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## Open Access scientific, electronic publishing and Bakhtinian dialogism

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### **Abstract**

The article explores Open Access (OA) scientific, electronic publishing in the context of recent contributions in communication and public relations theory, notably Bakhtinian dialogism. Increasingly since the 1960s, communication and public relations theory have shifted their focus away from one-way, asymmetrical to two-way, symmetrical models, thereby progressing to more equitable and interactive, multi-levelled conceptual models of dialogic and polyphonic communication (Grunig, 2001). It is in this context that Bakhtinian dialogism becomes highly relevant. OA scientific, electronic publishing is interpreted by using the Bakhtinian concepts of *dialogue*, *polyphony* and *carnival*. Acting together, these concepts define OA as a healthy and sustainable, consumer-led answer to the serials crisis, and a revolt against the system that has produced it, viz. hegemonic power structures and relations of traditional, subscription-based and commercially motivated scientific publishing.

### **Introduction**

How are we to assess the potential and direction of Open Access (OA) scientific, electronic publishing? Can alternative author-based financing models be successfully developed and be viable? Will the ideals of free and open scholarly communication for everyone, also those stranded on the 'wrong' side of the digital gap, prevail? Can this challenge by OA enthusiasts and adherents to traditional, subscription-based commercial publishing be sustained? Will the combined effects of self archiving in institutional repositories by researchers, partly in response to new funding agency requirements, lead to a redefinition of self interest among key stakeholders and spark more peer-reviewed OA journals?

There are many conceivable theories, methodologies and scenarios available to try to answer these and related questions. In this article scholarly communication such as OA scientific, electronic publishing is viewed from a communication and public

relations perspective, especially Bakhtinian dialogism. A noticeable shift in focus has taken place since the 1960s from one-way, asymmetrical to two-way, symmetrical models. The result has been that contemporary communication and public relations theory and practice are oriented towards and make use of interactive, multi-level models where the concept of 'dialogue' in various forms is operationalized. In consequence, several theorists are assimilating the ideas and reflections of the Russian literary theoretician Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1895-1975). Though not explicitly used by Bakhtin himself, *dialogism* is emerging as a useful term to project his thoughts on language, communication and literature (Holquist, 2002). These are proving fruitful in analyzing symmetrical communicative processes and electronic discourse in the information age, albeit Bakhtin's ideas predated the Internet.

In this perspective, as we shall see below, traditional subscription-based commercial publishing (print and electronic) which is seen to have been a major cause of the serials crisis, is interpreted as a manifestation of what communications and public relations theory define as 'asymmetrical' or 'one-way' relations. Such relations are imbalanced and tainted by the inequalities of the digital divide. In scientific publishing, asymmetrical relations have developed from and are driven by self interest among key stakeholders (publishers, agents, scholars, libraries, end users). In this framework OA represents feedback, a protest or 'voice' from the receiver (library, reader, research community, end user) in a communication model with a sender (author, publisher) and a message (publication, including its price and cost). Exactly how and why OA can be termed a 'voice' is where Bakhtin proves useful.

### **Methodology**

The article makes use of multimethod and interdisciplinary research (Brewer & Hunter, 2006) involving a) qualitative text analysis of key works in Russian by Bakhtin and studies in English of Bakhtin's work, b) intensive and typical case sampling (Patton, 2002) of recent textbooks in communication and public relations theory as well as some e-articles and a few international conferences dedicated to OA.

### **Results**

OA can be viewed in a Bakhtinian perspective as a manifestation of dialogic, polyphonic and even carnivalistic practice, as feedback from the recipient in a symmetrical communication process. Applying a Bakhtinian perspective facilitates the 'hearing' of the other, of other voices, and suggests that OA is generating a redefinition of self interest among key stakeholders as well as more balanced, equitable and democratic power relationships. The approach suggests that OA

- is not only a fully sustainable but a permanent dialogic twin feature of the prevailing and still dominating asymmetrical monologue of traditional subscription-based commercial publishing;
- will not replace traditional subscription-based commercial publishing but will continue to challenge it and provide symmetry, as many polyphonic voices – consonant and dissonant - join in support of and in opposition to, both prevailing publishing patterns and OA;
- represents a healthy celebration of the popular, riotous and democratic carnival, in favour of freedom, in opposition to established and asymmetrical commercial power structures.

