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Mika Lähteenmäki, Hannele Dufva, Sirpa Leppänen & Piia Varis

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EARLY SOVIET RESEARCH PROJECTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'BAKHTINIAN' IDEAS: THE VIEW FROM THE ARCHIVES

Craig Brandist
University of Sheffield, UK

When the history of Bakhtin studies is finally written, one particularly ironic aspect that will stand out is that an accurate understanding of the development of dialogic ideas has required us to liberate ourselves from a series of monologic myths. Such thinking, to paraphrase Bakhtin himself, 'impoverished' our understanding, 'disorganised and bled' an accurate image of the dynamics of intellectual formation, by 'mixing it up' with 'fantastic' and 'estranged' notions and 'rounding it out' into a 'mythological whole' (Bakhtin 1979 [1936-8]: 224; 1986 [1936-8]: 43). Four particularly persistent varieties may be briefly summarised as follows: 1) Bakhtin was a thoroughly original thinker who thought up all his ideas *ab nihilo*; 2) Bakhtin surrounded himself with mediocrities and there was a uni-directional flow of ideas from him to, say, Voloshinov and Medvedev; 3) Bakhtin was an 'unofficial' thinker who chose to remain outside the dominant trends within Soviet scholarship and was fundamentally unaffected by that scholarship; 4) where Bakhtin was compelled to engage with Soviet scholarship the result was either rebuttal or inner subversion rather than serious engagement. I will refrain from identifying specific works in which these myths are present since they permeated the majority of research in the field until relatively recently and they have receded only gradually. Furthermore, the myths have not uniformly disintegrated, but have retreated unevenly in the face of a varying amount and quality of research in specific areas.

Myth 1) has now largely collapsed in the face of sober historical scholarship, which has shown the debt of members of the Bakhtin Circle to, predominantly, though not exclusively, German and Austrian philosophical trends. Aspects of Bakhtin's work now appeared derivative rather than innovative, but the way in which these ideas were combined and made to serve a new agenda still marked the Circle out to be a significant intellectual formation. Myth 2) still finds its adherents, but careful analyses of the work of Voloshinov and Medvedev has shown distinct positions being adopted there and different areas of specialisation to that of Bakhtin at the time (see, especially, Brandist, Shepherd and Tihanov [eds.] 2004). Medvedev's (1928/1978) sociologisation of the categories of German art scholarship and stylistics and, as I showed at the Gdansk conference, Voloshinov's sociologisation of the ideas of anti-Kantian thinkers about the psychology of linguistic acts, Anton Marty (1847-1914) and Karl Bühler (1879-1963), were fundamental preconditions for Bakhtin's work on the novel, even though he developed them in ways often opposed to those of his colleagues (Brandist 2004a). While we no doubt find some of Bakhtin's ideas in the books by Voloshinov and Medvedev, we also certainly find the ideas of Voloshinov and Medvedev in Bakhtin's (1929) study of Dostoevskii. Voloshinov and Medvedev provided both the expertise and the institutional connections necessary to translate Bakhtin's earlier phenomenology of authorship into generic and discursive terms and to give him

the opportunity to publish his work in the same series as them. Myths 3) and 4) have only recently begun to crumble. Published material now shows Bakhtin consistently trying to secure a place at an academic institution, and even being prepared to adopt the biographies of his brother and close friend in order to do so. Similarly, Bakhtin's work from the 1930s and after has been shown to be full of ideas taken from official Soviet scholarship. As I showed in my paper in Brazil (Brandist 2004b), the ideas of heteroglossia, discursive genres, centrifugal and centripetal forces in language development and more came from Lev Iakubinskii's (1892-1943) work of the early 1930s,¹ while much of the idea of carnival derived from Marxist literary studies and folklorics and one even finds certain points taken from Maksim Gorkii's 1934 speech on socialist realism (Gorky 1977).

