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Discerning the Dialogical Self: A Theoretical and Methodological Examination of a Nepali Adolescent's Narrative

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Key words: BAKHTIN, identity, narrative, self processes, cultural worlds, heteroglossia, voice, utterance, dialogism, Nepal, speech genre, social language, caste, ideological consciousness

Abstract: Mikhail BAKHTIN's ideas of heteroglossia, voice, utterance, and dialogism are important theoretical concepts for investigating relations between social and personal facets of human development, especially the development of identity or self-understandings in cultural worlds. Yet methodological and analytic procedures for discerning voices in individuals' self-representations are relatively unexplored. In this paper, we discuss how BAKHTIN's ideas can be used in a type of narrative analysis that focuses on the construction of individual identity and positionality within cultural worlds. We use an empirical example from one Nepali adolescent's narration of self, collected as part of an extensive ethnographic study in a rural community in Nepal, to illustrate the conjunction of theory and method in discerning how individuals orchestrate the voices from their cultural and social worlds to create distinctive images of self and to envision their (future) social positions. Our examination of this narrative indicates that self processes orchestrate and transform social voices for past, present and future forms of self-understandings and cultural meanings. The primary *foci* in this paper are the theoretical concepts, methods and analysis that aid the researcher in discerning and understanding these voices and their orchestrations.

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> "In essence, the language as a living social-ideological entity, as a heteroglossic standpoint (*mnenie*) lies for the individual consciousness on the borders of the own (*svoe*) and the foreign (*chuzhoe*). The word in language is half-foreign. It becomes one's 'own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he masters the word (*ovladeet slovom*), and adapts it to his own meaningful (*smyslovoi*) and expressive tendency. Prior to this moment of appropriation (*prisvoenie*), the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that a speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own."
>
> (translated from BAKHTIN, 1975, p.106; in English version: BAKHTIN, 1981, pp.293-294).

1. The Question: Person as Cultural Constructor

This often used quote from the philosophy of speech of Mikhail BAKHTIN leads us to the two main issues we address in this article: 1) how do individuals, through a dialogic, sociogenetic process, orchestrate voices from their social and personal worlds—voices imbued with past meanings and intentions—to create novel self-understandings and envision selves in new social worlds; and 2) what theoretical concepts and methodological and analytic procedures aid the researcher in discerning these creations. [1]

This first question of how individuals develop novel personal and sociocultural forms has obviously been addressed in the history of developmental psychology (see VALSINER & VAN DER VEER, 2000 for a historical overview) as well as language philosophy (CASSIRER, 1929) and in the biology of organism-environment relations (VON UEXKYLL, 1940/1980). More recent works in anthropology have focused on individuals' narratives as a form that interweaves and creates both personal and cultural meanings (e.g., CRAPANZANO, 1988; HOLLAND, LACHICOTTE, SKINNER, & CAIN, 1998; MUMFORD, 1989; SKINNER, BAILEY, CORREA, & RODRIGUEZ, 1999; STRAUSS, 1990). In many of these works, authors have drawn upon BAKHTIN's notions of voice, heteroglossia and dialogism to account for mind as socially generated and selves as dialogical. From a BAKHTINian perspective, narratives are externalized, multivoiced utterances that originate from the author's internalization of past and imagined dialogues and encounters in the social world. As such, they become a

primary site for analysis of the mutual constitution of self and the social world, of meanings at the personal and cultural level. [2]

BAKHTIN's theoretical contributions, while a highly productive source of novelty in understanding the dialogic nature of self and society, offer certain complexities and issues for analysis. Since there are relatively few examples of BAKHTINian applications to actual cases and little discussion of the analytic and methodological issues involved in such applications, we introduce key concepts from BAKHTIN and colleagues and subsequently illustrate their application and extension in an analysis of an excerpt from a Nepali adolescent's self-narrative.[1] We end with a discussion of some methodological and analytic points related to a BAKHTINian analysis of text. [3]

1.1 BAKHTIN's heritage

In 1934-35, when BAKHTIN wrote the text from which the opening quotation was taken, he was in exile in Kustanai (KONKIN & KONKINA, 1993). The period of social turmoil in Russian society of the 1920s was a phenomenon of the past, and the ideological voices of the powerful institutions around him were persuading themselves and others to keep marching on towards the inevitable triumph of socialism in a land of endless opportunities. In contrast to any active involvement in the social discourses of the time (and especially from his ideologically marked position as a political exile), BAKHTIN concentrated on literary analyses. His observations on how different genres and social languages inhere in the speech of people in their everyday lives provided a productive context for his analysis. [4]

