more purely Socratic dialogue.

The other in the Socratic dialogue is no longer conceived unambiguously as an expert or more competent other into whose more highly developed cognitive space the apprentice inevitably moves in the course of enculturation. The hierarchically structured relations of expert and novice in the Magistral version of the ZPD, with its attendant conceptions of the self-possessed tutor and the child-on-the-way-to-self-possession, give way to a looser relational structure that is characterized by a greater mutuality of question and answer. This new sphere is conceived not exclusively in terms of unidirectional influence in which the less able apprentice is pulled up into the intellectual world of the parent, teacher or tutor, but rather as an encounter of differences that carries the potential for *interillumination* among the voices in dialogue. That the self-understanding of the tutor, no less than that of the apprentice, is subject to change is, of course, entirely consistent with the widely accepted truism of 'bi-directional effects' in developmental psychology. However, there are many levels at which this truism may be acknowledged and understood. In the context of the Magistral dialogue the 'child effects' are acknowledged as the necessary initiating and constraining forces of the *quaestio*. Power resides, nonetheless, with the second and third voices that motivate and direct development. In the Socratic dialogue control shifts to a more directive and active *quaestio* of the second

voice, one that may require a modification of the stance of the first voice, indeed one whose response, as Bakhtin (1984b) puts it, 'could change everything in the world of my consciousness' (p. 293). Another way of putting this is to point out that the Magistral dialogue proceeds most clearly when 'child effects' are passive and thoroughly anticipated with responsive strategies ready to hand. To the extent that the child's voice asserts itself in unpredicted and challenging ways, the dialogue becomes Socratic and the opportunity arises for the role of the tutor to be modified. The tutor's stance toward the child may now require an openness not only to the limitations of the child but also to otherwise previously unquestioned prejudices guiding Magistral dialogue in the ZPD. Here the sensitivity is not simply to the limits of the second voice but also to the self-understanding of the first voice. The correctness of the tutor's understanding of the third voice may be questioned and the authoritativeness of the third voice itself may be challenged. Indeed, in our pluralistic culture with its loss of 'grand narratives' (Lyotard, 1984) legitimating traditional authorities, we are sometimes free to change our allegiance to any given third voice or to seek out new authorities. 'Unsuccessful' parents, for example, may seek 'counseling', and enter into another Magistral dialogue in which they take on the second voice in order better to learn to parent.

The ideal Socratic dialogue will be guided by an openness to the emerging truth of the given subject matter and not simply by the adult's prepossessed knowledge. Now this is never more than an ever-present possibility. Certainly, Socrates' interlocutors were not distinguished by their ready abandonment of their Magistral voice, and many adolescents do not appear to feel that parents are any more ready to accept challenges to their own authoritative voice (e.g. Collins, 1990). Hence, in a Socratic dialogue the conflict of voices may escalate.

Menippean dialogue: carnival, misbehaved children and other horrors. To the continuing technical and epistemic interests of the foregoing dialogues an emancipatory interest may be added. When the first voice resists the changing status of the second voice, conflict and a deterioration of relationships are ever-present dangers. Levinson (1978) and Handel (1990) have described the breakdown in mentoring relationships among adults resulting from a questioning by the apprentice either of the mentor's source of authority (i.e. the authority itself) or of the mentor's capacity to continue to interpret authority to the apprentice (i.e. the mentor's hypocrisy). Similarly, an adolescent's conflict with parents or adults in general may be of either of these two sorts. Either parents may be seen as hypocritical, not in fact living up to their own standards, or, on the other hand, as (mis)guided by false standards. Questioning of the second voice may be associated with, result from or lead to the rejection of the third voice. One common consequence or symptom of this rejection is one form or other of relativism in which all

potential authorities are questioned, perhaps as a mark of an intellectual coming of age. The second voice now may turn from the skeptical but basically sincere questioning of the Socratic dialogue to the mocking and cynical questioning of what, after the Menippean satire that Bakhtin (1984a, 1984b) associated closely with his notion of carnival, we will call the Menippean dialogue.

The route from the Socratic to the Menippean dialogue is fairly direct. Indeed, in his writings on the Socratic dialogues, Bakhtin (1984b) emphasized the already satirical and unofficial aspects of Socrates. The Socratic dialogue introduces perplexity and so is on the way to becoming a 'war machine', and Socrates himself a 'nomad' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986) or an 'undisciplined child' (Misgeld & Jardine, 1989). There is always more than a mere suggestion of suspicion of the third voice in Socrates' querulousness, and Bakhtin (1984b) very much stressed the hint of carnival in the Socratic dialogue. The Socratic dialogue is a kind of 'discursive game' (Lyotard, 1984) that escapes the relatively tidy systematization of the Magistral dialogue. For Bakhtin, the Socratic dialogue challenges the centripetal, unifying forces of the Magistral dialogue with its own centrifugal, dispersing forces. As the Socratic dialogue evolves into a Menippean dialogue, the linear, logistic development of the Magistral dialogue, merely disrupted by the Socratic dialogue, is thoroughly displaced by a discursive Borgesian 'garden of forking paths' (Weissert, 1991). Ultimately, the third voice may be mocked, authority turned on its head, flags burned, and leaders burned in effigy (at least). Voices multiply and become inverted, high and low change places in a full-fledged carnival. Both Bakhtin (1984a, 1984b) and Frye (1957) emphasize the comedic, carnivalistic features of the Menippean genre, but it is a hard humor with an ever-present threat of violence. 'The laughter of the carnival', as Kristeva (1980) notes, 'is not simply parodic; it is no more comic than tragic; it is both at once, one might say that it is *serious*' (p. 80). The unruly class, the disenfranchised mob and the raucous demonstration in which a politician's bad faith is parodied are all threatening enough to those speaking in the first voice.