This textual evidence is all quite convincing, I think, but a better impression is gained if we explore the archival evidence about what research into language and literature was taking place in the institutes in which members of the Bakhtin Circle were working in the 1920s. I particularly, but not exclusively, have in mind the Institute for the Comparative History of the Literatures and Languages of the West and East (*Nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut sravnitel'noi istorii literatur i iazykov Zapada i Vostoka*, ILIaZV) in Leningrad. When I began my archival research in this area, I was not surprised to find that several scholars working within Bakhtin studies had already looked at certain files in which, judging from their titles, one might expect to find information about Voloshinov or Medvedev, but when I ordered the main files about what research was carried out within the institutions in which they worked I was very surprised to see that I was often the first person to order them. In my view a fetishistic concern with certain individuals has obscured a wider and more significant research into more general questions. Furthermore, such a narrow focus has distorted our sense of the exceptionality and significance of the Bakhtin Circle itself. The point is not that there were large amounts of information about the individual work of Voloshinov and Medvedev in the files – there was not. There is far more information about the activities of Matvei Kagan at the State Academy for the Artistic Studies (*Gosudarstvennaia akademiia khudozhestvennykh nauk*, GAKhN), in Moscow in the mid 1920s,² and these files do tell us something about the way in which certain German ideas of the period were received and transferred to the Bakhtin Circle. While this is interesting information, Kagan was by this time at a step removed from the Circle, though he did visit Leningrad from time to time (RGALI 941/10/297/13) and was in touch with other members of the Circle.³ In the ILIaZV archives we find more general and, I think, significant accounts of the collective research projects carried out within the institution in which Voloshinov and Medvedev were involved and sometimes had a leading role. Sometimes more important was the work of other sections in which Voloshinov and Medvedev had no direct involvement, but which played such an important role in the institution that it framed the research carried out by individual researchers. I am essentially arguing that there are institutional preconditions for the work pursued by the Bakhtin Circle that have been neglected. When ILIaZV formally came under the administrative and budgetary control of the Russian Association of Scientific Research Institutes in the Social Sciences (*Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia nauchno-issledovatel'skikh institutov obshchestvennykh nauk*, RANION) in May 1927 individual research projects and the collective research projects of which they were part had to reflect the institute's production plan. The same problems are thereby reflected in all aspects of the institute's work.

1 The most sustained account of relations between Soviet and more general linguistics on the one hand and the Bakhtin Circle on the other is Alpatov (2005).

2 See, for instance, the minutes of the meetings of the philosophy section at GAKhN (RGALI 941/14).

3 See the correspondence in Kagan (2004).

Our story begins before the formation of ILIaZV, however, with the establishment of Institute of the Living Word (*Institut zhivogo slova*, IZhS) in 1918. I am not going to say too much about this since Irina Ivanova has a paper about this institute, but this institute consolidates a whole trend of research into language in Russia that members of the Bakhtin Circle were to inherit. At the opening of this institute Commissar of Enlightenment Anatolii Lunacharskii (1875-1933) declared the Revolution had made it possible and necessary to teach the whole people to speak publicly, 'from the small to the great' (*Institut zhivogo slova* 1919: 23). This was an invocation of the principle of *isçgoria*, or the equality of speech, which was the basis of Athenian democracy (Wood 1996). The classicist Faddei Zelinskii (1859-1944) similarly argued, with reference to ancient Athens, for the inseparability of the living word and democracy (*Institut zhivogo slova* 1919: 8). Serious research into the relation between politics and discursive forms, especially focusing on oratory and rhetoric, emerged. The *rhçtôr*, it should be remembered, was any person who proposed and argued for a resolution at the Athenian assembly before all assembled citizens were able to make up their minds and vote (Hansen 1987: 56-63; Ober 1989: 104-55). There seems little doubt that the most popular and influential figure in the oratory section was Aleksei Koni (1844-1927), a figure closely connected with this rise of Russian juridical oratory, and whose courses attracted students from various specialisms (Chukovskii 1969). Although Koni had been teaching juridical oratory well before the Revolution, once his pedagogical activity was no longer framed by a purely juridical institute he began to locate juridical oratory among a variety of other forms of public discourse, cataloguing the socio-political tasks of the living word, the tools of discourse, forms of addressing the listener, the preconditions for the influence of the living word, the connection between the living word and literature and others. This was a significant step towards the sociological classification of discursive activity, since forms of discourse were aligned with their social functions and the ethical dimension of such activity was highlighted. Once liberated from a narrowly juridical framework, such work as *The general features of juridical ethics* (Koni 1967 [1902]), in which justice is closely connected with 'free inner-persuasiveness' as opposed to other forms of authoritative discourse, acquire a resonance close to what is now known as deliberative democracy. Bakhtin, it is known, adopts the dichotomy between authoritative and internally persuasive discourse in his juridically inflected work on the novel (Brandist 2001).