Contemporary efforts to grasp the cultural nature of persons have taken an interest in BAKHTIN's intellectual genealogy, yet there are notable differences in BAKHTIN's work and current extensions of his ideas. BAKHTIN's focus was on literary theory; he was never interested in explaining human development in its ontogenetic form. In contrast, many current applications of BAKHTIN's ideas are aimed at explaining how the social world of the developing person leads to the development of the self. BAKHTIN's "empirical data" were literary texts—fixed and final products—whereas developmental psychologists and anthropologists often examine individuals' narrative accounts, accounts that are emergent and extemporaneous. Finally, BAKHTIN's philosophical indebtedness to the literary and language-philosophical traditions of Continental Europe separates him from the Anglo-Saxon associationist traditions dominant in contemporary psychology at large, and likewise in developmental psychology. In spite of these discrepancies, BAKHTIN's theoretical contributions have helped transcend the person/culture dualism that has plagued social science, not by fusing the two, but by focusing on their mutually constitutive and dialogic nature (VALSINER, 1991, p.314). The relevance of the person—actor, constructor of the social world for oneself and for others—was crucial for a BAKHTINian perspective. [5]

1 See HILL and IRVINE (1993), HOLLAND and SKINNER (2001), LACHICOTTE (in press), and STRAUSS (1990) for other sources of ethnographic case studies using BAKHTINian concepts. HOLLAND and SKINNER (2001) in particular is engaged with issues of cultural and personal meaning as shaped by social processes.

Our summary of BAKHTIN's notions of heteroglossia, voice, utterance, and dialogism is necessarily brief and does not do justice to the complexity of these concepts, but it suffices to outline the ideas that scholars generally borrow from BAKHTIN in analyzing narratives and utterances and in speculating from these to the dialogic nature of the mind, self, and social world. More extensive discussions are available in BAKHTIN (1981, 1984, 1986), HOLLAND and LAVE (2001), HOLLAND, LACHICOTTE, SKINNER, and CAIN (1998), HOLLAND and SKINNER (2001), HOLQUIST (1990), VOLOSHINOV (1929/1986), and WERTSCH (1991). The dialogical self theory of Hubert HERMANS is built partly on BAKHTINian grounds (HERMANS, KEMPEN, & VAN LOON, 1992; HERMANS, 2001). Yet much remains to be constructed for these perspectives—the theoretical sophistication is still far from matching that of the empirical phenomena, and the methodology of performing any analysis of dialogical processes is still in its infancy. [6]

2. BAKHTINian Theoretical Concepts

2.1 Heteroglossia (*raznorechie*), social languages, and speech genres

Although BAKHTIN analyzed texts, he was interested in the living language, speech as spoken by real individuals in specific situations and addressed to audiences both immediately and distantly present. A living language is made up of a simultaneity of different social languages (or "sociolects"; LACHICOTTE, 1986, p.5), each attached to specific ideologies and perspectives. Social languages stratify any "national" language (e.g., French, Nepali) into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, "professional" and "generic" languages, languages of generations, and so forth (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.271-72). Examples of these social languages or sociolects include the professional jargon of psychologists or lawyers, the argot of teenage peer groups, the bureaucratise of government officials, the language of political campaigns, and the discourse of priests. Sociolects are characterized by the social stratum and styles of their speakers who are associated with particular social groups. These social groups are not equal in power, prestige or authority. The voice of one group may be authoritative and hegemonic, suppressing other voices, but in any society, there are counter-hegemonic voices that threaten to weaken and subvert more authoritative ones (BAKHTIN 1981, p.240; see also MUMFORD, 1989, p.15). For BAKHTIN, then, language is "heteroglossic," composed of a combination of social languages, some of which are engaged in opposition and struggle (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.294). [7]