### **Communication and public relations theory**

Communication and public relations theory is closely integrated with organization theory. It is therefore noteworthy that dialogue has become a keyword in organization theory. Let us take a brief look at some intensive and typical case samples (Patton, 2002) from the literature on these closely related disciplines. In her internationally acclaimed study of organization theory Mary Jo Hatch (2006) employs symbolic-interpretative and postmodern perspectives where organizations can be interpreted as manifestations of dialogues and dialogic communication. Hatch observes that organization theorists have used Bakhtin to describe the ways in which a dialogic organization is constructed in and by dialogue:

Confronting the dialogic and polyphonic aspects of organizations urges researchers and managers to *hear* organizing, not only to attend to the content of organizational dialogue, but to listen for its rhythm, harmonies and dissonance. (Hatch 2006, 205)

The same 'dialogic' perspective is also found in Eric M. Eisenberg and H. Lloyd Goodall (2004) who address organizational communication. The authors note that theory on organizational communication distinguishes among 4 different perspectives where communication is seen as: an information transfer, a transactional process, strategic control and a balancing of constraint and creativity. Making the observation that these definitions also reflect a chronological dimension as well as an increasing interest in and awareness of feedback and two-way interaction processes, the authors develop their own model of organizations as dialogues (in contrast with economic or political models) where dialogue is seen as a) equitable transaction, b) emphatic conversation and c) real meeting. They refer to Meade, Buber when discussing 'self' and 'other' but most of all to Bakhtin, arguing that

Our self-concept is formed in part from the social relationships we have with others and from others' responses to what we say and do (Bakhtin 1981; [...]). [...]. Because the self is constructed out of our need to balance our own needs with those of others, the self is necessarily dialogic or made in concert with others (Bakhtin, 1981). (Eisenberg & Goodall 2004, 33)

A further example is David Holmes (2005) who addresses communication theory. He discusses modern extended forms of communication and uses a paradigm involving three types of interaction: a) face-to-face interaction, b) mediated interaction and c) mediated quasi-interaction where a) and b) are both dialogic or two-way types of interaction.

In the field of public relations, Kenneth D. Day, Quingwen Dong and Clark Robins (2001) argue that ethical public relations practice is closely linked with 'dialogic communication'. Yet the parallel between Bakhtinian dialogue and symmetrical public relations was first pointed out by Grunig (2001). In his seminal 'Excellence' study from 1985 which was funded by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation, the main purpose was to establish best practice standards in public relations from a sampling of 320 private and public sector organizations as well as NGOs in the US, Canada, and the UK. A main finding was a new model of excellent two-way public relations. Here Grunig invokes the work of Bakhtin on dialogue. Looking ahead to the future of public relations research Grunig notes that

...simultaneous fusion with the Other while retaining the uniqueness of one's self-interest seems to describe well the challenge of symmetrical public relations – or, perhaps we should begin to say dialogical public relations. (Ibid, 28)

It is important to grasp that 'two-way' does not mean that relations are limited to one sender and one receiver. More often than not there are many senders and many receivers. The point is that there is a mutual or reciprocal exchange both ways, or in more complex models, many exchanges going many ways at the same time.

An interesting recent contribution bringing Bakhtin to the fore in relation to language, culture, art and new media is Finn Bostad et al. (2005). Apart from several articles on the Bakhtin Circle and language, this anthology has innovative contributions also on new technology and visual arts, e.g. dialogue in electronic public space and the semiotics of timer space and the internet (Bostad 2005); 'thought drawing', dialogical thinking and culture at the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art (Faber 2005); negotiating meaning and the dialogic imagination in electronic art (Kac 2005) and interactive computer-based art (Graham 2005). The authors argue that

....dialogism – old and new – offers an approach to cultural meaning that seems equally fruitful for studies of language, literature and new media. Since the handling of meaning is an acid test for any theory of culture, dialogism holds considerable promise as a still emerging approach. (Bostad et al. 2005, 17)

In summary, this brief sampling suggests beyond doubt that the work of Bakhtin, particularly his reflection on dialogue, is highly relevant for the analysis of communication at various levels of complexity, running from organizations to individuals. This also pertains to new media in the information age. Yet what is the more precise meaning of dialogue? In the following I will comment on this concept and also invoke two other related Bakhtinian concepts – *polyphony* and *carnival* – which are useful for our analysis.

