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Title: Urwind : A Novel in Poetic Prose as a Bakhtinian Limit Case

Year: 2020

Version: Published version

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Please cite the original version:

Vainikkala, E. (2020). Urwind : A Novel in Poetic Prose as a Bakhtinian Limit Case. In B. Kennedy (Ed.), *Voicing Bo Carpelan : Urwind's dialogic possibilities* (pp. 77-112). Jyväskylän yliopisto. Nykykulttuurin tutkimuskeskuksen julkaisuja, 126. <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-39-7930-0>

Erkki Vainikkala

**URWIND: A NOVEL IN POETIC PROSE
AS A BAKHTINIAN LIMIT CASE**

A writerly novel

Bo Carpelan's novel *Urwind* is a text which its narrator-protagonist Daniel Urwind is writing as a diary over the course of one year. Consequently, there is no worked-out plot in it. The chronotope of a diary, however, does not rule out the possibility of arranging the entries so that a communicative and relatively consistent narrative emerges by extrapolation. Building on this tension, the diary form is put to a special use in *Urwind*, as it combines its episodic make-up with the overarching narrative purpose of producing a written portrait of the diarist. In this fictional world, the whole diary is to be presented in due time to Daniel's intended reader, his wife, who has left on a scholarship for the U.S., and will return in a year's time. Her absence is also marked by a marital crisis. The writing is out to evoke Daniel's "innermost self" in episodic memories of his past and in descriptions of his experiences and thoughts during the time of waiting and writing. The self-portrait arising from it functions as enhanced self-knowledge at the same time as it is intended as an appeal to his wife.

The "entries" of Daniel's writing constitute the chapters of the book. They are set down regularly on a weekly basis over the one-year period of his wife's absence, as can also be inferred from the number of chapters, fifty-three, which is one more than the number of weeks in a year. The chapters follow each other in loose sequence without a developing narrative structure; they consist of, and add up to, episodes, scenes, and conjectures about the future. On occasion, they have a chronological fit, for example as the return of Daniel's wife approaches, but structurally they are independent small narratives and descriptions held together by recurrent motifs,

thematic patterns, partly overlapping environments, and obviously the narrator-protagonist himself. Almost all chapters deal with experiences in different rooms and parts of the big apartment house where Daniel has grown up and where also his second-hand bookshop, the place where he writes his entries, is located. As a corresponding large temporal dimension, the passing of a year creates a cyclic symbolic pattern with suggestions of the passing of Daniel's whole life. The latter is reinforced by the fact that fifty-three is also Daniel's age at the time of writing, when he takes stock of his life. These architectural structures, however, are not obtrusively delineated, but rather intimated and symbolically suggested as possible orientations for reading the text. Both the spatiality and the suggestive openness are features of Carpelan's modernist poetics.¹ The passing of time itself is rendered in terms of perceptions and emotional stances, on which the significance of the descriptions and the small-scale narrative sequences also depends.

Daniel's—and why not Carpelan's—writing in *Urwind* is memory work, which leads to different places and spaces in an often dream-like evocation. This is indeed not the kind of memory that one might expect to find in diary entries. Daniel brings memories emerging from the whole span of his past life into the present moments of his writing—or, as we could also put it, brings himself into the present moments of his past in writing. Not only are the entries exceptional for the span of memories they incorporate, they are also characterized by a markedly poetic language—*Urwind* can be characterized as a poet's work in prose (cf. Hellgren 2009, 136). A realistic motivation for this on the story level is provided by the fact that Daniel is a person with high literary ambitions, aspiring to give his memories and daily experiences another life in language, including references to pictorial art, artists, and the problems of creativity. As the owner of a second-hand bookstore, he authors this account of his life literally among books.

The inner and the outer in this self-writing appear as alternating faces or correspondences of the same phenomenal reality. Daniel's wife takes on varying positions in this layout. She figures as a

character in his writing and as part of his personal life experience, thus situated on the boundary, partly inside, partly as his “constituting other.” She is a figure of intimacy and uncertainty, returning and then departing again in a gesture of an even more uncertain future, left open but tinged with symbolically closing overtones. Her presence and absence are the motivating factor for the act of writing, and as a concrete figure she hovers over the beginning and the end of the story. On a more abstract level, her figure becomes an instance of the workings of Daniel’s mind and writing—as part of the correspondences and as the absent center of his hopes and fears. In Bakhtinian terms, there can be no strictly polyphonic or dialogic representation of this relationship because, apart from a few emotionally charged but descriptively distanced scenes, she appears only as a point of reference in Daniel’s mind. She does not properly have a “voice,” although she takes independent action. Even more generally, Daniel’s consciousness tends to absorb the dialogical edge of encounters in the Bakhtinian senses of person-centered polyphony or dialogically rendered language diversity.

This is not to say that there is no social diversity conjured up in the memory spaces or other descriptions, but it is all filtered through Daniel’s central consciousness. As suggested above, however, this centrality has the paradoxical quality that its boundaries often merge in dreamlike condensation with the surroundings and the voices sounding, remembered, and overheard. The ensuing attenuation of the contours of his individuality only increases the existential urgency of the writing. Such features, combined with the poetic elements of the prose, play down the story-like elements and underpin the “writerly” movement of Daniel’s mind.

A View from Bakhtin

As described above, *Urwind* is characterized by a loosely conceived diary form extending towards larger patterns of fictional autobiography and its questions of the meaning of life. Perceptions,

incidents, and encounters are recounted as elements of the narrator-protagonist's present life, as memories and anticipations. Writing presents an interface for a continuous exchange between the responses of Daniel's "inner self," including his hallucinations, and the environment with its different spaces. On this surface, everything seems mutable, the description often being a matter of quickly changing images, scenes, and time levels (for an account of this feature, see Hollsten 2004, 52–54). There are also strong intertextual elements in the ekphrastic descriptions and generally in the presence of visual art, music, and literature in *Urwind* (see Hollsten 2007, 48–58). Thus, although everything is rendered from the perspective and in the language of the protagonist, the term "monologic" would seem out of place in the narrow evaluative sense of the term, and it is not surprising to find the term "dialogic" used in some critical accounts of the novel. There are many voices and images at work in Daniel's mind, coming from different places and times as his writing has it.

The two Bakhtinesque terms above suggest the line of inquiry of this essay; Carpelan's novel will be discussed in Bakhtinian terms. This raises some initial questions. *Urwind* is by all accounts a modernist novel. In his theoretical and critical work, Bakhtin did not deal with the issues of literary modernism explicitly or in any depth. Indirectly, however, there are interesting connections, some of which take the form of prefigurations, while some others suggest themselves as implicit criticisms by targeting phenomena characteristic of modernist aesthetics. Bakhtin's theory of polyphony as a feature of "Dostoevsky's poetics" is a case in point. As an early example of the crisis of the unified subject and solid authorship, Dostoevsky has been regarded as prefiguring the mode of writing of the high modernists, and polyphony as Bakhtin's theoretical grasp of this phenomenon has been considered in similar terms (cf. Erdinast-Vulcan 2013, 91–92, 94). *Urwind* as a later modernist work shares this property of "a plurality of voices." The open-ended course, or spatiality, of its narrative fits into the same pattern, and so does the use of a few mythical figures as quilting points.