In addition to social languages, heteroglossia is also realized through speech genres. To BAKHTIN, a speech genre is not necessarily associated with a particular social group as is a social language (though one group may tend to use a particular genre such as military commands), but with particular forms of utterance and particular speech situations (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.87; see also WERTSCH, 1991). Speech genres include forms such as poems, folksongs, parodies, scholarly treatises, sermons, biographies, prayers, confessions, life stories, everyday conversations, conversations between intimate friends, and so

forth. These genres enable creativity, but also the rules and structure of the genre place parameters on utterances. For example, in many areas of Nepal, folksongs are a genre whereby women narrate their lives. There are specific types of folksongs, each of which engenders a particular rendition of self and the social world. This genre of singing one's life in a folksong draws on and evokes the cultural world of gender relations in Nepal. It affords creativity through providing a means and a space for individual women to orchestrate their own tales of hardship and hope, but the genre also limits them by its stylized form and expectations of what subject matter is appropriate for these songs (HOLLAND & SKINNER, 2001; SKINNER, VALSINER, & BASNET, 1991). Although there is room for creativity, the employment of a particular speech genre shapes one's words and manner of speaking in ways that are predictable and customary (HOLLAND et al., 1998). [8]

2.2 Voice, utterance, and dialogism

A speaking person produces utterances. For BAKHTIN, all utterances produced by a speaking person invoke both a social language and a speech genre (WERTSCH, 1991, pp.59-61). And all utterances are themselves multivocal and dialogic. Dialogism pays special attention to the variety of ways in which the self as author incorporates the words and voices of others (BAKHTIN, 1981, 1990). Utterances contain at least two voices: the voice of the speaking person and the voice of the social language through which it is ventriloquated. Words and discourse are socially charged, dialogically engaged with past, present and future audiences, and populated by the intentions of the unique speaker (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.293). These words, imbued with past meanings and located in social languages and genres, contain their own constraints as BAKHTIN noted:

> "The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all, the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as a rejoinder to it—it does not approach the object from the sidelines." (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.276-77) [9]

The author of a narrative generates novelty by taking a position from which meaning is made-a position that enters a dialogue and takes a particular stance in addressing and answering others and the world (HOLLAND et al., 1998, p.173). The author's words arise out of dialogue that has gone on before in situations that have left residues of meanings in the words, but her words are not entirely relics of the past. The speaker orients them toward ongoing dialogues, anticipating the rejoinders, arguments and agreements of her audience. She injects the words she chooses-words that come from her social environment-with her own intentions, her own perspective from a particular social position, as she directs them in dialogic encounters to engage and answer people who are actually present or who may be far removed in time and space. Thus speaking and authoring a self can be a creative and novel endeavor, an act that constructs

personal and cultural meanings. An author in her utterances also creates or assumes one or more positions in a cultural or figured world. In weaving a narrative, the speaker places herself, her listeners, and those who populate the narrative in certain positions and relations that are figured by larger cultural meanings or worlds. Narrative acts may reinforce or challenge these figured worlds. [10]

3. Extensions of BAKHTIN in Contemporary Studies of Identity and Culture

These notions of positionality and figured worlds come from extensions of BAKHTIN's ideas in anthropological examinations of how identity and agency are formed within and against cultural activities. HOLLAND et al. (1998, p.41) describe figured worlds as historical and social phenomena, into which individuals enter or are recruited and which are reproduced and developed by and through the practices of their participants. Figured worlds are not broad cultural logics of the sort described in older anthropologies, but circumscribed, conventionalized activities pertinent to specific historical times and places. They are populated by imagined social types who inhabit specific positions and carry out generic acts in order to satisfy culturally recognized motives. These social types have voices, in the BAKHTINian sense, and positions that vary in power and status. One's self-understandings, or identities, form within different figured worlds and each identity develops dialogically through continued participation with those actors populating these worlds. Thus, these actors' voices become part of one's consciousness, subjectivity, and inner speech, material which the self can orchestrate and externalize in various ways to position oneself within a figured world. [11]

The narrative analyzed below examines the voices and positions inhering in the figured world of caste relations in one mixed caste rural community in Nepal in the 1980s and 1990s. We use both BAKHTINian concepts as outlined above and the notion of figured world to demonstrate how narratives can be analyzed to show the dialogic development of identity and agency specific to historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally constructed worlds. [12]

4. Narratives and Ethnography in Nepal

In 1985-86, SKINNER began a long term, ethnographic study in Naudada, a mixed caste, Hindu rural hill community in Nepal. The overall focus of this initial thirteen-month study was on the ways in which children and adolescents developed identities, or self-understandings, related to caste and gender. In this fieldwork, SKINNER employed focused observations, semi-structured interviews, and informal conversations with 30 focal children and adolescents (aged 8-18). Transcripts of the audio-taped, semi-structured interviews and fieldnotes on observations and conversation yielded several thousands of pages of data related to children's developing understandings of self and their social world. Understanding the sociohistorical and political contexts of children's utterances and enactments also required extensive ethnographic observations and interviews in the larger community with a wide range of people from all social

groups and castes in the small settlements, or *gaons*, that comprised Naudada. After this initial fieldwork from November 1985 to November 1986, SKINNER conducted three follow-up studies in 1990, 1991, and 1993. The excerpt used below to illustrate a narrative analysis of voices comes from a conversation in 1991, but the analysis draws on data from the entire period of fieldwork. [13]

