Shklovsky's *ostranenie*, Bakhtin's *vnenakhodimost'* (How Distance Serves an Aesthetics of Arousal Differently from an Aesthetics Based on Pain)

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Abstract As literary critics and language theorists, Viktor Shklovsky and Mikhail Bakhtin each utilize "aesthetic distance" in an unconventional way—unrelated, it would seem, to the usual aesthetic criteria of beauty, goodness, or truth. For the Formalist Shklovsky, the distancing or estrangement of an object sharpens our perception and stimulates our senses, thereby arousing us to artistic (as opposed to drably everyday) experience. For the dialogic Bakhtin, the mandate to "be outside" that which you create is a matter of subject-subject relations, not subject-object. This essay considers only one aspect of this intersection: the role of pain (the hurting body as the norm) in these two aesthetic economies, Shklovsky's and Bakhtin's.

The passivity of suffering is more profoundly passive than the receptivity of our senses, which is already the activity of welcome, and straight away becomes perception. In suffering, sensibility is a vulnerability, more passive than receptivity; it is an ordeal more passive than experience.

Emmanuel Levinas, "Useless Suffering"

Estrangement (ostranenie) and outsideness (vnenakhodimost'): in the world of Russian literary theory, these two evocative abstract nouns are associated with two famous critics from two rival twentieth-century schools, the Formalist and the Dialogic. Each noun promotes acts of distancing over acts of identification, making this distance a prerequisite for genuine art. Viktor

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Shklovsky (1893–1984) and Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975), almost exact contemporaries, would seem to have little in common as thinkers and as personalities. The young Shklovsky was brash, secular, as succinct as an aphorism, and enamored of Futurism, modernity, fast machines, and the efficiency of the device. He was also a creative writer with a distinctive laconic style, whose "memoir-novels" shaped his own autobiographical image into a sardonic witness of massive political and personal loss. Although Shklovsky published a set of anecdotal remarks on Dostoevsky and his critics in 1957, Za i protiv: Zametki o Dostoevskom (For and Against: Notes on Dostoevsky), he was overall more accomplished as a scholar of Tolstoy (see Shklovskii 1957, 1967); his earliest examples of ostranenie are taken from Tolstoy's texts.

To Shklovsky's orientation toward the future, toward Futurism and vigorous self-fashioning, Bakhtin presents a contrast in almost every respect. He was an old-fashioned philosopher in the style of the German professoriat: patient, learned, something of a technophobe, given more to meandering than to manifestos, enamored of organic bodies (especially the body of Christ) and of the glorious past of literature rather than its present or future. He evinced no interest in creating primary literary artworks himself and near the end of his life firmly declined to write his memoirs (see Duvakin 2002: 295). As regards the Russian canon: Bakhtin never found Tolstoy congenial, but he did find a brilliant locus for his concepts of multivoicedness and outsideness in Dostoevsky.

During the first Soviet decade, Shklovsky and Bakhtin were both "characters." Each was charismatic (and eccentric) enough to be written into the romans à clef of their literarily gifted friends, Veniamin Kaverin and Konstantin Vaginov.⁵ The Soviet regime would harass both critics, but each

- 1. Something of a daredevil and dandy in real life, Shklovsky's autobiographical persona in his three memoir-novels from the 1920s is that of a resigned but recurrent loser, self-effacing and mournfully playful. See Bristol 1997: 323–25 and Razumova 2003: 135–38.
- 2. Shklovsky's "notes" on Dostoevsky are a compendium of insights into the biography and the major novels interspersed with commentary on major critics.
- 3. In February and March 1973, Viktor Duvakin conducted six oral interviews with the seventy-seven-year-old Bakhtin about life in the 1910s and 1920s. This exchange occurs near the end of the sixth conversation: "D: 'And are you intending to write your memoirs?" B: 'I absolutely do not intend to do so.'" (Translations from the Russian, here and elsewhere, are my own.)
- 4. The first edition of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* was published in 1929 and can be seen as part of Bakhtin's reaction to the "Formalist decade"; Bakhtin's exile followed hard upon it, after which his name was not cleared for print until the early 1960s. Bakhtin revised the book substantially for a second edition in 1963. For an English translation, see Bakhtin 1984 [1963]. 5. Veniamin Kaverin (pseudonym Veniamin Zil'ber, 1902–1989), an ornamentalist prose writer of the Serapion Brothers group, depicted the ossification of the older professorial
- writer of the Serapion Brothers group, depicted the ossification of the older professorial generation and the rise and fall of the Formalist movement in his *Skandalist*, *ili vechera na Vasil'evskom ostrove* (*The Troublemaker*; or, *Evenings on Vasilievsky Island*) (1928). Konstantin Vagi-

devised nonconfrontational ways to remain productive within Russian intellectual life, surviving into deep old age.6 Although Bakhtin did not know the young Shklovsky personally,7 they later came to respect warmly one another's contributions to literary study. Yet the methodological fault line between them never wholly disappeared. In The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship (1928), Bakhtin's associate (and perhaps collaborator) Pavel Medvedev reproached Russian Formalism for its "nihilistic slant," that is, for defining art by a subtraction of meaning and value rather than by an act of creation. Especially to blame, Medvedev said, was the "naked device" of ostranenie, which mocked and emptied out all that it de-automatized.8 Three decades later, when it again became possible to respond in print to Bakhtin, Shklovsky admired portions of Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky, which he recognized as a rather Formalist project.9 In a 1970 review of Bakhtinian carnival, however, he deplored Bakhtin's mythic, folkloric approach to the concrete historical targets of Rabelaisian parody as well as his failure to emphasize the literary virtues of Dostoevsky's menippean scenes over their millenarian, moralistic, or utopian message (Shklovsky 1970). Throughout his life, Shklovsky remained temperamentally attuned to the Renaissance and to the cutting edge of eighteenth-century satire; Bakhtin to the classics and to German Romantic aesthetics, especially Schelling and Friedrich Schlegel.¹⁰ On one point, however, the two critics were in agree-

nov (pseudonym Konstantin Vagingeim, 1899–1934) portrayed members of the Bakhtin circle against Petrograd as necropolis in his surrealistic *Kozlinnaia pesn'* (*Goat Song*) (1928).

- 6. Shklovsky was obliged to recant and officially endorse the sociological method in 1927 (see Shklovskii 2001 [1927]); Bakhtin was arrested late in 1928 and, after a year spent in detention (mostly ill in the hospital), was exiled with his wife to Kazakhstan in March 1930 (see Clark and Holquist 1984: 140–45).
- 7. See Duvakin 2002: 67–68. Duvakin: "So you did not know, even briefly, either the young Shklovsky or the young Eikhenbaum?" Bakhtin: "No. No. . . . I got to know them later; I got to know several of them later. But at that time, no. At the beginning of their activity, during the time of the circle OPOIAZ, I didn't know them. I became acquainted with the OPOIAZ circle only later, after finishing the university, when I was in Vitebsk."
- 8. See chapter 4 in Bakhtin and Medvedev 1985: esp. 60–61. Current scholarship holds that there is no justification for listing Bakhtin as co- (and even more as primary) author, a commercial decision now echoed by Bakhtin proselytizers in Russia. Bakhtin's own debate with the Formalists was carried out in a more abstract, metaphilosophical and phenomenological manner in "The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art" (Bakhtin 1990b; prepared for publication in 1924, first published in 1975).
- 9. The review is not, however, a rave. Shklovsky (1957: 221) calls Bakhtin's 1963 book on Dostoevsky "interesting" for its thesis of paired heroes and for its theory that authorial voice in the novels is absent (ibid.: 222–23); neither achievement, Shklovsky notes, is exclusively Dostoevsky's.
- 10. I thank Svetlana Boym (2004) for this placement of Shklovsky as a "modernist humanist" and for her further thought that Shklovsky's critique of automatization "paradoxically represents a kind of humanist critique of constructivism." Bakhtin was also a humanist in

ment: the observing self must be distanced from what it perceives, if art is to happen. The present essay speculates on one small aspect of this point of intersection: how their respective distancing techniques (their rationale for pushing an object away, for getting outside of it, so as to achieve the aesthetic relation) might be informed by the phenomenon of physical pain.