### **Bakhtinian dialogue, polyphony and carnival**

The influence exerted today by Bakhtin extends far beyond literary theory into fields such as philosophy of language, linguistics, musicology, anthropology, culture studies, classic studies, history, political science and theology, communication and public relations theory, including new media (Holquist 2001; Bostad 2005). Bakhtin did not gain recognition in his homeland until late in life, when the asphyxiating official ideology of socialist realism had started to subside (Vaagan 2000). Even today in Russian works such as *Философия языка в России* (2001) by Безлепкин (2001) or *Смысл как таковой* (2001) by И. Смирнов (2001), Bakhtin passes almost unnoticed by his countrymen. Yet in the West, since his introduction in the 1970s through the efforts of Julia Kristeva and Tsvetan Todorov – Bakhtin has been appropriated by a number of academic disciplines in addition to literary theory and philosophy. Also disciplines such as musicology, anthropology, culture studies, classic studies, history, political science and theology have all in various ways sought to assimilate Bakhtinian dialogism and key concepts such as 'dialogue', 'polyphony', 'carnival', 'chronotope', 'heteroglossia' and 'novelness' (Holquist 2002). As anyone who has read Bakhtin in his original Russian knows, the textology of his works is complicated, and of his planned 7-volume collected works that started appearing as late as 1996, only 4 volumes have so far been published (Бахтин 1996-2002).

Within the parameters of this article my primary intention is to apply three of Bakhtin's key concepts – *dialogue*, *polyphony* and *carnival* – to the analysis of OA. For further material on his authorship non-Russian speaking readers are advised to consult Holquist (2002) and The Bakhtin Circle at Sheffield University, including *Dialogism: An International Journal of Bakhtin Studies*.

In literary theory, dialogue (from Greek *dialogos* – conversation) signifies the organizing of fictional texts, usually novels, to allow the interplay of different voices, minds or value systems in such a way that none is superior to another. Although one can conceive a single person carrying on a dialogue with him-/herself, a dialogue normally requires 2 or more persons or voices. If more than 2 persons are involved a more appropriate term is polyphony, cf. below. Based on his study of Andrei Mikhailovich Dostoevsky's novels (first published in 1929 and revised in 1963), Bakhtin argues that dialogue is fundamental in literary language and that language originates in the interaction between 2 or more people. To Bakhtin, words are not neutral imports from others. Learning a language necessitates a dialogue with a previous user of that language. In Bakhtin's world the fundamental concept of 'self' is dialogic. The greatest writers of novels, especially Dostoevsky, manipulate the other also as a self. Applied to literary texts, Bakhtin contrasts dialogic with monologic texts. The author's views in a dialogic novel are only one of several voices in a dialogue, they are not the authoritative final statement on the fictional world that is presented in the text. Bakhtin argues in his study of Dostoevsky's novels that these are particularly illuminating in terms of dialogue: in *Crime and Punishment* (1866) the main protagonists Raskolnikov, Porfiry, Sonya and Svidrigaylov are all associated and intertwined with different and partly conflicting values, priorities and ideologies (Lothe 1999).

Everywhere we see a crossing, a consonance or an interruption between the main characters' speech in the open and inner dialogues. Everywhere we see a definite totality of ideas, thoughts and words combined with certain disjointed voices, sounding differently in each. (БАХТИН 2000, Vol. 2, 173; author's translation)

Whereas his classical antecedents Socrates, Plato and Aristotle all viewed dialogue as a way of persuading others to accept another's ideas, Bakhtin's understanding of dialogue stresses mutual testing, contesting and creation of ideas. This distinction parallels the difference in communication and public relations theory noted earlier between one-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models. Moreover, Bakhtin's dialogical rhetoric is not restricted to oral discourse but is possible in any medium including written, graphic and digital, which is why his thinking is relevant to contemporary communication and public relations theory, including new media (Zappen 2004; Kac 2005; Bostad 2005; Faber 2005; Graham 2005; Holquist 2002; Brandist 2006).

Though Bakhtin himself predated the Internet, e-mail, SMS and chat groups, Bostad (2005) nonetheless finds his thoughts 'strikingly relevant' for the analysis of electronically mediated discourse or dialogue. He uses e.g. Bakhtin's concept of the 'chronotope' to develop a taxonomy of ICT applications in space and time. Applied to the context of Open Access, the main point we can deduce from

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Bakhtinian dialogism is that in a communication process there is no single monologic, asymmetrical, one-way or authoritative solution, communication is a dialogic, two-way and symmetrical process where the other voice can well be OA.

