

## 2 From Speech Genres to Mediated Multimodal Genre Systems: Bakhtin, Voloshinov, and the Question of Writing

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### INTRODUCTION

Over the past 20 years, so much has been written on genre, so many astute analyses have been undertaken, so many important theoretical observations have been made (see, e.g., Bazerman, 1988; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Coe, Lingard, & Teslenko, 2002; Devitt, 2004; Freedman & Medway, 1994; Hyland, 2004; Russell, 1997; Swales, 2004), that it is challenging now to say something new that needs to be said, especially in the context of a volume dedicated to genre studies. It has been widely agreed for some time now that genres are not solely textual phenomena, that genres should be understood not as templates but as always partly prefabricated, partly improvised or repurposed. Over the last 15 years, in different terms and with somewhat different emphases, but with increasing clarity, genre analysts have been moving from a focus on genres as isolated phenomena to a recognition of how specific types of texts are formed within, infused by, and constitutive of systems of genres. Genres have been described in terms of chains (Swales, 2004; Fairclough, 2004), colonies (Bhatia, 2002), repertoires (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994; Devitt, 2004), sets and systems (Bazerman, 1994, 2004a; Devitt, 1991, 2004), and ecologies (Spinuzzi, 2004). Theorists have also begun to highlight ways that genre theory has privileged public texts whose primary functions are informational, rhetorical or aesthetic. For example, Swales (1996, 2004) has identified the category of *occluded* genres, and Spinuzzi (2004) has highlighted the way many workplace genres are designed primarily to mediate activity (e.g., to work as aids to thinking and action rather than as means of inter-office or external communication). Attention to modes other than writing has also grown. Räisänen (1999), for example, has examined the chains of written and oral genres involved in presenting at academic conferences. Analyzing topological and typological dimensions, Lemke (1998) has argued that scientific texts are, and long have been, routinely *multimedia genres*, whose mix of modalities plays a crucial role in the construction of meaning. Situated genre analyses in specific sites (e.g., Bazerman, 1999; Berkenkotter, 2001; Kambarelis, 2001; Prior, 1998) have also highlighted ways that literate activity involves

multimodal chains of genres. For example, a group may engage in planning “talk” (which might include written notes, drawings, diagrams, and so on as well as presentational and conversational talk); that planning talk may lead to a series of written drafts that are perhaps reviewed through a series of oral and written responses (with annotational genres including textual editing, marginal comments, and extended comments); and all of this activity may culminate in a final written text that is then read in certain typified ways and prompts other responses. Many of the genres in such chains are both relatively occluded and more oriented to mediational or processual purposes of individuals or groups than to wider public exchange. More and more, we understand that the rhizomatic threads of genre spread just about everywhere we might look into human societies. What is there to add to these insights, or more to the point, what might this chapter contribute to genre studies?

Without claiming a unique perspective, I will identify and elaborate on several points that do not seem to me widely shared and agreed to at present. The points I am identifying relate to where I am looking from, specifically from my participation in Writing Studies, where attention to writing as a process was woven into the formation of the field and where the question of how writing relates to other modes has become a pressing concern. From this perspective, I will focus on four key issues (the nature of the Bakhtinian notion of *utterance*, the problem of the text, the question of writing, and the relationship of inner to outer semiotics) that lead in the end to the notion of *mediated multimodal genre systems*. All four of these issues derive from theoretical and empirical attention to writing or more broadly literate activity.

### RECOVERING VOLOSHINOV’S THEORY OF THE UTTERANCE FROM BAKHTIN’S LATER DEFINITION

Bakhtin’s (1986) account of *speech genres*, that is, of genres as typified forms of situated *utterance*, has profoundly altered genre theory in the past decades. However, that seminal essay also displays how thoroughly Bakhtin’s approach to genre was grounded in literary issues, rather than the linguistic, semiotic, psychological, and sociological perspectives that we find in the work of Voloshinov (and to a lesser extent Medvedev)<sup>1</sup>. In fact, Bakhtin displays his limits in a prominent and repeated way: seriously undermining and confusing the fundamental unit of analysis in his theory, the utterance.

