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Relating dialogue and dialectics: a philosophical perspective

Manolis Dafermos
University of Crete, Greece

Abstract

Dialectics and a dialogical approach constitute two distinct theoretical frameworks with long intellectual histories. The question of relations between dialogue and dialectics provokes discussions in academic communities. The present paper highlights the need to clarify the concepts 'dialogue' and 'dialectics' and explore their origins in the history of human thought. The paper attempts to examine mutual relations between dialectics and dialogue in a historical perspective and develop a theoretical reconstruction of their philosophical underpinnings. It proposes to deal with challenges connected with the creation of spaces for sharing and mutual enrichment between dialogue and dialectics.

Manolis Dafermos is an associate professor in the epistemology of psychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Crete. He holds a PhD in Philosophy from the Lomonosov Moscow State University. His interests include cultural historical psychology, critical psychology, the history of psychology, and methodological and epistemological issues in the social sciences.

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Introduction

The question of the relations between dialogue and dialectics has been the topic of extensive debates in the international academic communities. Diametrically opposite positions have been stated by different scholars (Reigel, 1979; White, 2011; Matusov, & Hayes, 2000; Sullivan, 2010; Nikulin, 2010; Matusov, 2011; Rule, 2015). This question has been formulated by many of them as a question of relations between Bakhtinian Dialogic and Vygotskian Dialectic. The integration (or combination) between Bakhtin's ideas of dialogism and Vygotsky's Cultural historical psychology has been presented as an attractive perspective in human and social sciences (Wertsch, 1993; Roth, 2013). Other scholars focus on fundamental differences between Vygotsky's and Bakhtin's research programs and the theoretical incompatibility of their theories (Cheyne, & Tarulli, 1999; Wegerif, 2008; White, 2011; Matusov, 2011).

From my perspective, the question of the relationship between Vygotsky's and Bakhtin's theories could be examined as a part of the wider issue of the relationship between dialogue and dialectics in the context of the history of human thought. Under the influence of postmodern theories, an exceedingly hostile stance towards dialectics became dominant in the North Atlantic Academy. "Recourse to dialectics is generally associated with grand, totalising social theory and a 'foundationalist' epistemology... " (Gardiner, 2000, p.119). The anti-dialectic stance is very strong in the field of Bakhtin studies in which a dialogical approach has been developed. The representatives of the anti-dialectic 'camp' focus mainly on

the conceptual incommensurability and incompatibility of dialectics and dialogism. In contrast to this dominant interpretation, several thinkers consider dialogue and dialectical thinking as compatible concepts (Paul, 2012) and several attempts have been made to integrate dialogue and dialectics (for example, the theory of relational dialectic) (Baxter, 2004).

The present paper is an attempt to examine the complex and ambiguous relationship between dialogue and dialectics focusing mainly on their philosophical underpinnings. Firstly, I concentrate on defining the concepts dialogue and dialectics, their origin and multiple meanings. This requires a reconstruction of the genesis of these concepts in the history of human thought. Secondly, the present paper explores the relationships between dialectics and dialogue as well as several attempts to compare, contrast or integrate them.

The underlying purpose of the paper is to demonstrate that despite their fundamental differences, the dialogical approach and dialectics can be brought closer together. It is important to understand that the relations between different approaches such as dialogical and dialectical approaches are not fixed and stable, but they change in the history of human thought. What may seem impossible in one particular stage of development in the history of human thought becomes possible in another. The paper explores the possibility of the creation of a common space between dialogism and dialectics as theoretical frameworks and the perspective of their mutual enrichment.

A historical and philosophical account of the dynamic and changing relations between dialogue and dialectics can challenge the presently dominant idea about their total incompatibility and offer an insight into contemporary discussion in the field of dialogical pedagogy. In contrast to mainstream schooling, bringing together dialogue and dialectics may create the space for alternative and unpredictable encounters in the domain of education. Bringing together dialogue and dialectics in the domain of education is a promising, open-ended issue, outside the scope of the present paper that focuses mainly on the philosophical examination of dialogue and dialectics as theoretical frameworks. The paper is intended to encourage scholars and practitioners to think seriously about the possibility of the creation of a common space between dialogue and dialectic that remains largely terra incognita.

What is dialogue?

Dialogue in different forms (political, philosophical, and dramatic) historically emerged in Ancient Greece in the context of the polis as a community of actively participating citizens (Dafermos, 2013a). Plato's dialogues, the first written dialogical accounts in human history were formed in the context of ancient polis.

After a long eclipse in the history of human thought dialogue was reborn in the twentieth century in the writings of Russian literary theorist and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin. He developed a multifaceted theory of dialogism based on a set of concepts such as dialogue, monologue, polyphony, heteroglossia, utterance, voice, speech genres and chronotope. Bakhtin's writings inspired many scholars and practitioners to elaborate and apply various dialogical approaches in pedagogy (Matusov, 2009; Matusov, & Miyazaki, 2014), psychology (Shotter, 1995; Hermans, & Kempen, 1993), psychotherapy (Seikkula, 2011; Hermans, & Dimaggio, 2004) and cultural studies (Wertsch, 1993; Thornton, 1994).