But on a closer look, Bakhtin's account of polyphony has attributes which some modernist works may share and some others not, but which primarily is about a mode of artistic creativity that lets competing worldviews and ideological standpoints face each other on an equal footing. This emphasis on plurality as a struggle of worldviews is for Bakhtin the historical achievement of the novel, and it is not necessarily shared by modernist mind-writing.² In many respects, Bakhtin's best-known texts on the genre of the novel are anti-modernist, especially when it comes to the occurrence of poetic elements in the novel.

Although there are considerable changes in Bakhtin's theoretical outlook over time, his approaches to the novel, leaning on his theories of polyphony and dialogism, tend to have a normative and occasionally even polemical edge due to the emphasis on this specific generic achievement that he wants to describe and even praise. Bakhtin, of course, provides historical accounts of the novel, but especially when focusing on the issues of "dialogue," he approaches and judges novels from the perspective of a particular model of the genre. Consequently, it is not always possible to apply Bakhtin's critical concepts with just the customary twist on the empirical object. One may have to decide whether to go along with all the leverage of those concepts or stay back somewhat by acknowledging the resistances and counter-leverage of the text to be analyzed. This is the case, perhaps not surprisingly, with *Urwind*: a view from Bakhtin also turns out to be a view on Bakhtin.

There is also a question of which Bakhtin, unless one theoretical standpoint serves one's purposes. There is a difference even between polyphony as contending horizons of meaning, and dialogism as heteroglossia or social language diversity. The former is concerned with a theory of creation, especially as it applies to the structure of novels; it was developed in his treatise *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984), written in 1929 and published in a rewritten form in 1963. The concept of dialogue as heteroglossia was elaborated in the treatises of his "middle" period in the 1930s, collected in English translation in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981).

Compared to polyphony, it had wider cultural and social implications, and it was also essential to the development of Bakhtin's theory of the novel in that period. Bakhtin's book on carnival, *Rabelais and His World*, is not important for my purposes here. Bakhtin's early, "architectonic" period, however, opens interesting perspectives on *Urwind*. It has a more subjective orientation with an emphasis on the makings of an integrated and ethically answerable self and the function of aesthetics and art in that context. Finally, I have made some use of one of the last essays of Bakhtin, where he to some extent reverts to his early ideas.

I have not opted for any single theoretical standpoint or key concept of Bakhtin's for my approach to *Urwind*. Rather, I have chosen to see how *Urwind* responds to a spectrum of Bakhtin's theories and concepts at the different stages delineated above. These concepts are related but with different theoretical groundings and reverberations. Thus, *Urwind* will be examined from various Bakhtinian angles, and at the same time the reach of these critical concepts will be highlighted.

Not all Bakhtin's concepts are equally "problematic" in their leverage. In the section "Variation of Time-spaces and the Quest for Meaning," *Urwind* is considered in terms of varying time-space extensions and the way meanings are articulated in such changing perspectives. It builds on Bakhtin's theory of chronotopes, although no specific references to Bakhtin are made. The concept comes from his "middle" period, but it is not polemically conceived and contains a wide range of chronotopic patterns that readily apply to different kinds of novels. Specific instantiations of chronotopy, such as encounters on "stairs," also come up in other connections in this essay. In the subsequent section, "The Self and the Other, or Polyphony Finalized and Unfinalized," Bakhtin's early architectonic ideas will be drawn on along with the concept of polyphony in the Dostoevsky book; their relations and applicability to *Urwind* is gauged with the notions of finalization and unfinalization. The following section, "Inner Dialogue and the Fantastic Limits of the Self," also draws largely on Bakhtin's architectonic ideas of

the self and its limits, with a focus on dreamlike and fantastic elements in *Urwind's* writing and their haunting effects on images of the self and description of environments. In the section "Metonymic Figuration Between the Prosaic and the Poetic Word," the poetic figuration of *Urwind* is considered in contradistinction to Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia and his partly normative conception of the novel based on such premises. *Urwind's* metonymic troping as perception-oriented figurality is analysed as characteristic of its (in the Bakhtinian view) "unnovelistic" procedure. In the section "Voices of Lexical Shadings," my reading continues partly against the Bakhtinian grain by the reminder that the crossing of voices in a word always also brings in different semantic fields and thus the potentiality of troping (which Bakhtin of course would admit but in his best-known texts wants to constrain). I also draw attention to certain ambivalences in Bakhtin's own formulations with a quote from a late essay of his on voices arising from "lexical shadings" as a kind of "voice-troping," which is then considered as a feature in *Urwind*. The last section, "A Retroactive Complement," gives a short recount of the procedure.

Variation of time-spaces and the quest for meaning

Diary as form involves a special chronotopic pattern. The diary novel as a genre shares with this form, but it is blurred on the edges, as the entries in such novels are not always as convincing as real diary writing, and even the line between first-person and third-person intrusive narration does not always hold (Martens 1985, 6–8). In *Urwind*, this feature is enhanced; despite their personal nature, the chapters representing the entries have little to do with ordinary diary writing. As memory speaks, the entries are extended in associative transitions and connections in a way that cuts them loose from the daily grounding that usually constrains diary writing in its informative, musing, and even rambling forms. Even so, there are

also descriptions of daily occurrences that could have been taken from any diary.

This affinity to, and deflection from, the diary form contributes to the constellation of generic and local chronotopes of the novel. Put in narratological terms, the distance between enunciation and what is enounced as events and action tends to be short in ordinary diaries; it is only within such spatial-temporal bounds that short-term memories, aspirations, and anticipations can be grounded. This is at odds with the digressive and far-reaching memory work in *Urwind*, where the distance between enunciation and enounced continually contracts and stretches out, articulating in this way specific chronotopes of places and situations. Daniel Urwind is out to produce an account of the essence of his whole life, and the digressions serve this purpose, while the weekly diary form in turn gives his writing an unobtrusive presence of continuity rooted in the place where he writes. The physical place of Daniel's writing is fixed, and there are "architectural" fixations in the mode of the writing itself (see Hellgren 2009, 134–190). The existential moment of his writing, however, is situated in *medias res*, in a crisis of his life, and not in any quasi-autobiographical vantage point of a life lived or an education process traversed.

Daniel's age is secondary to the existential urgency of the moment of crisis, but at the same time, it significantly coincides with the quasi-mythical moment of mid-life—"When half way through the journey of our life / I found that I was in a gloomy wood, / because the path which led aright was lost." At fifty-three, having already started on the downward slope of his life, Daniel takes stock. In this context, the cycle of the year suggests symbolically a movement from birth to death, overlapping with the leaving and expected return of Daniel's wife, possibly a rebirth but with premonitions of a final separation and images of death. The cycle as such connotes both death and a new beginning, but the latter is suggested only in a resigned and halting manner at the end of the novel.

All these different dimensions of time and their spatial attachments link up to produce the chronotopic constellation of *Urwind*.

The main axes in this constellation are, on the level of narration, the above-mentioned contracting and extending distance between the enunciation and the enounced, and on the overarching hermeneutic level the presence of the cyclical form of a year symbolically expanded to a life cycle. There is a suggestive tension between this symbolic dimension and the episodic and scenic form of the narrative with tentative openings and loose ends. The cycle remains only one temporal structure among others, and thus its chronotopic status becomes a special kind of potentiality with touchdowns in certain places, the force of which comes from the fusion of the concrete and the symbolic. In such connections, even the verbal poetic elements of the novel play an important part, to be discussed in the last section of this essay.