While Koni's courses were practical, two linguists at the institute, Lev Shcherba (1880-1944) and Iakubinskii were well placed to develop the theoretical implications of looking at language in this way. The most important theoretical result was Iakubinskii's 'On dialogic discourse' of 1922 (Iakubinskii 1986 [1922]), which became a foundational text for what is now often called simply 'dialogism'. Particularly important in this work was the presentation of dialogue as the manifestation of social interaction in language and the contention that dialogue is the natural form of discourse while monologue is artificial. While the institute closed in spring 1924, it had a direct effect on members of the Circle through Lev Pumpianskii and Matvei Kagan, who read courses on cultural ethics and the history of aesthetics respectively (IRLI 474/1/470 and 151). The oratorical section of IZhS became the basis of the 'State courses in discursive techniques' (the first director of which was Iakubinskii), and which later became the Volodarskii Institute of Agitation. Koni died in 1927 but Shcherba, Iakubinskii and others worked at this Party institute until the mid 1930s while also working at ILIaZV. A certain parallelism between the two institutes soon became apparent, and this reflected the structure of higher education in the mid to late

1920s:⁴ ILIaZV provided a forum for theoretical reflection on problems raised in the activity of the Institute of Agitation. We will see how this worked later.

ILIaZV was originally founded in 1921 as the A. N. Veselovskii Institute of Language and Literature and in accordance with the work of that specialist in the international history of literature, it described its orientation to be 'comparative-historical'. Veselovskii (1838-1906) had studied the 'evolution of poetic consciousness and its forms' from a 'historico-psychological perspective'. With this agenda in mind he intensively studied the classics of bourgeois ethnography, such as E. B. Tylor's two-volume *Primitive culture* (1871),⁵ collecting a huge quantity of factual material and examining that material from a *Völkerpsychologische* perspective according to which language and literature are expressions of the psychology of a people. Veselovskii was torn between a positivist pursuit of facts and an idealist and psychologistic narrative of cultural development that led him into a case-by-case examination of the historical development of literary genres from a primordial, syncretic unity in the myths of primitive society. Veselovskii's most senior student, the specialist in Romance languages and literatures, Vladimir Shishmarev (1875-1957) led a project to collate, edit and publish Veselovskii's work and some of the research projects at ILIaZV followed on from this work, but stripped of the psychologistic approach and updated to fit in with a broadly socio-historical agenda. Veselovskii's adherence to the main features of *Völkerpsychologie* was also typical of the main influence on linguistic studies in Leningrad at the time, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (1845-1929), whose pupils Shcherba, Iakubinskii and Boris Larin (1893-1964) dominated linguistic study at the institute.⁶ Baudouin was undoubtedly one of the most important linguists at the turn of the twentieth century, working to define the phoneme and the social stratification of national languages, but his sociological reflections remained subject to the hegemony of psychological processes. One figure who cast a huge shadow over the work of the institute was the archaeologist and philologist turned linguist Nikolai Marr (1864-1934), who was also an enthusiast for Veselovskii's work and modelled his controversial theory that all languages unfold from a primordial syncretic language on Veselovskii's theories about literary genres (Thomas 1957: 114-15).⁷ The key *Völkerpsychologische* notion of the *Volkseele* or collective soul of the people as the 'seat' of a collective psychology was abandoned by researchers at the institute, who strove to develop a sociological perspective. In the work of Iakubinskii and Larin, the 'other' and social groups which arise on the territory of productive relations became the seat of a social psychology,⁸ while in the late 1920s, Marr linked *Völkerpsychologische* ideas to certain superficially Marxist tenets, arguing that the stages of language development correspond to stages in the development of the forces and relations of production and that since relations of production have explanatory primacy, different classes speak different languages. At ILIaZV this resulted in such research projects as the paleontological analysis of numerical terms and the names of animals in languages that were held to have no familial relationships. It is notable that functional analysis of language use was almost totally alien to Marxism, which not only adopted a one-sidedly genetic analysis, but also focused its attention on the remote past rather than more recent historical periods (Katsnel'son 2001: 807).

4 On this parallelism see David-Fox (1997).

5 On the influence of Tylor in Russia in the 1920s see Hirsch (2005: 218-19).

6 On Baudouin's influence on Shcherba and Iakubinskii see Leont'ev (1961); on Baudouin and Larin see GARF 298/1/122/13-14.

7 For a careful and nuanced discussion of Marr's possible influence on Voloshinov see Lähteenmäki and Vasil'ev (2005).

8 In this the Russian scholars were recapitulating the terms of the 'linguistic repudiation of Wundt' in the work German linguists. On the latter see Nerlich and Clarke (1998).