One of the reasons for the apparent confusion in the emerging interdisciplinary field of dialogical studies is connected with the polysemy of the notion of dialogue and the multiple meanings of its use in different contexts. I will attempt to define several meanings of the term 'dialogue'. In accordance with a first definition, dialogue is *a live conversation between two or more people*. In other words, dialogue can

be indentified with oral communication between two or more interlocutors. Being with other people and responding to their voices is an essential feature of a conversation. However, a difficult question at once arises whether dialogue is every form of conversation or a specific type of deep communication between different subjectivities. Nikulin (2010) defined four components that turn a conversation into a dialogue: a. the existence of personal other, b. voice, c. unfinalizability, d. allosensus (constant disagreement with other).

The second meaning of the term 'dialogue' refers to dialogue as *a genre or literary device*. Plato's dialogues are one of the most famous forms of using a dialogical form as a genre. Plato's written dialogues historically appeared as an imitation of oral communication in times of heated debates about the transition from oral to written communication. Dialogue as a genre has been used by many thinkers to formulate their ideas in various ways. However, the dialogical genre might be used as an external form for monological content. For example*,* dialogue might be used as a teaching method of catechesis*.* It refers to an instrumental approach to dialogue that tends to be considered as an "an effective means for non-dialogic ends, which are understood outside of the notion of dialogue, within a monological framework" (Matusov, & Miyazaki, 2014, p.2). However, if there is a perfect, final and absolute truth as in catechesis, there is no place and need for genuine dialogue.

In accordance with a third meaning, "...dialogue is the universal condition of using language at all" (Womack, 2011, p.48). From this perspective *both oral and written speech,* moreover, *language itself* has a dialogical character. Language can be considered mainly as an *intersubjective* communicative engagement, rather than a simple, formal, symbolic system.

Bakhtin offered a classic formulation of the dialogic nature of consciousness that can be regarded as the fourth meaning of the dialogue which goes beyond purely linguistic or literary phenomena: "I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another. The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness (toward a thou) … The very being of man (both external and internal) is the deepest communion. To be means to communicate … To be means to be for another, and through the other for oneself" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.287).

Dialogue is an essential characteristic of consciousness. The word 'consciousness' originates from the Latin 'conscius' (con- 'together' + scientia- 'to know'). 'Conscious' means sharing knowledge. Toulmin (1982) offers a brilliant interpretation of the etymology of the term 'consciousness*'*:

"Etymologically, of course, the term 'consciousness' is a knowledge word. This is evidenced by the Latin form, *-sci-*, in the middle of the word. But what are we to make of the prefix *con-* that precedes it? Look at the usage in Roman Law, and the answer will be easy enough. Two or more agents who act jointly—having formed a common intention, framed a shared plan, and concerted their actions—are as a result *conscientes*. They act as they do knowing one another's plans: they are *jointly knowing*" (Toulmin, 1982, p. 64).

In Latin "to be conscious of something was to share knowledge of it, with someone else, or with oneself" (Zeman, 2001, p.1265). "When two or more men know of one and the same fact, they are said to be conscious of it one to another" (Hobbes, 1660, Leviathan, chapt. VII). However, the predominant use of the term 'consciousness' is connected with John Locke's definition: "Consciousness is the perception of what passes in a man's own mind" (Locke, 1690, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II, i, 19). It

refers to 'inner perceptions' that are conceived by an individual. The understanding of consciousness as a private, internal awareness became dominant in contemporary scientific literature.

However, it is interesting to note that the term 'consciousness' has similar etymology in different languages: In Russian 'Сознание' (Со-знание), in Greek 'συνείδηση' (συν- ειδέναι), in English 'Con-scientia,' in French 'Conscience' (Con-science), in Italian 'Coscienza' (Co-scienza). The prefix 'co' refers to joint action, reciprocal interaction between people. The concept of 'consciousness' includes knowledge as its essential moment. However, consciousness is not reducible to simple knowledge but it refers to co-producing knowledge in the process of communication between different subjects. It refers to *joining* knowledge *with another* or *shared* knowledge. From this perspective, consciousness has dialogic structure and orientation.

The understanding of the dialogic nature of consciousness enables the demonstration of the mirrors of cognitivism and scientism. One of the most powerful objections to cognitivism has been formulated by Michael Bakhtin: "Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 110).

Dialogue has been defined by Bakhtin as opposed to monologism. Individual consciousness cannot grasp the complexity and variety of the human world. In contrast to the single, isolated, monological consciousness, a dialogical coexistence of different irreducible consciousnesses develops. Bakhtin argued that the idea is not developed in isolated individual consciousness but in dialogic communication between several consciousnesses. "...the idea is inter-individual and inter-subjective - the realm of its existence is not individual consciousness but dialogic communion *between* consciousnesses. The idea is a *live event,* played out at the point of dialogic meeting between two or several consciousnesses" (Bakhtin, 2003, p.98). The meeting spaces and dramatic processes of making meaning between different and not reducible consciousnesses constitute the *ontological* foundation of dialogue. The "ontological dialogue" (Sidorkin, 1999; Matusov, & Miyazaki, 2014) between consciousnesses penetrates the deeper and most important aspects of human existence.