Consider two passages taken from essays conceived in Russia during its uninterrupted seven-year stretch of social violence, 1914-21: world war, revolution, and civil war. Shklovsky and Bakhtin would each bear on their bodies the mark of these hungry, heroic, displaced, and dispossessed years until the end of their lives. Enlisting in the army in autumn 1914 to be trained as an armored-vehicle driver and then sent to the front in 1917, Shklovsky, known for his reckless bravery, engaged simultaneously and with equal energy in military action, radical politics, and literary theory. During the postrevolutionary civil war he composed essays in the trenches, literally under fire. He was twice invalided, once after a bullet passed through his stomach on the southwestern front in spring 1917 and again in 1920, when an exploding cylinder left eighteen metal shards in his body. 11 The theoretical concepts most relevant to our present discussion date from an earlier period, however, when literary debate was still conducted more often in Petrograd cafés than in trenches, hospitals, or the unheated ruins of homes. The first of our two passages is from Shklovsky's programmatic prerevolutionary essay "Art as Device" (1929 [1916]: 13):

So, in order to return sensation to life, in order to make us feel things as objects, to make a stone feel stony, there exists that which is called art. The purpose of art is to impart sensation to an object as something seen rather than [merely] recognized; the device of art is the device of the "estrangement" of things and the device of defacilitated form, enhancing the difficulty and duration of perception, so that the perceptual process in art is an end in itself and should be prolonged: art is a means for experiencing the making [delan'e] of a thing, but what is made in art is not important.¹²

the broad sense of the word but belonged to a tradition of thought that stretched from Kant through the German Romantics to the neo-Kantians and phenomenologists of the 1910s-20s. (Fluent in German since early childhood, Bakhtin absorbed this material in the original during his teenage years. Throughout his life, Bakhtin's access to German philosophy was unaffected by state-sponsored translation and censorship policies.)

- 11. See the biographical sketch in Chudakov 1990: 16–19. Among the remarkable aspects of this wartime and civil war biography is its resilience and integration of literary theory with life practice; Shklovsky under fire treated himself constantly *to* literature and *with* literature. Literature for him was never an escape; it was his most active material. His favorite writers were his contemporaries. Under these conditions, Chudakov (ibid.: 19) notes, "the writer approaches the correspondent."
- 12. Existing English translations of this famous essay are inexplicably capricious. Most accurate and adequate to Shklovsky's spirit (but still very free) is Sher's version (Shklovsky 1990).

The second passage, dating most likely from the mid-1920s, is from Bakhtin's early philosophical meditation known as "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity." Far less familiar than Shklovsky's famous statement, it requires some contextualization. At the time of its writing, Bakhtin—who could not have passed conscription and bore no war wounds—had already been ill over half his life. From the age of nine to his death at the age of eighty, he suffered from chronic osteomyelitis, "bone fungus," a progressive disease marked by recurrent high fevers, lingering foul-smelling infections, and suppurating ulcers. In February 1938, his right leg was amputated almost at the hip, so high up that Bakhtin had to wage constant battle with the prosthesis and eventually preferred to do without one (there was, it appears, not enough stump left to attach it; see Hitchcock 1998).13 After the amputation, Bakhtin's health apparently improved sufficiently to permit him to hold a regular job. Before then (that is, before his arrest in 1928), he was a migrating "independent scholar," intermittently able to lead a public life but bedridden for weeks at a time, moving with his wife from one modest room to another, discussing philosophy with like-minded friends and supporting himself by the occasional commission or by offering academic courses in private apartments. Unlike Shklovsky in the 1920s, who rose swiftly through postrevolutionary cultural institutions to professional prominence, Bakhtin remained an outsider. Central to his thought in this early period were self/other relations of a specifically nonofficial, nonpolitical sort, which he investigated in terms of the proper capture (or perhaps even quickening) of consciousness in a work of art.

In the passage cited below from "Author and Hero," Bakhtin is arguing for the necessary outsideness of every author to the character or hero being created. Or, as he puts it, for the "author's loving removal of himself (*ustranenie sebia*) from the field of the hero's life, his clearing of the whole field of life for the hero and his existence" (Bakhtin 2003b: 97). If In the spirit of

Among the liberties taken by Sher in the paragraph quoted is the opening phrase: "And so, in order to return sensation to our limbs" (ibid.: 6)—an appropriate imprecision for the present essay, as we shall see. In addition, Sher renders the crucial definition as: "Art is a means for experiencing the process of creativity" (ibid.). "Creativity" is surely too psychologized an equivalent for delan'e, the "making" or "doing" of an object.

^{13.} After the pioneering Clark-Holquist biography (1904), Hitchcock's (1998: 87) essay was the first in English to discuss the precise dimensions of Bakhtin's bodily disability and to document the extent to which he was "living with disease rather than dying from it." Russians are traditionally discreet on these issues. "The body in revolt is often a revolting body," Hitchcock (ibid.: 85, 78) writes compassionately of the Job-like pain and unpleasantness that Bakhtin endured throughout his life—a vital counterpart, it would seem, to carnival physicality, which in utopian fashion anesthetizes the grotesque body before celebrating its irregularities.

14. This annotated edition of the essay as published in the collected works differs in several particulars from the Russian text first published in 1979. In English, see the excellent transla-

OPOIAZ and early Formalism, Bakhtin subordinates the "what" of art (the end product) to the prior question of "how." At this stage in his thinking, however, he has yet to devise the dialogic word. His crucial categories are still spatial ones, and what interests him is the proper placement of bodies, so as to enable an aesthetic experience. Bakhtin insists that only the act of getting outside will guarantee an author the excess or surplus of vision (*izbytok videniia*) that is essential to conceptualize—however provisionally—the whole of another person. Since artists must always work with some approximation of a whole, this distancing gesture is mandatory for the coming-intobeing of any aesthetic image.

It is not only the author who benefits from this outsideness, however; the emergent hero does as well. Only an author looking in from the outside can complete the imaged self that the hero needs, can successfully pin it down and give it borders, so that it might conceive of itself as an agent in the world. Innerly, the hero (being free) is fluid, open, indeterminate, too much at the mercy of random impulses and flux to enact this indispensable containment. As with Shklovsky's ostranenie, this ustranenie or "removing" of oneself from the field is valuable not primarily as an activity that makes possible a cognitive or ethical deed (this move will come later in Bakhtin's thought) but as that which awakens the potentials of art. "Acts of contemplation, flowing from this surplus of my outer and inner seeing of the other person, are purely aesthetic actions," Bakhtin writes. "A surplus of seeing is the bud in which slumbers form, and whence form unfolds like a blossom" (Bakhtin 2003b: 105–6/1990a: 24). Hard upon this lovely botanical image follows our relevant passage, which immediately darkens it:

Let us say there is a person before me who is suffering. The horizon [krugozor] of this person's consciousness is filled by the circumstance that makes him suffer and by the objects which he sees before him. The emotional and volitional tones which pervade this visible world of objects are tones of suffering. What I have to do is to experience and consummate him aesthetically (Ibid.: 106/25).

As Bakhtin explains, my obligation has two phases. First I must project myself into him and try consciously to experience, fleetingly, his life from within—not out of pity, masochism, mere duplicative empathy, or morbid curiosity, but in the interests of basic emotional literacy. Such an entering of another can only be fleetingly attempted. If bungled, both of us stand to lose by it, for the presumption of another's position is in fact strictly impossible. Among Bakhtin's bedrock convictions is that my experience of you (as the "other-for-me") and my experience of myself (as an "I-for-myself") are

unbridgeably different. For this reason, we need one another constantly, as supplements and stimulants. The suffering other "does not experience the fullness of his own outer expressedness in being" (ibid.), which is only available from an exterior position. Inside the sufferer is chaos and formlessness but also a sort of innocence. The sufferer does not know himself as I, from my position, can see him; "he does not see the agonizing tension of his own muscles . . . or the expression of suffering on his own face. He does not see the clear blue sky against the background of which his suffering outward image is delineated for me" (ibid.).

Projecting myself temporarily into this suffering other (and thus losing, for a moment, my firm sense of his form) is, therefore, only the preparation for aesthetic activity. I must return to my own position so as to consummate the other's image, to "enframe him," and thus to render both of our experiences meaningful. "If this return into myself did not take place, the result would be the pathological phenomenon of experiencing another's suffering as one's own—an infection with another's suffering, and nothing more" (ibid.: 107/26). Sustained projection and identification, such as would deprive me of my unique place outside the sufferer, is "useless and senseless." A cry of pain needs a word of consolation or a gesture of assistance, not another helpless cry of pain. From inside the pain, Bakhtin implies, there is no way out; physical suffering experienced from within is blind and mute. From that position, no form can be imparted to the whole. So distance is reasserted—and once I have returned to my own place and can again gaze out, the "clear blue sky that enframes him becomes a pictorial feature which consummates and resolves his suffering" (ibid.: 107/27).