But what if there are more than two voices? This is where another Bakhtinian concept comes in: polyphony. Polyphony (from Greek *polyphonia* – many voices) is a concept closely related with 'dialogue'. Bakhtin adopted the term from the nineteenth-century German novelist and critic Otto Ludwig (Brandist 2006). As stated, polyphony requires three or more persons or voices and is therefore a wider concept than dialogue. Since OA involves many voices: end-users, libraries and librarians, scholars, the research community, publishers, agents and vendors, administrators, politicians, it is the more appropriate Bakhtinian term to use when more than two voices are involved:

The plurality of independent and unblended voices and consciousnesses, the real polyphony of fully valued voices, are really the basic particularity of Dostoevsky's novels. (Бахтин, 2002, Vol. 6, 10; author's translation).

In literary analysis, the binary monophonic/polyphonic can be used to distinguish between literary texts. In the former type of text the author represents an elevated and authoritative voice above the voices of the main protagonists. In the latter type of text the voices of author and main protagonists are equal. If we project this terminology to Open Access, monophony is therefore strongly linked with the asymmetrical communication models, imbalanced power relations and hegemonic structures referred to earlier. By contrast, polyphony is associated with symmetrical communication models, equitable power relations and even democracy (Hirschkop 2000).

It needs to be said immediately that to Bakhtin, 'carnival' and 'carnivalization' are positive terms, not negative. He introduced them in literary theory in his study of François Rabelais (1495-1553) published in 1965. They reflect Bakhtin's concern with folk culture and its manifestations which he divided into three distinct forms a) ritual spectacle (carnival pageants, comic shows of the marketplace); b) comic verbal presentations (parodies both oral and written, in Latin and in the vernacular) and 3) various genres of billingsgate (curses, oaths and popular blazons) (Bakhtin 1984, 5). Bakhtin views the carnival during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, which he finds particularly poignant in the works of Rabelais and his burlesque, spicy and humoristic descriptions, as a spontaneous form of revolt against the established order and official culture.

Abuse with uncrowning, as truth about the old authority, about the dying world, is an organic part of Rabelais' system of images. It is combined with the carnivalesque thrashings, with change of costume and travesty (Ibid, 198).

To Bakhtin the carnival, like the novel, is a means of expressing otherness and it exists on the boundaries between life and art, it can even be life itself but is shaped according to a game-like pattern. The carnival is a ritual spectacle which is popular and inclusive, gay and grotesque, democratic and anti-authoritarian, full of laughter and polyphony with fluid boundaries between artists and audience. Its inherent features are its emphatic and purposeful 'heteroglossia' and multiplicity of styles. Literature that has these signifiers can be termed carnivalistic, and authoring literature in this fashion is seen as carnivalization. It is also important to note that those in power seldom suppress the carnival, on the contrary, to do so would be counterproductive.

It is the anti-establishment, popular and inclusive, equitable, and essentially democratic character of OA that makes the concept of carnival relevant. To the extent that OA represents a consumer-led revolt against established publishing practices, it can be seen as carnivalistic, and therefore as a natural and healthy reaction, a necessary antidote to authoritarian and non-egalitarian structures. Also, the carnival, like OA, cannot be suppressed.

### **Open Access (OA)**

As defined by one of its leading proponents, Stevan Harnad, Open Access means 'immediate, permanent, free online access to the full text of all refereed research journal articles (2.5 million articles a year, published in 24,000 refereed journals, across all disciplines, languages and nations)' (Harnad 2005). OA involves 4 channels: a) electronic, refereed scientific periodicals; b) research-specific archive (e-print) servers; c) institutional repositories of individual universities and d) self-posting on author's home pages (Björk 2004).

Elsewhere I have argued that the future and shape of OA in Norway relies on key issues such as advances in institutional OA repositories, online peer-review systems, DRM (digital rights management), author payment, information ethics, institutional and governmental policies (Vaagan 2005). These issues are common to most countries where, in Bakhtin's terms, the novel of OA is being authored, where the story of OA is being told, and where the rhythms, harmonies and dissonances of OA can be heard and discussed in terms of dialogue, polyphony and carnival.