4.1 The figured world of caste relations in Naudada

In Naudada during the period of ethnographic fieldwork, there were 12 named caste/ethnic groups. These castes and relations among castes were interpreted or figured according to the hierarchical ranking given by Hindu concepts of purity and pollution (DUMONT, 1980). Bahuns and Chetris were the two highest castes, the only castes considered "twice-born," and therefore worthy of wearing the sacred thread (*janai*) which marked them as morally and ritually superior to other castes. Bahuns were supposed to eat and drink only with other Bahuns of their same status. According to historical proscriptions, Chetris could accept food and water from Bahuns and other Chetris, but not from members of lower castes. In Naudada, these two castes together constituted the majority of the population, owned most of the best land, and wielded much of the political power. The castes that made up the middle ranges of the local hierarchy were ethnic groups of Tibeto-Burman origin that had migrated out of Tibet in successive waves over past centuries. These castes were sometimes referred to as *matwali* (those who drink and manufacture liquor). They were not considered "untouchable," but they were not as ritually pure as members of the higher castes. Newars were ranked the highest in this mid-range group, followed by Gurungs, Magars, Ghartis, Tamangs, and Darais. Castes at the bottom of the hierarchy were considered untouchable (termed *saano jaat*—small caste, or *paani nachalne*—those from whom higher castes do not take or share water). Although virtually everyone in Naudada was involved in agricultural pursuits, many members of these lower castes also followed their traditional occupations such as leatherworking, blacksmithing, or tailoring. In Naudada, the Sunar (Goldsmith), Kami (Ironsmith), Sarki (Leatherworker) and Damai (Tailor/Musician) castes were designated "untouchable." [14]

Although some people in some contexts (e.g., older school children when on school grounds, local staff of an non-government organization devoted to rural development) chose not to follow proscriptions based on caste, at the time of SKINNER's fieldwork many Naudadans still followed inter-caste restrictions. For example, members of higher castes would not eat cooked food, take water, or smoke cigarettes offered to them by members of the lower castes, and members of lower castes were not allowed to enter the homes of higher caste families. For most people and in most interactions, one's caste was a crucial social identity. Although caste was not necessarily foregrounded in every interaction, all participants in an interaction were aware of each other's caste. One's behavior and language (e.g., choice of pronoun and verb forms that indicate relative status) were often dictated by participants' caste. Although caste restrictions have lessened in some arenas and caste as an ideology has been rejected by some individuals, at the time of SKINNER's fieldwork, caste constituted a thorough-

going system of privilege in Naudada, one that was deeply rooted and institutionalized. It was a cultural world that figured interactions and positioned people relative to one another. [15]

4.2 An example of a multi-voiced narrative

In 1991, SKINNER met with Hari, one of the focal children whom she had gotten to know well in her initial study. By then Hari, a member of the Sunar jaat (caste/ethnic group), was sixteen-years-old and in the ninth grade. As his caste fell into the "untouchable" category. Hari, in daily activities and ritual events in Naudada, was constantly reminded that he was lower caste. [16]

Hari was a very bright and articulate adolescent. In the course of their many conversations over the years, Hari told SKINNER about his experiences in Naudada and his plans for the future. During one interview in1991, Hari told SKINNER he hoped to study in Kathmandu or India and return to Naudada as a doctor. He wanted to become "a great man who would work to develop Naudada" and not be like those whom he characterized as "lazy drunkards, gamblers, and cheaters." A segment from this taped conversation is reproduced below.