Not surprisingly, the above passage of Bakhtin's, which appears to promise some resolution of another's pain merely through my sympathetic gaze upon it, has sparked considerable controversy, both aesthetic and ethical. It seems to confuse empathy with elimination of the hurt; it provides no platform from which a sufferer might mount a protest against institutions or social structures that routinely inflict suffering; ¹⁵ and it goes against the

15. Haynes (1995: 172–73), finding Bakhtin's work inspirational as a corrective to the bias in postmodernist art theory in favor of objects or viewers and against creators, nevertheless considers naive Bakhtin's insistence on the necessary outsideness of every aesthetic act. As she remarks on the sufferer in "Author and Hero": "Suffering, real suffering, is not resolved by 'seeing it against a clear blue sky.' This act may resolve *my* feeling about the other's suffering, but it does not in any way resolve the *other*'s suffering. Further, Bakhtin did not offer any way of understanding how structures of power influence and afflict [*sic*; inflict is meant] suffering on scores of others. Such suffering is not so easily mitigated as Bakhtin would like us to think" (ibid.: 93–94). Here Haynes joins the many radical activists who have faulted Bakhtin for his indifference to power relations and their distorting pressure. Bakhtin's discussion of outsideness, she notes, "focused on the relationships between selves, understood basically in Enlightenment terms as free, rational agents" (ibid.: 177).

grain of much self-help and support-group therapy as preached and practiced in the West—for example, by Arthur Frank, whose *The Wounded Story-teller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* (1995) holds that a properly consoling narrative of pain is achieved through identity, not through difference. ¹⁶ According to Frank, a sick person needs the constant proximity of another sick person, not a healthy person, in order to generate dialogue, a sense of community, the strength to confront disfigurement, and eventual reconciliation to one's fate. Within Bakhtinian aesthetics, however, the scenario of a "sickroom sufferer plus non-suffering caregiver" is indispensable. It is as central to Bakhtini's luminescent (but highly partial) readings of Dostoevsky as Shklovsky's exaggerated claims in "Art as Device" are essential to his bizarre (and highly partial) readings of Tolstoy. ¹⁷ At stake are two different starting points for the

16. In a Formalist spirit, Frank isolates four foci of embodiment (control, body relatedness, other relatedness, desire), four typical or ideal bodies (disciplined, mirroring, dominating, communicative), and three types of quest-stories generated when those body-types fall ill: memoir, manifesto, auto-mythology. In his first chapter, Frank (1995: 2) regrets the fact that "speech presents itself as being about the body rather than of it. The body is often alienated, literally 'made strange,' as it is told in stories that are instigated by a need to make it familiar." Estrangement is not, for Frank, a virtue. I wager that Russian readers would find Frank's treatment slick and indulgent in an unmistakably American-Hollywood way: a huge amount of concern with how "normal" (i.e., how physically beautiful and never-aging) one looks, a defense of one's "rights" to bond with others who are ill and to demand satisfaction from the indifferent healthy, and a disdain for bodies that are disciplined, stoic, or transcending (such attitudes are judged by Frank to be in denial, asocial, controlling, or pathological).

17. At several points in "Art as Device," Shklovsky illustrates ostranenie via Tolstoy: the diary entries, the polemical "Strider" (a first-person narration told by a horse), and most famously, the scene of Natasha Rostova at the opera (book 2, pt. 5, chs. 8-10 of War and Peace). In that last scenario, the confused, humiliated heroine, fresh from her disastrous encounter with her future father- and sister-in-law and eager to blunt her sense of the real, rejects artistic sincerity and welcomes operatic "falsehood" as a portal into her seduction by Anatol Kuragin. His sexual advances are an indispensable affirmation of her attractiveness, which had been cast into doubt. In The Formal Method, Medvedev mounts this sensible critique: "Shklovskii's understanding and interpretation of the device Tolstoi uses in this story ["Strider"] and other works is utterly incorrect, but this distortion of the device is quite characteristic of the new movement. Tolstoi does not admire a thing that is made strange. On the contrary, he only makes it strange in order to move away from it, push it away in order to put forth the more sharply what is positive: a definite moral value. Thus an object is not made strange for its own sake, in order that it be felt, in order to 'make a stone stony,' but for the sake of something else, a moral value" (Bakhtin/Medvedev 1985: 60). Medvedev is not wholly correct in his correction, however, at least as regards War and Peace. Although it is true that Tolstoy as man and moralist came to resist the artificiality of opera, nevertheless, from within the novel (that is, from within Natasha's world), the illusion of opera was precisely what the impatient, insulted heroine needed and desired to experience at that moment. To estrange the opera is her wish and will, not only Tolstoy's; that is why the device works and does not offend us. The device does offend when employed in a manipulative way, as Tolstoy does in his final novel, Resurrection (chs. 39-40). There an equivalent "social convention"—a prison church service is estranged, but in Tolstoy's own voice, which is explicit about the fact that no one in the fictional text shares his vision. Since in principle Formalist analysis ignores the personality of

sensate body. For purposes of comparison, then, we might begin by adducing some simple—perhaps even simpleminded—assumptions that seem to underlie these two distancing procedures available to creative authors: for Shklovsky, estrangement / ostranenie; for Bakhtin, removing oneself / ustranenie sebia.

To begin at the Formalist end: Under what conditions might we wish upon an organism the prolongation or intensification of sensation? Shklovsky would say: when this body, having learned to dispatch its tasks smoothly, with discipline and efficiency, risks being lulled to sleep. (Shklovsky, like many modernists fascinated by biomechanics, automobiles, and interchangeable parts, both feared this ideal state for the human body and emulated it. In his case more than any other Formalist, the metaphor of the Machine covered both of his professions, driver and literary theorist.¹⁸) The Russian Formalists had borrowed the idea of automatized perception from Henri Bergson and from the associationist psychology of William James,19 but they aestheticized the idea and heightened its dependence on the material world. A body whose perception has become automatized ceases to be aroused by stimuli in its environment-either strategically for self-defense or pleasurably for art, play, or Eros. In both contexts, the "body at rest" is presumed to be at peace with itself, imperceptible to itself, a potentially vigorous but blank and neutral background for the world's incitements and provocations. If-in the homey example Shklovsky provides in "Art as Device," taken from an 1897 diary entry of Tolstoy-this body finds itself walking around a room dusting things and, pausing over the sofa, cannot remember whether the sofa has already been dusted, such unconscious activity is to be regretted, for life under those conditions "fades into nothingness" (Shklovsky 1990: 5). This normal "background" body, always understimulated, easily bored and on the brink of drowsing off, wants the sun sunnier, the stone more stony in order to sharpen its appetites. Such bodies might well thirst for the shock of estranged or distorted perception. In the Shklovskian scenario, my physical body is given to me

characters, Shklovsky would consider it no great vice to conflate those two planes of authorial activity: internal interaction (between a character and her environment) and external dynamics (the moral message of the author that is directed, via the character, at the reader).

18. See "The Three Metaphors" (Steiner 1984: 44–67) for a development of mechanistic or Machine Formalism. The subsequent two metaphors Steiner provides—"the organism" and "the system"—are far more vulnerable to illness and decay.

^{19.} The concepts of "laying bare" a device and estranging a word from its accepted usage in order to heighten perception of it were adopted by Lev Jakubinsky in his work on the sounds of poetic language (1919); sources for these concepts include William James's *Psychology* (see Erlich 1965: 181–82n49). On the influence of Bergson's notions of time and laughter on Formalist views of estrangement and parody, see Curtis 1976 and Levchenko 2004: 174–83.

like any other "material" (in the Formalist sense of the word), inert and without awareness of itself, waiting for the application of a device that will wake it up. Intensified sensation becomes a weapon in the struggle against an automatized life, which (as Shklovsky puts it) "eats away at things, at clothes, at furniture, at our wives, at our fear of war" (ibid.).

