ESSENTIALS OF DIALOGISM

Aspects and elements of a dialogical approach to language,
communication and cognition

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1. Introduction: Dialogue, dialogism, dialogicality.

The purpose of this text[1] is to summarise in a concise manner some aspects and elements of a 'dialogical' or 'dialogist' approach to language, communication and cognition. It should be seen as a relatively brief overview of a number of 'dialogical' themes. However, the text cannot explain any of these themes in depth. For that, the reader should go on to consult references made in the text.

The term 'dialogism' can be used in many ways. Some scholars use in a rather narrow sense, e.g. referring to the philosophy of human relations in the work of, among others, Martin Buber or Mikhail Bakhtin (cf. Holquist, 1990). I shall join other scholars in using 'dialogism' in a much more comprehensive and inclusive way, referring to many mutually related (or sometimes not so very much related) approaches to language, communication and cognition. What these have (more or less) in common is their opposition to another paradigm, nearly as comprehensive, which I will call 'monologism'. This means, however, that 'dialogism' is not one coherent school, or theory, not even something that 'dialogists' of different persuasions would agree upon.

It follows from this introduction that it would be a misguided and gratuitous endeavour to try and classify thinkers into groups of more or less 'dialogical' scholars, let alone into those who are 'dialogical' and those who are not. What we are faced with are a number of 'dialogical' ideas which people mentioned below endorse to varying extents, sometimes very much, in some cases to quite a limited extent, if at all. Nevertheless, I shall treat dialogism as a fairly coherent theoretical framework, because arguably, the ideas do exhibit some mutual family resemblances, or they may be organised in terms of a connected network. Only towards the end, in sections 13 and 14, shall I dwell upon some of the internal controversies, dilemmas and challenges.

Words like 'dialogue' and 'dialogical' are frequently used about both 'dialogism' and 'dialogicality', often in a confusing manner. (In addition, as we will see, they are sometimes used in other senses too.) *Dialogism* is an epistemological framework; it concerns the most general ('metaphysical') categories in terms of which dialogically (or with a more pedantic term: 'dialogistically') minded researchers think about human action, cognition and communication. In other words, such an 'epistemology' is, roughly, a general (meta-)theoretical framework for how we – at

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[1] This text is based on lectures given at Växjö University, October 2000, and at Copenhagen University, March 2003. This draft was completed 2004-05-18.

different levels: as ordinary human beings and as researchers – acquire knowledge about the world and ascribe meaning to the world.

The term *dialogicality* (sometimes given in the form of 'dialogicity'), on the other hand, refers to some essences of the human condition, notably that our being in the world is thoroughly interdependent with the existence of others. Dialogicality is a property of the subject matter of the human and cultural sciences, and dialogism is an epistemological framework that takes dialogicality systematically into consideration. The two are therefore closely related. I hope to tease out some of the interpenetrations in the following. So I hope the reader will have some patience.

2. Dialogism and the 'dialogical principles'.

'Dialogism' may be taken as a name for a bundle, or combination, of *theoretical and epistemological assumptions about human action, communication and cognition.* These assumptions are aimed at describing and explaining human action and language use in real mundane life. (Hence, 'dialogism' should not be assigned any metaphysical or idealistic features.) There are, however, different opinions about exactly which these assumptions should be. As a first approximation, I would go for the following abstract points (§ 2.1-4, but see also further on).

2.1. *Interactionism*: Communication and cognition always involve interaction with others (other persons, other systems, other dimensions of one´s self, others through texts and other artifacts with 'inscriptions'), etc.[2] Such interactions involve interdependencies that cannot be reduced to outer cause-effect relations. The basic constituents of discourse are interactions (exchanges, inter-acts), rather than speech acts or utterances by autonomous speakers (authors, communicators). Also the single utterance by one utterer is interactive in nature. (Cf. § 5 below, on the role of the other, and the co-authorship of situated meaning.).

Note also that interaction takes place, at least in a somewhat stretched sense, in such a seemingly solitary activity as reading too; the reader interacts with the printed

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[2] A difference between communication and cognition is that the former, by definition, involves interaction, especially interpersonal interaction. However, cognition, roughly to be defined as intelligent (non-random) coping with the world (in perception, thinking, acting and preparing to act etc.), *also* involves interaction with the world, albeit not always (i.e. not in each and every moment) with other human beings. Thus, it turns out that the concepts of communication and cognition are dialogically intertwined. They are aspects of partly the same phenomena, rather than referentially distinct phenomena (Linell, 1998: 36; § 8 below).

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text (and perhaps with images), with elements, parts and wholes of texts. The meanings of a text result from the author´s construction and the reader´s reconstruction. The latter is not just a re-construction of the author´s meaning; the reader relates and reacts to the text, develops an active responsive understanding. Reflected considerations (interactions) give rise to deeper understandings. Reading a particular text involves relating it to previous knowledge and to other texts read before ('intertextual reading'). The 'interaction' with a cognitive artefact, such as a printed text or a computer interface, is therefore a 'dialogical' activity.

2.2. *Contextualism*: Situated discourse is interdependent with contexts. One cannot make sense of a piece of discourse outside of its relevant contexts, and, at the same time, these contexts would not be what they are in the absence of the (particular) discourse that takes place within them.

Contexts include co-texts (that is, the surrounding texts, in particular those which have already been attended to; these include non-verbal aspects too), situations[3], (knowledge of) activity types, interlocutors´ interactional biographies and cultural knowledge (the latter including language, encyclopedia, discourses in a Foucaultian sense).

There is no such thing as a message without a context. While we seem to be able – under the right circumstances – to understand a decontextualised sign (e.g. a sentence presented without context), it turns out that this sign is after all not completely decontextualised; it has its 'circumstances'. For example, we can understand what a sentence occurring in a grammar book, say "Peter loves Mary" might mean in abstracto (when it is decontextualised from mormal communicative contexts and is present only in its purely 'linguistic' meaning), without knowing who Peter and Mary are, in what respects he "loves" her, or why the sentence should be uttered at all. But then this act of understanding is still embedded within some relevant communicative activity context, e.g. that of learning something about grammar, or something similar.[4]

2.3. *Communicative constructionism*: The meaning of discourse and texts is (partly) accomplished in and through the active and formative sense-making of the linguistic, cognitive and communicative processes themselves (*dialogos* 'in and through words');

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[3] For the meaning of "situation", see § 2.5 below.
[4] Hence the notion of situated (i.e. contextualised) decontextualisation (Linell, 1998: 280).

communication is not a transfer of ready-made thoughts, nor does cognition simply copy, reproduce or reflect a pre-given extra-discursive reality. 'Every authentic function of the human spirit […] embodies an original, formative power' (Cassirer, 1953: 78, quoted by Lähteenmäki, 2002: 130). On the sociohistorical plane (§ 2.5), knowledge is largely communicatively constructed in and through its sociohistorical genesis. This also applies to routines and (meta-)knowledge of language and communication (communicative activity types, communicative genres, etc.).

Communicative construction presupposes interaction with others. It does not just refer to the individual´s active construction of the environment (the latter would be individual constructionism, cf. § 4.1).

The present point, communicative constructionism, goes against a long (monologistic) tradition in Western philosophy of language and communication, according to which words and languages do not contribute anything essential to meaning and communication; they are, according to the latter view, just labels for things or thoughts that exist as such before they are brought into language. An early and quite explicit proponent of this view was St. Augustine (Peters, 1999: 67ff.). For him, a word is just a sign that points to external or internal realities.

Note, however, that dialogism, as I approach it, while emphasising the linguistic, communicative and cognitive construction involved in the dialogical appropriation and recognition of the world, does not deny the reality of things (the body, nature, space, social constraints, etc.). We are dealing with a dialogical construction of a real, natural world that exists independently of the construction. Meaning is both cognitive and socio-historical, it is dialogically constituted, made in dialogue (cognition and communication), but this takes place with reference to the world and against the background of the world, which is in some sense already there. So, if the world is necessarily *dialogically appropriated* and *dialogically recognised*, this is not incompatible with some kind of realism. Hence, relationism – that we are bound to perspectivise the world, apprehend it and respond to it in particular and different ways, depending on e.g. cultural traditions, languages, situated commitments and concerns etc. – does not imply relativism across the board[5]. As Steiner (1978: 44)

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[5] Reality is always more or less constructed in and through language, and different languages, whether by 'languages' we mean natural languages or languages for specific purposes, such as theoretical paradigms in science. Thus, we endorse at least a mild form of linguistic relativism. But this is far from being 'relativism' *tout court,* a relativism that, for example, erases the distinction between fiction and non-fiction, or between discourse and extra-discursive phenomena. We would also denounce – as a

observes, laying out what he takes to be Heidegger´s position, perceptions and cognitions vary 'according to individual vision, social points of view, angles of interest and historical convention', but this is not to deny that the world is 'there' to be appropriated and understood, a 'thereness' which 'wholly antecede[s] any particular or general act of cognition'. On the other hand, human beings can of course also construct, in and through language and communication, 'out-there-ness' (Potter, 1996), making things appear as if they were real (when they really aren´t), but this is different from appropriating what is already real (thereby giving form to, i.e. constructing in a less radical sense).

It follows from the considerations just put forward that a human being must be viewed as biologically determined, socioculturally interdependent and equipped with an individual consciousness (responsibility and conscience). For example, it would be cynical to look at handicaps as only 'socially constructed' and to disregard physiological, perceptual and cognitive disabilities as really limiting conditions. It is an unethical stance to look upon the human being as only biologically determined or as only socioculturally interdependent (Rommetveit, 2003: 205, Hagtvet & Wold, 2003: 186).

2.3.1. *A note on 'rampant situationalism'*. I argue in § 2.3 that dialogism must comprise assumptions about both sociocultural and situated construction and that it is compatible with some form of ontological realism. Therefore, it is quite different from the kind of radical interactionism – what Goffman (1983: 4) called 'rampant situationalism' – which would claim, in its vulgarised form, that there is no meaning and knowledge except in the occasioned, situated interactions themselves[6]. Others would talk about the world as if it was just 'social constructs'[7]. This, we would argue, amounts to loose and sloppy thinking, a kind of acontextual constructionism that is alien to dialogism (Linell, 1996; Danziger, 1997). Even if radical interactionists or 'rampant situationalists' would not deny the existence of language, the mind, sociocultural institutions, social knowledge, identities and memories, they have nothing to say about them, unless they are manifestly oriented to in specific situated

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general epistemology or moral philosophy – the position (Laclau & Mouffe, 1986) that although the 'world out there' cannot be denied, we ought to ignore it in science. See also below.

[6] It must be admitted that the vulgarised forms are often formulated by the opponents of relativism and then attributed to their enemies (i.e. the 'relativists').

[7] Gergen (1994) and even Potter (1996) come rather close to this position.

interactions (e.g. talk or texts). One may say that they have no theory of language, no theory of the mind, and no theory of socio-culture and society. Dialogism, as conceived here, would insist that the phenomena just mentioned are indeed communicatively constructed, but construction transcends occasions and belong to socio-cultural practices and traditions. In addition, theories are the products of analysts´ constructions, even if the data are based on 'actors´' or 'members´' meaning-making.[8]

2.4. *Semiotic mediation:* Most accounts of dialogism would require that dialogue involve the use of language or some other semiotic system. That is, the interactional and contextual construction of meaning builds on the use of signs (words and symbols), on semiotic mediation (Wertsch, 1997). This links up with the etymology of *dialogos* as "in and through words"[9]. Semiotic systems, such as natural language, may be understood as some kind of abstract third party in the dialogue, to which primary parties must relate (§ 4.5). However, not only language in talk and writing, and other symbols (images, sign language), can qualify as such "third parties". For example, social knowledge ("social representations"; Moscovici, 2000; Marková, 2003a) of something (e.g. madness; Jodelet, 1986), especially if understood in dynamic (i.e. dialogical, § 6) terms (Linell, 2001), can build upon routinised ways of thinking and acting that are not necessarily (fully) couched in discourse. Accordingly, there might be some differences of opinion as to where dialogue ends. (This applies to "discourse" too, for that matter.)