> Hari: In Kalopani Gaon (a gaon neighboring his that is populated by members of the Chetri caste), people are addicted to playing cards (i.e., gambling) although they have nothing at home to eat. I don't like such people ... Some people, especially the Newars and Bahuns, don't allow me to enter their house. I am a Sunar. Just a little above Babu Ram's [caste]. But when I become a doctor, or an important man, I will be able to do some great works for this village-
>
> SKINNER: I'm a little afraid of these kind of men (referring back to the gamblers and drunkards).
>
> Hari: In front of these kind of people, I am a student also, but they have contempt for me. "J*au. Gharbhitra napas*! ("Go away, don't enter our house!") they say to me in the Newar house and Bahun's house. But I am a Sunar. "*Napas*!" ("Don't enter"), they say. My caste is just a little above Babu Ram's. "*Napas*!" they say. But later in this village, I will be a doctor or teacher. I will have my own job. I will be able to speak. I will be able to study, to do good things.
>
> SKINNER: When you become a doctor, do you think Newar and Bahun will let you enter their houses?
>
> Hari: Sister, the system is not right, however the heart/mind (*man*) of the people is all right. We shouldn't do these kinds of things. There are many people here who say, "Don't come here. It's not good." But in front of these people, sister, [I say] I am also a student. I shouldn't do this (i.e., treat people differently because of their caste). They hate me. "Don't go inside the house." In a Newar house or Bahun house, they say, "*Napas*!" I'm just a little higher than Babu Ram. They say "*Napas*!" When tomorrow comes, I may be a teacher, doctor, or anything I want to be. Tomorrow I can be. I will study, I will do good works (i.e., good deeds, projects).
>
> SKINNER: So do you think after you're a doctor that Newar and Bahun will say this [*napas*] to you?

> Hari: No, they will not say. The system is not good, but people are not bad. Later when I become a doctor, an important person, a powerful person and bring money, [I will say to these people], "Here, please have some tea. Please take a cigarette." But I will not take myself. [I'll say], "Come inside and eat." After this, I'll go to their place and eat. This is necessary. Because I don't like [them to say], "You go away from here." I don't like it because I love everybody, I get along with everybody. I don't say bad words. [17]

5. A BAKHTINian Analysis

Following BAKHTIN (1981), we begin the analysis of Hari's narrative by examining who is doing the speaking and under what concrete circumstances, who is present and who is the intended audience, and how the speaker apprehends this audience. In this conversation, Hari is the primary speaker and author. He is the concrete speaking consciousness that narrates events and orchestrates voices and positions to produce this unique utterance. In the course of the narrative, the positional identity he takes as narrator shifts from that of Sunar (his caste status) to that of student (his status as an educated person) to the future position of "great man." SKINNER is the immediate audience and interlocuter who in part shapes Hari's narrative through her questions and responses. The type of the conversation, or its genre, is one of informal conversation, but it is also a confidential and private exchange. No one else is presence or privy to it. This interchange is a continuation of the many conversations SKINNER and Hari had had over the years about his experiences in Naudada and reflections on his life and society. In this context, Hari regards his immediate audience, SKINNER, as an older sister, a confidante. He perhaps envisions a distant audience to be those to whom, SKINNER as a researcher, will relate his story. [18]

Hari locates his vision of himself squarely in the cultural or figured world of caste relations. He populates his narrative with various castes of Naudada, people he has watched and interacted with all his life. These people become the voices who position Hari in particular ways and the actors whom he chooses to engage in dialogue and critique. Hari's words carry his own subjective experience of living in the world of caste where he has sometimes felt the pain and stigma of being treated poorly because he was born a Sunar. [19]

In this excerpt Hari identifies himself and others in a world of caste relations where distinct types lay different claims to morality. Hari begins by positioning Chetri men in a neighboring gaon as morally corrupt because they gamble away money while their families go without food. In the moral hierarchy of caste, these people are superior to him. They are pure while Hari as a Sunar is polluting and cannot enter their homes. Hari identifies with his caste ("I am a Sunar") and invokes the ranking system of caste when he places Sunars a little above the caste of his friend, Babu Ram's. Yet Hari also begins to construct a world where social status based on caste is challenged and supplanted by alternate identities that can be achieved through education and good works. He does not create this world by himself, but draws upon his experiences in school where this alternative

vision is tolerated and even encouraged by textbooks and "progressive" teachers, and enacted by certain students (see SKINNER & HOLLAND, 1996).[2] In this alternate envisioned world, the moral code becomes one based on acts and deeds. In this way of reckoning, Chetris who gamble are lower than Hari, who does not, and (the future) Hari, who will do good works. In a few sentences, Hari has set out the endemic struggles and conflicts of his social world and depicted himself as embedded within, but also seeing beyond them. [20]