Again, if we use typical and intensive sampling methodology (Patton 2002) and consider some recent articles and conferences addressing OA, we see that in many countries, notably the USA, UK, public research funding policy is responding dialogically to OA initiatives such as The Berlin Declaration on Open Access (Harnad 2005). Self-archiving in institutional repositories is making advances,



although obstacles remain (Coleman & Roback 2005), and OA itself is converging with and gaining momentum from, Open Source and Open Science (Willinsky 2005). Is this not dialogue and polyphony? Innovative online peer-review systems are challenging the traditional view that quality is best assured through traditional double blind peer review mechanisms. A case in point is commons-based peer production, also termed the 'bazaar model' in contrast with the 'cathedral model' (Krowne 2003). Voluntary and community-regulated models like this represent a 'dialogic' turn, which can also involve e.g. the simultaneous publication of non-anonymous reviews along with the article in question. OA resonates well with researchers who see that OA increases research impact and that free online availability of scientific literature offers substantial benefits to science and society. This is probably tied to the spread of DRM techniques, as was seen at the SPARC/ACRL Forum conference in January 2006 in San Antonio, Texas. On the agenda was the relationship (dialogue) between author and publisher in terms of negotiating licenses and copyright. Further, the Directory of Open Access Journals is steadily expanding and covers a polyphony of 2,376 journals, which, admittedly, is a small proportion of available e-journals. On the issue of the digital divide and ethics, OA (together with Free Software and Open Source) is clearly a very important information ethics issue. Rapael Capurro (2004) in reality prescribes dialogue polyphony and carnival as medicine when he argues that reflection based on information ethics must a) consider issues such as the development of moral conditions in the information field, especially in global digital networks; b) reveal and criticize information myths, analyse power relations that decide information issues; c) lay open concealed inconsistencies in theoretical and practical language norms [38]. Many agree with this, including Jan van Dijk (2005) who discusses structural information age inequalities and recommends Open Access as a remedy for 'usage gaps'. Mathias Klang (2005), Daniel Poulin (2005), and John Willinsky (2005) also concur and all remind us that OA is closely linked with globalization, freedom, Open Source and Open Science.

A particular event in which I had the pleasure of taking part and where dialogue, polyphony and carnival were all richly in evidence, occurred during the 71<sup>st</sup> IFLA Annual Conference in Norway in August 2005 at a satellite meeting dedicated to OA which gathered some 150 participants (IFLA 2005). Among the speakers, David C. Prosser, SPARC, Europe, confirmed that Open Access can deliver, and he dwelt on how a number of traditional publishers and publications are transforming their closed access journals into open access journals. These include the Proceedings of the National Academies of Science, Oxford University Press, American Institute of Physics, Company of Biologists, American Physiological Society, Springer, Blackwell. Sheldon Kotzin, National Library of Medicine, USA, spoke of the requirement by the National Institutes of Health from May 2005 that NIH grantees submit a copy of their final manuscript, once accepted for publication, to the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central (PMC) archive.

This augurs well for Open Access because the NIH is the single largest federal R&D funding agency with a budget of \$28,6 billion in fiscal year 2007 (AAAS, 2006). Jens Vigen, CERN, elaborated on the 50-year old publication policy of CERN that all scientific results in particle physics, including both experimental and theoretical work, should be published or otherwise made generally available. Herbert Gruttemaier, INIST-CNRS, France, clarified how research institutions and scientific communities have been pioneers and main driving forces in the OA movement. Valentina Comba and Marialaura Vignocchi, University of Bologna, demonstrated how OA is having an impact on authors in astronomy, computer science, mathematics and biomedicine. Solveig Thorsteinsdóttir, Landspítali University Hospital, Iceland, shared with the audience the Icelandic government's firm policy of providing free access for all Icelandic citizens to a wide range of databases and e-journals. Paul Ayris, University College, London, assessed the impact of institutional repositories on the information landscape in the UK. He also noted that from October 2005, Research Councils UK requires that grantees deposit their journal and conference papers in a suitable institutional or discipline-based repository as soon as possible after publication, provided there are no copyright and licensing restrictions. The only contribution that drew negative comments came from Tony McSean, Elsevier, who denied that OA is a moral issue, refused to see that OA can be financially viable for anyone and claimed it cannot be sustained. This dissonant presentation was revelatory of the vested interests of the worlds' largest STM publisher.