Even a formal analysis of such patterns necessarily involves thematic questions of interpretation. Key passages of this kind, with extensive thematic effects, appear at the beginning and the end of the novel. The first five sentences of the first chapter, “The Name Urwind,” are about Daniel’s ordinary perceptions as he is riding a bus on the way back home after seeing his wife off at the airport. In this movement through the urban landscape, time and place are tightly knit as elements of perception. Then he is visited by an apparition after noticing a lonely man standing in a deserted parking lot: “Suddenly the man flared, a torch, stretched up his arms, burned inside my eyes like choked scream [...]” (UW 1). This image may give rise to various associations related to the violence of the outside world, and also, suggested by later elaborations, to the legendary phoenix burning to ashes and being reborn from the remains. This resonates with Daniel’s fears and aspirations, although in a temporally confused manner; it is often suggested, both explicitly and through the melancholy mood of the writing, that the end is already in the beginning, that the essence of fire is in the ashes, and that being reborn is as dubious as it is desired. This is reinforced by other images brought up on reflection after the apparition. Daniel thinks of “a violent wind” blowing outside his bus and the airplane carrying his wife, and he continues the rumination: “Each weekday

contains its hidden vertigo, it breaks out like a sudden fire, a text that must be interpreted. Perhaps it will illuminate my own face, so I will manage to interpret it before it returns to its darkness?" He then addresses his absent wife by telling her that he is writing a diary as an account and interpretation of his "days" and the vertigos of his mind (UW 1).

There are other image clusters to similar effects in the opening chapter. A semiotic play of meanings, or more properly in this context, their mind-dependence, is brought to the foreground when Daniel "plays with" the meanings of his last name, Urwind: "It is the primordial wind from the universe, the one that blows out of nothing into nothing, hurling stars into that storm-centre that is called the soul" (UW 3). Beyond the cyclical symbolism of the year, this is a timelessly mythical level of meaning contributing to the chronotopic constellation in its metaphysical way. The metaphor of the primordial wind has different temperatures. It is presented as the principle of poetic creation: "[...] it is the invisible symbol of metamorphosis, it exists in bowed trees and the snowy twilight out there" (UW 3). Metamorphosis as a poetic principle also suggests eternal change on an inhuman scale, the wind blowing "cold from an outer space." There is, however, even a more genial twist to this: it also blows as "a warm, steady wind" existing in dreams, "in our happily straying thoughts, in the grass, [...] in the eye of the child" (UW 3). It is "the blue colour of space," and not the empty sky; we could speak here of a necessary illusion. But then again—and the first chapter can be read as a miniature of the whole novel—it ends on a melancholy note, as Daniel has another apparition, a *déjà-vu* experience, waking up in the middle of the night. He sees a young boy sitting in his grandfather's chair. As the boy slides away, Daniel has a fearful and sorrowful feeling of his whole life having passed through him without leaving a trace. He looks on these apparitions as "vague signs" that he tries to interpret in his writing. He thinks of himself as a void to be filled; and after probing his name Urwind in its associative expansion, he now wonders if he has any name at all. He imagines himself peeping in

through the window from the courtyard where the boy had disappeared. He sees the furniture, the table, and the lamp, and “at the table no one.” The life cycle is here reduced to a loop where the starting point, on return, is empty (UW 5).

The cyclic dimension of time is heightened by the fact that such images are emphatically repeated at the end of the novel. By that time, the expectation of a rebirth of the relationship with his wife has expired in a new departure. This concrete turn of a cycle in his life has been metaphorically prefigured in the imaginary and associative images in the first chapter; or, as could also be said, the first chapter already presents the existential import of the fate of this relationship. A concrete link between the beginning and the end is presented by the “genial” wind blowing through the childhood summers and evoking the attic “with its forgotten treasures” where, along with objects, “all the clockwork of human life” appears in a dreamlike, tumultuous disarray of time and transformation. In this collection of things, Daniel writes about children playing in the attic and turning into birds “hurtling out, their arms spread like clockhands,” and a bit further on he imagines himself flying on his “fantastic wings,” perhaps reborn for the reunion (UW 4).

In the last chapter of the novel, “In a Cold Gateway,” having seen his wife again off to the airport, Daniel ponders over the course of the year and his efforts to gather and remake himself: “I have gone through myself, the unknown in myself, and come out into a cold gateway.” No more treasures. He describes climbing to the attic, visited in the beginning in a dream: “There lay a few pathetic remnants of my wings, the bamboo ribs, the whole spectacle. When I lifted my gaze I saw a young lad there, on a ledge, ready to go plunging down and dare the impossible. For a moment our gazes met.” The scenes from the first chapter resonate in this last description, including a repeated apparition of the boy, and again their meeting gazes suggest the cycle of life, in principle always repeated but here with a note of resignation at the sight of the “spectacle” of the remnants of the Icarus wings he had constructed as a child.

Even so, the novel ends in mid-air: “Perhaps, when we lie broken, a wind will carry us?” (UW 3–5, 189).

These dense passages, and the way they draw a loop between the beginning and the end of the novel, bring out a chronotopic arrangement where the generic diary chronotope is transformed through the quite different workings of memory and poetic analogies. Part of the latter are the quasi-mythical cycle of the year and of life, as well as the poetically refracted image of the timeless primordial wind suggested “literally” even by his name. These elements make up a constellation with varying and often ephemeral combinations of time and place. Even the generic chronotope of diary, much transformed, becomes only one refracted element in the whole. All this ties in with a particular *mode* of writing, of literary modernism with a poetic bent.

The self and the other, or polyphony finalized and unfinalized

Urwind raises questions about the conjunction of the inner and the outer, or the way that Daniel’s mental reality and the human and physical environment reflect each other in the writing. The relationship is porous both in terms of perception and the performative force of the poetic images, but also regarding “voice” and the dialogic elements, which do not have the status of strong contending subjectivities and languages as theorized in Bakhtin’s best-known writings on the subject. Daniel’s voice in the novel emerges from the poetic and often dreamlike quality of the writing, and the same applies to the voices of others which appear as indices of other life-worlds entering Daniel’s consciousness in his memories and observations.

However, the notions of “voice” and dialogue even in Bakhtin take somewhat different forms in different parts of his work. Even the apparently stark distinction between finalized and unfinalized procedures becomes “unfinalized” in this larger framework. (For

a comprehensive account of Bakhtin's intellectual trajectory, see Morson and Emerson 1990, 64–68 ff.)

Bakhtin's earliest published articles, written before 1924, are focused on ethical, cognitive, and aesthetic issues with Kantian and neo-Kantian leanings, with a polemical edge on the "material aesthetics" of the Russian Formalists. In this early phase, known as his "architectonic" approach, Bakhtin stressed "finalization" and "outsideness" as the precondition for achieving an image or conception of oneself; without another's look, a view from the outside, one's selfhood cannot not take shape. In the creative act, the author of a literary work finalizes the "hero," the protagonist, and by extension all characters, by setting up such necessary horizons. There is a strong ethical aspect to this as one's singular relationship of answerability to the "other," to what is outside oneself (Morson and Emerson 1990, 78–80, 83; see also Roberts 1989, 120–21). Several early works of Bakhtin's along such lines, characterized as his "architectonic" approach, are included in the book *Art and Answerability* (1990).