Let us now consider the suffering body as Bakhtin presents it in his example above. Here is a body whose normal state is pain. Waking or sleeping, this body is in constant perceptual overload; to intensify sensation under such circumstances is insane. The dulling of sensation, rather than its arousal, is the fantasy of the physical sufferer. Not only is nothing automatized for such a body but the simplest physical gesture can be registered on every inflamed nerve and sinew as an almost insurmountable task. A stonier stone, a sunnier sun could only add to its already morbid irritability. Before it re-dusted that sofa (to return to Shklovsky's example), a hurting body would check to see if the sofa was in fact still dusty (something that apparently did not occur to the vigorous Leo Tolstoy at age sixty-nine, striding around the room with dust cloth in hand, thinking of other things, and cleaning up the room the way he moved a field: as a sort of calisthenics). A crippled body or a body in pain cannot afford to squander its energy in that way; every movement it initiates through space is a conscious deed, with edges like blades.

From within Bakhtin's scenario, then, outsideness and distance mean something quite different from the ironic, consciousness-raising estrangement championed by Shklovsky. In an aesthetics based on the neutral or inert body, out-of-the-ordinary sensation is a positive good; in an aesthetics born of the hurting body, the first step would be to get outside the pain and thereby recover the use of the body. The body's hypersensitivity must be damped down so that the mind can be set free to pursue more interesting and productive values. It could be argued that Bakhtin's later, more famous constructs—the dialogic word and the carnival body—are in part variations on this primal imperative to displace, transcend, or recontextualize that which causes physical pain.

Consider, for example, verbal utterances. They preserve and transmit complex worlds of experience, but they are not dependent upon the perishable organs that utter them. Their carriers might be tormented and certainly will die, but as Bakhtin (1984 [1963]: 300) remarks in his notes toward a revision of the Dostoevsky book (paraphrasing the Elder Zosima): "personality does not die. Death is a departure. . . . The person has departed, having spoken his word, but the word itself remains in the open-ended dialogue." Zosima's radiant departure, and the irrelevance of the decaying state of his physical remains, was a truth precious to Dostoevsky—and to

Bakhtin. Carnival bodies, however one assesses their joyous physicality, are even more insulated than the uttered word; they are anesthetized from the start. The grotesque body drinks, eats, passes wind, curses people out, copulates, beats others up, embraces, guffaws, rams you in the stomach—but (one cannot help wondering) does it really feel? Remember? Suffer? In all these situations (verbal utterance, luminous dying, carnival interaction, and the suffering body in need of another's compassionate gaze), getting outside of the body means first of all getting to a place that no longer hurts.

It makes sense that Bakhtinian aesthetics selects the chronically ill Dostoevskiian body rather than the vigorous Olympian Tolstoyan one as its body of choice. Without a doubt, Bakhtin's sympathy for Dostoevsky is rooted fundamentally in that writer's multicentered polyphonic word. But also relevant to Bakhtin, I suggest, are categories derived from the caprice of illness: lengthy stretches of punishment, inflicted internally by no identifiable agent and "for no reason," relieved by the occasional precious moment of out-of-body time that all too soon collapses back into the flesh. This sequence of sensations would be intimately familiar to severe epileptics, such as Dostoevsky, and to any other sufferer for whom loss of bodily control is a routine event. Corporeal awareness under these conditions is neither sadomasochistic nor perverse (Bakhtin attended little to those nuances in Dostoevsky's work) but simply the given state of reality. The Underground Man sings the praises of toothache; but in fact, as Bakhtin surely divined, there is no need to seek physical suffering for the sake of consciousness. An active mind and disciplined body, subjected routinely to pain, will always attempt to reap some benefit from it.

Again the comparison with Tolstoy, and with Shklovsky's lifelong fondness for him, is instructive. Both the nineteenth-century prose master and the twentieth-century Formalist critic were drawn to eighteenth-century Enlightenment values, which insisted upon a subordination of material existence to the mind. At the center of mature Tolstoyan ethics, its core presumption, is razumnoe soznanie, "reasonable [or reason-led] consciousness," the unimpeded truth lit up by painless, clarifying light. Consciousness in Tolstoy, and in Tolstoyan aesthetics, sees through a glass brightly and simply. If an individual does not feel Tolstoy's truth or does not see it as true, it is because that individual body (or so Tolstoy believed) has been polluted—with some obscuring substance such as tobacco, caffeine, liquor, meat, lust. Addiction blunts the voice of conscience the way habit (in Shklovsky's example of dusting the room, from Tolstoy's diary) can blunt our memory of the most mundane physical acts, eating away at our wives, furniture, and fear of war. Anna Karenina takes morphine so that she can go on desiring Vronsky while knowing that this passion is wrong. That a

body might addict itself to a recreational chemical so as to dull its meaningless, chronic physical pain is not, for Tolstoy, a reasonable argument—regardless of the pathos of the dying Ivan Ilyich.²⁰ Bodies are part of our lower animal nature, but they are of exceptional importance to Tolstoy as a slate upon which sin, virtue, temptation, and self-deception are registered and dues are paid. The means for reading the body morally are within each of us; Tolstoy displays little tolerance for those who evade this cleansing imperative.²¹

Bakhtin displays none of this unforgiving rigidity toward the body's foibles or supposed failings, and most likely he considered the body a rather foolishly chosen site for moral judgment. His own chain smoking and chain tea drinking—odious addictions as they might have been—were surely in part painkillers. One of Bakhtin's students at Mordovskii State Teacher's College recalled how in the late 1940s he would visit the Bakhtins at their lodgings—a thick-walled single room, or cell, in what had once been the Saransk city prison—which was so permeated with smoke that it was hard to discern bodies or furnishings; students groped and sniffed their way down the appropriate corridor. During one of their sessions, Bakhtin, disappointed when students did not light up, and in response to a question about

20. In his great narratives of dying, such as the amputation wards in the Sevastopol Stories, the Austerlitz and Borodino battlefields of War and Peace, and the later "Death of Ivan Ilyich," Tolstoy shows himself to be an astute analyst of pain. In the military scenes, surviving acute physical pain is connected with courage, a dominant theme in the early Tolstoy, and especially courage in the face of an arbitrary distribution of woundings and death. War is an appropriate site for this trial, because under battlefield conditions, dying is comprehensible: it is one's official obligation, as it were, both to kill others and to be killed, and yet accidentally, illogically, one might avoid that fate. The only proper solution is Captain Khlopov's in The Raid: not to think about it and to go about one's duties, almost as if automatized. In the later "civilian" story, pain is *in*comprehensible. But it is without meaning only for poor Ivan Ilyich, who resents it; his cancer is real but undiagnosable. Ivan Ilyich's pain is not meaningless for the reader. As author of the tale, Tolstoy employs pain punitively and didactically. We are led to believe that to hurt means to hide the reality of death from yourself; to accept one's mortality (and to confess that one's life has been lived wrongly) is to rid oneself of fear, sensation, and regret. Ivan Ilyich's final moments are radiant and pain-free because he has at last acknowledged the worthlessness of his life.

21. Tolstoy always found it difficult to imagine a body—any body—desiring, responding, or behaving differently than his own. Because he was so distracted by sexual desire, all relations between men and women, within and outside of marriage, were assumed to be governed by this relation alone; because the music he loved made him want to weep or to dance, whatever music did not bring tears or did not cause feet to tap (but which brought, say, cognitive satisfactions instead) was consigned to counterfeit art; and because in his youth he was a passionate gambler, smoker, and hunter, he later assigned huge moral significance to giving up cards, cigarettes, and meat. That such "sacrificial" gestures might have no relevance at all to behavior modification because the body in question (whether inclined toward good or toward evil) has no interest in or appetite for those activities is a possibility that Tolstoy rarely entertains.

the negative effects of tobacco, remarked: "For some it is harmful to smoke; for others it is *necessary* to smoke" (Ryskin 1995: 112). Two decades later, Bakhtin's disciple and "butler-chauffeur" Vladimir Turbin, one of several young scholars who devoted themselves to Bakhtin's physical well-being during his final decade in Saransk and then Moscow, left moving testimony of the endless, often fruitless search for aspirin in provincial pharmacies. Bakhtin "took by the handful" whatever tablets could be found. "Did that pain ever recede, even temporarily?" Turbin wondered. "Or did he simply live that way, carrying that pain in himself? That pain was itself a continuation of the pain from prior years, from very far back, a pain that he had hoped to rid himself of by undertaking the amputation. When did this ancient pain first begin to speak to him? Doubtless long ago. And to remove it, to muffle its voice, was impossible" (Turbin 1994: 449).