Let’s turn to three quotations that illustrate the problem. In the following passages, Bakhtin (1986) is defining utterances (spoken and written) as the real unit of speech communication (in contrast to the abstract sentences of linguistic analysis):

The boundaries of each concrete utterance as a unit of speech

communication are determined by a change of speaking subjects, that is a change of speakers. Any utterance—from a short (single-word) rejoinder to the large novel or scientific treatise—has, so to speak, an absolute beginning and an absolute end . . . . (p. 71)

Complexly structured and specialized works of various scientific and artistic genres, in spite of all the ways in which they differ from rejoinders in dialogue, are by nature the same kind of units of speech communication. They, too, are clearly demarcated by a change of speaking subjects, and these boundaries, while retaining their external clarity, acquire here a special internal aspect because the speaking subject—in this case, the author of the work—manifests his own individuality in his style, his world view, and in all aspects of the design of the work. (p. 75)

The work is a link in the chain of speech communication. Like the rejoinder in dialogue, it is related to other work-utterances: both those to which it responds and those that respond to it. At the same time, like the rejoinder in dialogue, it is separated from them by the absolute boundaries of the utterance. (p. 76)

Bakhtin's problem here is not subtle. In defining the utterance as the real unit of speech communication, he makes two claims that undermine the power of a dialogic approach. First, he equates utterances with externalized utterances. Second, he equates spoken utterance (talk) with works (texts). In effect, he is saying that a "Hi, Sally!" spoken on the street to a passing acquaintance and Tolstoy's *War and Peace* each count equally, each one utterance, each a move in a sequence of dialogue. Bakhtin does seem to sense the oddness of this claim, but he locates the difference in marks of individuality in texts, marks that index the vision and craft of the author (yet another indication of what a narrow literary canvas Bakhtin was painting on).

Bakhtin's departure from the earlier theory articulated by Voloshinov<sup>2</sup> could hardly be more plain:

The process of speech, broadly understood as the process of inner and outer verbal life, goes on continuously. It knows neither beginning nor end. The outwardly actualized utterance is an island arising from the boundless sea of inner speech, the dimensions and forms of the island are determined by the particular situation of the utterance and its audience. (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 96)

Where Bakhtin (1986) boasts of the absolute beginning and end of utterances (which he believes give the utterance scientific priority), Voloshinov argues that speech has neither beginning nor end, that utterance is an island rising from the sea of inner speech. Voloshinov (1973) initially articulates the point more generally as a semiotic rather than solely a linguistic issue (and Voloshinov does not mention signs only in passing).

We repeat: every outer ideological sign, of whatever kind, is engulfed in and washed over by inner signs—by the consciousness. The outer sign originates from this sea of inner signs and continues to abide there, since its life is a process of renewal as something to be understood, experienced, and assimilated, i.e., its life consists in its being engaged ever anew into the inner context. (p. 33)

Voloshinov's (1973) attention to inner speech and consciousness needs to be placed in the broader context of his social (ideological) theory of the formation of consciousness itself: "Consciousness takes shape and being in the material of signs created by an organized group in the process of its social intercourse" (p. 13).

In another early, disputed text, Bakhtin/Medvedev (1978) locates utterance and genre firmly within as well as outside of the individual:

It is the forms of the utterance, not the forms of language that play the most important role in consciousness and the comprehension of reality. . . . we do not think in words and sentences, and the stream of inner speech which flows within us is not a string of words and sentences. We think and conceptualize in utterances, complexes complete in themselves. . . . These integral, materially expressed inner acts of [people's] orientation to reality and the forms of these acts are very important. One might say that human consciousness possesses a series of inner genres for seeing and conceptualizing reality. (pp. 133-134)

Voloshinov (and it seems Medvedev) clearly had a robust notion of utterance as inner speech and inner genre that Bakhtin only fleetingly affirms and easily abandons. (When Bakhtin writes of inner speech, he is typically writing of the *representation* of inner speech for characters in a novel.) Many of the problems that I address in the next three sections flow from Bakhtin's definition of the utterance as externalized utterance and his clear equation of talk and text.

## REVISITING THE PROBLEM OF THE TEXT: THE COMPOSED UTTERANCE

When Voloshinov and Bakhtin articulated their account of utterance and distinguished utterances from the specialized representation of “decontextualized” linguistic sentences, they aimed to put the study of language and, especially for Voloshinov, signs, firmly in the lived world, in concrete space and time. However, locating signs-in-use also called for a recognition of the complex temporalities of semiosis. Utterances do not achieve their sense and function in a moment. Their relevance, production, interpretation, and use all require attention to temporal trajectories—to the histories that lead to an utterance, the unfolding events of its use, the imagined projections of its future, and ultimately the way it is in fact understood, taken up, replayed and reused in near and perhaps more distant futures.