Hari continues the narrative by shifting his position to that of a student, an educated person. Being an educated person is a relatively new status in Nepal and one that assigns status on a basis different from that of caste (SKINNER & HOLLAND, 1996). Hari is not only Sunar; he is an educated person who plans to become a doctor or teacher. Yet those of higher caste do not treat him with the respect due to a student. They still express contempt for him. At this point in the narrative, Hari uses the technique of reported speech (BAKHTIN, 1981; VOLOSINOV (1986/[1929]) to bring in the dialogic others with whom he is engaged. He interanimates his utterance with the speech of higher castes who tell him to go away, and not enter their homes ("*Jau. Gharbhitra napas*!"). As author of the narrative, Hari distances himself from the axiological position of the Newar and Bahun by clearly setting off their speech from his own. Hari submerges his own subjectivity to report their words. As he did so, he changed his intonation and gestures, speaking with loud authority and taking on the bearing of the Bahun or Newar who issues the command to go away. [21]

In BAKHTINian terms, Hari used means of reporting others' speech that clearly sets boundaries so that no mixing of accents or blurring of boundaries can occur (see BAKHTIN, 1981, p.326). The voice of Hari as student and the voice of the higher castes are juxtaposed as aware of each other, but not engaged in polite conversation. Bahuns and Newars have become generic characters carrying out generic actions in the figured world of caste. Their speech is framed as antiphonic to Hari's as a Sunar. The words of the higher castes index a collective voice of the Brahmanical tradition, the religious ideology which ranks castes along dimensions of purity and pollution, and Hari's caste as untouchable. The speech of Bahuns and Newars is associated with the discourses and practices of the powerful. The single word, *napas*, a verbal command used only with inferiors, indexes Hari's low status and encapsulates a long history of power and social force. Bahuns and Newars, with this one word, assert their status and show contempt for Hari. In this juxtaposition of voices, there is a clash of perspectives, perspectives that reflect the social heteroglossia and ongoing contestations of Naudada and the larger Hindu social world. [22]

Hari then shifts to the future and a more direct criticism of the caste system. He envisions repositioning himself by returning to Naudada as a doctor or teacher, as a great man who will be able to "speak," that is, command a place, a position, and a voice. He plans to challenge the caste system by altering inter-caste relations and the ideology which permeates them, to change the dominance of

2 See also HOLLAND et al., (1998), Chapters 11 and 12, for the importance of imagined worlds in social change.

caste and the rules whereby worth is measured. There is evidence in this utterance that Hari is aware of the heteroglossic world around him, the sociolects of his society, the power linked to those sociolects, and potential subversive voices that could threaten or weaken the authority of caste (i.e., by supplanting it with the status of an educated person). The utterance, "The (caste) system is not right," is an evaluative critique of the caste system and a rebuttal to an authoritarian language of those who would keep in place a hegemonic system of caste and a cultural world where lower castes are oppressed and treated as inferior. At this point, Hari as narrator allows himself more subjectivity than those who mistreat him. The terrain is frozen, the boundaries drawn, between Hari and the members of higher castes. [23]

But a highly significant phrase follows Hari's assertion that "the system is not right," a phrase which softens the boundary between the self Hari is constructing and the higher caste Others, a phrase which complicates the otherwise generic character of the higher caste actors and attests to their potential for change. Hari notes that "the system is not right, but the heart/mind of the people is all right." In this telling utterance, Hari grants some subjectivity to Bahuns and Newars. They are not inherently corrupt, but are corrupted by the system. They have internalized caste ideology as internally persuasive, but Hari is aware that people's hearts and minds are open to other persuasive discourses, potentially ones that can change their subjectivity, and he sees himself as an actor or agent who may effect these changes. He allows his portrayal of Bahuns and Newars to become less frozen and formulaic, less stereotypical and more open to dialogue. With this one phrase, Hari grants that these characters can change, that the relationship between them and himself is open and the boundary permeable (see HOLLAND & SKINNER, 2001). Hari relents in his monologic portrayal of the higher castes' rigidity, their intentions, to recognize that people in these positions are also open to changes in consciousness. [24]

In Hari's utterance, caste hegemony enters as particular speakers, the Bahuns and Newars who represent and embody historically powerful social forces. But Hari can foresee a time when these forces may change, at least locally, as a direct result of his agency, and presumably others like him. In his narrative, Hari is influenced by his own past history and past speakers, but he is oriented towards future aspirations and audiences as well. He creates a rather detailed and strategic plan to become the magnanimous great man who will return to Naudada—a rich and powerful man whose offerings others could not refuse. The exchange of food and drink (e.g., who exchanges what with whom) is a fundamental way caste has historically been enacted. Reconfiguring these exchanges provides a direct challenge to caste relations in Naudada. As is evident from his future vision, Hari does not find the authoritarian voices of caste superiority to be internally persuasive, nor does he view these voices as enduring for all time. He actively plans to change the behavior, and presumably the thoughts of those who follow caste prescriptions. He perhaps hopes to make his own voice more widely accepted and internally persuasive for others. These others he sees as having the potential to yield to changing configurations of self and social relations. Hari counterposes the old world order based on caste with a

new order based on education and good works, but for the present, he resides somewhere in between. [25]