The Conflict of Dialogues

In the Socratic dialogue the third voice is constantly put at risk of being plunged into the chaos of Menippean dialogue. Such moves away from Magistral dialogue are therefore justly viewed with suspicion, and the Menippean second voice is often stigmatized as immature, deviant, sick or subversive. Counter-moves against incipient Menippeanism may be initiated. Avatars of the third voice may, through various instruments of the state, attempt to re-educate, discipline, cure, shun, silence or banish the unruly second voice (Foucault, 1965, 1975). Authority continually strives to manage dialogue successively through stigmatization, suppression and, ulti-

mately, incorporation into a stable Magistral dialogue. The tendency may be seen in such diverse contexts as Plato's latter dialogues (especially after the *Meno*), which become more didactic, or in the legitimization of the trade union movement, or in the domestication of experimental education in the form of government commissions and federal grants. If the parent is perceived to be an ineffective first voice and does not or cannot accept a second-voiced role in a sanctioned Magistral dialogue, then there are institutional and instrumental remedies to be invoked. In its enlightened tack, the liberalized modern state with its myriad first-voiced agencies ventriloquating the diminishingly authoritative third voice has generally preferred to pursue the educational option of dealing with the second voice, and remediation for the 'failing' child. Hence, the collapse of orderly civil dialogue may be attributed to failures in educational technique or to deficits in the second voice ('bad parenting', poor teacher training, etc.). Techniques are developed and implemented to overcome the developmental lags, deficits or incapacities revealed in developmental research. When the educational option falters, the state turns to other technical resources, typically medical or quasi-medical therapies, and ultimately legal options may be employed or, in extreme cases, terror. Modernist educational theory tends to proceed on two fronts with constant restructuring of the technical educational apparatus of the state and ever-renewed efforts at quasi-medical assessment and remediation of nomadic or deviant second voices and their treatment within a Magistral dialogue. Disciplines and professions such as psychology are a growing part of this system. These are not merely theoretical systems but social institutions, and increasingly a third voice immanently present in countless Magistral dialogues.

Social discourse gives rise not merely to conflicts about subject matters but more fundamentally to conflicts over dialogical genres. The notion of internalization, as articulated by Vygotsky, itself presupposed a rather structuralist view of culture as a set of interconnected and relatively complete rules. Discourse is viewed as largely consisting of overcoming differences in understanding of the rules and of the appropriateness of local applications in particular circumstances. This monological view is most consistent with the Magistral dialogue and relatively 'weak' forms of the Socratic dialogue. A more post-structuralist view of culture, one that offers an alternative image of, at best, a loosely connected set of guides, ever open to reinterpretation and constantly under renegotiation, opens up more radical forms of Socratic dialogue and even the possibility of Menippean dialogue. The conflict of dialogues, or contentious dialogue among dialogues, provides a ground for social unrest and, ultimately, of construction and destruction forming a higher-order ZPD for, at least the possibility of, sociogenesis. In this context a ZPD is created that is relevant to a broader notion of cultural-historical psychology.

The three dialogical types discussed here are all, we submit, relevant to the notion of ZPD and, moreover, are offered as a potential typology to identify different phases of the ZPD. These dialogical genres reflect transformations in the ZPD as the voices, particularly the second voice, are transformed. As the dialogical genre of the ZPD changes, however, the potential for change extends to the other voices: first to the first voice and, finally, to the third voice. A central feature of all is the generative capacity of asymmetry induced by the third voice. There are asymmetries of knowledge, expertise, resources and, ultimately, power. All offer an opportunity for productive change, on the one hand, and for oppression or disorder, on the other. In the developmental literature the ZPD is almost invariably presented as a rather cozy, nurturant, extended 'womb', but, as we, and others, have argued, it also has the capacity to dominate, discourage and oppress (e.g. Goodnow, 1990). These latter tendencies may be mitigated by the possibility of the Socratic dialogue. Yet, just as Magistral dialogue may range from benevolent paternalism to oppressive authoritarianism, so the Socratic dialogue may range from a subtly modified Magistral dialogue, to creative emancipation, to the nauseating *mise en abîme* of Menippean deconstructive carnival. These are risks for all who enter into dialogue.

We are of the view that the meaning of the ZPD, like any meaning, emerges as part of an unfinalizable dialogue on the topic at hand. While we are not arguing for an abandonment of the ZPD notion as traditionally conceived, we do hope that by contrasting its inherent Magistral qualities to those of the Socratic and Menippean dialogue genres—by, as it were, bringing the Magistral genre into a dialogue with these other genres—we have made some of the assumptions on which it is premised more explicit, and thereby more amenable to critical questioning. In this connection, we are not too far from Bakhtin's (1984b) own views on the dialogizing of genres, according to which a genre's dialogic encounter with other, rival genres promotes a genre's greater self-consciousness. Commenting on the influence of new genres on old ones, Bakhtin (1984b) writes:

... no new artistic genre ever nullifies or replaces old ones. But at the same time each fundamentally and significantly new genre, once it arrives, exerts influence on the entire circle of old genres: the new genre makes the old ones, so to speak, more conscious; it forces them to better perceive their own possibilities and boundaries, that is, to overcome their own *naïveté* . . . [and] promotes their renewal and enrichment. (p. 271)

Dialogue has often been viewed, by more critically oriented psychologists, as inherently emancipatory and decentering or, in contrast, by many of those in the mainstream, as an essentially neutral field of communication within which may be discovered many differently valenced contents. We have argued that Bakhtin and Vygotsky promote rather different views of dialogue and consider that each illuminates different possibilities. This

heterogeneity of dialogue must give us pause to reflect on the contemporary valorizations of 'dialogism' and ask in each case: 'What kind of dialogue is this?'

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