To summarise, interaction, contexts and communicative construction through signs (including, first and foremost, language) are key-words of dialogism. Contexts include both situations (with their situated interactions) and sociohistorical praxis. This, in turn, can be formulated as a fourth or fifth point:

2.5. *Double dialogicality* refers to, in the terms of Nystrand (1992), the combination of interactionism and social (i.e. sociohiostorical) constructionism. In and through communicative and cognitive activities, there is dialogue within both situations and

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[8] This is argued more extensively in Linell (2004: ch. 8).

[9] In a sense, the two phenomena of interindividual interaction and semiotic construction (sense-making via words and symbols) relate to two etymologies of the word *dialogos*. One is the false one, "interaction between two (or more) parties", the other is the correct one of "in and through words", related to *dialegesthai* "speak through words" and *logos* "discourse, reason, word(s)".

traditions, i.e. participants deal with both situated interaction and sociocultural praxis (situation-transcending practices). The terms "situated" and "situation" mean that reference is made to specific occasions or encounters, specified in terms of particular times and places and specific participants (speakers, recipients). Sociocultural practices are sustained by social life, whether everyday or not so literally everyday, and sociohistorically maintained over more or less *longues durées*.[10] Dialogue concerns both "the freedoms and constraints governing the social interactions through which human beings create the world in which they live and, conversely, the processes through which the historical worlds thus created in turn create the human beings born into them" (Luckmann, 1992: 4).

The notion of dialogicality at the two levels is perhaps most familiar in the analysis of the arts, literature and scholarly texts, in which we can talk about dialogical relations within a given text or piece of art or music, but also about dialogue between generations of texts and authors (artists, composers, etc.) (intertextuality in terms of quotes, allusions, commentaries of other texts, authors, composers) (cf. § 8.9). But here I am interested in double dialogicality in a partly different manner, as a distinction applicable to all kinds of communication and cognition. Dialogue takes place not only in interpersonal dialogue (situated interaction) but also at the level of *praxis*, i.e. in sociocultural practices, communities, institutions, etc. which transcend situations. Such practices involve the use, development, circulation and modification of linguistic resources (e.g. words, grammatical constructions, discourse-structuring devices), interactional routines, ways of thinking, talking and acting, social representations (Marková, 2003a; Linell, 2001) etc. Sociocultural practices and institutional routines have a *longue durée* (Giddens, 1984: 35). In accordance with this distinction between the "dialogue of the situation" and the "dialogue of the tradition", Malinowski (1972) talked about contexts of situation and culture. In Bühler´s (1934) partly different terms, signs are defined both in a *Zeigfeld* (situated, referential field) and a *Symbolfeld* (network of linguistic meanings)[11].

Both situated interactions and situation-transcending practices are dynamic, never static or frozen, although the latter are often relatively stable and thus changing

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[10] Using a time-honoured philosophical jargon, one could say that situated construction emphasises haecceity at the expense of quiddity, or, in other words, situatedness at the expense of essence.

[11] Note Bühler´s contextual, i.e. gestalt-psychological, term "field".

more slowly. Both are evolving and emergent phenomena in the process of becoming, rather than ready-made products or systems in particular states (§ 6, § 7).

At both planes of situated interaction and sociocultural praxis, interaction with others (and their communicative products) is pertinent and incessant. (I will say more about individuals and the role of the other in § 4.) First, we can talk about (asymmetrically distributed) *co-authorship of situated meaning* in situations; all parties to an interaction contribute in some way or another, but typically to different extents (asymmetrically), to sense-making. For example, in the local communicative project of asking a question and getting it answered, the asker and the answerer makes quite different contributions, and the asker has the instigating role. Linell (1998) discusses such communicative projects in terms of the co-construction of meaning and discourse, and the *asymmetrically distribution of communicative labour*.

Secondly, on the sociohistorical plane, we have the (socially distributed) *shareholding in a common language (or culture)* (or in several partly common languages and cultures). The latter concerns sedimentations of aspects of co-authorships in participants´ biographies; as members of cultural communities, in the sociohistorically sustained continuity of praxis, we partially share meanings, and we inherit and reinvest in them (Rommetveit, 2003).

Dialogically conceived theories of cognition and communication may differ with regard to the relative importance they assign to situated interaction and socio-cultural (situation-transcending) practices, respectively. For example, one may argue that Conversation Analysis (CA) focuses more or less exclusively on interactive processes in situ (e.g. Schegloff, 1991), whereas theories as different as Cassirer´s (1953) theory of symbolic forms (which is clearly neo-kantian) and Foucault´s theory of discourse are mostly concerned with socio-historical traditions. I argue that dialogism must integrate both perspectives (hence, "double dialogicality"). One field where this can be done (and is being done) is the theory of communicative activity types, and the attempts at combining theories of interactional order with theories of institutional order (cf. Sarangi & Roberts, 1999).

2.6. *Talk-in-interaction as metaphor and metonymy.* The four or five principles above (§ 2.1-5) may be dubbed fundamental "dialogical principles" (although there are

several other proposals as to what the appropriate dialogical principles are[12]). In addition, one might say that dialogism uses *talk-in-interaction* (dialogue in a concrete sense, Swedish: *samtal*) *as a model and metaphor* (or metonymy) for human communication and cognition in general[13]. That is, with suitable accommodations of the dialogue metaphor, dialogical analysis can be applied also to written texts (their production as well as consumption), Internet- and computer-mediated communication, use of artefacts (e.g. in work activities, learning situations) by both individuals and in teams, distributed cognition, individual cognition ("solitary thinking"), as well as to public discourse in society and culture on a particular issue/domain over long periods (from, say, a few days to several centuries[14]).

That dialogism is applicable to all forms of communication, including what Peters (1999) calls "dissemination" (communication to broad audiences), is important. It means that "dialogue", when conceived of as or within "dialogism" and understood as a metaphor, has an abstract meaning (cf. above, and fn. 8)[15]; it is a generalised way of theorising about language, communication and cognition.[16] Consequently, we do not adopt an externalist definition, starting out from the outer form of the communicative processes; "dialogue" is not simply equal to two-way communication between co-present interlocutors (as in Peters, 1999: 34 et passim) (i.e. a concept defined as different from, for example, the one-way communication of the mass media). Yet, the

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[12] Cf. § 4 and 8.7 below.

[13] This raises the question what "dialogue" or "conversation" means when it is used metaphorically at this level. What is crucial is arguably a number of abstract conditions (exactly which may be disputed), such as:
(a) meaning is produced in a dynamic interaction between parties to communication and in their use of contextual resources; thus, communication is situated interaction;
(b) communication is mediated through, and embodied in, language or other symbolic resources;
(c) communicative practices are socioculturally produced and reproduced;
(d) communication is not symmetrical between parties, but rather asymmetrical; it is made possible when parties complement each other ("complementarity", Linell 1998: 14).
These are conditions which are made visible in talk-in-interaction.

[14] E.g. Kroon (2001) on public debates in the media, Linell (2004: ch. 6) on the "conversation" between ideas in the history of linguistics.

[15] It is somewhat confusing that the terms "dialogue", "dialogism" and "dialogicality" are so closely related and sometimes used almost interchangeably. It would be possible to deploy them with different references: "dialogue" would then refer to actual interactions between or within individuals in situations and/or within sociocultural practices; "dialogism" refers to a general epistemological framework (cf. § 1 above), and "dialogicality" refers to "dialogical" properties (roughly pertaining to interaction and contexts) of language, discourse and cognition. However, terms like "dialogue" and "dialogical" are often deployed (e.g. in the title of this text, and elsewhere within it), when if we were more pedantic, we should have used "dialogism" and "dialogistic".

[16] One consequence of this is that "dialogue" and "dissemination", in Peters´s senses, are not as different as one might think at first glance. For example, "dissemination" can be analysed in terms of "suspension of reciprocity" (p. 53). Here, we agree with Peters.

metaphor of dialogue, which is so central to dialogism, has of course its source in precisely these more concrete forms of dialogue between human beings. But note here that if, accordingly, we use talk-in-interaction as a model and metaphor, we must *not* assign too much importance to such sociohistorically quite specific communicative genres as, e.g., argumentative ("Socratic") dialogue (argumentation) and sociable (phatic) "conversation" (polite leisurely talk), i.e. (the) two genres which have sometimes been taken to be prime examples of "dialogue". These cannot be taken as broadly valid models of human dialogue.

2.7. By way of summary, dialogism is a general epistemological framework for sociocultural (human) phenomena: semiosis, cognition, communication, discourse, consciousness, i.e. for the social, cultural and human(istic) sciences (and arts). We are concerned with meaning and mind, not with matter (the object of the natural sciences)[17]. One might say that the essence of dialogism resides in its interactionism and contextualism, and one might of course prefer to use such terms instead (especially, if one is troubled by the possible association to messianic ambitions, attributed to dialogue by some, cf. § 13.3). However, it is important that dialogism is taken to refer to all, or at least most of, the points of § 2.1-6 together.

More comprehensive perspectives on dialogism are to be found in Linell (1998) and Marková (2003a). Linell (op.cit.) deals primarily with talk-in-interaction as such, using many excerpts from authentic interactions to illustrate dialogical principles. Dialogism is often seen as a general *epistemology*, ways of appropriating (knowledge about) the world, especially the world of meaning (as opposed to matter); culture is epistemologically more complex than nature. Marková (2003a: 90ff.) however, regards dialogicality in ontological terms too; here, *ontology* is not taken in metaphysical terms, but as a theory of the mind. This becomes a theory of the meaningful world, seen

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[17] That is, dialogism deals with processes in human sense-making in and through language, in thinking, communication and action, and with the products of such processes. Cultural sciences (the humanities, social sciences) and natural sciences are therefore different on a couple of related points:

(a)   The subject matter of the cultural sciences are (to a large extent) meanings, which are dialogically constituted, whereas the natural sciences deal with objects that must be assumed to exist without human attention and intervention.

(b)   The practices of doing science is itself a sense-making – and hence dialogically constituted – activity. This means that the cultural sciences exhibit dialogicality at two levels, both at the level of subject matter (people´s meaning-making in different activities, what Schutz called "first level phenomena") and at the level of the analytic practices themselves ("second level phenomena"). The natural sciences are "dialogical" only at the analytic

as consisting of cognitions (ideas, thoughts), communicative processes and meaningful actions, all of which are anchored in both a sociocultural and a physical world (cf. § 2.3-5).

A predisposition for dialogicality, taken as the ability to indulge in dialogue, is a human (innate) property; infants starts to interact virtually from the very beginning (Trevarthen, 1992; Bråten, 1992). In addition, children are born into a communicating social environment, a meaningful world populared by others (adults) who treat it as meaningful in specific ways. Man is a semiotic animal (an *animal symbolicum* with Cassirer´s term). Dialogicality is more fundamental than, or at least as fundamental as, language. (Here, as well as on so many other points, dialogism takes a stance very different from Chomskyan linguistics and many mainstream traditions in the language sciences; Linell, 2004).