Writing Studies, which focused attention early (Emig, 1971) on the acts of composing that lead to a text, has argued for the need to see written utterances (the situated moment-to-moment production of texts) as historical acts exactly on a par with spoken utterances (the situated moment-to-moment production of talk). Collapsing years of written production across diverse events into a moment of publication (if such a moment ever arrives and for many, perhaps most, texts, it does not) is a high price to pay for “proving” that utterances are real units of communication<sup>3</sup>.

However, the problem of the text, specifically of what I will call *composed utterances* (for reasons that should become clear shortly), remains. If online production of written utterances is equated to online production of spoken utterances, how do we understand texts that emerge out of long histories of production, texts that are composed and often lengthy? Such utterances not only have a history, as even a simple “Hey, Sally, what’s up?” must have history; they have a history of focused composition. Composed utterances (and genres) call on us to analyze the chains of utterances that are woven together in a teleological project; the various ways that the composed document/performance overtly or covertly indexes its specific history of composition; and the ways that production, reception, and use take that history into account.

Interestingly, the problem of the composed utterance is not limited to written texts; it also applies to talk—to formally composed speech, repetition of memorized text, and even events that are worked out orally in advance. Judith Irvine’s (1996) analysis of insult poetry at Wolof wedding ceremonies makes this point clear as she examines how the insults are co-composed prior to the event by sponsors, others in the community and a *griot* (a low-ranking female bard); how the *griot* delivers and leads the insults during the event; and how what Irvine calls *shadow conversations* (those conversations that are not here-and-now but

are felt here-and-now) are critical to the production, uptake, and interpretation of the insults. Likewise, to understand an utterance by an actor on a stage or in a film—the way the utterance is delivered, the way the audience interprets it, the way it is re-used and re-presented—it is critical to understand the shadow conversations, writings, and texts that are at play. Kevin Roozen's (Prior, Hengst, Roozen, & Shipka, 2006) analysis of semiotic remediations in the historical trajectory of an amateur comedy skit offers us a detailed glimpse into the complexity of such composed performances, particularly the way compositional events can bring together multiple people who co-compose the text/performance in interaction. Such composed performances index not simply some authorial vision, but also the social identities and discourses represented; the interpretive work of the actor who is animating her lines; and the influence of the director, stage crew, and others who have shaped the contexts of the performed utterances<sup>4</sup>. Political speeches, film and stage drama, religious ceremonies, sales pitches, language drills, sermons—once we begin to look, a lot of talk fits into the category of composed utterance, sometimes with texts woven into the history (as in Roozen's comedy skits) but sometimes (as in Wolof insult poetry) without it.

*Composed signs* (whether material artifacts, enacted performances, or both) are not unique in having a history, but are special in the ways that histories are aligned and are sedimented into and impinge on the present. The presence of a history of composing activity bumps up against another problem: the need to recognize writing not only as activity, but also as activity that can happen face-to-face. If we conceptualize genres as involving production, reception, distribution, and representation, then it is important to *not* see these as separate stages, but as co-present dimensions of discourse with multiple and changing configurations over time.

#### **ANIMATING WRITTEN UTTERANCES: LITERATE ACTIVITY AS CO-PRESENT PRODUCTION**

Even in some of the richest theoretical and empirical work, there remains a tendency to freeze writing (as though it entered the world from some other realm), to see writing as a noun rather than a verb, to specifically not study writing as activity. For example, in what is otherwise a sophisticated account of dialogic theory and method, Linell (1998) devotes almost no space to the question of writing. When he does turn to writing, he touches briefly on the notion of writing as activity but clearly fills in the blanks with cultural assumptions rather than the kind of close research attention he offers talk:

Written texts, being permanent records, encourage the view that the meanings of texts “are there” “in the texts themselves.” But mean-

ings are of course assignments and accomplishments by human beings, writers and readers. The production of meaning takes place in interactions, on the one hand in the writer's struggle with thoughts and words in conceiving and formulating the text and in her interplay with the text so-far produced, and, on the other hand, in the reader's efforts in assigning meaning to the text and in using the text as a vehicle, as a means for activating semantic potentials of words and text chunks, in the service of creating an understanding which somehow fits the contexts given and purposes which are relevant for him. (p. 268)

Linell usefully does invite us to consider text as a human product, to see writing and reading as acts, and also notes the role of in-progress text; however, he imagines a culturally prototypical scene of writing (see Prior, 1998, for analysis of such scenes) rather than studying actual scenes of writing. In Linell's scene, the writer is always alone, the text is always permanent, the reader is always somewhere else, making meaning on her own.

Scollon and Scollon (2003) also display this blind spot in current theorizing of discourse. Their approach to mediated discourse and what they call *geosemiotics* offers a theoretically rich and empirically rigorous examination of semiotic practices in material worlds. They pay close attention to ways that texts are handled, to the complex textures of texts, even to esoteric issues like text vectors. Critically, however, writing does not appear as activity on their expansive map. Consider the following quote:

. . . there are three ways in which language can be located in the material world, the interaction order (including speech, movement, gesture), visual semiotics (including text and images), and place semiotics (all of the other non-linguistic symbols that directly or indirectly represent language). Geosemiotics analyzes the semiotic systems among which we take action in the world. (p. 13)

The point I want to draw attention to here is that the interaction order is glossed as "speech, movement, gesture" but not as writing. Writing (or at least its products) only appears in the next item, visual semiotics. It is true that this glossing of the interaction order is not presented as complete, yet writing as action does not appear later. Farther down in the paragraph, Scollon and Scollon indicate that their interest is in bringing together studies of the interaction order (talk, movement and gesture) and textual analysis (study of the structures of text).

Writing must be done in particular times and places and it can be done in face-to-face social interactions. Writing as a face-to-face activity has begun to

emerge in studies that look at people working around whiteboards and screens (see, e.g., Hall, Stevens, & Torralba, 2002; Heath & Luff, 2000; Prior, 2007) and in situated studies of writing processes across varied settings (see, e.g., Bazerman, 1999; Beaufort, 1999; Iedema, 2003; Kamberelis, 2001; Prior, 1994, 1998; Prior & Shipka, 2003). At first, examples of face-to-face writing and reading may seem esoteric, until we recognize that group invention/response and writing on boards in schools and workplaces routinely involve co-present writing and reading. Board texts, intentional texts (e.g., notes, outlines), written responses, and drafts are also typically temporary (not the permanent records Linell invoked), as are many other texts written on scraps of paper; on steamed or frosted windows; in the dirt, sand, or snow; and so on. It is also worth noting that many early literacy experiences involve face-to-face reading and writing, something we should expect from a Vygotskian perspective where practices move from the social to the (relatively) individual.

#### **VOLOSHINOV AND VYGOTSKY: THE CURRENTS OF INNER AND OUTER SEMIOTICS AS MULTIMODALITY**

That writing is a process also means that writing is a stream within the broader flows of semiotic activity. Once we see genres as produced in processes that have histories, then we find that multimodality arises not only when a particular text/performance is realized materially in multiple media, but also when we consider the multimodal chaining that marks historical processes. More fundamentally, every text, every utterance, is multimodal as it must involve a mix of inner and outer semiotics.

Bakhtin (1981, 1986) does reach into inner semiotics when he defines utterance, but only in the arenas of planning (by the speaker or writer) and reception (the inner responses of people). It is important to recall that, for Bakhtin and Voloshinov, the utterance is not defined by what is produced only, but also by its reception. Bakhtin (1986) writes: "Still current in linguistics are such fictions as the 'listener' and 'understander' (partners of the 'speaker'), the 'unified speech flow,' and so on. These fictions produce a completely distorted idea of the complex and multifaceted processes of active speech communication" (p. 68). Voloshinov (1973) articulated this point as well:

. . . there is no reason for saying that meaning belongs to a word as such. In essence, meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is, meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding. Meaning does not reside in the word or in the soul of the speaker or in the soul of the listener. Meaning is the effect of interaction between speaker and listener.