6. Developmental Implications: Narrating as (Part of) Becoming

Hari's utterance is significant at a number of levels. It is an externalized discourse that constructs a constellation of self and others, dialogically joining local contentious practices of caste taking place in particular venues such as school with alternative visions of social relations. But the utterance also provides evidence of the role of inner speech in the ongoing development of consciousness. Hari's utterance was made with reference to the figured world of caste relations, one he knew well from his experiences in Naudada. BAKHTIN points out that what people say in real life not only constitutes much of everyday discourse, but also carries psychological significance as people try to make sense of what people say and what it means for them (BAKHTIN, 1981, pp.338-339). It may be that we can never know fully the intra-mental world of another person, but it seems likely that Hari was externalizing dialogues that he had had or had imagined having with real people in the past, dialogues that now in some modified form, exist in his thoughts. In Naudada (and other parts of Nepal), people talk about storing the words and deeds of others in their *man* (heart/mind, the seat of consciousness and emotions). There, thoughts churn about what other people have done and said that has affected them personally. Naudadans often say, "In my *man*, there are many things/words playing." They report that they hear the words of others in their *man*, sometimes engaged in conversation with each other. So in Naudadan ethnopsychology, the *man* is thought of as an arena where dialogic thought occurs and from which externalizations of these thoughts are generated. In this sense, the *man* can be viewed, as Hari surmised, as a location for the dialogic development of consciousness and the origin of externalizations that could take on collective form and further effect changes in individuals (see HOLLAND & SKINNER, 1997, for an example and model of this process). [26]

BAKHTIN (1981) stressed that struggling with another's discourse is crucial for the development of an individual's (or group's) ideological consciousness. Voices may be contextually separate in society and distinct in one's mind, but once languages become critically interanimated, there is the necessity of actively choosing among them. BAKHTIN wrote: "Consciousness finds itself inevitably facing the necessity of *having to choose a language*. With each literary-verbal performance, consciousness must actively orient itself amidst heteroglossia, it must move in and occupy a position for itself within it, it chooses, in other words, a "language" (1981, p.295). In Hari's utterance, we see his struggle with the authoritative word and world of the caste system and his orientation to a newer system that is more internally persuasive for him and perhaps others, a world where social relations and one's position are determined more by achieved status than ascribed conditions. We see evidence in Hari's words of an emergence of an "ideological consciousness" that has been formed in the dialogism of his social and personal life. What has become internally persuasive for Hari is not the authoritarian discourse of the Brahmanical model of caste, but more recent

discourses of the modernization of the nation through education. In his utterance we see the struggle between different ideological points of view and the possibility of new configurations. We also see bi-directionality. That is, Hari does not just seek to remake his own identity, to refashion his own self, but also to reconfigure the cultural world of caste relations in Naudada. [27]

Hari did not passively internalize the figured world of caste. Instead, he sought to actively make sense of a heteroglossic world that presents challenges, ambiguities, and conflictual situations which have emotional and social consequences. The process of sociogenesis occurs as individuals like Hari encounter and participate in different settings, settings in which they and others use historically given symbols to communicate or negotiate a stance in the world. These symbols are continually (re)produced and (re)defined in the activities and practices of individuals and groups. An individual transforms the messages encountered in various activities, not by simply internalizing collective representations or cultural templates, but by reconstructing semiotically encoded messages and orchestrating them in personally meaningful and "senseful" forms that are in accord with past life experiences and with future possibilities. This intra-psychological knowledge or "personal culture" is then externalized by the person as she communicates with others, represents herself to others, and negotiates and maintains a certain position and identity vis-a-vis others. [28]

Since a person is guided in his reconstructions by culturally available means like speech genres and social languages, he may often reproduce certain meanings and echo familiar or dominant voices, but reproduction is not certain. Heteroglossia, manifest in multiple social languages and in speech genres, makes perfect reproduction unlikely. Novel constructions and meanings can emerge in the process of externalization as stories are retold in new situations or for new purposes, or as dominant discourses are subjected to internal reflections and alternative critiques. If individual senses and creations converge in the imagination of new figurings of social relations and these new figurings begin to be performed as collective actions, transformations in cultural meanings and social structures may occur on the wider cultural and social scene (see, for example, cases described in OBEYESEKERE, 1981; EGNOR, 1986; and HOLLAND & SKINNER, 1995; 2001; HOLLAND et al. 1998 address these possibilities in theoretical terms). [29]