Although dialogue has been defined as being contrary to monologue, the consideration of dialogue as a positive and monologue as a negative term leads inevitably to oversimplification of dialectic relationships between them. I totally agree with Matusov's position that "Bakhtin's notions of dialogue and monologue is *complementary*" (Matusov, 2009, p.112). Matusov argues that the concepts of dialogicity and monologicity mutually constitute each other. "Monologicity makes clear who is speaking (i.e., authorship and responsibility) and what is said (i.e., the message). In other words, monologicity objectivizes others and the themes of communication... Monologicity reflects centripetal forces of language, communication, and community oriented on centralization, unification, unity with action, seriousness, cohesiveness and integrity of voice (and position), articulateness, globalization, decontextualization, exactness and correctness of meaning (finalizing the meaning)" (Matusov, 2009, p. 131).

However, many Bakhtinian scholars tend to interpret the concepts 'dialogue-monologue' in terms of Western post-modernism such as 'the death of author' (more generally, the 'death of subject'), 'deconstruction*,'* 'decentration,' 'intertextuality' (Bell, & Gardiner, 1998; Holquist, 2002). From the perspective of post-modernism, monologue is defined as a 'grand narrative' that should be 'killed' and 'destroyed'. With the total 'death of monologue' any claims for 'seriousness,' 'cohesiveness,' 'integrity of voice (and position),' 'articulateness' and 'correctness of meaning' might disappear. The celebration of

post-modern, deconstructionist discourse tends to lead to the deconstruction not only of 'old' metaphysics and 'grand' monologic narratives, but also of scientific thinking and knowledge itself. "...the deconstruction of metaphysics is the deconstruction of the scientificity of science. The deconstructive strategy aims at the very source of science itself, at the kind of question that gives rise to scientific investigation" (Evans, 1999, p.156).

It could be argued that the destruction of reason itself may give rise to a new form of irrationalism. Based on the analysis of post-Hegelian philosophical tradition, Lukács (1954) demonstrated that the destruction of reason and the advent of irrationalism prepared the ground for fascist ideas.

Flecha (1999) distinguishes two kinds of racism: modern racism is based on the idea of the existence of inferior or superior ethnicities and races, while postmodernist racism built on postmodern relativism, "...accepts diversity and difference but accords different groups a place in their own, distinctive contexts" (Flecha, 1999, p. 153). Postmodern relativism promotes proliferation of differences and fragmentation of social space. Flecha proposes a dialogic approach as an alternative platform that can deal simultaneously with both forms of racism. Dialogue as a dynamic and positive force offers the opportunity to stimulate unpredictable meetings between the participants and build bridges across differences. Going beyond the tension between absolutism and postmodern relativism, dialogue can promote deep communication and encourage mutual recognition and understanding between the participants.

What is dialectics?

The concept 'dialectics' has acquired different forms and meanings in various historical contexts. In ancient Greece dialectics emerged as an art of dialogue and a problem solving method through argumentation. The term 'dialectics' has a similar origin of the term 'dialogue'. It refers to the art of conversation or debate that is connected with seeking truth through reasoning. "... someone tries, by means of dialectical discussion and without the aid of any sense-perceptions, to arrive through reason at the being of each thing itself" (Plato, 2004, Republic, 532a). By the power of discussions, dialectics provides genuine knowledge. Dialectics as a method originates from the Socratic elenchus, a method of hypothesis elimination that takes the form of a question-answer dialogue and brings out the contradictions in the interlocutor's arguments.

Dialectics constitutes a way of thinking based on the understanding of the contradictory nature of both reason and being. Naive, spontaneous dialectics had been developed by ancient thinkers as an attempt to offer a living, sensory concrete perception of the world in the process of its change and becoming. "Tao-Te-Ching" in Ancient China as well as Heraclitus' philosophy in Ancient Greece were forms of ancient spontaneous dialectics that were expressed in the idea that "everything is in a state of flux" (Skirbekk, & Gilje, 2001, p.13). Although Heraclitus didn't use the term 'dialectic,' he developed a dialectical understanding that *everything is becoming*. However, a conceptual, categorical system for the representation of things as processes did not yet exist in the ancient world. Becoming is expressed through metaphors, images of an *aesthetic equivalent such as the image of a river:* "you cannot step into the same river twice" (Plato, 1997, Cratylus, 402a).

The meaning of the concept 'dialectics' was transformed by Aristotle. For Aristotle dialectic wasn't a form of being but rather a method of logical argumentation. Moreover, dialectic broke down its interconnection with dialogue and became mainly a method of building knowledge. In the Middle Ages dialectic was constructed as a method of argumentation on the basis of a set of logical rules (Nikulin, 2010).

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries an analytic method *of knowledge production* dominated in concrete sciences and a metaphysical mode of thinking in the field of philosophy (Pavlidis, 2010). The metaphysical mode of thinking is based on the consideration of reality as a sum of separated, unconnected independent entities. A metaphysical outlook considers things as self-subsistent, isolated and abstracted from their context (Sayers, 1976). It denies fundamentally both the internal relatedness of all things and their development.