While one's relation to the "other" is crucial already in Bakhtin's architectonic phase in regard to the integration of the self and ethical responsibility, the notion of the double-voiced prose word and the overarching idea of polyphony or multi-voicedness were properly developed during—in this scheme—his second period, in the early version of his study of Dostoevsky (1929), of which a rewritten and expanded version was published as late as 1963. These ideas still harken back to Bakhtin's early philosophical positions due to their continued emphasis on consciousness and worldviews, of ideological positions taking the measure of each other. In a further development, this undergoes a change in the essays of Bakhtin's "middle" period, collected in English in the volume *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), where the idea of polyphony is transformed into "dialogue" with a strong emphasis on "dialogized heteroglossia" or diversity of languages in social encounters.³ Thus although the notion of "prose word" as the privileged vehicle of contending voices already appears in the book on Dostoevsky, a "pro-

saic” conception of language as social discourse comes into its own in these essays (Morson and Emerson 10, 15–38, 67).

Bakhtin himself describes the difference between the views of the Dostoevsky book and the later modification of the conception of voice and dialogue like this:

In Dostoevsky’s multi-voiced novels, for example, there is significantly less language differentiation, that is, fewer language styles, territorial and social dialects, professional jargons and so forth, than in the work of many writer-monologists [...]. It might even seem that the heroes of Dostoevsky’s novels all speak one and the same language, namely the language of their author. (Bakhtin 1984, 182)

Thus, while this is a note on the specificity of Dostoevsky’s novels, it also specifies a moment in Bakhtin’s thought and his theory of the novel. The point is that although there is no focus yet on the forms of language or discourse as diversified, the contending worldviews are nevertheless considered in terms of their diversification. No different “territorial and social dialects” make an appearance, but even so, the development of different ideological positions is not constrained by any unified outlook of the author, and consequently the treatment of the “other” in the author–hero relationship rests now on the principle of *unfinalized* creation. This marks a departure from the philosophical ideas of the early, “pre-Dostoevsky” Bakhtin, where finalization as the production of “outsideness” was considered to be the precondition of the development of integral selfhood and the possibility of fixing the contours of the others (see e.g. Bakhtin 1990, 28–29). As a general directive, the new principle of unfinalization extends to the phase where dialogism takes the form of language diversity.

Still, despite the harsh critique of finalization this change entails, the distinction between finalized and unfinalized remains aspectual and ambivalent; openness in one respect needs horizons to relate to in another. In the Dostoevsky book this shows in the reservation of necessary information to be provided (1984, 73), and more specially as the provision of “extralocality” and a “surplus of vision” on the part of the author, characterized by such meaningful

structures of feeling as love, forgiveness, or simply “willingness to listen” (1984, 299; Morson and Emerson, 91–92). Although even these orientations cannot but be considered as general aspects of worldviews, they are not considered to rule out polyphony, provided that they don’t curtail other orientations on the “hero” or character level.

The point of this account for tackling a novel such as *Urwind* is that even in Bakhtin’s key concepts there are historical variation and certain ambivalences which hold out different viewpoints and possibilities, some of them more amenable and some clarifying through their recalcitrance. The theory of chronotope has a broad applicability, also to this novel, whereas Bakhtin’s philosophical and critical accounts of the self–other relation and the contentious relations between worldviews or discourses offer not only a different conceptual framework but also a very different task of application. More than a matter of tools of description, they are a matter of prying into the properties of the novel with more or less uncertainty and difficulty. This falls out differently depending on the provenance of Bakhtin’s critical terms in theories of architectonics, polyphony, or heteroglossia.

Despite their differences, Bakhtin’s architectonic position and his conception of polyphony in the Dostoevsky book more readily provide conceptual tools for the analysis of *Urwind* than the essays from the 1930s as far as their orientation to heteroglossia is concerned—or to put it differently, the former are more coextensive with the literary procedures of the novel, while an approach through the latter provides a sharper edge of difference. Nevertheless, even the conception of polyphony in the Dostoevsky book with its emphasis on competing worldviews jars with the characteristics of *Urwind*. The differing values and social experiences voiced in the locales of the apartment house and elsewhere do not share the strong sense of polyphony as mutually challenging ideological forces. Daniel himself as the narrator-protagonist of the novel is not an ideological contender; his relations to other characters are rendered in terms of personal, existential significance and

not in terms of assertive ideological positions contending on a par. As prior examples and descriptions in this essay already show, the others' voices appear much more as echoes in his consciousness.

In *Urwind*, the writing is throughout couched in the vision and the language of Daniel the narrator-protagonist, and moreover there is a strong correspondence of style, values, and the overall emotional stance and sensibility of this narrative instance to the image we have of Carpelan as a writer. These quasi-autobiographical connecting effects need not be hastily considered as a feature of closure precluding the appearance of otherness. In its own terms, this closeness to each other of the different narrative instances, the resulting coherent voice, and the pervasive meditative and poetic style enable a free movement of recollection and projection, including the contingent appearance of characters in situations evoked by the movement of Daniel's associative mind.

This difference that remains from efforts to apply the "Dostoevskyan" notion of polyphony to a novel such as *Urwind* brings out, in addition to immediately suggesting something about the characteristics of the novel, the above-mentioned theoretical ambivalence of Bakhtin's distinction between the notions of "unfinalized" and "finalized." When the others' voices appear in Daniel's mind as elements of his subjective experience, they do retain their strangeness and the haunting outsidership of their origin, and there is no evaluative or intrusive containment imposed on them; in this sense they are not co-opted or finalized. But as they appear on the inner-outer conjunction, their outsidership is qualified by a certain evanescence; they share this quality with all the other signs which Daniel endeavors to interpret to make sense of his life. In this way, the other characters are like visitations to grapple with, insistent and even fateful, and much less subjects to be reckoned or contended with on an equal footing. In this respect, *Urwind's* falling short of, or fitting only partially into, Bakhtin's concept of polyphony suggests a more aspectual application of the finalized/unfinalized distinction, and a less strict and more complementary approach to the conception of polyphony itself.

Interestingly in view of *Urwind's* practice of fictional self-writing and its metonymic chain of author–narrator–protagonist, Bakhtin also draws attention to the “internally dialogized” dimension in encounters with others, when a character’s external exchanges are intertwined with “his internal dialogue with himself and in his internally polemical interrelations with others” (Bakhtin 1984, 279). In such internal contention, a character’s inner discourse may alternate between, for example, religious belief and disbelief as varying responses to pressing circumstances (on such wavering, see also La Capra 1987, 37). For Bakhtin, even such internal dialogue is a response to dialogic situations with others.