We do not know to what extent Shklovsky's body, with its eighteen pieces of shrapnel embedded in it from that civil war wound, also spoke up for the rest of his life. Nor can we know whether chronic pain would have prompted Shklovsky to modify the idea of ostranenie, which he had penned as a healthy young man in Petrograd and had made so dependent for its aesthetic benefits on intensified sensate perception. In Bakhtin's case, as we have suggested, the sickroom figures prominently in his earliest model of self-other activity. In this room, there are two participants: a needy sufferer up front and a compassionate caregiver (his wife, a member of his circle) who is outside the pain but never too far away. Later in that same discussion, Bakhtin makes a more explicit reference to his own condition while speaking of outward physical actions undertaken by the body. If one wishes to move successfully through space, one must translate exterior reality into the "language of my internal self-sensations" (Bakhtin 2003b: 121/1990a: 42). This internal sensory language succeeds to the extent that it serves me automatically, without drawing attention to itself. Bakhtin offers this illustration: "When, as the result of an illness, we lose control over one of our limbs—a leg, for example—this leg appears to us as something precisely alien, 'not mine,' although in the externally visual and intuitable image of my body it is undoubtedly part of the whole of myself" (ibid.). This spooky distancing of an organic part is sensed as a partial dying, because in order to belong to myself, I must experience innerly every fragment of my outer body.

It should be noted that "experience" here does not mean—as it appears to mean for Shklovsky—friction, tension, exaggeration or exacerbation but precisely the opposite. Bakhtin is striving for connectedness and inner integration, the ideal of a body that has forgotten itself. If a body does not experience this integration, if I see the part but have "lost control" of it,

then "I am quite prepared to reject a given fragment as not mine, as not part of my body" (ibid.: 121/43). In fact, I must reject this dead part. If I fail to do so, I will be unable to perform those movements through space, which require above all a sense of the seamless whole. Intriguing parallels might be drawn between this dead, "othered" leg and the Russian Formalist passion for impeding, braking, de-facilitating, and estranging objects and processes, the better to perceive them as art (and the better, the more vividly, to perceive life through its refraction in artistic form). From the perspective of Bakhtin's subject, such a desire to set up deliberate, artificial obstacles and woundings could only be the whim of a healthy and limber body. Bodies in pain, which already feel too much, partake of other fantasies.

Here Bakhtin is adjusting Henri Bergson on perception, memory, and the body to draw theoretical deductions from an intimate knowledge of what it means to be crippled, that is, conscious of the body primarily as dysfunctional, as an impediment.²² Healthy bodies, it would appear, are healthy precisely because they do not feel. Coordinated from within, spatial movements flow smoothly and unselfconsciously; the correct habits and training will always result in a certain anesthetization. Such blankness, far from being feared or deliberately provoked back to life, is the ideal for any dynamic, perfectly realized spatial art. At this point, the frequently immobilized Bakhtin has practical advice for the athlete: "The first rule of any sport," Bakhtin (ibid.: 122/45) counsels anyone attempting a "difficult and risky high jump," is to "look directly ahead of yourself, not at yourself." From these homely examples, he concludes that "the artistic truth of an expressed and externally apprehended action, its organic wovenness into the outer fabric of what exists around it, its harmonious correlatedness with the background"—note how passionately the goal is everywhere to fit in, to integrate rather than to shock or jolt—is available only to an outside body, a body not my own. "Only the other's action is capable of being artistically understood and shaped by me [from without, from my position as a spectator], whereas from within myself my own action does not yield . . . to artistic shaping and consummation" (ibid.: 123/45).

22. Bakhtin (2003b: 121/1990b: 43) appends the name "Bergson" in parentheses after a sentence occurring soon after the instance of the unresponsive limb: "The path followed in performing an action is a purely internal one, and the continuity of this path is internal as well." The annotators of the Russian text do not argue for a more specific source but instead list several essays on Bergson in Russian from the 1910s (Bakhtin 2003a: 631). Liapunov, in his English edition of the text, identifies Bergson's *Matière et Mémoire* (1896) as the source Bakhtin probably had in mind (Bakhtin 1990a: 238). Curtis (1976: 109) prefers to speak of a "Bergsonian paradigm" in Russian Formalism related to its quest for an "epistemologically based aesthetics"; for the impact of *Matter and Memory* on Shklovsky's view of ostranenie and of parody, see Curtis 1976: 112–16.

It is curious and poignant how Bakhtin, in these pages, moves from the body in space (or the athlete who dares not look at his limbs) to the image of the body in the history of art—and from there, in his later work on the carnival body, to the organism relieved of its pain but not of its sensation or corporeality. These early writings are preoccupied with the human need for integrity and a sense of the whole. Taken alone, my body and I are only a shifting, hurting, partial entity. But you can help me to feel whole. Although I am trapped and mute within my own body, you can supplement me, you can stand back and frame me against the sky. And when I think about myself in *your* picture of me (that is, from the "outside in" rather than from the "inside out"), I am just there, in an opaque neutral way, and I am whole. In your eyes I do not have to hurt, because I have become, for a moment, your image of me, and you are not subject to my pain. Thus are *vnenakhodimost*' (outsideness) and *ustranenie sebia* (removing oneself) revealed as more powerful forms of empathy, not as its antipode.

Such distancing moves are also, of course, the first step toward that "displacement" of sensation that is so commonly practiced, in one form or another, by chronic pain-sufferers. One thinks of Nietzsche's courageous exercises in objectifying his headaches into dogs, whose behavior he could then try to discipline, or of Bakhtin's legendary stratagems (involving his beloved cat) for dealing with a phantom limb. Such temporary anesthetization is central to Bakhtin's definition of aesthetic activity (as opposed to activity that is ethical, or political, or religious, which he also planned to explore and which had a far better chance of changing the world). Bakhtin's goal for aesthetic activity is personal and, for his era, surprisingly modest. He labels as art (or, in this pre-Logos phase of his thinking, "plastic-pictorial art") that bounded image of another person's body that I have created from the outside, from a different and more complete perspective. 23 Everywhere art partakes of this standard dynamic: we depend on others to produce wholes out of us, since we cannot produce a sense of the whole from within ourselves. I am always grateful to you for this delimited image, for positioning me against that blue sky behind my head that only you can see. Since pain is so ubiquitous, Bakhtin seems to suggest, art is everywhere necessary, and this aesthetic impulse is indistinguishable from caregiving and love.

In the past several decades, a large number of European and American researchers from various disciplines (sociologists, anthropologists, and cultural theorists as well as biomedical professionals) have taken up the prob-

^{23.} In "Author and Hero," Bakhtin includes a brief "history of the value of the human body in history" from the perspective of the "plastically and pictorially significant" (*zhivopisno-plasticheski*) (see Bakhtin 1990a: 52ff.). The visual and the tactile are Bakhtin's senses of choice in these early writings.

lem of pain.²⁴ In his study *Pain: The Science of Suffering*, Patrick Wall (1999: 22) begins the argument at a familiar point: Descartes's subjective assertion that mind and body belong to separable orders. This judgment was reinforced by the Catholic Church, which deemed it "inappropriate and heretical to treat mind and body as aspects of a single entity." Alternative evidence that a "single entity" was in fact more truly the case-that "the body is an integrated whole from whose properties emerge intellectually separable components" (ibid.: 24)—frequently relied upon phenomena that Bakhtin had ample occasion to test on his own body, including the sensation of a phantom limb. It appears that Descartes was challenged on precisely this point, sensory testimony from amputees (ibid.: 21). As his contribution to this critique of Cartesian thinking, Wall mounts a vigorous case on behalf of intelligent human behavior that is not governed entirely from the site where intellectuals feel most at home: the cognitive speaking mind. Many fully responsive behaviors are accomplished without conscious mind, such as operating sophisticated machines, performing as a concert pianist, executing complex bodily maneuvers as a dancer or a professional athlete (the example also adduced by Bakhtin). These processes are far from "mindless" or "automatic"; they take preparation and attention. But they can defy articulate analysis. The experience of pain, which is individualized in each sufferer and in some instances untraceable to concrete tissue damage, is placed by Wall on this malleable mind-body continuum.