3. Monologism.

3.1. *Dialogism as a counter-theory to monologism:* "Dialogism" is defined, and must be understood, in contrast to an alternative, as a *counter-theory,* to *"monologism"* (Heen Wold, 1992). What then is monologism? The brief answer is this: the constituent theories of monologism are the information processing model of cognition, the transfer model of communication, and the code model of language (Linell, 1998: ch.2).

These constituent theories of monologism are clearly interrelated, and they go far back in history. For example, Aristotle launched a theory that the real world is structured in terms of substances and accidences. Such ideas, things and categories have linguistic names; language is a code (a theory known as "nomenclaturism"). Augustine argued that words and languages are just signs, passive vessels for the communication between individual minds that struggle to make contact; the only realities of meaning are in the things themselves or in ideas interior to individual minds (§ 2.3). The medieval modists argued that the modes in which the world exists ("modi essendi") are *reflected*, rather than creatively constructed, in categories of thought ("modi intelligendi"), which in turn are reflected in their linguistic labellings ("modi significandi"). Such ideas have been legion in virtually all traditional grammars and many schools of linguistic philosophy. In addition, many scholars, particularly within

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level. (The corollary is that dialogism will be come relevant to the natural sciences too, namely, if and when we deal with the practices of *doing* natural sciences.)

linguistics, argued or at least implicitly assumed that the categories of language are best represented in written language. Monologism is linked to a "written language bias" (Linell, 2004), and a literate, scholarly, philosophical culture ("scholasticism"; Bourdieu, 2000).

It is noticeable that there is no place for constructive processes of communication in monologism. Cognition precedes communication, and ideas ("thoughts") (and possibly "emotions") are represented and transmitted in communication. Little is changed, if language is regarded primarily as a means of communication rather than of thinking. As a case in point, one may take Haapamäki's (2002) study of over 40 traditional grammars of the Swedish language from the late 17th to late 20th century. She notices that the overwhelming majority of these grammarians regard language as a medium for representing thought. When, according to Haapamäki, interpersonal communication is indeed given priority (mainly by some late 19th century linguists and onwards), it is characteristic that for them, language in communication is still taken simply to *express* ideas and thoughts, i.e. (in modern terms:) products of cognition. Thus, we are still faced with a transfer model of communication, in which cognition is the only fundamental phenomenon, and language is a code ancillary to this. Dialogism would of course hardly deny that we communicate ideas and thoughts, but it assumes that language contributes to sense-making of what is said in the situated interpersonal interaction itself. By contrast, the traditional conception shows no recognition of the dialogical idea that meaning is, at least partly, communicatively constructed, rather than simply cognitively constructed prior to communicative processes.

3.2. *The ontology of monologism.* Monologism presupposes an ontology according to which there are only individuals; groups and societies are nothing but ensembles of individuals[18]. Individual subjects, supported by an objectivised language and culture, are the only authoritative meaning-makers. Cognitions take place in individuals, and communicative acts are done by individuals in their capacity of senders or speakers. Complex cognitions and communicative exchanges ("dialogues") can be derived from their individual cognitions and actions. There is no active role for recipients who have

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[18] One might regard objective and collectivist theories of society, e.g. Durkheim, as a deviant kind of monologism; here, it is the collective representations and social structures that act as monological sources of authority.

to understand. A conversation is a series of one-way speech acts (from speaker to listener), rather than a jointly accomplished meaning-making in concert.

Monologism is part of a major tradition in Western philosophy and science, which has tried to reduce the world to rational individual subjects, on the one hand, and verifiable objects, on the other. The only options, which are often made comptaible to each other, are subjectivism and objectivism, respectively[19]. According to dialogism, this is not all there is; in particular, there are the relationships between the individual subject and the other(s) (on intersubjectivity and alterity, see § 4), and between the individual and the world. These relations are primary, rather than merely derived; *relationism* is basic to dialogism (§ 2.3). Monologism tends to think of unilateral causality and 'independent' vs. 'dependent' variables in scientific models, dialogism insists on interdependencies between dimensions.

Despite the ontology based on individuals, monologism seeks to construct language and knowledge (of language, of the world), moral systems, etc., as independent of (single) subjects (objectivism). (There are different opinions as to whether language and knowledge are there by nature (e.g. 'wired in' in the brain) or as a result of prior human creation.) While single subjects (actors), *qua* individuals holding intentions, knowledge etc., are the sense-making organisms, these individuals are often mistaken in their actual performance; they do not always live up to the requirements of the supra-individual system (language, culture). (Hence the attitude to language "performance" as full of errors, for example in Chomsky, 1965.) Dialogism, by contrast, looks upon knowledge as necessarily constructed, circulated, negotiated, and (re)contextualised (a) in situ and in socio-cultural traditions, and (b) in dialogue with others; individuals are never completely autonomous as sense-makers. Hence, the normative, "fault-finding" perspective is tuned down, and it becomes a moot point who has the right to determine what is "faulty".

3.3. *Cognition and communication.* We saw (§ 3.1) that for monologism, cognition and communication are separate processes, cognition being prior and intrapersonal (individual), communication being entirely secondary and interpersonal; communication concerns the transfer between individuals of thoughts and ideas. The dialogical stance serves to keep together cognitive structures and processes and interactional processes; they are aspects of partly the same dialogical processes.

In monological research traditions, e.g. in cognitive psychology (especially "cognitivism") and at large within the discipline of mainstream psychology which tends to be very individualistic, cognition is taken to be an internal individual phenomenon[20]. Cognition is portrayed in terms of materialised (neurophysiologically based) structures and processes in the individual brain. In dialogism, cognition is concerned with sense-making in and of the world, *in relation to* the world and with the help of communication, language, and the use of artefacts (e.g. Wertsch, 1997). This, of course, is not to deny that cognition needs a neurophysiological substrate.

The concept of dialogue covers both "inner dialogue", in e.g. solitary thinking or individual problem-solving, and "outer dialogue", in externalised interpersonal communication (§ 8.3).

4. Dialogue and the other.

In § 2, an attempt was made to formulate some fundamentals of dialogism in the most abstract, general terms. The picture will be given some more substance in several of the sections to follow. I will start with a point, which many would take as definitional of dialogism, namely, the role of *the other*.

4.1. *Interpersonal (communicative) construction of meaning*. In the philosophy of knowledge or psychology of perception and cognition, many theories emphasise that the individual acquires knowledge in and through "interacting with", organising and "constructing" his or her environment. For example, this is true of pragmaticists like Dewey (1938) and psychologists like Piaget. But they concentrated very much on the individual´s struggle to achieve understanding (individual construction) (more so in Piaget´s later work); other individuals and sociocultural phenomena like language and institutions enter the picture only secondarily. By contrast, in dialogism, *social* constructionism (§ 2.3) is essential; the other is there from the very beginning.

Let me make a couple of additional remarks on construction and constructionism in relation to dialogism. The idea that the human subjects "constructs" or "interacts with" the environment as part of his or her cognitive activities exists in

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[19] Cf. also sociological theories of irreducible social structures (e.g.Durkheim) (cf. fn. 12).
[20] See Still & Costall (1991) for critical discussion of cognitivism.

several varieties. On the one hand, there is *individual* construction vs *social* construction; construction is done by individuals *qua* individual agents, and/or by (individuals as part of) social groups, communities and activities (the latter would stress the role of language, culture and communication more than individual constructionism). Then, there is *past* construction, which is assumed to have taken place prior to the present interaction, and *present ongoing* construction, which takes place in the situated interaction at hand (here-and-now). The combination of past and individual construction might be exemplified by individual, biographical history, as in life narratives, often researched with inspiration from Paul Ricoeur and other dialogically minded scholars. Otherwise, the second-mentioned distinction applies primarily to social construction, where it corresponds to (what is normally termed) sociocultural (sociohistorical) vs. situated (social) construction, respectively (§ 2.5). Many theories, which would call themselves "discourse theories", belong to the sociohistorical branch. They often portray "discursive formations" and "orders of discourse" (Foucault´s concepts, Fairclough, 1992: 40, 43) as fairly objectified and solidified; they have already been socioculturally constructed. They same applies to the discourse theory of Laclau & Mouffe (1986), which is less concerned with language and tends to obliterate the boundary between "discourse" and "non-discourse". By contrast, Fairclough´s (1992) "text-oriented discourse analysis" is clearly text-based. However, none of these have been very much concerned with situated construction in actual talk-in-interaction, as has CA (§ 2.5)

I believe that a full-blown dialogism would assign important functions to all four kinds of construction. At the same time, dialogists would hold that individual construction too is covertly social, since the individual human being is (almost) always implementing habits and concepts acquired in sociocultural environments. For dialogism, social and situated construction is certainly the home base of meaning-making.

4.2. *Individual agency.* Dialogism highlights the individual´s cultural embeddedness and interactional interdependencies, both sociohistorically and situationally (§ 4.1). One may ask oneself whether this amounts to denying the relevance of the individual subject. The answer is, I think, emphatically no. Individuals are still to a large extent the origins of personal initiatives, and are accountable for their actions. They are morally responsible (as has been emphasised by several major dialogists, such as

Bakhtin and Lévinas). So, what dialogism denies is the existence of the *autonomous* (i.e. socioculturally independent) subject. Rather, the subject is both socially embedded and subjected to bodily constraints, *and* is a conscious, rational individual with a will and an ability to indulge in emancipatory action.

4.3. *Intersubjectivity and alterity.* Other-orientedness (or alterity) has two sides, commonality and difference. On the one hand, there is (the strive for) *intersubjectivity*, rather than subjectivity and/or objectivity. This has been stressed by many, as different as, for example, (social) psychologists like Baldwin, Mead, and Vygotsky, or philosophers of communication like Grice. Intersubjectivity is a defining property of communication; there must always be intersubjectivity at some level; some common assumptions, norms and commitments (Clark, 1996: "common ground"). In addition, this "intersubjectivity [at some level] must be taken for granted in order [for intersubjectivity at other levels] to be achieved" (Rommetveit, 1974: 56). In other words, we must trust that there is some kind of common ground; otherwise, we cannot communicate or go on communicating.

On the other hand, there is the somewhat opposed strand of *alterity* (cf. Marková, 2003a: 103ff., 2003b): dialogical tensions and differences between people and traditions, boundaries between communities (and reaching across boundaries), knowledge, norms and expectations at variance. If you will, otherness introduces strangeness (Bakhtin: 'estrangement', Ru. *ostranenie*), in the form of oppositions, disagreements, different perspectives, evaluations and accounts[21]. It is the disruptive influences of the other which introduce tensions; the other brings in extra ('surplus') knowledge other than you had before or you had expected to encounter; she may see things from points of view that are so far strange or unfamiliar to your self, which forces you to reflect and try to understand, thereby possibly enriching your (and our) knowledge and language. Bakhtin talks about the role of the alien, foreign or strange word (Ru. *chuzhoje slovo*), the discourse of the other, as multi-functional and appearing at several levels[22]. For example, whenever I utter something, not only do I talk about something in the world, but I also consider what others have already said, or

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[21] Bakhtin also talks about the tension between centripetal vs. centrifugal forces in dialogue, creating coherence vs. divergence, respectively. These correspond roughly to intersubjectivity and alterity, as explained here.

[22] See e.g. Møller Andersen (1998).

could have said, or may be about to say (that which has not yet been said) about the things involved. 'The word is half someone else´s' (Bakhtin, 1981: 293-4).