Inner dialogue and the fantastic limits of the self

Inner dialogue or responding to voices in one’s own mind, again in consideration of what finalization and openness in their differential pull might mean in this connection, raises the question of the *dreamlike* elements in the novel. As I observed in the first section of this essay, writing in *Urwind* often proceeds “in dreamlike condensation,” and there are interesting passages in Bakhtin’s works where he brings up the issue of dreams and fantasy as something of a testing ground for his views of dialogism and the novel. In the treatise “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity” (1990), dating from his architectonic period, Bakhtin discusses this in numerous passages. The emphasis at this stage, as suggested, is on finalization as the result of both recognition and distance (“outsideness”) vis-à-vis others; without this, no integral and ethical self can come about. But there are complications to this even there. In one’s dreams and fantasies, Bakhtin writes, one may perceive the other participants and objects with the same clarity as in ordinary waking perception—“in its plastic and pictorial aspects, the world of fantasy is quite similar to that of actual perception” (Bakhtin 1990, 28). The point is that while the others are expressed “outwardly,” the self in both waking and dreaming can be experienced and expressed only

“from within.” This is a direct experience, but it necessarily lacks the contours that others have; such contours are not needed for the “center” of inner experience, which remains outwardly indistinct. It is only when starting to recount such fantasies to other persons that I transpose myself onto the same plane with other participants, which means that I start drawing the contours of myself. Crucially, this is the case even in first-person narration, narratologically pinpointed by the distinction between I–me and the “narrating” and “narrated” selves. In this, for Bakhtin, lies the difference between “the world of artistic creation and the world of dreaming as well as that of actual life” (Bakhtin 1990, 28–29, 59–60, ff.). Thus, in artistic creation the inner experience of oneself is transformed into an outward, perceivable image of oneself.

In a narratological sense this division can be dealt with in purely structural terms. In the early treatise where Bakhtin deals with this issue, however, the structural duality is considered as a larger ethical and aesthetic question, and more particularly in terms of a certain difficulty; in this creative act, where externalization does not happen easily because one cannot externalize one’s own outward image (project “myself” into it) in the same way as one can perceive external characters in real life or in writing and reading fiction. As he puts it, the effort to visualize oneself as another requires a forced breach with one’s “inner self-sensation,” which produces a “peculiar *emptiness*, *ghostliness*, and an eerie, frightening *solitariness* of this outward image of ourselves” (Bakhtin 1990, 30). There is an interesting twist in Bakhtin’s argument, because he first describes the “difficulty” as one of formal perception, as simply the difficulty of seeing oneself, and then as a forced objectifying act turning out an alienated likeness without enlivening “self-sensation.”

Through this twist, the description acquires quite different attributes which usher it towards a Freudian register—a direction that Bakhtin himself disowned. This externalized other self invites the Freudian conception of “uncanny” (*unheimlich*), as the doubling of the self remains haunted by the “inner sensation” and fantasy of the

self. In other words, this doubling as a miscarried act of “finalization” remains a split, fantastic, and thus ghostly or “haunted” self.

Given the early Bakhtin’s theoretical outlook and Carpelan’s literary orientation, it may not be surprising that Bakhtin’s account of the haunted and solitary self cogently applies to Carpelan’s novel. In *Urwind*, there is a pervasive sense of this kind of solitariness and uncanny fusion of the familiar and unfamiliar. An impressive image of the haunting nature of such splitting is the scene, already described from a different angle in this essay, where Daniel wakes up in the night (from his “dreams”) and has an apparition of himself as a young boy sitting in his grandfather’s chair, then sliding away from the room, and subsequently imagining himself as looking in from the window beyond which the boy had disappeared—inside, through the boy’s eyes, there is no one inside (UW 5). This connects with Daniel’s feeling of himself as a void to be filled. Bakhtin’s architectonic account of phenomena of this kind addresses conceptually the same issue. From this point of view, *Urwind*’s writing concretizes and gives new meanings to the idea of the solitariness of the circular fantasy of the self, or as I have modified it here, of its haunted nature. This solitariness (be it in view of author–protagonist or the protagonist’s externalizing of himself even as a double) can be accounted for as an effect of a failing connection to “others,” which corresponds to the circle of turning oneself inside out.

The ghostliness of the image thus turned out can always be considered as a product of imagination, whether the “inner experience” to be externalized lies in one’s everyday consciousness or day-dreaming fantasy. The term “fantasy” in this usage, however, suggests something extra, extravagant, which is needed to compensate for and charge a lack. The differences from Bakhtin’s views here are twofold. First, even if we accept the idea of the solitary circle as such, the ghostliness of the outward image is not due only to the emptiness or lack as such, but also an effect of the workings of the “inner self” which is by no means simply left behind – from this comes the haunted nature of the externalized image. Second, the “others” (or theoretically, the “other”) may also be eclipsed in a

way similar to one's inner self, which then does not redeem the self from its fantasy but rather adds to its complication. It follows from both considerations that the inner-outer and self-other problematic loses some of its Bakhtinian contours, with a modifying effect on Bakhtin's views of such relations from his early thinking right through to his ideas of polyphony and dialogism. This of course is not to be taken as a critique of the premises of Bakhtin's thought, which remain what they are, but rather as a deviation called for by *Urwind's* literary practice.

A shortcut to this practice are, as suggested, the dreamlike qualities in *Urwind's* poetic prose, engendered by its associative procedure that often moves between different time-levels with spatializing effects. The image of the boy as his doubled self, for one, becomes meaningful only as a product of Daniel's "dream" of himself; it is not just an outward visualized image brought up by memory, solitary due to the formal lack of "others," but a haunted and haunting dream-like image of Daniel's existential predicament. Regarding the "others," in Bakhtin's architectonic as well as polyphonic view "the other's possible emotional-volitional reaction to my outward manifestation" is needed to vivify the otherwise empty objectification of the self and make it answerable. The experience of the other, however, is often quite different in *Urwind*: although acting characters, the others often have dreamlike and fantastic qualities in Daniel's child's-eye perception of them, and as such, they appear as memories on the interface of his writing. Being subjected to the other's response in this way is not only a matter of being redeemed into unalienated social existence, although recognition is a crucial element in individual and social life. Such recognition can be affected and haunted—vaguely perceived—by the *other's* eclipsed and enigmatic "inner self," in addition to the usual complications resulting from different perceptions and points of view. The following example comes from the chapter "In Viktoria's Room":

In the hallway there is a smell of warmth, and Viktoria squints at me and asks how old I am now, I have grown since last time, I am a big ras-

cal, soon we will be able to stand before the altar together, she laughs hoarsely, and the birthmarks in her face darken. [...] And she looks at me with her large, pale eyes. They were dark as Andalusian nights once, says Viktoria, they saw so much of what is foreign, then one goes dark, but perhaps you won't understand that, even though you say you are fifty. (UW 13)

How do Aunt Viktoria's presence and words in this passage vivify and give contours to Daniel's solitary and ghostly image, or more precisely, how does it come through in the writing which is all about Daniel's own perception and memory? There is something enigmatic about Viktoria herself, and there is something about the whole interaction that remains eclipsed. The obvious refraction concerns the age difference; much of what Viktoria says must remain odd for the young boy, and the end of the passage, "even though you say you are fifty," mixes the memory with the act of memorizing. But there is more to it. Viktoria's joke about their soon getting married, which must be alluring and embarrassing to Daniel, is a suggestion full of duplicity and indirection. The young Daniel takes it in as an indication and anticipation of his growing up. In the text, this is shown in the first-person descriptions which come from Viktoria's mock-imitation but immediately become Daniel's self-experience in a loop initiated or mediated by the other: "I have grown since last time, I am a big rascal" (UW 13). On the face of it, these can be considered in Bakhtinian terms as "emotional-volitional" external attributions, but in Daniel's mind they sound as if giving voice to his innermost "inexpressible" self. Indirection in such memories strongly suggests what is known as dreamwork, a rhetoric of dreams, with its haunting effects on this scene of Daniel's acknowledgement by his aunt. On the story level, this comes through as the dual workings of the experiencing and remembering Daniel's mind, Aunt Viktoria's opaque way of addressing him being part of it; on the level of writing itself ("Carpelan"), this is part of its haunted mode, discernible throughout the novel.