The concept of 'dialectic' was reborn and acquired new meanings and connotations in the context of German classical philosophy from Kant to Hegel and later in Marxism. Kant proposed "transcendental dialectic" as the logic of errors and illusions that arise when reason goes beyond its proper role in attempting to grasp the actual objects themselves (the thing-in-itself) (Williams, 2014). Kant demonstrated the structural necessity and inevitability of *illusions*. According to Kant, thinking confronts antinomies and falls into conflict with itself. Challenging Kant's concept of dialectic as a logic of illusions, Hegel developed a "positive" dialectic based on the examination of a universal as a concrete unity of multiple determinations (Hegel, 2010). Dialectics was developed by Hegel as a method of thought that included the process of expounding contradictions and their resolution in the corpus of a rational understanding of an object (Ilyenkov, 1977). Materialistic dialectics developed by K. Marx as an attempt of the theoretical reconstruction of a concrete organic whole (the capitalist mode of production) through the creation of a system of interconnected concepts.

The conscious (or systematic) dialectics stood against the metaphysical method of thinking. Dialectics and metaphysics constitute two different ways of thinking about thinking. In contrast to the metaphysical method based on one-dimensional, abstract analysis of an object and its elements as unchanging and immutable, dialectical thinking examines an object in the process of its change. The dialectical method focuses on the examination of things in their mutual connections, movement and development. Dialectics as a way of thinking grasps and represents the developmental process of a concrete object in its interconnections with other objects (Pavlidis, 2010).

In the late 19th century and early 20th century the tendency of the rejection of dialectic and the acceptance of other trends such as Kantianism, philosophy of life and positivism became dominant in Western academy. The bulk of research for a long period in the Western academy was primarily associated with the assumptions of positivism and reductionism. In contrast to widespread reductionism in concrete disciplines which focuses on analysis of isolated elements of reality, the dialectic approach is oriented to grasp full complexity of interrelationships of reality and the contradictions that embody them (Bidell, 1988). The famous formula 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis' represents a very schematic and over simplistic description of the dialectical understanding of development. Such kind of caricatured representation of dialectics can give rise to the negative stance (or total rejection) of dialectical thinking. Laske (2009) argues that the dialectical mode of thinking "remains a closed book for the majority of adults in the Western world, while in Asian cultures nurtured by Buddhism it more easily assumes a common sense form" (Laske, 2009). Although the explanation of the negative stance toward a dialectical mode of thinking is out of scope of the present paper, I would like only to note that the increasing individualization, fragmentation and commercialization of social life in North America and Western Europe is not unconnected to a lack of understanding of dialectic at the level of everyday life.

The multiple crises (economic, political, ecological and scientific) as a result of the increasing social contradictions and asymmetries in a rapidly changing world may provoke interest in dialectics as a way of the conceptualization of contradictions. However, dialectics is not a given system of postulates that can be immediately applied as an external guiding system for investigating problems. The application

of dialectics to the concrete fields presupposes its essential development. The question of how to further develop dialectics in a rapidly changing world remains open for future investigation.

Bakhtin's dialogism and dialectics

Obviously, there are strong arguments for the incompatibility between dialectics and dialogism. It is possible to find several critical remarks on dialectics in Bakhtin's works: in his book "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics" (*PDP*), and some writing included in the anthology "Speech Genres and Other Late Essays" (*SG*). Bakhtin's treatment of dialectics has fragmentary character and it did not include a systematic examination of the relationship between dialectics and dialogue.

Bakhtin focused mainly on incompatibility between dialectics and dialogue. "Take a dialogue and remove the voices…remove the intonations…carve out the abstract concepts and judgments from living words and responses, cram everything into one abstract consciousness – and that's how you get dialectics" (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 147). Nevertheless, there is nothing more alien to dialectics than the idea of isolated, individual and abstract consciousness. Dialectics as a way of thinking emphasizes internal, essential connections between people rather than a separated individual, an abstract consciousness.

Moreover, the concept 'abstract' has a different meaning in the dialectical theory of knowledge in relation to Bakhtin's quotation. Ilyenkov (1982b) brought into light the shortcoming of the view that the 'concrete' is a product of sensuous experience and the 'abstract' is a result of rational thinking. Ilyenkov (1982b) demonstrated that the examination of the concrete as a synonym of an immediate sensual image, and the abstract, as a synonym of the conceptual follows the empiricist tradition. The repudiation of dialectics as a form of abstract thinking is based on the assumptions of *empiricism* that remains a dominant "paradigm" in the Western academy.

Hegel in his wonderful text "Who thinks abstractly" pointed out that in regarding all other people exclusively from a narrow pragmatic viewpoint, an undeveloped person thinks abstractly. He highlighted the essence of the abstract thinking: "This is abstract thinking: to see nothing in the murderer except the abstract fact that he is a murderer, and to annul all other human essence in him with this simple quality" (Hegel, 1808/1966). Taking only one quality of a person and ignoring all of his (her) other qualities, not interested in the history of his (her) life is the essence of abstract thinking. In contrast to abstract thinking, Hegelian dialectics attempts to look at an object as a concrete unity of multiple and interconnected determinations.