The differences in perspectives, the asymmetries inherent in alterity relations, are important for the creativity in social life. If we want to acquire something new and productive from our participation in discourse, we must actively struggle with the other´s strange contributions. 'It is the impossibility of a total consensus that is the basis of all dialogues; indeed, the lack of consensus keeps the dialogue going.' (Marková, 2003b: 256). That fruitful communication presupposes respect for the other´s different, sometimes even alien, contributions is a key point for the dialogist philosophers Franz Rosenzweig (1921) and Emmanuel Lévinas (1961). Marková (2003a: 69) also sees W. von Humboldt as an important precursor on this point (as well as on other points of dialogism).

Let me recap this discussion of intersubjectivity vs. alterity. Communication is oriented towards shared knowledge (intersubjectivity), but there would be no point in communication if there were no differences and asymmetries of knowledge (cf. alterity). The dialogical interplay involves taking the perspective of the other (Mead, Vygotsky), but also interpreting (the other) by responding (or preparing a response) on one´s own terms: imposing one´s own meaning (according to Marková, 2003a: 103, more of Bakhtin´s position).

Dialogists vary in their tendencies to stress intersubjectivity or alterity. Those who emphasise the effort for intersubjectivity (Buber might be an example) seem to be inclined to tie up with associations of "dialogue" (more or less exclusively) like consensus, communion and equality, whereas those who honour alterity (Rosenzweig, Lévinas etc.) also provide space for differences of perspectives and opinions, asymmetries and argumentation, competition and conflict, as well as misunderstandings and misalignments. Cf. § 13.

4.4. *Dialogue as unfinished.* Related to the point of alterity is also the insistence, on the part of Bakhtin and Lévinas, on the nature of dialogue as incomplete. First of all, thought is not ready-made, before the communicative acts, but is conceived (accomplished, temporarily completed) when, in a dialogue, another mind transgresses the boundaries of your own (Merleau-Ponty). But, secondly, the dialogue is not finished with the communicative act, because the addressee will carry it forward by providing an active responsive understanding. (The speaker herself may also come up

with second thoughts, as she is speaking or after her speech act.) New contributions to dialogue engender new responses. In this way, dialogue is never-ending and uncompletable. To indulge in cognition or communication is to "move beyond" what is already given.

However, we cannot go on talking for ever, in any single situation. Normal social life would be impracticable and uncontrollable unless we take measures and make decisions quite frequently, in mundane life as well as in institutional encounters. Imposing a final answer to somebody´s wondering amounts to exercising cognitive power (authority, hegemony, colonisation). This aspect is also part of human dialogue.

4.5. *Self and others: `I´, `you´, `it´ and `one/we/they´.* Dialogue and dialogism involve self and others (in the plural) (§ 4.1), i.e. more than just "me" and "you/thee" (cf. Marková, 2003a: 80, 2003b: 256, on Rosenzweig). Nor is it only about "it" and "me", i.e. as in the mainstream (monological) alternative of objects and subjects. For example, communities of several kinds ("we", "they") are also involved, albeit often more indirectly.

We may therefore talk about at least four co-ordinates of communication: "I, it, you (thou), we": Behind this reasoning, there are several stages of conceptual development. The classic contrast is, as we just noted, that between subjectivism and objectivism. Accordingly, Rommetveit (2003) contrasts the psychology of "the first person" ("I") with that of the "third person" (looking at people as objects in the world, which is of course grammatically in "the third person"; "it"). Indeed, radical objectivism may even construct the relation of language to the world as one between two "third person"-like entities, i.e. a linguistic representation (the constellation of symbols) and the organisation of the world; this is a theory cleansed from subjectivism (objectivism supported by scholasticism, cf. Bourdieu, 2000).

The next step, one that takes us closer to dialogism, is to introduce "you/thou" (Rommetveit, 2003: psychology of "the second person"); now we have a triad of "I", "you", and things in the world (Bühler, 1934; Marková, 2003a: 147ff). A third step, implied by the double dialogicality (cf. § 2.6 above), is to distinguish between the concrete other ("thou, you") and the generalised other. Communicative acts are addressed to "you", in a world of sociocultural, conceptual webs woven together with others ("one/we/they").

One may go on, in a fourth step, to distinguish between different kinds of generalised others. On the one hand, we have an anonymised "one". Alternatively, we distinguish "we" (the community in which we are members) from "they" (the community excluding or excluded from "us")[23].

The introduction of "one/we/they" implies that a third, potentially active party (a "third person" in a sense different from the one just introduced) enters our analysis of communication. The roles of "third parties" in dialogism has occasionally been discussed, often in somewhat other terms than I have just used. I shall therefore devote a special section to "third parties".

4.6. *Third parties.* Third parties play important roles in communication, e.g. with respect to trust and confidence. The notions of discretion and secrecy presuppose categorisations of others into those with whom one shares knowledge and those from whom one hides (i.e. the more typical "third parties"). Therefore, the web of confidence vs. suspicion is sometimes woven to shield off third parties.

But there are also "third parties" who are used as aids or partners in communication. Sometimes, we collude with third parties. This suggests that the topic of "third parties" is quite a complex one.

In order not to water down the notion of "third party", we define "party" as somebody who says or does, or could say or do, something relevant which primary parties orient to in their discourse. Third parties are silent, or play more peripheral roles than primary participants in the interaction. The third party might either be a specific third, particular individuals, or it might be an abstract (generalised) third. If we want a preliminary taxonomy of third parties, the following springs to mind:

(i) *Concrete* third parties, who are physically *present* and usually intervene verbally in the communication between the two (or more) primary communicating parties: mediators and go-betweens (e.g. mediators in negotiations, dialogue interpreters, adjudicators), chairpersons, audiences, overhearers and eavesdroppers (cf. Goffman, 1981). Concrete third parties, present or absent (category (iii) below), may give rise to "split audience design" on the part of primary parties, who must orient to both what the

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[23] Pronominal use in living interactional language is much more complex than indicated here. There are several mixed categories and fuzzy boundaries. For example, generic "you" approaches anonymisation while retaining some reference to the class in which the addressees (and perhaps the speaker too) are included, and "one" in many languages (Swedish *man*, German *man*, French *on*) straddles the boundary towards "I" and "we", on the one hand, and "they" on the other.

interlocutor says or might say, and to how third parties might react. One case is the interaction between parties within a televised talk show, vs. the orientation of these to an overhearing audience present in the studio. (There are also the absent spectators, i.e. the large TV audience, category (iii) below.)

(ii) "Virtual" (*virtually present*) third parties, i.e. parties who are not physically present but quoted or else somehow invoked by the communicating parties. In the discourse, they are treated as agents (actants) or stake-holders. They can be subcategorised into actual (named) individuals (or groups), partly constructed collectives ("the media", "the politicians") or constructed collectives (such as "people", "the man in the street"). Chief among the latter abstract and generalised thirds are perhaps sectors of society (science, the media, the political system, the church, the legal system, the banking system, the market, the state bureaucracy) or other abstract *institutions* (money, the family, the language code, other norm systems). Such "virtual" parties are often invoked in e.g. focus groups (Adelswärd et al., 2003).

(iii) *Absent concrete* third parties who are possible distant recipients of information about the conversation here-and-now. These parties (Linell, 1998a: "remote audiences") are often indirectly oriented to by speakers, who therefore may adopt a "split audience design"; they have both their interlocutors as their primary audience, and they sometimes also keep the absent third parties in mind. I say things to you here-and-now, and at the same time indirectly to all those with whom you might talk in the future, and these thirds will talk with other thirds, in principle infinitely. These thirds may be potential future gossipers. This category of absent thirds may be especially those who are involved in or concerned about our topics, perhaps those who may be present at other times when we meet. Another obvious case is the broadcast (radio or TV) conversation; here interlocutors talk with one another in front of a listening remote audience.

(iv) Thirds like professions and *institutions* show up as perspectives or identities ("voices") voiced by the communicating parties, particularly perhaps in the contributions by professionals in institutional encounters (cf. § 8.9 on polyvocality). These voices are sometimes integrated and disguised, i.e. parties do not explicitly mention or thematise them.

(v) Concrete *artefacts* which somehow voice a (virtual?) third, usually an institution. These artefacts are present in the situation and oriented to, or used as tools or aids, by the parties. They are oriented to as sources of information or agents which oblige the

parties to interact in certain ways. Examples are images that are interpreted or texts that are read (or produced on-line), diagrams and maps to which you orient (Mondada), written reports, printed forms (to be filled in), questionnaires (governing how questions are asked and responded to in interaction), values shown by measuring instruments (numerical values given by "objective" instruments are often given great authority in parties´ deliberations). Examples of texts used as carriers of authority are the use of police reports in court trials or of diary notes in therapy sessions. Such tools and artefacts have in fact sometimes been analysed precisely as third parties in the discourse analyses of institutional talks. Of course, artefacts can be partners in a kind of dyadic interactions with only one single human agent. For example, we have media such as e-mail, chat systems, and SMS.

In sum, there are several categories of third parties to whom participants directly or indirectly orient. Often, third parties determine what you choose *not* to say, but also the ways in which you say that which you do in fact say. In discussing such phenomena, Bakhtin (1984: 199) introduces the concept of the word with a "sideways glance"; the utterance, and its utterer, looks – in a "sideways" manner – also at how indirect recipients (third parties) might understand it.

One issue in this context is whether communication should *always* be said to involve (a silent) third. Particularly category (iii) above comes close to being always potentially relevant. However, we may approach this question on two planes. In one sense, we try to restrict the notion of third parties to those that leave traces in parties´ manifest discourse (cf. the five categories above). On the other hand, we can adopt an abstract position and claim that, at an epistemological level, all communication involve third parties.

4.7. *Relations in an "inter-world"*. Dialogism tries to transcend the dichotomies between objectivism and subjectivism, and between extreme empiricism and idealism-cum-rationalism, by stressing intersubjectivity and alterity in a real (material and social) world.

As was already pointed out, we can conceive of the role of the cultural collectivity in relation to individuals at two levels, the long-term perspective of sociocultural praxis and the here-and-now perspective of the specific situated encounter; Rommetveit (2003) talks about the (socially distributed) shareholding in a common language (languages, social representations etc.), and the co-authorship (or co-construction) of

situated meaning, respectively. At both planes, understanding is mediated by dialogue; understandings accomplished must be thought of as temporary, partial and only partially shared (§ 8.8-9).[24]

Meaning resides in the *interface* between the culturally embedded subject and the culture itself (which contains other individuals embedded in the culture) (Rommetveit, 1998). Similar formulations about the human mind can be found in Bakhtin (1984: 287ff.). Husserl, in his late works, proposed that epistemology starts with intersubjectivity rather than in the individual subject. Another proposal of the same kind is Merleau-Ponty´s (1955) concept of *intermonde* ("inter-world") between subjects and the world. Buber (1962) has, according to Marková (2003a: 79), "the sphere in between". Heidegger (cf. Peters, 1999: 16) likewise stressed that being with others is fundamental to the human condition; we are "thrown into" a world which is meaningful, and is incessantly being made meaningful in human intercourse.

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[24] For those who are familiar with Rommetveit´s work and its exemplary stories, cf. "the man who was ignorant of carburettors" (point: you can be share-holders in the same language and yet have varying amounts of shares, i.e. understandings) and "Mr. Smith who was mowing his lawn" (point: diametrically opposite claims can be true of the same objective situation) (Linell, 2003b.).

5. Monological and dialogical practices.

Also according to a general dialogical framework (epistemology or ontology), there is a considerable variation among cognitive and communicative practices. Some texts and discourses are more "monological", and others more "dialogical". However, here we must be careful with our terminology and conceptual apparatus; at one level, *all* cognition and/or communication is dialogical, at another level, we can talk about a scale, or matters of degree, or of several dimensions ranging from "monologue" to "dialogue". This squares well with Bakhtin´s theories, as they have been explicated by Morson & Emerson (1990).