The dreamlike and fantasy-driven elements of *Urwind's* writing mold the affirmations of the self through glidings and transfor-

mations as if on a fluctuating interface. The resulting un/familiarity of things often spawns haunted images and haunting effects on the self as well as on whole scenes. However, this is not limited to the author–protagonist–character relations but can also affect descriptions of the physical environment, which always involves the use of poetic and rhetorical means of expression. The following excerpt from the chapter “In Rooms Dreamt and Real” gives a sense of the fluctuation and the strangeness of the familiar:

The intractable door refuses to open. The light on the other side is too strong. On the whitewashed wall hang a steel lantern, a rusty barometer, an old icon. The odour of metal is as acrid as the brown water on the stone floor. From the stairs comes a cold wind of wood and damp. A cane chair lies knocked over on the floor. When the door opens the winds blow out the light in the room, it is immediately dark. [...]

Further away in the wood-fragrant room one can see a finely latticed window that divides a forest landscape into clearly separate parts: trees, roads, field, all enclosed by a house-wall. The wall grows and sets before me the familiar rubbish-bins, the grey sky and time, the war, the rats, the night. Here the silence has been scraped together in a hurry, it rests by the legs of the table, hangs from the ceiling, smooths out the tablecloth but cannot manage to do anything about the bread-crumbs. Do I hear singing, like a floating in the air, a many-voiced voice? As a child I heard muffled churchbells, they rang in Sunday and its boredom, my dreams [...]. (UW 87)

There is no divided self here, and no character entering an action-oriented relation to the world of people and the environment. The person entering the room is reduced to an instance of lucid perception—a moving eye, a nose that smells, an ear and tactile sense that feels the wind blowing in. In this kind of description, the metaphoric interface between inner and outer tends to fade out. It does, however, retain its function here when perceptions are rendered as memory (“the familiar rubbish-bins”; “As a child I heard”), or when imagination engenders quasi-causal connections (the door refuses to open “because” the light on the other side is too strong) and expands the perception of things into memories and lists of very different objects and scenes (“rubbish-bins, the grey sky and time,

the war, the rats, the night”)—and also in the metaphoric description of the silence as hurriedly scraped together and fixed on tangible objects. An imaginary “many-voiced voice” connects the room with Daniel’s childhood.

Most of the description, despite the variation of the means, could equally well be accounted for as contents of Daniel’s (or anyone’s) mind or as things in the world that just “need” a mind in order to become accessible to other minds. Still, with a focus on Daniel’s figure, especially in a larger context, the significance of the room for him as a memory space is evident, and the description itself brings out his peculiar sensibility intertwined with the power of language. In the scheme of the whole novel, however, Daniel as an experiencing person is by no means thinned out. His life and predicament have clear contours and situate him in the framework of answerability within the author-protagonist-character framework, his wife as a character and addressee. With reference to Bakhtin’s early, architectonic thought and his theory of polyphony in the Dostoevsky book, we could say that *Urwind* deals with the same problematic with a strong modernist bent. Given the mode of writing of the novel, the notion of polyphony becomes applicable with a “sideways glance,” as infected from the novel’s poetic language which in the story world Daniel writes, but which in its rhetorical force also takes him over as its vehicle. The remaining two sections will focus precisely on the poetic and rhetorical means and force of *Urwind*’s language, and the way it relates to Bakhtin’s discussion of such elements in a novel.

Metonymic figuration between the prosaic and the poetic word

As a shortening of larger units and contexts, “word” in Bakhtin’s usage has metonymic implications and dialogic significance. The “double-voiced” or multi-voiced word is in this sense a meeting place for different speakers and discourses, be it in terms of ordi-

nary conversation or ideological struggle. Along with these voices and discourses come meanings in their linguistic-semiotic and referential dimensions and rhetorical and poetic articulations. A consideration of their relative status in the whole pattern takes us to the point where Bakhtin's dialogical approach becomes a matter of critical discrimination. With his "translinguistic" approach, he supersedes Saussurian linguistic approaches (Todorov 1984, 24–25, 54–56), and his emphasis on responsiveness and dialogue takes precedence over referentiality and representation. More particularly, and most significantly in this case, "lyrical self-expression" and poetic diction (troping) are problematized as alien elements in the context of his prosaic and dialogical theory of the novel; to the extent that such features assume a formative impact beyond some local functions, they are seen to compromise the historical achievement of the novel.

This critique of "poetic novels" is a consequence of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and the dialogic theory of the novel. It is fully developed in the writings of his "middle period," accessible in English in *The Dialogic Imagination*, of which I shall be drawing here mostly on the treatise "Discourse in the Novel" (DiN). As the focus of my discussion in the remaining two sections is on the poetic and rhetorical means of *Urwind's* prose, my references to Bakhtin will be predominantly to these core ideas of his middle period where his critique of "poetic prose" is most intense.

This non-coincidence brings such features in the novel to their characteristic edge. And even here, Bakhtin himself occasionally touches on the limits of his critique.

Reservations about such "unnovelistic" features already exist in Bakhtin's discussion of polyphony in his book on Dostoevsky's poetics, although there almost exclusively in relation to "lyrical expressivity" and not to troping. In DiN, this critical stance has become much more emphatic, and explicitly leveled at troping. In this critical—and censoring—definition, the "word image" as image-as-trope is "completely exhausted by the play between the word [...] and the object [...]," and all the richness of meaning and its

“contradictory multiplicity” resides in the aspects of the object itself, in language in its “virginal” or as yet “unuttered” nature. Thus “word” in its limited understanding as an image or trope “forgets that its object has its own history of contradictory acts of verbal recognition, as well as that heteroglossia that is always present in such acts of recognition”. The “novelistic image” or prose word, by contrast, is born “in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object” (DiN, 277–279). Apart from failing in this respect, novels may also fail by staging themselves in the manner of classical drama; such novels, written in “pure single-voiced language,” remain “closet dramas” considered “unnovelistic” (327, 327n25) by Bakhtin. These are different kinds of failure, but with equally un-novelistic consequences. What matters for my purposes here are the strictures on poetic elements in novelistic prose.⁴

In his sweeping critique of troping, Bakhtin does not much distinguish between the different effects of different kinds of figure (although he discusses the prosaic specificity of irony at length), not even between metaphor and metonymy. This distinction, however, is important when discussing *Urwind's* poetic prose, a salient characteristic of which is its propensity for metonymy and, as part of it, synecdoche. As figures, they readily tap into contiguous, perceivable everyday realities and thus also into the dialogic potentiality of the lifeworld. This special characteristic of *Urwind's* figurative language partly refracts Bakhtin's sharp and general critique of the status of poetic figuration in novels.

The penchant for metonymy has been observed to be a general characteristic in Carpelan's writing, especially in his poetry, but also in his prose (Hollsten 2004, 44–62). Metonymic and metaphoric troping may intertwine, which is the case in *Urwind* as well. Pivoted on similarity, metaphors are dependent on metonymic elements, but the degree of explicitness may vary greatly, and in longer texts metonymic relations may give rise to comprehensive metaphoric meanings in the end (e.g. Lodge 1977, 73–111). Along such lines, it is possible to discern extended textual metonymies.