Bahktin's critical remarks on dialectics do not prove a replete incompatibility between dialectics and dialogue. Firstly, it is important to take into account the polemical context in which Bakhtin criticized the dominant, dogmatic version of dialectical materialism ("Diamat") in the USSR. Bakhtin's critique of Hegelian dialectic served as a form of disguised criticism of the official ideology in the form of "Diamat". Additionally, going beyond explicit criticism of Hegel's dialectic, it is possible to demonstrate that Bakhtin was implicitly involved in dialogue with it. Hegelian philosophy could not leave Bakhtin indifferent. Hegel's philosophy was developed in dialogue with the main philosophical theories of his time as well as the previews stages in the history of philosophy. "... it is difficult to see how Hegel's philosophy could not be considered part of a dialogue taking place with other philosophies of his time (and a dialogue in the history of philosophy as well). It would be just as difficult to consider his 'monologue' to be unanswered or 'unresponded'. It would be unfair, though, to reproach Bakhtin for a failure to understand Hegel's voice, and to refuse to enter into a dialogue with it. Rather, we can assume that beyond the superficial direct critique of Hegel, Bakhtin in fact *responded actively* and more often *implicitly* to Hegelian philosophy in his own works..." (Côté, 2000, p. 26).

Several Bakhtin's followers argue that dialectics is a synonym of the Cartesian solitary consciousness or monological view of the world. "Dialectics is a product of the old monological, Newtonian view of the world" (Morson, & Emerson, 1990, p.57). However, dialectics had existed long before the appearance of the Newtonian view of the world in direct connection with dialogue.

Hegel was far from accepting Cartesian "Cogito ergo sum" ("I think therefore I am"). From a Hegelian perspective, Man is not a solitary thinking being, a single individual. For Hegel, knowledge is a constituent moment of consciousness and self-consciousness, rather than an independent entity. Hegel's view that logical concepts cannot be derived from the individual mind provides a creative insight on the *intersubjective nature* of thinking. In contrast to the widespread reception of Hegelian philosophy in terms of Cartesian solitary consciousness and monologism, Luther (2009) offers evidence of Hegel's shift from Kantian-Cartesian "I" into "We":

"For Descartes and Kant, the individual subject is the source of knowledge; however, for Hegel, knowledge is a collective achievement. This represents a crucial shift from the first person singular to first person plural standpoint, and it has much in common with the paradigm shift from the philosophy of consciousness to the philosophy of intersubjectivity in the late twentieth century" (Luther, 2009, p. 4)

At the same time, the Hegelian idea of absolute knowledge and Hegel's representation of his own philosophical system as the completion of self-development of thinking in human history is a monologic as well as an anti-dialectical idea. It is possible to reveal a contradiction between Hegel's dialectical thinking and his close, dogmatic system (as well as an internal contradiction in Hegel's understanding of dialectics).

However, totally rejecting Hegelian dialectics means throwing out the baby with the bath water. The Hegelian analysis of master–slave relations[1] in "Phenomenology of Spirit" is especially important for understanding the interconnection between dialectics and dialogue. The dialogical concept of mutual recognition became an integral part of the dialectical process of the historical development of consciousness and self-consciousness. In other words, Hegel incorporated the concept of dialogue in his dialectical Odyssey of consciousness and self-consciousness toward knowledge. The Hegelian analysis of master–slave relations provides a dialectical understanding of dialogue and the difficulties of promoting it in human history.

Hegel attempted to describe the relations between self and other in a world in which there is no pre-established harmony between different participants, but a struggle for recognition between them takes place. Consciousness does not live in a self-sufficient isolation, but in a mutual relation with other consciousnesses. "Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged" (Hegel, 2004, p.111). For Hegel, developing an independent self-consciousness goes through mutual recognition.

Hudson (2010) argues that despite their differences, it is possible to find some links between the Hegelian concept of mutual recognition and Buber's "I-Thou" philosophy of dialogue. Moreover, the Hegelian idea of an incomplete form of recognition between Master and Slave as a result of the perception of Slave as object bears striking similarities to Buber's formulation of the I-It relation. The treatment of asymmetrical relations between Master and Slave is one the most important contributions of the Hegelian investigation of the historical development of consciousness.

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[1] The German expression "Herrschaft und Knechtschaft" has been translated as "Master and Slave" (Or "Lordship and Bondage") (Hegel, 2004).

Unlike Kant, Hegel didn't examine the relationships between consciousnesses in terms of an idealized deontological norm, but as they are shaped in hard contradictory historical reality. Hegel demonstrated that in human history the recognition between different consciousnesses is not mutual and reciprocal. Human history is not a linear progression but a contradictory, dramatic process. The inequality between Lordship and Bondage has been expressed in the fact that one consciousness recognizes other without being recognized. One consciousness has been recognized as an 'autonomous' existence and another as a 'dependent' existence. Hegel's analysis of dialectic of the dominance and servitude demonstrates in which way the hierarchical power relations reproduce distorted forms of consciousness. Moreover, Hegel brought to light the struggle for recognition as a crucial moment in the history of consciousness and self-consciousness.

Marx's account of alienation and commodity fetishism offers a deep understanding of the distortion (degradation) of human relationships in the capitalist society. The relations between people appear to be relations between 'things' (commodities). From this perspective, it is hard to develop dialogic spaces without taking into account challenges of the *commodification of human relationships and asymmetrical* power relationships. The commodification of human relationships reproduces a monological way of thinking, because other subjects have been reduced to the status of material objects. It is interesting to note that Bakhtin linked monologism with "...absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself" (Bakhtin, 1984, 18).