7. Methodological and Analytic Issues

Discerning distinct voices and their dialogic relationship in narrative is not a simple task. In order to identify the voices engaged in dialogue, the social languages or groups they represent, and the significance of the juxtaposition and inter-animation of alternative voices, one must have substantial knowledge of the figured world(s) invoked by the narrative. Understanding the figured world means knowing the kinds of people (or generic actors) who populate it, their relationship to one another, recognized motives for action and the plots or storylines available for linking actors and events in these worlds. Without this knowledge, it is difficult to understand the shifts or readings of events that the narrators construct or the

reasons why they orchestrate voices as they do. A person unacquainted with the meanings and practices around caste in Nepal or the alternative voices which challenge caste would be unable to carry out the kind of analysis we present here. This kind of knowledge calls for methods, like ethnography, that can explore in depth the meanings and relationships in narrativized accounts. One question in this kind of analysis is how much does one need to know about local cultural or figured worlds versus how much about the personal history of the narrator. For our analysis, knowledge of the figured world was more important. For the researcher more interested in the dialogic construction of the individual personality, the narrator's personal history would be foregrounded and the figured world perhaps less of an analytic focus (e.g., HERMANS, 2001). [30]

For a BAKHTINian approach to narrative analysis, it is also important to look closely at the social setting of the speech act: the location (both literally and figuratively) from which the author produces an utterance. An awareness of the different social positions both the narrator and audience can take is essential. Also crucial to the analysis is the interrelationship of speech to paralinguistics. To analyze voices and their dialogic relationship requires recognizing the rhythms, intonations, and gestures that accompany and inflect speech. These paralinguistic markers are meaningful tools that people use to position selves and others. The importance of non-verbal communication argues for video-taping as a method when a narrative analysis of voice is planned. If video-taping is not possible, audio-taping combined with detailed field notes on paralinguistic elements of the conversation would suffice. [31]

Finally, this type of analysis takes us beyond content or thematic analysis that does not have as its focus the agent of the text or how the text relates to the agent. Most content or thematic analyses are done to explore cultural meanings or the personality of the speaker, but rarely are they done with a theoretical understanding of how the production of narrative relates to both the personal and social context and the double-sideness of identity. A BAKHTINian analysis does greater justice to that integral relationship. [32]

8. Conclusion

VALSINER and VAN DER VEER (2000) have pointed out that sociogenetic theories mostly reiterate the claim of the social constitution of individual psychology without furthering ideas of the processes by which this happens and without properly acknowledging the social tensions and contestations that individual narrators must navigate. BAKHTIN's concepts in combination with the idea of figured worlds provide a theoretically rich means of examining how voices are recreated by individuals embedded in cultural and semiotic worlds; how voices are orchestrated and employed somewhat uniquely by individuals for self-understanding, moral judgments, problem-solving, and other cognitive and affective functions; and how individuals may introduce novelty in their externalizations in ways that can potentially transform meanings and practices at a cultural level (for examples, see HOLLAND & SKINNER, 1997, 2001). [33]

In our analysis of Hari's narrative, we adopted a bi-directional model of sociogenesis, a co-constructivist and dialogic approach that redefines the relationship of person and society as one of inclusive separation, that is, one in which persons are not only constituted in and through social activities, but are simultaneously the constitutors of cultural meanings and social structures (SKINNER, HOLLAND, & PACH, 1998). This crucial reformulation allows the investigator to examine the ways in which persons and cultural worlds develop interdependently and the ways in which novelty in both personal and "collective" cultures (VALSINER, 2001) emerge through their systematic linkage and co-construction. It allows for the person in history and history in person (HOLLAND & LAVE, 2001). Furthermore—it provides us investigative access into the history-in-the making--how the person constructs one's own (and society's) cultural future in the here-and-now setting. The basic relevance of culture for human psychology is guaranteed by the flexibility of semiotic mediators to afford the present state of affairs into a desired future state. Both anthropology and psychology are only beginning to make sense of that process—while Hari was seen constructing a future, so are researchers who study the phenomena—stepping towards new understanding in their disciplines [34]

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