As an example of such two-way movement, Hollsten notes (60–61) how in *Urwind* long mimetic listings of different objects are often suddenly framed in a way that endows them with an extended metaphoric meaning. Somewhat differently, objects and places—including the whole apartment house where much of the action and the writing itself take place—may stand in a metonymic relation to those who have used them or lived there.

In the following excerpt, taken from the chapter “Snow Letter,” it is through such metonymic figures and their metaphoric condensation that the experiences and voices of others present themselves to Daniel’s consciousness:

How heavy it feels to struggle up this cold and vertiginous stairwell while the snowstorm quietly rages out there. It is as if I had been making my way up here for decades and had slowly grown, become heavier, acquired eyes ever more hesitant, ever more difficult to find the way with. But Viktoria is surely waiting for me, why, we shall get married this autumn, she says. I sniff the air. At the Bengtssons’ they are frying herring, where did they get it? Out under the door it streams, bones, spines, dead heads, dead eyes. At the Pietinens’ they are listening to the news, there is the sound of Sibelius, a woman is screaming: ‘If you touch me, I’ll leave!’ Hot lava penetrates across the thresholds, here everyone at all may give up the ghost without anyone hearing, snow whirls in through the windows and covers all those who are asleep, they lie in rows as along wintry roads near the front. Each window is a darkness, each stair a year of my life—how many years do I have left? (UW 11)

This passage is full of indices of the war years. It is both mimetically forceful and stridently subjective. The different voices and suggested discourses (Sibelius-cum-patriotism) along with the affective and emotional qualities (fear, envy, aggression, melancholy) merge to produce connotations of threat, death, and shortage. The passage is metonymically mimetic, arising from concrete sensations, with a metaphoric pull through the image of “lava.” Carpelan’s tendency in his poetry to eschew metaphors and symbols without concrete attachments is no less the case with the figurality of his novelistic prose. But as suggested, this verbal characteris-

tic can be combined with larger imaginative, even turbulently figural and fantastic elements, such as the semi-mythical cycle of the year and suggestions of mythological figures and apparitions. For Daniel, such apparitions function as “vague signs” whose meanings he is out to interpret. But although they are detached from ordinary perception, as phantasmatic messages they are embedded in his lifeworld.

The metonymic procedure comes through with exceptional clarity in the sentence “Out under the door it streams, bones, spines, dead heads, dead eyes.” All this belongs to fried herrings. This is the sensation has it, they can even be sniffed. At the same time, surrealistically or as in a dream, these parts of the fish are described as materially and separately streaming through the door crack. They become concretely visible in fantasy—be it in the child’s fantasy or the adult Daniel’s fantasy in writing. Formally these body parts are just “parts for the whole,” but the way they are presented connotes cutting into pieces, and as such they lead to, and partake in, the images of wartime violence and violence in the families. The parts of the fish suggest what kind of food is being prepared in the rooms, and at the same time their severed quality suggests bodies cut into pieces on the front. The same image is symbolically split in two directions. These different orientations are joined in the same act of evocation, but both their metonymic connections and symbolic meanings remain largely separate, as their weight lies in the concrete situations. The common element of violence in Daniel’s recollected experience provides a rhetorically vague but emotionally strong link, starting in his experience in the apartment house and widening out to the front.

The different scenes and elements of violence are suggested by the juxtaposition of lava and snow. If “lava” connotes death by heat (aggression of any kind), in the same passage “snow” connotes death by the cold; both images overdetermine the image of cutting. Death by the cold as an inner and outer experience is suggested by the “cold and vertiginous stairwell” inside the house and the snowstorm outside, these images of vertigo arising in Daniel’s

mind as he makes his way up the stairs. This leads to the description of “snow whirls” covering all sleeping people and, in another move, soldiers lying in rows “along wintry roads near the front.” The image of lava, too, relates to Daniel’s perceptions in the stairwell: “Hot lava penetrates across the thresholds,” as do the parts of fish, both functioning as images of hatred and rage in the rooms behind the thresholds, and more extensively of destruction in the image of death by heat and then petrification. In a series of displacements, personal rage leads to an index of war, concretely the Finno-Russian Winter War. “Lava” and “snow” as vehicles give this passage a metaphoric twist, but even so the text retains a strong metonymic basis, because the different realities thus suggested are brought together only by common connotations, without losing any of their lifewordly and physical differences.

The passage also has chronotopic significance. Daniel’s climbing the stairs is presented as lasting for decades, the climb becoming heavier and heavier. When the boy struggles up the stairs, every step is at once movement in place and time, from the young boy of the war years to the middle-aged man writing about it. The common chronotope of stairs as a place of moving up and down and meeting others (Bakhtin 1981, 248) is turned into a poetic image by transforming it into a suggestive space with an opening towards one’s whole life. The stairway functions as the scene of concrete time-space contiguities and metonymic displacements, with the special edge of being the scene of the workings of memory and recollection.

What transpires from the above reading of Carpelan’s metonymically leaning figurality is that, although poetic prose is by no means the privileged means for furthering polyphony or dialogism in Bakhtin’s definition, neither are the effects of this kind of troping limited to narrowly linguistic substitutions or self-expression. Bakhtin does not pay much attention to what can be achieved through such means in the genre of the novel; such considerations are soon cropped by his polemical genre criticism. As shown above, however, troping in its metonymically oriented variations may very

well have large textual and social reverberations and as such serve to interrelate different domains of individual, social, and historical experience. This is the case even in a novel such as *Urwind*, where everything is filtered through the narrator-protagonist's sensibility.

"Voices of lexical shadings"

Bakhtin's emphasis on "voice" as a carrier or performer of world views and language diversity is at the core of his theory of polyphony and dialogism. "Word" as a vehicle of voices is in this sense not understood in terms of a single voice, but dialogically as the site where several different—responsive, anticipating, and contending—voices may appear. Along with these translinguistic and performative functions foregrounded by Bakhtin, words retain their representative and—in this case more importantly—rhetorical functions. These latter features, too, embedded in overlapping semantic fields and tensions between the axes of selection and combination have a force of their own, with the consequence that a simultaneity of voices in "words" may also involve figurative transformations of meaning.