Of even more relevance to Bakhtin's thinking in the 1930s and 1940s, however, are studies of the relation between pain and the comic. In his chapter on "The Pain of Comedy" in The Culture of Pain, David Morris (1991: 81) speculates on the unique status of the comic body: "Comedy holds an ambivalent position within the world of art precisely because comic writers, like doctors, insist upon viewing humankind from almost the same demystified point of view: as creatures whose fundamental attribute is the possession of a body. Comedy and pain both share the body as their common ground. . . . As medicine will attest, the possession of a body absolutely guarantees the comic prerequisite that sooner or later something will go wrong, often painfully wrong." Since comedy is dependent upon bodies and bodies will always "go wrong" (if only because they age and die), it is exceptionally difficult to enfeeble or to shock comedy; "comedy maintains its power even when stripped of every redeeming social value and reduced to its lowest level of intellectual life" (ibid.: 84). Tragedy, of course, can be easily shocked; the example Morris (ibid.: 84-85) gives is act 3, scene 4 of

^{24.} For a basic bibliography and much stimulating discussion throughout June 2003 on the topic of chronic pain, I am indebted to Dr. Victoria Grace of the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.

King Lear, when Lear experiences the tragic awareness that "unaccommodated man" is nothing but "a poor, bare, fork'd animal." Comedy, Morris (ibid.: 85) observes, "knows this truth from the outset and finds it more or less hilarious."

According to Morris (ibid.), comedy, as an "ancient human mode of dealing with pain," invests in a wide number of genres. At one pole are comedies of affliction—the greatest being Don Quixote—in which a "dolorous [pain-ridden] countenance" suffers any number of bodily indignities constantly, graphically, stoically, and in this abuse resides the "central paradox of comic pleasure. Comedy must implicitly include pain in order somehow to overcome it" (ibid.: 91). But there are also instances where pain cannot be endured and overcome. So it must be denied; it slips into another mode of representation. Then one enters the world of utopia, dream, fantasy, or (in more recent times) cartoons and comic strips: situations that, in Morris's (ibid.: 93) words, "call for pain, but pain mysteriously turns up missing. Such comedies offer us a vision in which—despite beatings, collisions, and man-eating plants—there is no cost to pay and nothing really hurts." These scenarios Morris calls "comedies of pure wish fulfillment."

Bakhtin's carnival of cheerful abuse visited on friendly, anesthetized bodies fits neatly into this second category. Bakhtin's personal body belongs there as well. Although he did share some details with his interviewer, Viktor Duvakin, about his amputation and about bone fungus (distinguishing it from tuberculosis, for his was "an illness not of the bone itself but of the nerve tissue inside the bone," in the generative "brain of the bone" 25), Bakhtin did not write much on the phenomenon of bodily pain. The topic appeared not to interest him very much—or perhaps he took it for granted. Certain aspects of his thought are clarified, however, when physical pain is presumed as background to both consciousness and communication. It justifies his insistence that the most primary of all binary distinctions is that between self and other (ideas, after all, can be shared and negotiated; my precise sensations, never). An aesthetics of the hurting body might also help explain the often whimsical or indifferent attitude Bakhtin professed toward power, his apparent dismissal of political resistance to institutionalized tyranny, which distresses so many of his more activist admirers. With chronic illness as one's starting point, Bakhtin's position becomes more sensible and easier to accommodate. No "structure of power" inflicted this suffering, and thus no regime change or overturning of power structures can mitigate it. Among the most lapidary formulations in Elaine Scarry's clas-

^{25.} Duvakin 2002: 53. The amputation, Bakhtin remarked, was "a very difficult operation"; the surgeons "chiseled all the way through my leg, my hip, and chiseled through the shin. So. I was ill for a long time, but then, to tell the truth, began to walk rather soon."

sic study *The Body in Pain* (1985: 161–62) is that physical pain is not perceived by the sufferer as having an object in the external world; "it is itself alone." So the sufferer dodges, tricks, transcends, displaces, endures, registers the occasional empathetic visitor as a distraction or a tenderness; but the pain itself is nontransferable—and the responsibility for bearing it belongs to the singular suffering self.

Healthy-bodied aesthetics (that is, ordinary life as celebrated by Tolstoy, Whitman, Hemingway, Pushkin, Nabokov) is another matter. For those creators, the major problems are happiness, greed, arousal, the curbing of carnal appetites, justice. Death in such a vigorous world can be an unnatural evil, a punishment, and a choice. Aestheticians of the hurting and ailing body—Schiller, Kafka, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Chekhov, Bakhtin—are less horrified by violence (because the body will inflict it anyway), less offended by injustice (because their pain knows no external object that can be blamed or swept from power), and as a rule, far less resentful of death, that sweet sleep. ²⁶

It was suggested earlier that one reason Bakhtin might have turned so enthusiastically to the dialogic word in the late 1920s, leaving the sensate body behind, is that his mature dialogism utilizes a medium (the utterance) that cannot be fatally compromised or snuffed out by corporeal failure or death. And when the body returns to Bakhtin's thought in the concept of carnival, it is a body that no longer hurts. This stilled body is a salvational fantasy. Unlike the machines that so dazzled the young Shklovsky, bodies are not reliable; by definition they are needful, and not just of "maintenance" but of unpredictably personalized services. The most "carnivalesque" part of the Gospels for Bakhtin was not the jeering crowd at the foot of the Cross-although that too, he felt, was carnival-but rather the fact that crucifixion is a torture machine, a gallows, designed to prolong the agony and test the body in the constant presence of pain. The body must get smarter under such trials; it must seek new ways out and devise more elaborate structures of trust and faith to keep despair at bay. Until the end of his long life, Bakhtin was intrigued by Job's dialogue with God, both as a commentary on justice and as survivor literature.²⁷

^{26.} I thank my Princeton colleague Ksana Blank for the provocative observation that among the "healthy-bodied aesthetes" there seems to be a strange tendency toward recklessness and self-destruction—Tolstoy's asceticisms and depressions, Hemingway's suicide, Pushkin's erratic behavior during his final year—whereas among the Dostoevskys, Chekhovs, and Bakhtins there is an ethics of stoic survival (as long as the body will hold out, my spirit will endure).

^{27.} Refining the dialogic model throughout his life, Bakhtin sought the optimal combination in it of embodiment, immortality, and pain in need of a compassionate other. A passage present in the original 1929 book on Dostoevsky and cut from its revision in 1963 (when Pla-

The best students of Bakhtin agree that his early and his late writings on the body have little in common. Central to the early scenarios are individual identity, obligation, responsibility, relief, delimitation; the inner body is heavy and bears witness. In the later carnival body, all has become more accessible and profligate; what matters in this new context is "transgressive togetherness" (Tihanov 2001: 114). These two separate chemistries are linked by the laughing face. Only laughter can hope to create a harmony between nature and culture—but this is not a verbal harmony, because one cannot laugh and talk at the same time. 28 Laughter, for Bakhtin, is a gesture of acceptance and affirmation; add it to the grotesque or disfigured body, and this body is turned into a spiritual entity.²⁹ Authentic twoway laughter—which Bakhtin is careful to distinguish from reduced parody or irony—always dignifies and elevates the grotesque body, reconfiguring what was crippled or monstrous into something protean, supple, flexible, freer, and thus closer to the realm of the spirit than is the canonical classical body. Again and again, the self-sufficient, healthy-looking classical body is revealed as too brittle, a body with too much to lose and therefore unable to laugh. It is pampered, all it needs is a mirror, it does not need you or me.

Let us pursue this question of mutual need—my need for a discrete but compassionate you, your need for a discrete me—from Bakhtin back to Shklovsky and his ostranenie. For fifty years, from 1924 through the early 1970s, Bakhtin made scattered references to Shklovsky in his working notebooks, which are only now being deciphered and published in full in the

tonic dialogue is reconceived as a source for the Russian novelist) reads: "The very juxtaposition of Dostoevsky's dialogue with Plato's dialogue seems to us in general superficial and unproductive, for Dostoevsky's is not at all a purely cognitive, philosophical dialogue. More to the point would be its juxtaposition to Biblical and evangelical dialogue. The influence on Dostoevsky of Job's dialogue and several evangelical dialogues is indisputable, while Platonic dialogues simply lay outside the sphere of his interest. In its structure Job's dialogue is internally endless, for the opposition of the soul to God—whether the opposition be hostile or humble—is conceived in it as something irrevocable and eternal. However, Biblical dialogue will also not lead us to the most fundamental features of Dostoevsky's dialogue" (see the translation in Bakhtin 1984 [1963]: 280).