From 1927 ILIaZV had 'a) a language section with a subsection of general linguistics, laboratories of public discourse and the physiology of speech and an office of contemporary Russian language; b) a literary section with a subsection of the methodology of literature [of which Voloshinov was the secretary] and a bibliographical office'. Each section's presidium could organise commissions and working groups according to concrete projects. Three themes were pursued in the work of both sections of the institute: 1) questions of the methodology of language and literature; 2) questions of international and internal-national linguistic and literary exchange on the basis of socio-economic, political and general-cultural interactions of peoples and countries; 3) the study of languages and the oral creation of the contemporary city, village and national minorities of the USSR and also the mixed peoples of the West and East on the basis of their socio-economic, political and general-cultural development. This had the effect of creating a certain parallelism between the work of each section: study of 'the paleontology of speech' found a parallel in the paleontology of literary plots and devices; 'the study of the interaction of linguistic units (national and class languages, ethnic and social dialects etc.)' found a parallel in the study of 'international literary exchange in connection with the development of peoples and countries found in literary interaction'; the study of the language of the city and countryside, dialects and public discourse, found parallels in the rural and urban folklore and the rise of national literatures (TsGALI 288/1/39/1).

The general lines of the collective research projects were seen to have linguistic and literary aspects, and this fitted the profiles of many members of staff well. This was particularly true of Viktor Zhirmunskii (1891-1971) and Shishmarev, who worked on German and Romance languages and literatures respectively. In accordance with the extensive collaboration between Soviet and German ethnographers in the mid 1920s (Hirsch 2005: 233-46), Zhirmunskii visited Germany for four months in the spring and summer of 1927 to familiarise himself with latest techniques of collecting dialectological and folkloric material and to pursue archival and library research. His visits to Bonn, Marburg, Freiberg and Berlin gave him much material and he was able to use the experience in leading a project to study the language and culture of German colonies in Ukraine, the Volga and Swedes in the Leningrad region of the USSR (TsGALI 288/1/29/83). However, Zhirmunskii simultaneously worked on the West European novel, specifically the comparative morphology of the German and English novel and patterns of influence between different national literatures (TsGALI 288/1/39/73). The first study published in the series of ILIaZV monographs in which the main works of Voloshinov, Medvedev and Bakhtin were to appear was Zhirmunskii's study of Byron's influence on Pushkin in 1924. Shishmarev similarly studied the language of Moldavian and remnants of Italian colonists in the south of the USSR while also working on the publication of the works of Veselovskii and studying French literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (TsGALI 288/1/39/73, 92). Here the formation of national languages from regional dialects and the rise of national literatures from myth and folklore became aspects of a single problem, and the theoretical conclusions of the study appeared in print in the early 1930s. Perhaps the most advanced version was Zhirmunskii's (1932) article 'The method of social geography (Dialectology and folklore in the light of geographical research)', which appeared in the final issue of ILIaZV's journal *Language and Literature (Jazyk i literatura)*. Here the work of French and German linguistic geographers such as Jules Gilliéron (1854-1926), Ferdinand Wrede (1863-1934) and Theodor Frings (1886-1968) were combined with social theory and the sociology of literature and folklore that had been developed at ILIaZV in the 1920s. Zhirmunskii and Shishmarev also worked together on a project to study the rise of the epic in

Western European literatures. One of the most significant developments was Boris Larin's pathbreaking study of the linguistic relations of the city in which he analysed the *mnogoi-azychie* (polyglossia) of Leningrad and the presence of social dialects. At the same time, however, Larin studied the aesthetic functions of language and, the poetics of Indian literature (TsGALI 288/1/16/18-18ob).

Here we have a general tendency to describe, catalogue and study the forms of interaction and exchange between different linguistic and literary communities. Spatial description and analysis tended to push genetic explanation into the background, while a one-sidedly genetic analysis was developed by the Marrist sections of ILIaZV, where research was based on the assumption that all semantic phenomena arise from a shared primitive, mythical consciousness and are evolving towards a linguistic and ideological unity. What we begin to see at ILIaZV, therefore is the emergence of mutually exclusive lines of enquiry: one dealing with the social functions of language and literature and based on a largely synchronic and descriptive approach, and another which eschewed all such analysis in favour of a one-sidedly genetic approach which projected its lines of inquiry back into the murky depths of prehistory and into the unverifiable future. The work of Voloshinov and Medvedev very much fitted in with the first trend, and this is something that also comes to dominate Bakhtin's 1929 study of Dostoevskii, which includes none of the material on the history of genre that we find in the 1963 edition. Indeed, however much he raised the need to overcome the synchronic and diachronic dualism, Bakhtin's own work remained locked into that very dichotomy and, as we shall see, his attempts to overcome it repeatedly fell into the same pattern as others at ILIaZV in the 1920s.