Morson & Emerson (1990) try to sort out things in terms of five different properties of discourse and communication. According to them, three conditions of dialogicality are universal:

(a) *responsivity*: No cognitive or communicative act is randomly related to the environment. Every act is selectively responsive to (a complex array of) contextual conditions, often including particular communicative actions by others.

(b) *addressivity*: Every act is addressed to somebody, whether this addressee is individual or collective, real or imaginary, being an another person (or group) or an aspect of one´s own self.

Responsivity and addressivity are thus related to the responsive and projective aspects of acts and utterances (§ 8.6).

(c) *genre-belongingness* (and socio-cultural belongingness): Every cognitive and communicative act presupposes a history (or biography) of prior sociocultural praxis, of reliance on languages, routines and communicative genres. Thus, the situated act is "in dialogue with" sociocultural practices.

These first three properties define the dialogical basis of all cognition and communication. (We note that responsivity and addressivity together correspond to "interactivity", and with "genre-belongingness" (in a broad sense) we introduce other aspects of the "double dialogicality" according to § 2.4.) Nevertheless, specific situated acts may differ in degrees of dialogicality also on these accounts, especially as regards concretely manifest interactivity (in the situation where the communicative act is produced). All the forms of "dissemination", in Peters´ (1999) terminology (see below), are characterised by the limited, displaced, deferred or suspended types of responses. However, this is not what Morson & Emerson mean by monologue. For them, by

contrast, the following two conditions exhibit (more of) variation from "monologue" to "dialogue":

(d) *perspectivity and voicedness*: A text or discourse may (try to) express one and only one perspective on its topic. Such a text would be one-voiced (univocal). Many administrative, legal and scientific texts belong here. Other texts harbour several perspectives or voices (polyvocality, multi-voicedness, cf. § 8.9). Monoperspectivity is a form of monologicality, the author trying to authorise only one interpretation on the topic treated.

The fifth condition is closely related to perspectivity:

(e) *imposition of response*: A text or discourse may be monological, authoritarian, in the sense that it tries to impose on the addressee only one possible way of understanding and, above all, only one option of responding. A military order is a case in point. Totalitarian political propaganda is another blatant case. On this point, by contrast, a dialogical utterance tries to leave options open, leaving to the addressee to choose more or less freely his understanding or responsive action.

Note that monological acts and activities, according to (d-e), still take place in a dialogically constituted environment. Even a monological text or utterance involves rational calculations of the other´s situation and projected reactions. Thus, for example, there may be an "internal dialogue" (§ 8.3), e.g. in choosing the best formulation, before the issuing of the monological utterance, and the recipients may indulge in their internal dialogues in silently (or overtly) taking a stance towards the utterance, also when they choose to provide the overt response required by the speaker. It is mainly the overt act or text which appears to be monological.

The five conditions correspond to different ways of "taking the role of the other". Conditions (a-c) involve rational considerations of the other´s possible stances, reactions and understandings. However, when the speaker allows different perspectives and leaves room for the addressee´s own choice of action, (s)he also takes into account ethical aspects of communication.[25] (Notice also the relationship between responsivity (a) and responsibility, which is related to (e).)

Peters (1999) draws a distinction between "dialogue", which for him is "dyadic, mutual, and interactive" (p. 34) (thus, "dialogue" in an externalist sense, § 2.5), and "dissemination", one speaker/writer´s broadcasting of a message directed to many, unspecific recipients. Dissemination would include teaching, preaching, informing,

various forms of mass communication. Artefact-based communication is usually designed for displaced, off-line consumption and response. As Peters himself notes (although he prefers a different terminology), dissemination is, or can be, dialogical too. For example, it can be multi-perspectivised (even though many rhetors aim for "clear messages"), and there will be responses, although they are often deferred or postponed and may not reach the sender. Dissemination is "suspended dialogue".

"Monological" texts (i.e. monological on accounts (d-e)) can be seen as the products of *monologising practices*. Such "situated but decontextualising" (Linell, 1998: 280) practices have an established position also in a dialogically conceived and constituted world. For example, they are legion in legal and scientific contexts. It is something of a defining criterion of "terminologies" that they try to fixate the meaning, especially the referential meaning, of terms. In linguistics, (allegedly) "fixed" meanings (e.g. of lexical items) are the products of fixation activities (e.g. in people´s compiling dictionaries, defining scientific terms). But all these "monological" texts and practices remain dialogical on the accounts of (a-c) above.

6. The role of dynamics.

The human world, as scientifically conceived, contains not only stable structures and general mechanisms (and firm or certain knowledge about these) (Descartes, Newton), not only elements and categories but also essential (i.e. constitutive) dimensions of movements, interdependencies, potentialities (in addition to actualities)[26], oppositions and antinomies (Marková, 2003a), tensions, Thus, an important characteristic of dialogism is its insistence on *dynamics*, change and evolution.

Dialogue and discourse must be seen in terms of "becoming" (and iterated becoming; Salazar Orvig, 1999: 9: "le devenir du discours"), "in the making" (and remaking), rather than "being", "movements" and "moving beyond what is given" (§ 4.3; Bostad et al., 2004). Processes and actions are more fundamental rather than products.

The genetic perspectives in dialogism include phylogenesis (the evolution of the species), ontogenesis (the individual´s biography), sociohistorical genesis

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[25] On rational vs. ethical considerations of the other, see Allwood (1976).

[26] To use a distinction from Aristotle!

(sociogenesis, in the sociocultural practice), and microgenesis (in the single situation) (Vygotsky, Marková, Wertsch). The emphasis on evolution, relativity, and interdependence exhibits similarities with the ideas and theories of e.g. Darwin, Einstein, Heisenberg, Bohr, Bateson. A modern neurophysiological account has been provided by Damasio (1994).

It is important that dynamics and change apply to both situated interaction and sociocultural (situation-transgressing) practices (praxis), although the latter are long-term developments with relatively more of stability and robustness (toughness, viscosity, inertia) (§ 2.5). The nature of praxis has often been overlooked or mistreated in monologism, with its often quite rigid dichotomies like structure vs. agency in sociology and system vs. use (langue vs. parole, etc.) as well as sunchrony vs. diachrony in linguistics. Even dialogists can reflect traditional dichotomies, as when Bakhtin (1986: 134) argues that elements of speech are experienced in two ways: through the repeatability of the language and the unrepeatability (uniquesness) of the utterance. But language is also dynamically changeable (though usually rather slowly), and utterances too display some recurrent features; stability and change are attributes at both levels.

The emphasis on dynamics will be a recurrent feature of the following sections. For example, instead of looking at knowledge exclusively in terms of states, representations and stocks of knowledge, we conceptualise cognition as communicative (dialogical) activities, as ongoing processes with a moving focus. A conversation is a form of distributed cognition (Linell, 1998: 224). Individuals´ communicative abilities are understood as dynamic potentials and vulnerabilities (§ 8.12).

7. Embodiment, time and historicity.

The previous point focused on the dynamics in the sociohistorical development of language, communicative genres, cultural activities, work etc. Thus, for example, language is not simply a system outside of the flow of social history, linguistic structures are not atemporal, abstract, spiritual or mental, but organised in time and embodied by real people. Acts of cognition and communication are embodied semiotic activities in real time.

The temporal structure is absolutely crucial to situated interaction; talk exchanges are organised in terms of *sequences*. Contributions derive parts of their meaning and significance from their sequential positions (§ 8.6). This is a point which has been a corner-stone of theorising within Conversation Analysis (Schegloff et al., 1996). A dialogical outlook on language and mind draws attention to the *historicity*, *temporality*, and *embodiment* (corporeality) of (spoken) language.

8. Other aspects and elements of dialogical approaches.

8.1. *Action and meaning:* Action *in the world* is a more basic semantic-pragmatic function of language and communication than is representation of the world. Language is not primarily a language of representation; rather, representing something can be reanalysed as a kind of action.

Basic to action is *interaction*. The constituent actions (communicative acts) of a conversation are (social) inter-acts[27], rather than (individual) speech acts in Searle´s (1969) sense. Turn-taking is a fundamental phenomenon. Social other-orientation permeates also the content/substance of basic action.

8.2. *Utterances:* Many dialogists use the notion of "utterance" as a basic concept; for example, this is true of Bakhtin (Ru. *vyskazyvanie*) (e.g. Todorov, 1984: 41ff.). However, the term is typically used rather loosely. First of all, English does not make a distinction between the utterance act (which is what is most relevant) and the words uttered (here, French linguistics distinguishes between *énonciation* and *énoncé*.) An utterance act is a situated (inter-)act (see § 2.5 and § 8.1, respectively, for the meanings of "situated" and "inter-act"). Secondly, the extension of an "utterance", as opposed to a sequence of utterances, is often unclear. However, linguists often take as a limited act, a sentence- or clause-shaped enunciation (or its functional equivalent). "Utterances" then become the situated tokens corresponding to abstract sentences (types) in the linguistic system. (The matter becomes more complicated, when pragmaticians like Levinson (2000) introduce the notion of "utterance type", i.e. an act

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[27] This term is a back-formation from "interaction" and is intended to stress than also the elementary contribution to a dialogue, e.g. an utterance by a single speaker, is permeated by social, sequential and interactional interdependencies. The utterance act (§ 8.2) has both responsive and projective properties (§ 8.7). The term "inter-act" has been used by both Halliday (1994:68) and Linell & Marková (1993).

(type) which is not situated.) Others use "utterance" in a loose sense, like ("(piece of) discourse".

8.3. *The mind: body and culture:* The mind is "something alive" (Marková, 2003a: 24), not a set of mechanisms. It is characterised by both embodiment (cf. Merleau-Ponty) and cultural embeddedness, not primarily by abstract, universal ideas (§ 7). The body is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for meaning and consciousness; only individuals have bodies (there are no spirits without bodies, no collective souls). But the mind, though embodied, is a relational phenomenon, and works as interaction between systems:

- between different neurological systems (engaging different structures; not only representations; parallel distributed processing) and other bodily systems (e.g. hormonal systems) (Damasio, 1994)

- between individuals

- generating meaning in the interface between individual and culture.

8.4. *Intrapersonal ("internal") dialogue:* Dialogue as a phenomenon covers both "internal (inner) dialogue", in e.g. solitary thinking or individual problem-solving, and "external (outer) dialogue" in externalised interpersonal communication. Within limits, however, the individual may gradually acquire an ability to develop an internal dialogue, to introduce "virtual others" in his or her argumentative thinking (Billig, 1987)[28].

One can speak about the individual being engaged in "internal dialogue" also while she is taking part in a conversation with others (Marková, 2003a: 115). These cognitive "internal-dialogical" activities take place before and after, behind and beyond what is made public in the individual´s contributions to "external dialogue". However, while this theory points to the intricate interpenetration of cognition and communication, it does not claim that internal and external dialogues are the same in structural or functional terms; for example, it may not be entirely brought into verbal

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[28] The role of the other is thus constitutive of social construction. The consideration of the estrangement introduced by others is comparatively absent in the theories of "individual constructivists" like Piaget; despite being dynamic, his developmental psychology founded on processes of accommodation and assimilation is very much geared towards "equilibrium".

language (cf. Vygotsky, 1986). In addition, there are undoubtedly different kinds of internal dialogue, just as there are many activity types (§ 8.5) in talk-in-interaction.