28. This scenario would seem to be Bakhtin's version of Morris's paradox mentioned earlier—in which comedy implicitly includes pain in order to overcome it—but in a more sober variant: the utopia of "pure wish fulfillment" is an ideal only, never a transcript of actual experience.

29. Here is the epicenter of Bakhtin's laughing utopia. "Indignation, rage, dissatisfaction are always unilateral: they exclude the one who is being raged against etc., they evoke an answering rage. They divide, whereas laughter only unites; it is not able to divide" (see Bakhtin 1985a: 135; translation adjusted as per "Notebook 2" in Bakhtin 2002: 393). These categorical restrictions on the legitimate use of laughter (it can only unite, never divide) render unsuccessful, in my view, the attempt of scholars such as Aage Hansen-Löwe (1978, Russian translation 2001) to link together Russian Formalism with Bakhtin's dialogism and carnival under the all-encompassing principle of ostranenie, understood very broadly as irony.

ongoing Moscow edition of Bakhtin's collected works. The Formal Method is nowhere endorsed, but it is everywhere given its due. As Bakhtin wrote in the early 1970s, apropos of "the positive significance of formalism" (and surely with Shklovsky's manifestos in mind): "what is new always assumes one-sided and extreme forms in the early, creative stages of its development."30 From Bakhtin's perspective, the most "one-sided and extreme" aspect of Shklovskian distancing via estrangement was doubtless the fact that this process is designed to take place between a person (the author, the critic, the reader) and a thing. In such a scenario, there is only one necessary consciousness: one mind, or mind-body, in need of arousal. Some object out there is estranged by a deformed or de-facilitated word—a stone made stonier, a sun made sunnier—and this deformation is sufficient to accomplish that waking up of the drowsing mind. Aesthetic activity requires only de-automatization; interpersonal communication is not a necessary part of it. Bakhtin would disagree. For him, aesthetic activity occurs when meaningful distance is established between one person and another person, between two distinct living centers of consciousness. As Michael Holquist (1990: xxvii) put this point in lapidary fashion in his introduction to the early philosophical writings: "'self' and 'other' are not for Bakhtin mysterious categories in which the delusion of immediacy slumbers. . . . [Bakhtin understands] perception as an event that can only be reciprocal."

In his essay "The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art," written in 1924 but published only posthumously, Bakhtin expands on this crucial difference between his approach to a work of literature and that of the Formalists. Bakhtin is gentler on his opponents than is his Marxist associate Medvedev, who several years later accuses ostranenie of outright nihilism. But Bakhtin nonetheless faults the Formalist "material aesthetics" for failing to invite two consciousnesses to experience one another within a work. "There are works which indeed do not deal with the world, but only with the world 'world' in a literary context," Bakhtin (2003c: 292/1990b: 283–84) writes. Their content is not co-cognized or co-experienced; "rather, one work of literature comes together with another, which it imitates or

30. The phrase appears as part of a 1974 draft, "[Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences]"; see Bakhtin 1985b: 169. This essay was patched together posthumously by Bakhtin's editors in 1979, from material in Bakhtin's working notebooks from the 1960s through the early 1970s. In Bakhtin 2002, these same editors reproduce the fragments precisely as per the original notebooks; the passage on Formalism appears on page 434, in the section titled "Razroznennye listy" ("Scattered Sheets"). The quotation in the text is preceded by these comments: "My attitude toward formalism: a different <understanding> of specification: ignoring content leads to 'material aesthetics' (criticism of this in my article of 1924); not 'making' [delan'e], but creativity (from material one can only get a manufactured article [izdelie])" [McGee translation adjusted).

which it 'makes strange,' against the background of which it is 'sensed' as something new."31 For art, this was the wrong sort of distancing and the wrong sort of sensation. No interpersonal obligation is created; no urgent human need is satisfied by it, nothing comparable to the clear blue sky that a compassionate outsider can offer to a suffering person. "The so-called 'ostranenie' of the Formalists is at base nothing more than a function of isolation," Bakhtin (ibid.: 315/307) remarks further in the same essay, "and in most instances incorrectly related to the material." Such distancing cannot create value, if what is estranged is only the word. 32 Bakhtin regrets that this process is so crudely psychologistic: the object, its value, the event—all are stripped of cognitive and ethical meaning. The decision to isolate acts in this scientific manner does indeed render form perceptible, Bakhtin admits, but the price is high. "The word, the utterance, ceases to expect or to want anything beyond its own borders. . . . a prayer ceases to have need of a God who could hear it, a complaint ceases to have need of assistance, repentance ceases to need forgiveness. . . . The author enters, as it were, the isolated event and becomes a creator in it, without becoming a participant" (ibid.: 316/308).

Creation without participation: the formula is harshly expressed, but in a sense no aspiring science of literature could ignore its appeal. By eliminating the vulnerability of two interacting consciousnesses, the Formalist experiment in literary analysis brought a hard objective edge to its theory of art. Distance could now be controlled by the experimenter. To be a literary professional meant either to focus on one's own perceptions in the aesthetic process or to construct a system that functions free of individual risk, will, and faith. For some Christian readers of Bakhtin, this dynamic approaches idolatry.³³

- 31. An earlier reference to ostranenie in "Author and Hero" was edited out of the 1979 Russian text and is therefore not included in the Liapunov translation (p. 99, where the omission of a page is marked by an ellipsis). The full text (Bakhtin 2003b: 174) includes this enigmatic phrase: "Making strange and braking as a disconnection of the horizon" (ostranenie i zatormozhenie, kak razmykanie krugozora). Again, we are reminded of Bakhtin's impulse to hook up discrete living bodies into wholes that can then gaze at one another as the prerequisite for an aesthetic act. Shklovsky's more secular understanding of literary science is to fragment bodies, to "disconnect" and analyze them as potentially autonomous parts that grow by accretion, not consciousness.
- 32. For a more balanced view of this opposition between "word" and "world"—between the sonic or graphic envelope deformed by the literary artist and the consciousness or referent existing outside it—see Striedter 1989: 21–43. Striedter's compromise view is now widely accepted as a sensible corrective to both the Shklovskian (word-based) and Bakhtinian (world-based) extremes. I thank Meir Sternberg for this reference.
- 33. The debate between Christianizing Bakhtinians and the more academic historians of philosophy is now several decades old; for one good introduction to the former, see Lock 2001. In a recent triangulation of ostranenie, kenosis, and dialogue, Alexei Bogdanov juxta-

In closing, we might consider the resonance of these strong competing ideas—a Formalist aesthetics of solipsistic arousal versus Bakhtin's aesthetics of participation in order to lessen the other's pain—against the larger horizon of Soviet reality from the 1920s through the 1940s. In early programmatic Formalism, as we have seen, an initially blank but infinitely "resensitizable" body was seen as a prerequisite for registering the artistic effect. Seeking, surviving, and even relishing shocks was a necessity to it. Does this early aesthetic imply a larger politics? Does it suggest that revolutionary violence—a concept much idealized in Bolshevik culture—could help an individual body redirect its pain, take what hurts and dedicate it to the future, invest pain in a cause and thereby give pain a purposefulness that one's own body cannot? In other words, might pain itself be turned into a device, like art?

Vladimir Turbin, the poet of Bakhtin's bodily suffering, expressed no doubt on this score as regards his own mentor. "Revolution is first of all the causing of pain," he wrote. "Its main metaphor is the metaphor of the strike or blow [udar]; its main summons . . . is the summons to beat someone up. Of course at first this talk about strikes can be limited chastely to the verbal sphere . . . but in our age, metaphors reveal the capricious tendency not to be restrained in the spheres of pure spirit but to be vulgarly realized. . . . Bakhtin took upon himself everything the revolution brought. Little by little he tasted of all its multifarious gifts; in particular, he knew pain" (Turbin 1994: 448–49).

And Shklovsky? Here, too, there is little trace of naïveté. In the early 1920s, the wounded body (its "scar tissue") begins to appear as a striking metaphor, even in defense of the vigorously mechanistic wordplay that is ostranenie.³⁴ In *Zoo; or, Letters Not about Love* (1923), estrangement no longer presupposes a given body's ability to regain its autonomy or freshness of vision. Ostranenie has evolved into literal pain at separation: a confession of paralysis, acute loneliness, isolation, hunger for response, and need. In

poses a kenotic, Christian reading of Bakhtin's aesthetics to what he sees as Shklovsky's more inert and mechanistic ostranenie. In the Formalist model, Bogdanov argues, the empathy, self-renunciation, and supplementation essential to the Bakhtinian model of art devolves on to things. Because half of the aesthetic contract now consists of inert matter, "dead Logos" (Bogdanov 2005: 55), Shklovsky is able to call so boldly and literally for its resurrection. The "cornerstone of Formalist reasoning," in Bogdanov's view (ibid.: 51), is the "overwhelming power of form (minus love)."