. . . It is like an electric spark that occurs only when two different terminals are hooked together. (pp. 102-103)

Voloshinov (1976) argued that “*any locution actually said aloud or written down for intelligible communication* (i.e., anything but words merely reposing in a dictionary) *is the expression and product of the social interaction of three participants: the speaker* (author), *the listener* (reader), and *the topic* (the who or what) *of the speech* (the hero)” (p. 105; italics in original). If we took a Bible passage as an example, in one case it might be read reverently as part of a religious ritual, whereas in another case it might be read critically by an archeologist searching for clues for a dig. Such uptakes structure different situated utterances, not one utterance with two interpretations<sup>5</sup>.

Voloshinov (1973), as noted above, articulates a much more robust and central notion of inner speech, inner genre, and inner semiotics. Complementing Bakhtin/Medvedev’s notion (1978) that we possess inner genres to perceive and understand reality, Voloshinov (1973) suggests how ideological content, especially in the form of social evaluations, can be found even in inner feelings and emotions:

. . . not even the simplest, dimmest apprehension of a feeling, say, the feeling of hunger not outwardly expressed—can dispense with some kind of ideological form. Any apprehension, after all, must have inner speech, inner intonation and the rudiments of inner style: one can apprehend one’s hunger apologetically, irritably, angrily, indignantly, etc. (p. 87)

Vygotsky (1987) also saw the transitions between inner and external speech as complex:

External speech is not inner speech plus sound any more than inner speech is external speech minus sound. The transition from inner to external speech is complex and dynamic. . . . (p. 280)

Prior and Shipka (2003; see also Prior, Hengst, Roozen, & Shipka, 2006) argue that Vygotsky’s fundamental theory of human development and consciousness was very attuned to the semiotic transformations that link the inner semiotics of thought, perception, motivation and feeling to the outer semiotics of action (talk, writing, drawing, object production and manipulation, movement, stance).

When I presented an earlier version of this argument at the SIGET 4 con-

ference in Turabão, Brazil on the morning of August 17, 2007, I wanted to illustrate some of the relations between inner and outer semiotics in the sea of signs. The utterance I chose that day as an illustration was: “*The camera is on the floor.*” As a reader who knows English, you can make some meaning of this linear packaging of six words, but the meaning structure is skeletal and how you fill in the blanks is critical. Different readers might imagine different kinds of cameras (video or photographic, digital or film, different historical designs) placed in particular ways (lying, sitting upright, on a tripod, neatly or haphazardly) on different kinds of floors (concrete, wooden, carpeted; in a classroom or a home closet). Or perhaps, no particular camera-in-the-world is imagined and only the barest meaning is registered. As Voloshinov (1976) wrote:

The concrete utterance is born, lives, and dies in the process of social interaction between the participants of the utterance. Its form and meaning are determined basically by the form and character of this interaction. When we cut the utterance off from the real grounds that nurture it, we lose the key to its form as well as its import—all we have left is an abstract linguistic shell or an equally abstract semantic scheme. . . . (p. 105)

When I said *the camera is on the floor*, I was standing behind a table and podium on a raised platform in a large hemispherical auditorium talking to an audience of a few hundred people, mainly sitting in chairs lined up on the floor but some standing around the outer edges of the room. A large video camera on a tall tripod on the concrete floor below the platform was focused on the upper half of my body and its images were being projected on two large screens on the walls to the left and right of the platform. The externalized utterance was heard in English and (by simultaneous translation through headsets) in Portuguese. I noted in my talk that I used the definite article “the” although I had not yet mentioned a camera, because my utterance was accompanied by a pointing gesture and the camera was, I assumed, visible to the audience. Hence, the utterance was already multimodal (language accompanied by gesture and oriented to the perceptible visual-material space of the room and the audience). I noted that when we saw the camera on the floor our inner semiotics did not experience first the camera, then the floor, and only those two objects (as the linear sentence presents it)<sup>6</sup>. I also noted the importance of evaluation to inner semiotics. A foundation of Voloshinov’s and Bakhtin’s account of the utterance, *evaluation* points to the affective, motivated, socially indexed dimensions of the utterance as well as to stance/evaluation. For me, the camera on the floor occasioned a particular self-awareness and some discomfort as it was projecting a

large (not necessarily flattering) image of my face on the screens left and right, an inner sense that I assumed might be understood but not felt by members of the audience. *The camera is on the floor* illustrated the gaps that exist between inner and outer semiotics, one of the reasons why as speakers and writers we so often experience a sense of loss when our words fail to capture the inner webs of meaning and feeling that we had meant them to convey.