8.5. *Communicative activity types:* Action, communication and cognition are subordinated to or organised in terms of more comprehensive activities (activity types, e.g. Levinson, 1979, cf. Wittgenstein´s notion of language games). Communicative activities are subject to habit (routines, norms, rules), physical and social constraints and impositions, intentions (e.g. conscious decision-making), and chance. They differ with respect to e.g. degree of ritualisation, interactivity, dependence on artefacts, built and written environments etc. Communicative activity types are defined by frames. Examples are criminal court trials, doctor-patient encounters, psychotherapy sessions, Tv talk shows, and their various subtypes.

8.6. *Knowledge:* The body is a prerequisite for consciousness, and (some degree of) consciousness is necessary for knowledge. At the same time, consciousness has a sociodialogical basis[29], and the same applies to knowledge; knowledge is of a *social* nature, and is closely related to communication and action (some prefer terms like ”(social) understanding” to ”knowledge”). Duveen (2000: 2) explains:

”Knowledge emerges from the world in which people meet and interact, the world in which human interests, needs and desires find expression, satisfaction and frustration. In short, knowledge arises from human passions and, as such, is never disinterested; rather, it is always the product of particular groups of people who find themselves in specific circumstances in which they are engaged in definite projects.”

Accordingly, knowledge is dependent on communication between individuals for its genesis, evolution and maintenance (and disappearance!); it is socially generated, socially sustained, socially negotiated, transformed, confirmed and censured, socially distributed.[30]

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[29] Consciousness involves reflecting on one´s own position, and this is dependent on experiences of alterity, on the realisation that others understand you and the world in specific and sometimes divergent ways. Lévinas has reportedly that human understanding does not start out from the Cartesian *Cogito,* but from *Bon jour*! You cannot begin to understand that you are somebody (who can think) until you have been approached and greeted as somebody by the other.

[30] `Social´ is a better term than `collective´: `social´ connotes asymmetrical distribution and avoids some of the unfortunate loadings of `collective´ (e.g. actions carried out by collectives (rather than individuals in interaction), consciousness associated with a collectivity (collective representations, Volkseele)).

Dialogism (as I understand it) rejects Descartes´s general claim that there can be some kinds of knowledge of the world that are absolutely certain, but maintains that we can have *reasonably* certain knowledge, on the basis of empirical and reflective evidence (Peirce).

8.7. *The architecture of interaction:* An interactive sequence involves responses, initiatives and reciprocity of contributions:

- responses display candidate understandings and stances with respect to prior contributions to a dialogue;
- initiatives introduce new material into the discourse, and they foresee, anticipate and project possible next contributions (actions) to the dialogue;
- reciprocity is interdependency between contributions to dialogue.

Communicative acts are sequentially ordered. Contributions to dialogue have both responsive and initiatory (projective) aspects simultaneously (Linell, 1998: 175ff.). A related theory is therefore that of the three-aspectual model of the utterance or contribution to dialogue; we see it in terms of its background (the utterance is made to respond to, understand, reinterpret and recontextualise the (other´s) prior utterance), its present (its substance, expressing the speaker´s own initiative), and its horizon towards the future (it projects further contributions to come). Other dialogical concepts that correspond to these three aspects are responsivity, expressivity and addressivity.

Another related theory is that of the three-step model of the minimal communicative interaction; if speaker A utters something and thereby indicates a targetted understanding, then B must indicate his understanding of this by some responsive action, typically another utterance, and then A has to show her reaction to B´s response by yet another action (utterance). Note that without the third step, while A has access to B´s understanding as displayed, or at least as partially displayed in his utterance, B has not yet received any reaction from A and hence cannot know whether his utterance, and its presupposed understanding of the A´s first utterance, fits with A´s ideas; hence, no mutual and shared knowledge has been established (unless, of course, there are contextually established routines which make such checking procedures necessary). This three-step model refelects Mead´s (1934) analysis of "the conversation of gestures" in terns of three behaviours ("gestures").

This theory of communicative acts ("inter-acts) is opposed to "speech act theory" (Searle, 1969), which has been a dominant, monologistic theorists of language

use. This theory has onesidedly discussed active initiatives ("speech acts") of the individual agent. But even such classical speech act types as to assert something, to ask a question, to issue an order, to thank, to promise, to accuse, etc., are part of more comprehensive communicative projects (Linell, 1998a: ch. 11). Communicative acts are not decontextualised assertions, questions etc., but acts made for some purpose (as parts of communicative projects), e.g. assertions in the service of making the recipient accept them or arguing for a point, or questions in the service of understanding something or checking somebody´s knowledge.

In addition, there are countless acts that are even more clearly responsive: e.g. to respond, to initiate a repair, to confirm (what others have said), to make an assessment (or second assessment), to make a counter-argument. Many of these actions are essentially interactional, whether collaborative or competitive. Yet other examples are to joke, to tease, to insult and to respond to such attempts.

Dialogists like Bakhtin emphasises responses; everything we say and do is a response to something. Lévinas (1961) argues most consistently that response, responsivity and responsibility are what makes us human.[31] But, according to Lévinas, this serves to stress *individual* responsibility. It is when the other looks at me and speaks to me that I become responsible (for acting with respect to him).

The issue of initiativity vs. responsivity, aspects which are closely related to moral issues of responsibility, must be discussed at more global levels as well. Dialogism is not a social-determinist framework in which human individuals are reduced to crossing-points of various social influences. Dialogue is also the environment for processes in and through which individuals construct their (individual) identities and establish themselves as responsible social agents.

8.8. *Sequentiality, joint construction and act-activity interdependence* have been formulated as three reflexive "dialogical principles" (Linell, 1998: 85ff.), especially with reference to talk-in-interaction. *Sequentiality* means that situated interpretations of utterances (or acts) are partially dependent on their positions in sequences of actions. *Co-authorship (joint construction)* implies that meanings are the products of the

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[31] Cf. fn. 22.

interaction between subjects. *Act-activity interdependence*, finally, means that acts and overarching activities (§ 8.5) co-constitute each other[32].

Sequentiality implies that each utterance derives part of its meaning from its position in the sequence of utterances, actions and events, in which it occurs. Each action or utterance has a situated meaning of its own, interdependent with the particular matrix of contexts in which it occurs. Utterances are not simply instantiations of units belonging to the language. For example, a *repetition* in discourse does not repeat the original – it is not a simple copy – but it constitutes a new action and a new version of that which is done or talked about. This is so partly by the action´s being sequentially positioned after a similar instance (”original”).

The three principles can serve as a summary of basic dialogical claims, but it is only a partial definition of dialogism. They amount to a counter-theory to speech act theory, which can be said to claim that each communicative act is (a) an autonomous act (against sequentiality; cf. § 8.7), (b) produced by a single speaker (against co-authoring), and (c) independenly of any overarching activity type.

8.9. *Meaning and understanding* exhibit still other characteristics, and explanations of the processes involved make use of concepts like:

* *Sense-making in situ* is – for both speaker and recipient – a *dynamic* undertaking involving communicative activities and discursive movements (§ 6); it is not a matter of producing and perceiving mappings of reality. Salazar Orvig (1999: 9) writes: 'Saisir le sens d´un énoncé, c´est aussi rendre compte de son avènement, de la façon dont il vient s´inscrire dans un espace discursif, qu´il complète, modifie, infléchit, dans la façon dont il construit une progression de dire, dans les changements qu´il introduit…"'

Sense-making is therefore in principle a *never-ending process*; meaning is never finished (§ 4.3), but may be provisionally finalised at a given point in interaction (we cannot go on talking for ever, sometimes we must rest and go to sleep, eventually we die).

* What we choose to give overt expression to in interaction is not the totality of what we think or experience. One could describe it as the result of a struggle between

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[32] Sometimes, the (Bakhtinian) term ”interpenetration” is preferred to ”interdependence”, since the latter may suggest that the entities that are interdependent exist as autonomous units, and depend on each other from that point of departure (Putnam, 1995: 57f).

disclosure and non-disclosure, between *revealing and hiding* (inhibiting impulses to give overt expression to all kinds of responses). (Cf. below, § 13.3.) Some things gets said, others not (but can perhaps be inferred) (Ducrot: *le dit* vs. le *non-dit).*

* *Understandings* are *partial* and fragmentary, dialogically constituted and only partially shared (Rommetveit, 1974: 51). Understanding one another in a real communication situation is not a matter of achieving 'complete and completely shared' understandings, but we need understandings 'for current (practical) purposes' (Garfinkel); when we understand what we need, we can go on to other points in our business.

* *Implicitness*: we can never say explicitly (in words or other symbols) everything we want to say. Language is fundamentally allusive and incomplete (Merleau-Ponty). Explicit expressions do not represent but help prompt situated meanings. We have contexts (and interlocutors) to rely on, and we always do so. Communication has to build on many aspects of *trust* (trust that other people have rational purposes for their actions, that they mean something, that they use language 'normally', etc.).

* *Meaning potentials:* The semantics and pragmatics of language and communication revolve around notions like polysemy, vagueness, ambiguity, multiple perspectives, multiple interpretations, redundancy (e.g. Fauconnier & Turner, 2003). The meaning potential of a word (lexical item) is a structured set of semantic resources that are used in combination with contextual factors to prompt and give rise to situated meanings.

* Thinking in *oppositions* (in addition to categories; talking about X makes non-X relevant) and *aspects* (in addition to entities) and in *figure – background* relations.

* *Perspectivity:* the sociocultural nature and historicity of meaning (Vico) implies that knowledge is subjected to perspectives (e.g. Nietzsche); the same data or topics could have been conceptualised otherwise. Nietzsche stressed the indeterminacy of interpretations and multiplicity of perspectives (Nehamas, 1985: 100). The ways in which the world appears to us, the versions and visions of the world, are dependent on positions, perspectives and interests. While this theory goes against universalism, it does not follow from it that all the versions are worth the same (or 'true' or 'false' to the same extent). Contextual constructionism may be compatible with some kind of (moderate) realism; relationism is not the same as relativism (§ 2.3).

8.10. *Language and narrativity*. We create order through dialogue and language. Less coherent and less meaningful structures of pre-linguistic perception and cognition

become more coherent and more meaningful by being brought into language. This is an idea that has been articulated most clearly by some scholars in narrative theory, but it is fully compatible with dialogism. A major form for bringing coherence into one´s life is to tell stories (to others and oneself) about significant events and experiences therein (e.g. Polkinghorne, 1988). Narratives bring coherence to life, time and existence (Ricoeur, 1983).

8.11. *Polyvocality and intertextuality:* Texts and utterances are not the speaker/writer´s own products; they typically contain (explicit or implicit) elements from other sources (Anward, 2002), traces of others´ texts and utterances (other 'voices'). Expressions, ideas, messages etc often travel between texts and contexts ('recontextualisations', Linell, 1998: 140ff.). Such recontextualisations bring along some aspects of meaning from the 'quoted' sources/contexts, but they also bring about new meanings in the new, 'quoting' contexts.

These types of recontextualisations form more concrete forms of intertextuality; they index relations between specific discursive events ('tokens' of discourse), i.e. particular texts or talk exchanges. But there are also more abstract forms of recontextualisations; orders of discourse (Foucault), genres or activity types, may also borrow from other genres or activity types (Bakhtin, 1984; Morson & Emerson, 1990). This abstract inter(con)textuality (partly on the 'type' rather than 'token' level) is what Fairclough (1992) terms 'interdiscursivity', something which is linked to what I called 'situation-transcending (socio-cultural) practices' in § 2.5.