^{34.} See letter 22 of his epistolary novel-memoir *Zoo; or, Letters Not about Love* (1923): "When works of art are undergoing change, interest shifts to the connective tissue. . . . At the next stage in art, psychological motivation wears out. It must be changed, 'estranged.' . . . Finally, all contrasts are exhausted. Then one choice remains—to shift to the components, to sever the connections, which have become scar tissue" (Shklovsky 1971: 80–81).

his preface to the second edition of Z_{00} (1924), Shklovsky, still in exile in Berlin, laments that irony, that most necessary of devices, has devoured words; that "things are detached from each other" in this foreign land; that the woman who has forbidden him to write about love "inflicts a blow. The pain is real" (Shklovsky 1971: 107–8).

Shklovsky's subsequent confessional text, Third Factory (1926), is cast in the same subdued, melancholic tone. Written after his ardent and abject petition to the Central Committee resulted in his repatriation to Bolshevik Russia, its essay on "Freedom of Art" is famous for images of "oppressed" flax being processed violently in factories and trees being tapped to death in "ritual murder" for pitch and turpentine.35 By 1926, Shklovsky had no illusions about the freedom or vigor of art under conditions of revolutionary violence. As Svetlana Boym argues elsewhere in this special issue, Shklovsky's postrevolutionary stance was in marked contrast to the cavalier and uncritically avant-garde position of "newness at any cost" espoused in the famous 1916 essay, to which Shklovsky's name and professional trajectory is too often unceremoniously reduced.³⁶ Bodies are no longer automatized machines, even in the ideal. Rather, machines are put to work on organisms, and the new Soviet factories where this is done are notable less for their efficiency than for their willingness to flay and pierce living things. Nevertheless, Shklovsky's metaphors are not Bakhtin's body. Suffering is imposed, it does not well up from within. Flax and trees are healthy, innocent organisms (trees and plants), whose pain is inflicted by outside forces toward a concrete economic or ideological end.

It would become increasingly clear during the 1930s and 1940s that politics—especially of the Stalinist sort—required such corporal violations.³⁷ In prose by writers as various as Andrei Platonov, Fyodor Gladkov, and Mikhail Zoshchenko, ritual sacrifice and symbolic mutilation bound characters to the cause and writers to the state. Pushkin's "The Prophet" was

^{35.} Shklovsky anthropomorphizes and sensitizes the inanimate objects (flax, trees) on the receiving end of revolutionary violence, a gesture that should modify our, and perhaps Bakhtin's, reproach against the coldness of insensate "Machine" Formalism. See "O svobode iskusstva," in *Tret'ia fabrika* (1926) (Shklovskii 2002: 367–68). The petition to return is included as letter 29 in *Zoo. Pis'ma ne o liubvi, ili Tret'ia Eloiza* (1923) (Shklovskii 2002: 329; English translation Shklovsky 1971: 103–4).

^{36.} Svetlana Boym is one of the few Western scholars of Russian Formalism (Galin Tihanov is another) who has attempted to see in Shklovsky more than the manifesto "Art as Device," placing his long life in context and his literary methodologies in creative flux. I owe much to her inspirational advice and correctives on various drafts of the present essay (personal communications from February 2004).

^{37.} See chapter 8 in Clark 2000 [1981]. In this summary discussion of Stalin-era images of the body, I am indebted for many details (and for a sense of the epoch) to Livers 2004.

widely read as a summons to the creative intelligentsia to enter the fray in more than armchair fashion. (In that 1826 poem, the poet's sinful, frivolous tongue is torn out and replaced by the forked tongue of the wise serpent; his heart is plucked out and replaced by a burning coal; and the bloodied prophet is sent forth to preach the Word.) Civilizing violence was expected to purge the individual body, as well as the body politic, of its impurities. The chaotic and neurotic body (such as Zoshchenko felt he possessed) could hope to be healed by the punitive hand of Stalinist discipline. The owners of such recalcitrant bodies were intoxicated by the violent, even exorcist aspects of the procedure. If the 1920s fixated on the sleek reliability of the machine, which did not feel pain regardless of its exploitation by the proletariat, then the 1930s were fascinated with the healthy body, the organic end product of an aggressive "reforging" that ripped out flaws at the root.

Russian literature itself was not spared these enthusiasms. The nine-teenth-century pantheon was reordered along a health gradient: Pushkin, Tolstoy, Gorky, and Goethe were numbered among the greats who had struggled for health and had achieved it; Gogol, Dostoevsky, and Alexander Blok were the notoriously unsuccessful, succumbing to a cult of illness and suffering. But the attitude toward physical suffering in this Stalinist aesthetic was ambivalent: to feel pain was by no means presented as a shameful thing. Pain was to be administered (in symbolic woundings, construction accidents, on battlefields), but it was to be transcended. On the sociocultural plane, this dynamic arguably became one huge ostranenie in reverse: a shock or deformation that was then normatized and made both beautiful and harmoniously invisible. It was against this fantasy-move in Socialist Realism that Bakhtin mounted his grotesque carnival-body project in the 1930s.

By 1938, the year of the amputation, Bakhtin's own body had become a "classic" Stalinist-era text, wounded and hurting. Socialist Realism even endorsed a cult of the missing leg, a handicap (or stigma) that was seen as especially, patriotically heroic. Igor Smirnov, in his psychohistory of Russian literature, remarks on the most popular kenotic models from the best-selling novels of the time: the one-legged tubercular Voropaev, the legless Meresiev, the paralyzed Korchagin. A "motif of lameness was a common point of Stalinist texts," Smirnov (1994: 253–54) writes; bullets immobilize the legs first of all, and amputations are described in meticulous detail (in section D.2, "Totalitarian Culture, or Masochism"). 38 Bakh-

^{38.} Smirnov's pioneering attempt to apply Freudian and neo-Freudian categories to Stalinist culture has since had many imitators.

tin held himself wholly aloof from these enthusiasms. Like Shklovsky, he looked back at a long life twisted by politics—but nevertheless a life strewn with a massive body of uninterrupted writings about literary art. Neither Shklovsky nor Bakhtin chose to carry his memoiristic reminiscences significantly beyond the 1920s.³⁹ For all that their public image fell silent for decades with no promise of rebirth, both indefatigably sought out new genres, media, routes, and rubrics in which they could continue to produce. And perhaps here we can divine a use of distance, both from one's own body and from the pain of one's own experience, that unites these two remarkable Soviet-era figures.

During his final decade, Bakhtin (2002: 375) wrote in his working note-books the following lines: "To the essence of every feeling belongs its unmediated link to its object, its unity with the object, in contrast to the rational and reasonable disunification of subject and object. In this regard, respect [uvazhenie], with its distancing objectivity, differs sharply from all other feelings. . . . The feeling of respect creates a distance, both in relation to the other person, and in relation to one's own self. The person exits the warm atmosphere of protectiveness provided by the animal side of life, into the cold and clear air of freedom. The plane of respect is the plane of freedom. Only a free person can respect [another], and only a free person can be the object of respect. Children are still alien to respect. Persons of slave-like consciousness are also alien to it. Terror and respect are incompatible."

Here, then, is one wisdom that the Soviet experience bestowed upon these two survivors within the vulnerable field of literary theory. For all their dissimilar placement of subject and object, and for all the fundamental differences between the Formalist and Dialogic methods, Shklovsky and Bakhtin were equally skeptical of a Marxist or materialist model that could turn human material into an instrument toward some other end. They were also skeptical of an ethics of identity, which would collapse the space in between and reduce reality to an echo chamber, out of which no creative act could emerge. Respect cannot coexist with terror. Freedom is essential to the "plane of respect." Our chances of achieving both aims—subduing terror and cultivating respect—are directly proportional to mastering the arts of outsideness and estrangement.

^{39.} Bakhtin's seventeen hours of conversations with Viktor Duvakin in spring 1973 (see Duvakin 2002) get no further than the late 1920s; Shklovsky's reminiscences, "Zhili-byli," begun in the 1950s, end in the mid-1920s, the time of *Third Factory*.

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