*The camera is on the floor* also makes it plain that multimodality is a routine dimension of language in use, as utterances can only happen in embodied, material, multisensory, multi-semiotic worlds. Bakhtin (1981) did argue that utterances are fundamentally situated in time and space, fundamentally *chronotopic* (set in and indexing both representational and material-perceptible worlds). An understanding of genres as inner and outer, as semiotically remediated, and as central to socialization (the co-production of the person and the social) flows from Voloshinov's boundless inner sea of signs fed by the ideological streams of cultural-historical practice. In this light, multimodality is not some special feature of texts or certain kinds of utterance, and certainly is not a consequence of technologies (cf. Kress, 2003). Multimodality has always and everywhere been present as representations are propagated across multiple media<sup>7</sup> and as any situated event is indexically fed by all the modes present, whether they are focalized or backgrounded. In this sense, all genres are irremediably multimodal; the question then becomes what particular configurations of multimodality are at work in a particular genre system.

### **COMPOSED UTTERANCES AND SEMIOTIC ARTIFACTS: A MULTIMODAL ETHICS OF ANSWERABILITY**

Composed utterances highlight the tension that emerges between historical flows and semiotic artifacts. Whereas all utterances have a history, the composed utterance has a history where a sequence of interactions and possibly a series of externalized inscriptions have been organized around the project of a final text/performance. Through composition, different moments of history, different persons, different voices, different addresses may become embedded in the composed utterance. The utterance may come to be crafted and polished through revision and response rounds. In my own research, I traced in one study (Prior, 1998), for example, how written and oral responses got embedded in composed utterances (seminar papers, conference papers, PhD exams, dissertation prospectuses) that emerged around a sociology seminar linked to funded research project, and in another study (Prior, 2007) how an art and design group engaged in talk, drawings (on paper and whiteboards; often with written annotation), gesture, computer programming, and data entry over eleven months to revise (and remediate) another type of composed semiotic artifact (an interactive, on-

line art project). These long histories of intense collaboration were organized around the finalization of a semiotic artifact that could be shared with wider publics.

Bakhtin (1986) may have equated situated talk with published texts because these externalizations are presented as final, and hence might be supposed to have kinds of consequentiality, responsibility and affordance for uptake that differ from those of in-progress texts<sup>8</sup>. Attending to such factors, from practical as well as ethical perspectives, is important. However, consequentiality, responsibility and affordance for uptake are routine dimensions of discourse. Indeed, in his earliest ethical discussions of action and answerability, Bakhtin (1993) argued that it was the ongoing flow of deeds—not certain special deeds—that carry ethical dimensions. What degrees of responsibility, levels of care and attention, and scopes of consequence a multimodal text entails must be a question of a complexly situated ethical and political geometry, not a categorical question, not a question of whether a text is in-progress or final, or even for that matter externalized or interiorized.

## CONCLUSION: MEDIATED MULTIMODAL GENRE SYSTEMS

Voloshinov and later Bakhtin articulated an expansive view of genres as concrete, historical phenomena. Their historical orientation is key not only to a dialogic, non-structuralist understanding of language (and more broadly signs), but also to the integration of semiotic mediation with a sociohistoric account of the formation of individuals and society. A dual orientation to genre as discourse and development has led North American versions of genre theory in particular to explore relations between genre theory and sociocultural theories of mediated activity and agency (e.g., in the work of Vygotsky, Engeström, Wertsch, Latour)<sup>9</sup>. Here I propose the notion of *mediated multimodal genre systems* as a framework for genre studies (see also Molle & Prior, 2008). This notion asks us to look for multimodality not only *in* specific texts, but also

- in the productive chains of discourse that make up the whole system (e.g., where a sequence of oral and embodied genres of discussion, inquiry, composing, response, and presentation may mix with written and visual inscribed genres—or, more to the point, where a set of differently configured multimedia genres are linked together in locally situated ways),
- in their use (e.g., a text may be written to be read; a speech may be transcribed), and
- in the consciousness (the situated inner semiotics) of people as well as in externalized artifacts and actions.