In somewhat more abstract terms: events of using language (or other cultural forms), in short: discursive events, can be interdiscursive with (an)other discursive event(s), or genres, in that it/they index or iconically take up features from these events or genres. Most often, such relations are discussed in terms of 'intertextuality', whereas others (e.g. Linell, 1998) have preferred the more processual term 'recontextualisation'.

8.12. *Discourses and discursive orders*. Ways of thinking and talking about things within specific domains, such as madness or sexuality, get organised or "ordered" within sets of patterns over time. Foucault called these "discourses" or "discursive orders" (e.g. Fairclough, 1992). Some of these discourses are dominant, others subordinated, within a community or society for certain times. If a certain discursive order gets cemented and even hegemonic, we are faced with monological practices in

the sense of § 5 (d-e). Yet, there is dialogue going on, at least within limits, within and across the boundaries of suich discourses. Foucaultian discourse theory is almost exclusively concerned with sociocultural processes of the social, collective kinds (sociohistorical dimension) in the taxonomy of § 4.1.

8.13. *Multiple channels of mediation.* Language in use is always indexical, allusive and incomplete; utterances must rely on contexts of various kinds. But utterances also involve the concomitant use of 'non-verbal' signs (voice characteristics, gestures, facial expressions, body movements and postures, etc.), as well as the meaningful manipulation of objects (cf. § 4.4 on artefacts as "third parties"). Sense-making is often *mediated by artefacts* (e.g. cognitive artefacts, inscriptions, tools, instruments). The use of tools and objects create meaning outside of talk itself; the neglect of these aspects of communication has sometimes been called 'talk bias' (Hak, 1999) or 'language bias'. There is a risk that dialogism itself falls into this trap.

Sense-making must also make use of (partially) non-linguistic resources such as background presuppositions, implicit meanings, and preconceptual structures. As for the latter: e.g. experiencing 'blue', or feeling attraction or disgust involve bodily reactions and non- or pre-linguistic perceptions; 'the mind arises out of an organism, not a disembodied brain' (Damasio, 1994: 229).

8.14. *Asymmetries, boundaries and tensions* are essential in communication. As parties to communication, we do not share all assumptions about the diverse activities we get involved in, and we normally do not communicate out of situations of equal opportunities. Instead, we need to discuss authentic communication in terms like:
* asymmetries, power, domination
* boundaries between cultural communities, and the necessary transgressions of boundaries between genres, activity types, and communities.

8.15. *Potentialities and vulnerabilities.* Mainstream clinical psychology, and related specialities, often concentrate on trying to identify and measure communicative and cognitive abilities and disabilities in terms of context-free (in)competences and (in)capacities tied to and inherent in the individuals themselves. A dialogical approach needs concepts which are more interactional in nature. A metalanguage of "potentialities" and "vulnerabilities" can be metaphorically extended to language itself.

Thus, we think of word meanings as meaning potentials, as structured resources that prompt situated interpretations in combination with contextual dimensions (§ 8.8).

Individuals vary in their abilities to carry out communicative or cognitive tasks. Relative problems, such as linguistic disabilities and psychiatric disturbances, may be understood in terms of vulnerabilities, the liabilities to perform more or less poorly (or well) in different situations. Individuals´potentialities are vulnerable in the sense that they may not suffice for certain activities types, while the same individuals could cope well with other tasks[33].

9. Against Cartesian dichotomies.

As an introduction to a tiny bit of historical background (§ 10), let me go back to the fact that dialogism must be seen as a "counter-theory" to monologism (§ 3).

Dialogism assumes that concepts are interdependent, and interrelated through intrinsic (rather than extrinsic or contingent) relations. This applies, *a fortiori*, to oppositions (dichotomies, antinomies) like:

mind - body
subject – object
knowing - acting
knower – known
fact - value
cognition - communication
cognition - emotion
system - practice
speaker - listener
self - other
individual - collectivity
discourse - context
biology (nature) - culture (nurture)
rest – movement

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[33] As implied by § 2.3, diagnoses understood as vulnerabilities do not of course deny the physical or psychological reality of disabilities. Such a denial, sometimes made by reference to a vulgarised version of 'social constructionism', would amount to a very severe cynicism (Linell, 1996).

abstract – concrete

mental work – manual work

micro - macro

stability – change

potentiality - actuality[34]

etc.

Making distinctions (classificatory definitions such as those mentioned here) is of course necessary for the purpose of keeping phenomena *analytically* apart. This is something which one does for methodological or analytic purposes. But methodology is easily transformed into ontology, and the different categories become erroneously interpreted as independent (autonomous) objects; X and Y are seen as (ontologically different) *entities* (X is logically and physically (locationally) distinct from Y). Moreover, in most Western mainstream disciplines, from Aristotle onwards, many dichotomies (X vs. Y) become *Cartesian* in an even more pregnant sense: not only is X seen as privileged with respect to Y (the subordinate term, Y, is just a supplement to X), X is even *causally* prior to Y. This applies, for example, to X-es like cognition and the individual (self) with respect to Y-s like communication and society (and others). This monological perspective looks upon the world as based on autonomous and basic units (even if these units are sometimes assumed to enter into secondary interdependencies). Monological models are often couched in terms of unilateral causality and independent vs. dependent variables (determinism).

According to dialogism, we have dualities instead of distinctions between entities; in the spirit of Wittgenstein, we would talk about more about *aspects*, less of entities. X and Y are aspects of partly the same phenomena, and they are mutually co-constituted and logically interdependent. The interdependencies or interpenetrations are essential, not secondary or accidental. One cannot talk about one of the terms of a dichotomy (opposition) without presupposing, thereby implicitly talking about, the other. The one is the "counter-point" of the other, to use an analogy from musical theory (Salazar Orvig, 1999: 10)[35].

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[34] This particular, somewhat more scholarly, dichotomy is due to Aristotle. It corresponds to a rather basic notion in dialogistic thinking. However, the Aristotelian tradition has interpreted it in rather Cartesian terms. See Marková (2003a) for extensive discussion.

[35] On monological vs. dialogical understanding of "antinomies", see Marková (2003a).

Again, the dialogist´s argument is of course *not* that the distinctions would be irrelevant. Certainly, we must distinguish between mind and body (incidentally, the most classical of all Cartesian dichotomies) (cf. § 8.2), cognition and communication (§ 3.3), or facts and values (objectivity and subjectivity), etc. But the point is that one cannot understand the one concept in total isolation from – or before – the other. Facts, for example, are not chemically free from values; the establishment of facts rests ultimately on the evaluations of perceptions.

10. A very brief history of ideas

10.1. *Monologism:* Monologism stems from a scholastic, philosophical tradition with a strong impact on Western sciences. It works with idealisations which are detached from social conditions. Common goals and assumptions include:

* autonomy (of science, theories)

* universal (rather than socio-historically specific) theories

* abstract ideas (invariants, concepts) mediating in communication, cognition and perception

* individual subject as the origo in the human sciences

* precision, and freedom from ambiguity

* purity, elegance and economy of scientific models.

One might dub this a Cartesian tradition, which includes, apart from Descartes, among so many others: Plato, Aristotle and later Kant. There are of course philosophers whose status, with respect to this dichotomy, is much more ambiguous: Husserl, Bergson, and Sartre. Some of these, particularly perhaps Sartre, are also partly "dialogistic" in some respects. However, those mentioned here tend to subscribe to points like the following:

* the individual subject as the self-evident, absolute point of departure

* disconnecting the subject from his world

* Cartesian dichotomies (cf. above).

The disciplines of psychology and psycholinguistics have continued to be characterised by an individualist perspective (O´Connell & Kowak, 2003). The same is true of most of Anglophone social psychology (Farr, 1996).

Dialogism deprives these stances of their privileged status. It fosters a scepticism towards the postulation of abstract types and underlying structures, thus being against the tradition in formal linguistics related to Platonic ideas (Plato > Descartes > Chomsky).

Cartesianism strives for ordered, rational discussion with coherence, logic, and often normativity, *without* considerations of "irrelevant" human interests and commitments, power, illusion, collusion, human errors and shortcomings. The dialogical alternative (classified by Marková, 1982, as Hegelian) also acknowledges the actual sociocultural realities in the human world(s): Changing foci, streams of varying topics, channelled through different textual, intertextual, contextual factors, culturally different participants (§ 6-7).

Schematically, we can exemplify some differences between monological and dialogical traditions with the following names:

Plato, Aristotle	Herakleitos (pre-Socratics)
Augustine	
Descartes	Vico
Saussure	Volosinov, Bakhtin
Habermas	Nietzsche

In more general terms:

enlightenment	romanticism
modernism	postmodernism
intellectualism	emotion, corporeality
rationality	rationalities of different kinds, interests, passions
unitary science	distinction natural vs cultural sciences
universalism	historicism, constructivism
individualism	other-oriented theory

Placing scholars and schools in either of two coarse categories, in two columns as of above, amounts to some unacceptable simplifications. For example, putting Plato and Aristotle in the same cell is partly unjustified. Aristotle was certainly monological in devising his system of categories, but in being more empirically oriented, he was less monological than was Plato with his abstract ideas. Plato set a model for a strong cognitive tradition in Western thinking.

10.2. *Precursors of dialogism:* Monologism is the dominant tradition in Western philosophy and science. However, there have been precursors of dialogism, for example (see Marková, 2003a: ch.3): Vico, Hamann, Hegel (in some respects), Humboldt, Herder etc, neo-kantian philosophers (Cohen, Natorp, Cassirer)[36] ("Marburg school") including dialogue philosophers (Rosenzweig, Buber), preparing the ground for Bakhtin and his contemporaries (e.g. Prague linguists like Mathesius, Karcevskij, R. Jakobson).

In addition, Linell (1998) and others suggest that dialogism inherited elements from (some variants of) phenomenology (e.g. perspectivity, multiple realities, human interestedness), pragmatism (e.g. embeddedness in practical action, vagueness and the gradual emergence of meaning), social behaviorism and symbolic interactionism (Mead; the three-step model of (minimal) interaction), cultural semiotics and activity theory (cognition, communication and work as mediated by language and culture). Heidegger is, in some respects, quite dialogistic (Steiner, 1978) (being-in-the world, involvement, the role of the other, etc.) We also have French existentialism and dialectic philosophy: Marcel, Kojève, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre: human existence as praxis in social, historical and linguistic contexts: engagement, embodiment, relation to the other. But these deviate from dialogism on several points: they are more macro-oriented (no (empirical) focus on situated interaction), pay less attention to language and talk-in-interaction (communication), and their point of departure is still in the individual subject. Finally, one could mention the theory of social systems of Luhmann (1995), which takes communication as the "basal process of social system" (p. 138). Luhmann´s theory exhibits both similarities and crucial differences with respect to dialogism, phenomenology, and philosophy of action.

10.3. *Empirical approaches to interaction:* While most of the "schools" mentioned above are "philosophical", there are also some 20th century empirical approaches, which are, in part or even in large part, dialogistic in orientation. My contention (Linell, 1998) is that these vast research traditions have provided important empirical evidence for the fruitfulness of a dialogical approach, in particular as regards spoken

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[36] The neo-kantians combined Kant´s idea that active thinking creates meaning (concepts are partly man-made) with the idea of the social embedding, the role of the other (language, culture) (Marková, 2003a: 79).

language and talk-in-interaction. These traditions include ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis, ethnographic and context-based discourse analysis, the Firth/Halliday tradition in linguistics, social pragmatics, Critical Discourse Analysis, symbolic interactionism (Goffman), interactionist social psychology (Clark), discursive psychology (Potter), social-constructionist versions of social representations theory (Moscovici), socio-cultural semiotics and cultural psychology (Wertsch), and interdisciplinary dialogue analysis (Rommetveit, Marková, et al.).