Voloshinov and Medvedev worked in the section for the methodology and theory of literature and were firmly located within the functional side of work at ILIaZV. Here a subsection on the theory of literature (poetics) was organised by Shishmarev and Medvedev, and within this there was a project on Sociological Poetics directed by Medvedev, Ieremiia Ioffe (1888-1947) and involved Voloshinov when he became a postgraduate in 1927. Medvedev's *Formal method* book (1978 [1928]), subtitled *A critical introduction to sociological poetics* and, to some extent, Voloshinov's work on the transmission of alien discourse, which ended up as the final part of *Marxism and the philosophy of language* (1929/1973), which was subtitled *Basic problems of sociological method in the study of language* should be seen in the context of this project. Medvedev and Ioffe concentrated on the sociology of style, with Medvedev specialising in the sociology of literary style and Ioffe on more general sociological stylistics. Ioffe strove to translate the ideas of German art scholars like Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945) and Wilhelm Worringer (1881-1965), who treated artistic styles as indexes of aesthetic orientations on the world into a sociological paradigm so that art becomes a function of social activity or a system of devices for social communication (Ioffe 1927).

The ideas of Wölfflin and Worringer had already been appropriated for literary scholarship by the German philologist Oskar Walzel (1864-1944), whose influence on the Bakhtin Circle has not been fully appreciated. Walzel had achieved his literary reworking of German art scholarship by drawing on phenomenology and *Gestalt* theory, arguing that genres and linguistic styles are intentional wholes and embody authorial orientations

on the world. Walzel was a friend of Zhirmunskii, who championed the German's work, sponsoring him to become an honorary member of the State Institute of the History of the Arts (Gosudarstvennyi institut istorii iskusstv, GII) in Leningrad (Walzel 1956: 230).⁹ It is quite possible members of the Bakhtin Circle met Walzel at this time. Moreover, on the recommendation of no less than the chair of the literary sections of GAKhN and the State Scholar Council (Gosudarstvennyi uchenyi sovet, GUS) of the Commissariat of Enlightenment, Pavel Sakulin (1868-1930), Walzel was also made an honorary member of GAKhN at the end of the 1920s (RGALI 941/10/87). Sakulin, with whom Medvedev maintained a respectful correspondence and planned to collaborate (IRLI 272/2/103),¹⁰ regarded Walzel's work as the most important recent development in Western literary studies and the closest to the agenda of Soviet scholars (RGALI 941/10/87). Medvedev shared Zhirmunskii's and Sakulin's high regard for Walzel's work, citing him as (along with Zhirmunskii and Veselovskii) as one of the theorists with whom he most often agreed, as early as 1924 (Medvedev 1992: 92). He also adopted several of Walzel's ideas for the cause of sociological poetics (Brandist 2002: 69-70; Tihanov 2004: 53). Certain genres now became embodiments of certain forms of orientation on both the social world as object and audience as interlocutor. In this way genres become functional forms of social interaction and the language of which literature is constructed adopts a socio-aesthetic function. Voloshinov worked according to exactly the same agenda, but rather than art scholarship, drew on contemporary psychology and philosophy of language, particularly Marty and Bühler, to argue that in forms of reported discourse intentionally impelled forms of discursive acts encounter and respond to each other. The final paper Voloshinov delivered at ILIaZV in 1931, 'The genre and style of the artistic utterance', clearly continues this trend (ARAN 827/3/93/50).

The genetic trend within literary studies involved Shishmarev, as the main heir of Veselovskii's ideas at ILIaZV, and several other talented figures including the philosopher and biblical scholar, who had studied under Wundt and Simmel in Germany (ARAN 77/5/142/13), Izrail' Frank-Kamenetskii (1880-1937). Frank-Kamenetskii was important in many ways, not least because as early as 1929 he was striving to unite the ideas of Marrism with Ernst Cassirer's *Philosophy of symbolic forms*, which was crucial in the development of Bakhtin's ideas (Frank-Kamenetskii 1929). The other important figure in this respect is the classicist Olga Freidenberg (1890-1955), whose work on parody (1973 [1926]) and on plot and genre (1997 [1935]) were crucial sources for Bakhtin's later work on the chronotope and Rabelais. Where Marr and his followers in linguistics had sought to trace the way in which a single semantic unit could be traced back into the distant past, changing its meaning at various points along the way, these scholars sought to trace the paleontology of literary devices, plots and images to show how forms that appear in modern literature are but new instances of features that have appeared throughout the history of literature and before that in folklore and myth. The results were indeed very interesting, and many of the specific ideas we find in the work of these scholars we later find in Bakhtin's work of the 1930s. I am not going to say much about this since I have written on

9 I am indebted to Galin Tihanov and Matthias Aumüller for drawing my attention to this source. There is extensive discussion of Walzel's visit in Zhirmunskii's letters to Sakulin held in the latter's archive (RGALI 444/1/331).