Obviously, it would be simplistic to equate the dialogic idea of multiple perspectives and voices with Marxian materialistic dialectics. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism has developed under the influence of fundamental ideas from neo-Kantianism, philosophy of life, and phenomenology. Especially important for the development of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism was Dilthey's understanding of human sciences as grounded in 'lived experience' (*Erleben*), 'expression' (*Ausdruck*), and 'understanding' (*Verstehen*) (Brandist, 2002, p.18). However, Marxism was also one of the strong voices in *Bakhtin Circle.* The impact of Marxism is felt in Voloshinov's (1973, 1976) books "Marxism and the Philosophy of Language" and "Freudianism: A Marxist critique"*.*

Bulavka and Buzgalin (2004) consider dialectics as the basis of Bakhtin's dialogical world. From their perspective, the subject-subject relationship of dialogue as a relationship of qualitatively different integral beings represents a dialectical process of breakdown of the world of alienation, in which people relate to one another primarily as objects (commodity and money fetishism, the fetishization of bureaucratic hierarchy). Dialogue is presented as a window into a world of collaborative creativity, a joint creation of the participants themselves.

Bulavka and Buzgalin (2004) distinguish two types of dialectics: the 'old' dialectical logic is oriented primarily toward the representation of objective processes, which do not depend on the will and activity of the subject. The 'new' dialectic is oriented to reflecting the subject-subject relationship, polyphony and collaborative creativity of the 'realm of freedom'. The transition from the 'old' to new dialectics is examined through the prism of the shift from the 'realm of necessity' to the 'realm of freedom'. A possible objection to this original interpretation of dialectics might be that the confrontation between the representation of objective processes and the reflection on subject-subject relationships reproduces an antidialectical subject-object dualism. The issue of the conceptualization of subject-subject and subject-object relationships from a dialectical perspective remains at stake and provoke tensions. However, there is no doubt that resisting against the objectivation of human being, the adherents of the dialogical approach are focused mainly on understanding of subject-subject relationships.

Interconnection between consciousness and knowledge

Dialectics and dialogue constitute two distinct traditions and each of them has its own logic of development in the history of human thought. Nevertheless, there was not an absolute gap between these traditions and it is possible to find complex relationships between them.

Traditionally, dialectics has been conceived as a mode of thinking connected with a concrete form of knowledge production. "...modern dialectic still tends to become the *organon* of thinking..." (Nikulin, 2010, p.71). Dialogue, on the other hand, has been traditionally conceptualized as a particular type of communication that creates shared meanings between different subjects. The concept of dialogue is more connected with the communication between consciousnesses rather than with knowledge production. However, there is not a gap between consciousness and knowledge. Dialectic connections develop in the interspace between consciousness and knowledge. On one side, consciousness includes knowledge as one of its moments. On the other side, reflective thinking has been involved in the dialogic communication between different subjects. Thus, thinking is not a solitary activity of a purely autonomous subject but a dialogical act, unfolding between different subjects. The knowledge representation of an object is socially mediated and the path to knowledge passes through relationships between subjects. Knowing with the other evidences the dialogical quality of consciousness (Shotter, 2006).

The investigation of developing interrelations between thinking and speech was examined by Vygotsky (1987) as the key to understanding the nature of human consciousness. The analysis of the internal relations between thinking and speaking as sides of human consciousness constitutes one of the most important foundations for linking dialectics and dialogue. Vygotsky (1987) addressed this crucial issue from a psychological perspective, but it remains under-investigated. However, it is worth emphasizing that dialectical thinking is a specific type of thinking that develops at a concrete stage of the process of historical development of human consciousness. Dialectical thinking offers the opportunity to overcome widespread positivism and reductionism in science (Ilyenkov, 1982a, 1982b; Dafermos, 2014).

In contrast to monologism, the dominant 'paradigm' in social and human sciences, Bakhtin revealed not only the dialogic nature of consciousness but also the perspective of conceptualization of thinking as a dialogue. "This mode of thinking makes available those sides of a human being, and above all the thinking human consciousness and the dialogic sphere of its existence, which are not subject to artistic assimilation from monologic positions" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.270). Dialogue was portrayed by Bakhtin as a unique meeting between several consciousnesses in a concrete moment of a historical and cultural chronotope.

Bringing together dialectics and dialogue, Feuerbach pointed out that "The true dialectic is not a monologue of the solitary thinker with himself. It is a dialogue between "I" and "You" (Feuerbach, 1843). Criticizing Hegelian philosophy, Feuerbach demonstrated the shortcomings of a pure speculation, which a single thinker carries on by or with himself, and subsequently, he focused on dialogue between "I" and "You" as sensuous and concrete human beings. It is worth mentioning that Feuerbach's ideas on dialogue inspired Vygotsky to develop his theory of social education in the field of defectology: "Only social education can lead severely retarded children through the process of becoming human by eliminating the solitude of idiocy and severe retardation. L. Feuerbach's wonderful phrase, might be taken as the motto to the study of development in abnormal children: 'That which is impossible for one, is possible for two.' Let us add: That which is impossible on the level of individual development becomes possible on the level of social development" (Vygotsky, 1993, pp. 218-219).

For Vygotsky, dialogue and collaboration between people becomes the basis of their social development. However, the question as to whether dialogue and development are compatible raises objections.