It argues for a semiotic perspective on genre systems, considering such systems as fundamentally constituted in the varied activities and artifacts involved in trajectories of mediated activity—that is, not only in the whole ensemble of discourse production, representation, distribution, and reception, but also in the activity and socialization that flow along with and form that ensemble<sup>10</sup>.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Of course, to make such a comparison, it is first important to distinguish the work of Voloshinov from that of Bakhtin. Morson and Emerson's (1990) astute analysis of the authorship disputes around Voloshinov's texts comes down clearly for the distinct authorship of Voloshinov, in part (as is outlined in this chapter) because differences in the theories themselves suggest distinct authorship. Bazerman (2004b) has articulated the particularly strong resonances between Voloshinov's and Vygotsky's theories, which reflect Voloshinov's close attention to psychological, sociological, and linguistic theories.

<sup>2</sup> To understand the historical development of these theories, it is important to return to the original Russian dates of publication. Voloshinov began to articulate the notion of utterances and their typifications in a 1926 essay and in his 1927 monograph on Freudianism (both translated and published in English in 1976) and then most fully in his 1929 book (translated and published in English in 1973). Bakhtin takes up utterances in his essay, *Discourse in the Novel*, written in 1934-35, published in Russian in 1975 and in English in 1981 and then most fully in the essay "The problem of speech genres," written in 1952-53 published in Russian in 1979 and in English in 1986.

<sup>3</sup> Bakhtin may well have had other motivations for the equation of spoken utterances with works (written texts), particularly for example in light of his earlier work on the ethical grounds of action (see Bakhtin, 1993), a point I return to later in this chapter.

<sup>4</sup> Prior (1998) and Prior and Shipka (2003) consider this kind of heterogeneity and hybridity, not only in signs but also and especially in historical trajectories of representation and action, through the notion of *chronotopic lamination*.

<sup>5</sup> Bakhtin (1986) writes: "Two or more sentences can be absolutely identical (when they are superimposed on one another, like two geometrical figures, they coincide); moreover, we must allow that any sentence, even a complex one. . . can be repeated an unlimited number of times in completely identical form. But as an utterance (or part of an utterance) no one sentence, even if it has only one word, can ever be repeated: it is always a new utterance (even if it is a quotation)." (p. 69).

<sup>6</sup> Here I was alluding to Vygotsky's (1987) reflections on the transformations

that occur between thought and externalized speech:

Thought does not consist of individual words like speech. I may want to express the thought that I saw a barefoot boy in a blue shirt running down the street today. I do not, however, see separately the boy, the shirt, the fact that the shirt was blue, the fact that the boy ran, the fact that the boy was without shoes. I see all this together in a unified act of thought. In speech, however, the thought is partitioned into separate words. . . . What is contained simultaneously in thought unfolds sequentially in speech. Thought can be compared to a hovering cloud which gushes a shower of words. (p. 281)

Jody Shipka and I reflected on this example of inner and outer semiotics, noting:

Beyond the shift from a holistic and multi-sensory semiotic to a linear-verbal semiotic, there is also the question of the observer's feelings about the scene, questions of tone and evaluative orientation. Is the barefoot boy celebrating with abandon a beautiful summer day, evoking perhaps a complex mix of joy and nostalgia? Or is the barefoot boy a starving and ragged child running from soldiers and explosions, producing quite different emotions and motives for action? In any case, squeezed into an externalizable form something is lost, not only the holistic world of inner representation, but also a world that is embodied, affect rich, and deeply dialogic. At the same time, the externalized form adds to and amplifies certain meanings, producing resonances not intended or felt by the writer. (Prior & Shipka, 2003, p. 215)

<sup>7</sup> Hutchins (1995) describes distributed cognition in terms of "the propagation of representational state across representational media" (p. 118), where one of these media is the brain. His work begins to suggest how the boundaries of inner and outer might be neither negated nor equated, but blurred and softened.

<sup>8</sup> I wish to acknowledge and thank Charles Bazerman for raising this interesting issue in response to my SIGET paper. His questions led me productively back to Bakhtin's earlier work on ethics and answerability.

<sup>9</sup> We might also begin to examine more seriously the consequences of seeing activity and genre systems as assemblages or actor-network rhizomes (Latour, 2005), as mycorrhizae formations (Engeström, 2006), or as flow architectures (Knorr-Cetina, 2005).

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