10 The critical attitude found in Medvedev (1926; 1983) evidently did not amount to a denigration of Sakulin's work as a whole. It is unfortunate that this article has obstructed a sustained consideration of the relationship between the two scholars, especially since each in their own way attempted to draw on the same German sources to fashion a sociological approach to literature. Sakulin's critical evaluation and assimilation of the German sources can mainly be found in Sakulin (1925).

it elsewhere (Brandist 2002: 110-11, 135-7), but suffice it to say that the shared features are significant (see also Tihanov 2000: 136-38, 159-60). From the methodological point of view, however, we can see here how these thinkers tried to overcome the one-sidedly genetic character of Marrism, or rather (to paraphrase Nina Perlina [2002]) of *Völkerpsychologie* in Marrist garb, by treating semantic material as eternal and indestructible. Meanings and ideologies may change but semantic forms and their clusters remain unchanged. Here we have the root of Bakhtin's tendency in the 1930s and 1940s to discuss the novel as a genre that emerges to become the characteristic literary form of modernity but at the same time to discuss the dichotomy of novel and poetry as an eternal feature of literary history. Publication plans in the ILIaZV archives from the beginning of the 1930s shows Medvedev planning a joint publication with Feidenberg and Frank-Kamenetskii on the history of the epic, and Voloshinov collaborating with Frank-Kamenetskii, Feidenberg and (at that time) another prominent Marrist Aleksandr Kholodovich (1906-1977) to produce collections on the *Classics of aesthetics* and on *Contemporary Western-European literary and aesthetic theory*, to include essays on Walzel and Cassirer (TsGALI 288/1/41).

Here we can see how Voloshinov and Medvedev acted as a conduit through which the discussions at ILIaZV were to reach Bakhtin, who was desperately trying to find his own place within Soviet academia. Members of the Circle who were in a position to help Bakhtin in this endeavour did so. Ivan Sollertinskii provided Bakhtin with an opportunity to speak about 'Author and hero' at another Leningrad Institute, the State Institute for the History of Arts (*Gosudarstvennyi institut istorii iskusstv*, GIII) in 1924 (GARF 2307/3/299/62).¹¹ Voloshinov and Medvedev were better placed to help and facilitated the publication of Bakhtin's study of Dostoevskii in the same series as their own works after familiarising Bakhtin with the research projects and methods underway there. Just as some of Bakhtin's philosophical ideas appear in the works of Voloshinov and Medvedev, so the fruits of their research on the methodology and theory of literature shape Bakhtin's work on Dostoevskii into a work on sociological poetics. This literary side requires more research: a close analysis of the traces of the work of such figures as Ioffe and Shishmarev in the work of the Circle would represent a doctoral project in itself. Shishmarev, for instance, was one of the main Soviet interpreters of Veselovskii and, moreover, wrote a good deal about French and Italian literature (1965, 1972). It would certainly be worth finding the traces of this work in Bakhtin's writing on Rabelais, Dante and the like. The philological sources of Bakhtin's work is generally an under-researched area of study, but it is also far from clear that Bakhtin's own work was the most important product of that institute – there is simply not enough research on this area.

From my point of view, one of the most important projects carried out at ILIaZV was the continuation of the work begun at the Institute of the Living Word, which again ran in parallel with the Marrist genetic approach without really intersecting. The practical work of the old institute was pursued at the new Institute of Agitation, where Iakubinskii was the first director and where most of those involved in the oratory section of the old institute were gathered, along with literary scholars such as Boris Eikhenbaum (1886-1959) and Iurii Tynianov (1894-1943) (TsGAIPD 8720/1/3/1-2). The focus was a little narrower, since the main function of the institute was to train Party cadre, but until the end of the 1920s this was no simple management school and the institute pioneered what now goes under the label of 'communication studies'. The main theoretical work was carried out by

¹¹ It should be noted that GIII and ILIaZV shared many members of staff including Zhirmunskii, Eikhenbaum, Tynianov, Shcherba and Larin. Sollertinskii was also a visiting postgraduate student of West-European languages and literatures at ILIaZV 1925-27 (TsGALI 288/2/137).

the same people at ILIaZV, however, and first resulted in a collection of articles on the late Lenin's discourse and style of argument, which appeared in the journal *Lef* in 1925. Here Lenin's ability to deflate rhetorical and ideological pretensions through '*snizhenie*' or 'lowering' is given particular attention (Iakubinskii 1924). These works led to more general studies of the nature and functions of public discourse and of oratorical discourse in particular.