Dialogue and development

The issue of development provokes tensions between dialogic and dialectic approaches. Dialectics historically emerged as a way of the conceptualization of change and development. From a dialectical perspective, development has been conceptualized as a process that occurs due to internal contradictions within an object. Adherents of the dialogical approach tend to view the concept of development with an ambivalent attitude.

Roth (2013) notes that scholars who follow Bakhtin's tradition often focus mainly on language use but not on the existence of different levels and forms of development (ontogenetic and phylogenetic). Moreover, Hegel's dialectical concept of development has been criticized by dialogical scholars for its monologism, determinism, and teleology (Holquist, 2002). "Hegel is often associated with a kind of postmodernist caricature of an abstract, hierarchical, decontextualised reason, but this is far from the truth" (Derry, 2013, p.110-111). Both Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories of development have been accused of universalism, decontextualization, ethnocentrism, and adultcentrism (Matusov, & Hayes, 2000).

Frequently, the critique of the dialectical concept of development has been implemented from the perspective of postmodernism that became a fashion trend in North Atlantic academic communities. "Postmodernity is a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation. Against these Enlightenment norms, it sees the world as contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable, indeterminate, a set of disunified cultures or interpretations which breed a degree of scepticism about the objectivity of truth, history and norms, the giveness of natures and the coherence of identities" (Eangleton, 2003, vii). Eagleton argues that postmodernism has as a material condition a shift to a new form of capitalism - "to the ephemeral, decentralized world of technology, consumerism and the culture industry, in which the service, finance and information industries triumph over traditional manufacture, and classical class politics yield ground to a diffuse range of 'identity politics'" (Eagleton, 2003, vii).

However, in its attacks against 'grand narratives of modernity' postmodernism presupposes precisely these principles that it simultaneously rejects. "The Hegelian reply to postmodern discourse theory is as powerful as it is simple. Postmodern discourse theory presupposes exactly what it omits: the totality of an intersubjective rationality expressed in the medium of a shared language" (Boucher, 2000). Moreover, rejecting universalistic claims of developmentalism, cultural relativism leads to legitimation of the universalistic claims of diverse cultural communities and hierarchical relations of power within them. "The increasing globalization and homogenization of culture and its fragmentation and localization are in fact closely related. Global universalism and postmodern particularism are actually two sides of the same coin" (Dafermos, 2013b, p.8).

Cultural differences and local contexts tend to become new absolutes: "...if something is contextual, it cannot be universal'. Interestingly enough, relativism seems to be based on such absolutes" (Bang, 2008, p.51). In contrast to traditional developmental absolutism, a post-modernistic anti-development absolutism emerged with "its total acceptance of the ephemerality, fragmentation, discontinuity, and the chaotic.... " (Harvey, 1989, p.44). Anti-development absolutism is based on the

postmodern celebration of cultural differences, heterogeneity and plurality. Promoting a post-modern celebration of particularity tends to turn into a fashionable monologue about difference based on the reception and assimilation of 'otherness' in terms of cultural difference. Post-modern monologism of difference is connected with the strong tendencies toward fragmentation of social life that characterizes new form of capitalism.

The idea of the existence of irreconcilable differences between participants of a dialogue is based on the dominance of alienation. Both the idea of the existence of irreconcilable differences between the participants of a dialogue and the legalistic concept of 'consensus' between them constitute two sides of the same coin of a society based on alienation, isolation and fragmentation. The concept of 'consensus' points to an external type of agreement between alienated people in the context of a legalistic approach to human relations. The post-modern celebration of irreconcilable differences between the participants of dialogue might give rise to the legalization of the fragmentation of social space as well as the alienation between people.

Contrary to the view about an absolute gap between a dialogical approach and a dialectical concept of development, it is possible to find in Bakhtin's writings some ideas that seem unpredictably closer to dialectical understanding than to postmodernist celebration of the fragmentation of culture. "The study of culture (or some area of it) at the level of system and at the higher level of *organic unity*: open, becoming, unresolved and unpredetermined, capable of death and renewal, *transcending itself*, that is, exceeding its own boundaries" (Bakhtin, 1986a, p.135). Bakhtin's idea of an open, developing organic unity is a truly dialectical insight in the theorizing of human sciences. The contradictory coexistence of 'death' and 'rebirth' constitutes a moment of a dialectical understanding of culture. I don't claim that Bakhtin was a dialectical theorist, but only that it is possible to find influences of dialectics in his writings. In other words, there is no absolute gap or a rupture between dialogic and dialectic traditions but paradoxically, a dramatic relation between them might be detected.

From a developmental perspective, dialogue cannot be reduced to a simple communicative interaction or a conversation. Not every communicative interaction or conversation promotes human development. Dialogue is such a conversation that does promote human development. Dramatic tensions and collisions in a dialogue might become a source of personal growth for their participants. In other words, dialogue opens up the perspective of personal growth for subjects engaged in it (Apatow, 1998). "...the discursive dynamics has as its central question the ways to critically negotiate/collaborate meanings, highlighting the contradiction as a driving force for the development between participants with different social, historical, cultural and political constitutions" (Magalhães, Ninin, & Lessa, 2014, p.142).