The preceding section ended in a note on how Bakhtin's sharp critique of the effects of troping in novels disregards the novelistic achievement of even the kind of metonymically bent poetic prose practiced in *Urwind*. Positively put, *Urwind's* figurative practice could be seen to effect a tentative convergence between Bakhtin's privileged prose word and its generically undermining "other," the poetic word. Below, I shall approach the issue from Bakhtin's direction by suggesting that even in some parts of his own theory of the multi-voiced word there are implications towards a similar partial convergence. These implications, at variance with Bakhtin's polemical strictures, point to the possibility of constructions where the "word" as the site of crossing voices may work on different semantic potentials to the point where something of *voiced-troping* be-

gins to emerge. The following quotation from the fragmentary late essay “The Problem of the Text” (2004) brings home the point:

Each large and creative verbal whole is a very complex and multifaceted system of relations. With a creative attitude toward language, there are no voiceless words that belong to no one. Each word contains voices that are sometimes infinitely distant, unnamed, almost impersonal (voices of lexical shadings, of styles, and so forth), almost undetectable, and voices sounding nearby and simultaneously. (123–124)

In DiN, when discussing the difference between poetic and prosaic use of tropes, Bakhtin is ready to “save” the poetic figure or trope when it is taken over for dialogic purposes and given a prosaic accent, for example through an ironic twist:

To understand the difference between ambiguity in poetry and double-voicedness in prose, it is sufficient to take any symbol and give it an ironic accent (in a correspondingly appropriate context, of course), that is, to introduce into it one’s own voice, to refract within it one’s own fresh intention.” (328–329)

The above excerpt gives this earlier allowance a different extension, as “distant” and lexically suggestive features are now discussed on a par with contextually identified dialogic relations. Voices are described as emerging from “lexical shadings” and stylistic values, and not exclusively from socially identifiable forms and subjects of discourse; thus, the notion of voice becomes interwoven with the characteristics of words as bundles of associative semantic fields and rhetorical transformations. Even the workings of metonymy, apparent in any realistically oriented dialogic text, become different in the kind of more distant voicing that Bakhtin discusses in the excerpt above. In such cases, the metonymic potential of the “word” becomes loosened from its contextually identifiable groundings, and this kind of voice-troping⁵ may also have more pronounced condensing and thus metaphorizing effects. Theoretically speaking, we are now probing into the boundaries between linguistic signification and Bakhtinian translanguistics.

In this convergence between word-as-voice and word-as-trope, the distinction between the prosaic and the poetic word becomes

ambivalent. In *Urwind*, words as carriers of voices (“If you touch me, I’ll leave!”) are often interwoven with words as tropes (“Hot lava penetrates”). The cry from behind the door, a concrete voicing of quarrel, hatred, and despair, is also part of a whole life, while “hot lava” is a directly metaphoric rendering of a similar destructive and ultimately petrifying quality of life. They relate differently to the idea of “voice,” the former connecting with concrete speakers in the lifeworld of the protagonist-narrator, the latter being part of “writing” that draws on the rhetorical and poetic resources of language and, at the same time, on the inner experience of the narrator-protagonist, engendering a more fluid kind of subjectivity.

Even for Bakhtin, the dialogic and “lyrical” (self-expressive) orientations are not unconditionally inimical to each other, but they lean on “voice” in divergent ways, and an overdose of the latter—which would be the case in *Urwind*—undermines the historical dialogic achievement of the novel as Bakhtin has it. The difference is critically significant, and thus it has been instructive to gauge these leanings also against the grain, both in fiction and in theory.

Concluding remarks

As I have been reading *Urwind*, a novel with salient poetic elements, against the foil of Bakhtin’s overlapping but changing views of the self and the other, inner and outer, polyphony and dialogue, and the status of troping and the “lyrical,” the applicability of these concepts and notions has been variable. In this two-way reading connecting to different moments of Bakhtin’s thought, even the limits and ambivalences have, I hope, been significant in both directions.

The emphasis in this essay has been on Bo Carpelan’s novel, and consequently the discussion of Bakhtin’s changing views over time has been limited to the essentials, although I have tried to give it enough space to make the cross-lighting meaningful. There is a certain increase of friction when I move from the discussion

of chronotopes to self–other relations and polyphony, and further to the poetic elements and the status of troping in the novel. The view from chronotopy and from Bakhtin’s early architectonic ideas proved to be more directly amenable to account for *Urwind’s* specificity than the view from Bakhtin’s “middle term” theory of the novel exemplified here by the treatise “Discourse in the Novel.” Bakhtin’s critique of “unnovelistic” novels provided a foil against which *Urwind’s* poetic prose most clearly stood out.

In looking at this most thorny part of the relationship, it has obviously not been my purpose to polemically roll back what Bakhtin has stated about the difference between the novel and the poetic genres, or the difference between the prose word and the poetic word. Nevertheless, the quotation from Bakhtin’s posthumous essay in the last section is symptomatic in the sense that it draws, once again, attention to the modifications of Bakhtin’s views of the novel and the varieties of novelistic prose. Considered as a complement with retroactive effects, the passage from the late essay together with other similar passages has a relativizing impact on the sharp distinctions made elsewhere in Bakhtin’s work.

As part of the same gesture, I have regarded Carpelan’s novel as in its own way triggering off similar, complementary effects vis-à-vis Bakhtin. *Urwind* itself with its own “voices of lexical shadings” can be viewed as a fictional complement affecting Bakhtin’s strictures on self-expression, troping, and lyricism. Theoretically speaking, it questions the cleanliness of Bakhtin’s distinction between “pure language” (language as a formal system of differences) and language as a translingual and dialogic phenomenon. There is no pure language, although formal abstractions exist, and so do specific formal operations known as rhetoric. The latter, however, only exist to produce particular meanings, the status of which in different contexts and dialogical relations may vary greatly. Most clearly, perhaps, this transpired from the way *Urwind’s* metonymically bent figuration functioned as mediation between the narrator-protagonist’s subjective experience and the social world, thus bringing about a dialogic relationship of its own kind.

NOTES

¹ For a discussion of Carpelan's relation to modernism in a literary and historical context, see e.g. Hollsten 2004, 33–36, 89–91, 288–289, and Hellgren 2009, 70–73.

² Dentith (1995, 43) somewhat relativizes Bakhtin's unreserved characterization of Dostoevsky's works as decisively polyphonic, i.e., lacking any hierarchical structures of meaning. On a scale between hierarchy (consistent narrative omniscience) and polyphony, he situates Dostoevsky close to the latter, but considers Joyce and even Dickens to be the closest. However, Dentith reduces polyphony to the idea of "freedom of the word" or an open process of signification, thus playing down Bakhtin's view of the centrality of struggles over meaning on the level of worldviews and discourses.

³ Graham Pechey describes the position of the Dostoevsky book as the point of transition between "the sociologizing imperative of his friends' polemical texts and the historicizing imperative of his own work on carnival and the novel," which makes it "the locus classicus" of an "existentializing imperative" affecting all of Bakhtin's thinking. Regarding another pair of competing paradigms, the subject-oriented stance of the Dostoevsky book—its "*textualizing* of the subject"—is considered as setting itself apart from both Saussurean objectivism and the "premature" cancellation of both subjectivity and sociality in Russian Formalism (Pechey 2007, 20–21).

⁴ For a Bakhtinian discussion of poetry, see Wesling (2003); for a discussion of poetry and polyphony, see the chapter "Polyphony and the Poetic Text" in Steinby and Klapuri (2013).

⁵ It is not possible to deal here in any detail with Paul de Man's (1989, 105–114) idea of the radical otherness or exotopy as a way of attending deconstructively to Bakhtin's idea of dialogism, or to the effects of the distinction between the epistemic (intentional) and the linguistic conception of trope. Clearly, however, my own analysis comes close to de

Man's critique of the opposition that Bakhtin sets up between "trope as object-directed and dialogism as social-oriented discourse". Such a division for de Man is "tropological in the worst possible sense, namely as reification." On the face of it, of course, Bakhtin's approach is the opposite of reification, but his efforts to oppose it by defining troping or the "poetic word" in terms of "pure language" land him facing the problem he had been striving to overcome. On these issues, see also Roberts (1989) 115–134.

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