In 1926 Iakubinskii established two laboratories of public discourse at the Institute of Agitation and ILIaZV, which were directed by the former head of the oratory section of IZhS and founder of the Free Philosophical Association (Vol'fila) Konstantin Siunnerberg (pseud. Erberg 1871-1942),¹² and a graduate of that institute, the future cinema scriptwriter Vladimir Kreps (1903-84), who became the director of the Institute of Agitation in the same year (TsGAIPD 8720/1/54/88; RGALI 2889/1/197/3). The initial aim of the LPD was in accordance with the general early work of the institute: 'the definition of terms and the classification of concepts within the field of public discourse' and the 'compilation of a bibliography on questions of public discourse in Russian and foreign languages' (GARF A-4655/1/275/22, 104-105ob).

It is instructive to note focus on the career of Viktor Abramovich Gofman (1899-1942) who, along with Voloshinov, enrolled on the ILIaZV postgraduate programme History of Russian Literature on January 1st 1927 (TsGALI 288/2/14/76). Gofman worked under the supervision of Eikhenbaum, studying the political poetry of early nineteenth-century Russia (GARF A-4655/2/478/ 13-14) and publishing articles on *skaz* (Gofman 1926) and the fundamental 'principles of construction' in which the political semantics and the genres of the political poetry of the epoch of the 1812 war and the Decemberists' were discussed (GARF A-4655/2/478/5; Gofman 1929). Gofman nevertheless studied the history of Russian language and general linguistics and pursued a second specialism in the laboratory of public discourse with Kreps and Siunnerberg, resulting in papers on 'The problem of agitational oratorical discourse' and 'The problem of socio-historical analysis of oratorical discourse' at ILIaZV (GARF A-4655/2/478/ 6-8b), followed by an article in a collection published by the laboratory (1931) and the following year a monograph on the history and theory of oratorical discourse (1932).

Taking the work of Gofman and two members of the Bakhtin Circle together, it becomes apparent the extent to which the agenda of that group of thinkers and much of its theoretical approach derived from the projects at ILIaZV. Though ostensibly working on literary matters, both Voloshinov and Gofman move to questions of linguistic theory and the historical typology of discourse without entirely abandoning literary analysis or categories. Both also draw extensively on Iakubinskii's work about dialogic discourse and the genres of public discourse, indeed Gofman's development of monologue and dialogue as analytical categories in his work of 1931 and 1932 anticipates the main lines of Bakhtin's own usage in the mid 1930s. Thus Gofman argues that the adoption and use of classical rhetoric in the medieval world had a 'monologic' character that became increasingly separated from both the language of the street and truly scientific discourse. This had become especially apparent by the early Renaissance, ultimately leading to the parodies of Rabelais (GARF A-4655/2/478/7). In the contemporary world the bourgeoisie similarly clothes its political and juridical public discourse in the monologic forms of the rhetoric of the classical world to mask its own interests that are distinct from and indeed antago-

12 On Siunnerberg (Erberg) see Grechishkin and Lavrov (1979) and Zabolotskaia (1996). On Vol'fila see Belous (2005). Siunnerberg's archive contains several still unpublished works on public discourse and oratory that deserve publication. The only article he published on this issue is Erberg (1929).

nistic to those of the proletariat. The proletariat gradually learn to counter this through the development of its own orators, dialogising monologic forms and breaking down the boundaries between conversational language, scientific discourse and oratorical speech (Gofman 1931, 1932). One aspect of the social revolution is thus a revolution in the social functions of language, which Gofman skilfully analyses by weaving together studies of classical rhetoric, formalist literary theory, Iakubinskii's analysis of the dialogic functions of language and the empirical studies of oratory and public discourse then being developed in the Laboratory of Public Discourse at ILIaZV. Voloshinov, meanwhile, incorporated some of the same sources with the insights of Brentanian psychology found in the work of the Austrian scholars Marty and Bühler.