Explaining the deep meaning of the general genetic law of cultural development as it was formulated by Vygotsky, Veresov notes: "Dramatic character development, development through contradictory events (acts of development), category (dramatic collision) — this was Vygotsky's formulation and emphasis" (Veresov, 2010, p.88). The dramatic collision, conflicts and contradictory relations that emerge in a dialogue as they are experienced by its participants may promote their self reflection and personal growth.

The dialectic of change constitutes an essential dimension of a dialogue. "...neither a first nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and the boundless future). Even past meanings, that is, those born in the dialogue of past centuries, can never be stable (finalized, ended once and for all) – they will always change (be renewed) in the process of subsequent development of the dialogue" (Bakhtin, 1986a, p.170).

Both dialogue and dialectics can be examined in terms of a drama that includes tensions, conflicts between opposing forces, contradictions and crises. Bakhtin wrote about Dostoevsky who was able to offer "a living reflection of the contradictions of contemporary society in the cross-section of a single day...Where others saw a single thought, he was able to find and feel out two thoughts, a bifurcation; where others saw a single quality, he discovered in it the presence of a second and contradictory quality" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.30). From this perspective, a dialectical understanding of the internal contradictions of society as they are expressed in everyday life means the dramatic relationships between people are an essential moment of a dialogue. Dialogue without considering such kind of dramatic tensions and contradictions as they have been experienced by subjects involved in this process may be turned into an external lifeless form. On the contrary, as I already mentioned, dramatic tensions and contradictions in the dialogical spaces may become a source of development for their participants.

If dialogue wants to consider larger social dynamics, it has to talk to the dialectic tradition

I will conclude by saying that the relationships between dialectics and dialogue are more complex and paradoxical than they are usually presented. The 'horror of dialectics' (Gardiner, 2000) in the field of Bakhtin studies constitutes an obstacle for developing a dialogue between these distinct but interrelated traditions in human sciences.

Although both dialogue and dialectic share a common origin in ancient Greek philosophy, they historically developed as independent theoretical traditions with their own conceptual apparatus. The dialogic tradition is associated with the concepts of 'voices,' 'utterance,' speech genres, 'polyphony'. The dialectic tradition is based on the concepts of 'contradiction,' 'development,' the distinction between 'understanding' and 'reason'.

In contrast to the dominance of positivism in the North Atlantic Academy, both dialectics and dialogism have been developed as attractive alternatives. However, while dialogism and dialectics as theoretical frameworks have essential differences, there is a common space between them and "they also mutually enrich each other" (Sullivan, 2010, p.362).

Dialectics might offer in dialogical research a creative perspective for re-opening history (included the history of thought) as a contradictory process. For example, the lack of dialectical thinking constitutes an obstacle in the study of the historical development of Bakhtin's works. Many Bakhtian scholars encounter difficulties in understanding "inconsistent positions", "shifts in terminology" in writings of the founder of theory of dialogism, "...contradictory evidence regarding the authorship of the so-called disputed texts...", "quite contradictory account of his life" (Brandist, & Shepherd, 1998, p.9,10). As a result of the dominance of a presentist and teleological mode of thinking and the absence of a dialectical understanding of the development of Bakhtin works, many Bakhtian scholars tend to "read the early texts through those of the central or later period, which were published first, and thus to read early concepts in terms of later ones" (Brandist, & Shepherd, 1998, p.10). A dialectical approach with its focus on contradictions, change, totality, development may offer insights on Bakhtin's creative laboratory and reveal its complexity.

Dialectical thinking can also contribute to an understanding of the difficulties in developing dialogue in hard reality of the overarching power relations (presented by Hegel as 'master–slave relations'), growing social inequalities and increasing commoditization of all aspects of human life and experience. Otherwise, dialogue may be turned into a noble and idealized deontological principle but unable to meet the challenges of hard historical reality.

Dialogue offers a creative insight into going beyond truth as 'istina' (as a pure cognitive endeavor) toward truth as 'pravda' (as embodied and lived) (Bakhtin, 1993; Sullivan, 2010). "As we develop our consciousness through participation in social life, it is the potential of the other's response and its affective impact upon our sense of what we are doing that makes consciousness more indeterminate and more experiential than the truth of the dialectic allows" (Sullivan, 2010, p. 375). Focusing on intersubjective and ethical dimensions of knowing, a dialogical approach allows intellectualism to be avoided and challenges of communication to be faced between unique personalities in complex and uncertain situations.

Dialectical thinking is ongoing and unfinalizable as is dialogue. Both dialogue and dialectics historically change. Opening up new spaces for sharing and mutual enrichment between dialogue and dialectics may give rise to their unpredictable transformations. Perhaps, the initial starting point of the internal connection between 'dialogue' and 'dialectic' in Ancient Greece will be reborn in a new, unpredictable form in the future. "Nothing is absolutely dead: every *meaning* will celebrate its *rebirth*" *(Bakhtin, 1986b, p.* 393*).* Despite his serious objections, noted above*,* Bakhtin acknowledged that dialectics can give rise "a higher level dialogue" (Matusov, 2009, p.385). Bakhtin found a perspective of bridging dialectics and dialogue on the basis of a Hegelian argument*: "Dialectics was born of dialogue so as to return* again to dialogue on a higher level (a dialogue of personalities)" (Bakhtin, 1986a, 166).

Acknowledgement

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