11. Dialogism and science.

Dialogue theory, or dialogism, should account for social reality in terms that are imaginative, comprehensive, rigorous, and sensitive to empirical variations. In other words, it aims to be a scholarly paradigm for theorising human action, cognition and communication. But is dialogism dialogical in itself? Systematising sciences are monological in the sense that they want to fixate perspectives, be unequivocal, and strive for generalising accounts or even universal validity (§ 5). Even if we restrict the ambitions of dialogism to account for meaning (as opposed to matter), I therefore think that we must admit that dialogism may involve monological components.

First, we have the paradox of, on the one hand, proposing a perspective on the human world that stresses dynamics, multiplicity, partial contradictions etc., and, on the other hand, proposing only this single perspective, thus being on the meta-level "monological". Here, we must have recourse to what was previously said about monological practices in a dialogically constituted world (§ 5). Scholarly or scientific systematicity *is* admittedly monological in nature. In opposition to such a stance, one might propose that there should be no attempts at "grand theories" (dialogism could be seen as a "grand" epistemology for the human, cultural and social sciences)[37]. We need to develop a coherent alternative to monologism. This dialogism must assign a place to monological practices (§ 5), and must not be confused with extreme postmodernism (§ 14).

Secondly, at the more down-to-earth level, specific studies of circumscribed phenomena are of course local and subject to specific interests and purposes (thus contextualised), but they tend to deal with their phenomena in systematic ways, under

fixated theoretical and methodological perspectives. For the purpose of a specific, scientific study, one may even treat some of the distinctions of § 9 *as if* they were Cartesian ones. For example, looking upon man as an information-processing system, as in mainstream individual cognitive psychology, is such a 'local' or 'situated' enterprise, which proves reasonably successful in certain contexts, in certain 'enclaves of expertise'. Take the case of machine translation (cf. Rommetveit, 1998: 228ff) as an example. Machine translation necessitates that language be transformed into such formally defined entities, which can be handled by computers. This has proved to be quite successful within limited domains, in which relevant human concerns and interests can be taken for granted and temporarily fixated (and often partially brought into the language of the computer program). Yet, and here we return to our dialogist perspective, the human interpreter, who is immersed in a human social world, must always make the final assessment if the translations produced are reasonable and accurate. As Rommetveit argues, following Wittgenstein and others, ordinary language can never be exhaustively conceptualised in simple and abstract concepts.

The fixation of perspectives applies also to studies of e.g. talk-in-interaction, a thoroughly "dialogical" data type. Any systematic endeavour within this field will bracket some dialogical properties in the data. This happens for example when we categorise utterances, turns or episodes in terms of taxonomic systems. This we may want to do in attempts at diagnosing individuals´ manifest interactional abilities, or assigning values to dominance or coherence patterns in different conversations. However, such category systems can be designed to capture some (if not all) dialogical properties (as argued by Marková & Linell, 1996; Linell, 1998: 178f). In Linköping, two such systems have been developed: initiative-response (IR) analysis (using turns as basic units) (Linell et al., 1987) and topical episode analysis (using episodes and transitions between episodes as basic units) (Linell & Korolija, 1997; Korolija, 1998).

A way of making up for excessive monoperspectivity in science is obviously to change perspectives *between different* specific studies.

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[37] Incidentally, the theory that there should be no grand theories is itself a grand theory!

12. Dialogism in language studies.

This section briefly addresses the role of dialogism mainly within linguistics. What could be the substantial, theoretical *consequences for linguistics* of adopting dialogism? These, I think, are some examples:

* linguistic theory is a theory of *praxis*, rather than a system of abstract units (and rules), and praxis comprises the duality of *situated interaction* and *situation-transcending practices;*

* one must take one´s point of departure in *interaction* (cf. `interactional linguistics´, Ochs et al., 1996; Linell, 2001, 2003b): inter-acts (rather than speech acts; § 8.1), sequences, activities and larger units. In phonology, one might talk about *gestures*, rather than segments, supra-segments or other units. Structural units are emergent abstractions from utterances (which implies an empirical approach to spoken language and interaction, rather than one primarily based on intuitions about structures);

* situated meanings (interpretations) are to be seen in terms of actions and *movements*; parties to communication engage, usually in asymmetric manners, in linguistic work and efforts for meaning, they monitor the processes of becoming, and they position themselves with respect to the world, the other, the self, the discourse and its movements, the shifting attunements to the attunement of the other (Salazar Orvig, 1999: 9);

* linguistic units, on the other hand, are to be seen as *potential(itie)s*[38]: the (linguistic) meanings of lexical items are meaning potentials (Halliday 1994, Rommetveit 1974, Lähteenmäki, 2001, Allwood 2003), grammatical constructions have functional potentials (Linell 2003b). For Bachtin, 'the language system is a potential that becomes realised in concrete utterances which utilise the meaning resources of a language' (Lähteenmäki, 2003:26);

* accordingly, situated meaning cannot be entirely derived from inherent lexical (and grammatical) meanings; rather, linguistic meanings are potentials that combine with various contextual (co-textual, situational or activity-related) factors to produce situated interpretations[39];

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[38] `Potentials´, as a characteristic of units of the linguistic system (as opposed to the `actualities´ of language use), is a notion related to that of `energeia´ proposed by Aristotle and taken up by, among others, Humboldt.

[39] For example, not all emotive words are inherently emotive; some are (more) neutral and derive their emotiveness in context from the contexts themselves (Holmberg, 2002).

* grammatical constructions have *responsive and projective* properties ('outer syntax'; cf. above three aspects of the utterance: retrospection, substance, projection) and are often loosely coupled to communicative activities; the grammatical construction is a linguistic means of transforming one micro-situation of contextual understanding to another; it s a method for assigning linguistic form to (parts of) an utterance and to contribute to accomplishing a local communicative project (Linell, 2003b);

* emergent regularities ('rules, constructions, analogies') cluster around different types of model utterances and utterance parts. The boundaries between lexical entries and grammatical constructions are fuzzy, at least in some areas.

13. Some controversies and dilemmas in dialogism.

Dialogism is of a fairly wide applicability. In some respects, one could compare the narrative paradigm (with which it overlaps), which has been applied to personal narratives, sociocultural narratives, as well as researchers´ meta-narratives (Somers & Gibson, 1994). Some would undoubtedly prefer a narrower interpretation of both paradigms.

Accordingly, different "dialogists" do not agree on all that has been said above. Some of the *controversial points* are:

13.1. Should dialogism be seen as a general (philosophical) framework, a way of looking at the human world, or as a more precise theory ('dialogue theory')? In the former case, is it an epistemology or rather an ontology (or both) (§ 2)?

13.2. Should 'dialogue' be taken in the abstract sense (all forms of knowledge, cognition, communication can be analysed in dialogical terms) or only in the concrete sense as 'interactive communication through symbols between two or more individuals who are mutually co-present'? (Peters, 1999, takes it in the latter sense.)

13.3. Is dialogue to be understood in a normative sense ('dialogue' assigned an almost 'holy status', cf. Peters, 1999: 33)? Should, for example, the theory address the dream of ultimate, mutual communion? Should 'dialogue' invoke relations of absolute sincerity and intimacy between two single individuals (I, thou), or does it refer to

relations of varying qualities to others of several kinds (§ 4.2)? Should dialogism deal with an idealised kind of communication characterised by liberty (openness, freedom to take individual initiatives), equality (symmetry of participation), and fraternity (mutual responsibility and responsivity) (cf. Habermas, who is hardly a dialogist!)? Or are asymmetries, multiperspectivity and misunderstandings (alterity according to § 4.2) inherent in human dialogue?

Other related issues include the following: Is dialogue something which can promote thinking, consciousness and reflexivity of all kinds (including immoral and malevolent ones), or is it a kind of moralism (theological variants: mysticists like Böhme etc.; later Buber, also perhaps Bakhtin)[40]?. Is dialogue concerned with individual responsibility, or is it something whose essence is its social genesis and social construction (cf. § 8.6). (On this point, Bakhtin has been interpreted differently, with characteristic differences between Russia and the West; Steinglass, 1998.)

We must take account of the ideals and norms which, in some form or another, are part of our cultural realities. Under certain conditions, such ideals have an impact also on actual behaviour; interaction is reflexively related to theories and norms. However, actual situations and interactions are never ideal in any single dimensions. Empirical realities are much more complex. My approach to dialogism, as outlined here, is geared towards

a more 'robust' (Peters, 1999) and empirical theory, which is built upon concepts capable of describing and explaining all actually occurring forms of discourse, text (use), communication, cognition and meaningful (inter)action, including all the differences between human beings, the asymmetries, complementarities and tensions of communication, and the exercises of discursive power. The reciprocity of knowledge transfer is incomplete, approximate and uncertain; the basic notion of understanding is not that of complete understanding but that of sufficient understanding for current purposes. Discourse in the world only partly consists of mutual open disclosures; it also contains discretions and indiscretions, lies as well as white lies, allusions, secrets, collusions, fictions, exaggerations and understatements, parodies and jokes, etc. [41]

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[40] At some points, Peters (1999) talks with a certain amount of disdain about "dialogicians (a term to rhyme with theologicians)" (p. 34).

[41] Cf. Petitat´s (1998) treatise on secrets and its social forms. Petitat also points out: 'Si nous exprimions tout ce qui nous passe par la tête, les autres auraient la tâche impossible de démêler le chaos mental qui nous habite' (p. 158). The communication process helps us to bring order to our thoughts, partly because

14. Epilogue: The importance of avoiding extremes.

The previous section alluded to some possible problems and dilemmas in dialogism. In order to avoid some reductions into absurdity, I believe that a viable dialogism must involve positionings which some people might experience as compromises. This includes points like the following.

We must avoid the extremes of postmodernism (§ 2.3). This partly anti-postmodernist stance involves (a) avoiding extreme anti-individualism ("the subject as nothing but a nexus of social relations and dependencies"), just as we deny extreme individualism ("the subject is absolutely free") (§ 4.2), (b) avoiding the extremes of the "linguistic" or "discursive" turns in the social sciences; note that I advocate a certain kind of "realism" as compatible with dialogism, (c) promoting a *contextual* social constructionism, rather than a radical constructionism (the latter implying post-modern relativism, which amounts to a kind of extremely abstract thinking, negating the body and nature, space, social conditions, etc.) (Linell, 1996), (d) recognising science as a particular type of activity (Bourdieu, 2000: 109ff), and (e) in general seeking a mediating position between modernism and postmodernism, i.e. neither objectivism nor relativism (Bourdieu, op.cit.: 120). Relationism does not imply relativism.

We must acknowledge monologue and monologism too: there are monologistic (or monologising) practices in the world (§ 5). Indeed, there is, as suggested in § 11, a certain paradox involved in proposing dialogism as the (only) general framework; it may be argued that on the meta-level, this amounts to adopting monoperspectivism, which is arguably typical of monologism (Bourdieu, 2000: 50, 93). Therefore, one could argue (Linell, 2003a) that we must oscillate between two overall stances, one which assumes monologism and dialogism as co-existant and competing paradigms, and one which, after all, adopts dialogism as the super-ordinate epistemology, while still acknowledging that many human practices are in many respects monological.

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we cannot, in each and every moment, bring into language everything we experience ('la présence de non-dit', p. 159). This idea, that language brings order to a pre-linguistic chaos, has of course been proposed by others too (§ 8.10).

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