As is well known, there were catastrophic transformations in the institutional structure of Soviet higher education institutions between 1929 and 1932, and ILIaZV (from 1930 called The State Institute of Discursive Culture (*Gosudarstvennyi institut rechevoi kul'tury*, GIRK) was one of its many victims. The laboratory of public discourse was relocated to the Institute of Agitation, which was by now little more than an ideological management school and the institutional basis for theoretical investigation into the functional analysis of language use was lost (ARAN 827/3/101). A few publications, like those of Gofman, which grew out of the work of ILIaZV were published in the early 1930s, but the trend largely died out. The archives contain several interesting and unpublished works, which my research assistant Katya Chown and I plan to edit and publish in the coming years. Marrism was granted the status of the official Marxist theory of language and the narrowly genetic approach to semantic phenomena was made the only legitimate approach. The work of Frank-Kamenetskii and Freidenberg was relocated to Marr's Institute of Language and Thought (*Institut iazyka i myshlennia*, IIAm), where they continued to produce some valuable studies. Some scholars like Zhirmunskii and Shishmarev published some interesting work on language and literature in the 1930s that grew out of research at ILIaZV, but the momentum, and the environment in which functional and genetic questions were posed side by side had passed.

Bakhtin's work of the 1930s and 1940s constitutes some of the most significant attempts to continue the type of work that had been developed at ILIaZV. His relative detachment from Soviet academic institutions meant he was more able to remain within the research programme of the 1920s than might have been the case had he been as well integrated as he would have liked. In his work on the novel of the 1930s we find an attempt to combine the work on the social stratification of the national language with the study of linguistic functions, the study of the mutual influence of literary forms and the Marxist account of literature emerging from myth but retaining its semantic clusters. Following Frank-Kamenetskii (1929) he attempts to tie this together by means of Cassirer's idealist dialectic. But the problem is that the functional and genetic modes of analysis do not fit together and so when he concentrates on history in the essay on the chronotope or the *Bildungsroman* for instance, the question of dialogue falls out of view. When the focus is upon the meeting of utterances and linguistic styles then historical narrative is suspended. The most extreme example of this comes somewhat later, in the essay on speech genres from the early 1950s. The only way these can be united is through the notion that the key cultural forms have always existed and merely reappear in new ways. This we find throughout the Rabelais study, where we see Freidenberg's (1997 [1935]) catalogue of semantic clusters is ransacked for the key elements of carnival. The problem is most clearly shown in the second edition of the Dostoevskii book (1963/1984), when Bakhtin inserts a distinctly and anachronistically Marxist chapter on the history of genre into a study that

was firmly located within the functional strand within ILIaZV from the 1920s.

Interesting though Bakhtin's work is from this period, it represents a provocative syncretism of trends rather than a successful synthesis of them. To have wove them together would have required detailed historical analysis which operated at several levels simultaneously, including detailed philological and philosophical investigations, along with the economic and institutional analyses that Bakhtin completely ignored, and the absence of which severely weakens the critical force of his work. In short, it would have required the ongoing efforts of many talented people whose research was coordinated in an institute. All the more reason then to shift our attention to the institutional level and to see Bakhtin's work as but a significant contribution to something much larger and important than his individual work. ILIaZV is but one important institute in which ideas from German and Austrian philosophy and philology and French linguistics (Desnitskaia 1991) were reworked according to distinctly early Soviet research programmes. All the more reason we should no longer hypostatise individual research by severing it from its institutional preconditions.

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f. 77 Institut iazyka i myshleniia;
f. 827 N. F. Derzhavin.
- GARF: Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv rossiiskoi federatsii (Moscow):
f. A-298 Gosudarstvennyi uchenii sovet;
f. A-2307 Glavnauka Narkomprosa;
f. A-4655 Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia nauchno-issledovatel'skikh institutov obshchestvennykh nauk.
- IRLI: Institut russkoi literatury (Pushkinskii dom), (St. Petersburg):
f. 272 P. N. Sakulin;
f. 474 K. A. Siunnerberg (Erberg).
- RGALI: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstv (Moscow):
f. 444 P. N. Sakulin;
f. 941 Gosudarstvennaia akademiia khudozhestvennykh nauk;
f. 2889 V. M. Kreps.
- TsGAIPD: Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv istoriko-politicheskikh dokumentov (St. Petersburg):
f. 8720 Institut agitatsii im. Volodarskogo.
- TsGALI: Tsentralnyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstv (St. Petersburg):
f. 288 Nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut sravnitel'noi istorii literatur i iazykov Zapada i Vostoka.