The presentation by Richard Gedye, Oxford University Press, was particularly enlightening regarding the redefinition of self interest. He described how Oxford Journals since 2003 is conducting a number of experiments in open access publishing. Oxford Journals currently provides full OA model for three journals and optional OA to another 42 journals. The shift from subscription-based to author-based payment systems is difficult for less privileged end users, which is why Oxford Journals offers differentiated pricing with reduced prices to developing countries. Authors who pay to have their paper freely available online through the Oxford Open Initiative, are allowed to deposit a post-print of their accepted manuscript and/or the finally published version of the article, into an institutional or centrally organized subject repository, immediately upon publication. Also, the Wellcome Trust is committed to funding authors to pay for open access publication under the Oxford Open option (IFLA 2005).

The individual presentations at this satellite conference were all dialogic discourses combining into a multitude of polyphonic voices which – with some exceptions – were also carnivalistic in their revolt against prevailing commercial publishing models.

### **Redefining self interest**

Traditional subscription-based, commercial publishing (print and electronic) and the resulting serials crisis, can be seen as a manifestation of what communication and public relations theory define as 'asymmetrical' or one-way relations. Such relations are typical of the digital divide and structural information age inequalities among key stakeholders (Van Dijk 2005; Klang 2005; Poulin 2004; Willinsky 005). In scholarly publishing, asymmetrical or one-way relations are driven largely by self interest among key stakeholders (publishers, agents, scholars, libraries, end users). The reflections of the Elsevier representative at the Open Access meeting referred to in 4.3 can hardly be interpreted as anything else than expressions of self interest from the world's largest STM publisher. Elsevier has also been among the most profitable STM publishers – and unless author-based payment models take hold, Elsevier therefore will suffer most financially from the spread of OA.

OA can e.g. be interpreted as feedback or 'voice' from the receiver (library, reader, research community, end user) in a traditional communication model with a sender (author, publisher) and message (publication, price and cost). Yet OA is more than a threat to publishers (many of whom are successfully adapting to OA) or redress to impoverished libraries and disadvantaged end users trapped on the 'wrong' side of the digital divide. For OA to succeed and be sustained, self interest must be redefined in such a way that most key stakeholders find they can benefit from switching to OA. The process is probably most difficult for key stakeholders like researchers (who are accustomed to traditional scholarly publishing based on traditional peer review) and large and profitable publishers like Elsevier. SPARC has shown that many researchers can redefine their notions of self interest and be converted to OA, as it gathers momentum and delivers what researchers require. The process of redefinition of self interest which is very pronounced at Oxford Journals describe above, also depends on sensitivity among researchers to ethics and solidarity, as we are reminded of by Capurro (2004). Among publishers, the experiments of Oxford Open reflect that even dominating stalwarts such as Elsevier can be swayed. Here it should be noticed with regard to the related issue of proprietary versus public-domain software, that Microsoft in November 2005 said it would submit its Office Open XML document format technology to the International Standards Organization (ISO) to be adopted as an international standard (Montalbano & Taylor 2005).

The shift to symmetrical information age relations ultimately reflects a new scholarly information age ethos of 'dialogic communication', where dialogue is used in the Bakhtinian sense: a simultaneous fusion or unity of multiple voices (polyphony) at the same time that each voice retains its differentiated uniqueness. In a Bakhtinian perspective, Open Access is both part of a dialogue, a voice in a polyphonic and essentially democratic structure and even represents an inclusive

and anti-authoritarian, healthy reaction typical of certain rituals such as the carnival, which cannot be censured or suppressed by those in power.

OA also questions our notions and ideas of self interest, as developments at Oxford Journals suggest. It was noted above that according to Bakhtin the greatest writers of novels, especially Dostoevsky, manipulate the other also as a self.

Dialogism is a way of looking at things that always insists on the presence of the other, on the inescapable necessity of outsidedness and unfinalizability. If Bakhtin is right, then nothing exists in itself and we live lives of buzzing, overlapping, endlessly ramifying simultaneity. (Holquist 2002, 195)

### **Conclusion**

In the introduction a number of questions were posed about the viability and sustainability of OA. To conclude, we can say that our chosen multi-method and interdisciplinary perspective using communication and public relations theory in the form of Bakhtinian dialogism combined with typical and intensive sampling methodology, all in order to assess OA, has proven fruitful. A Bakhtinian perspective provides clearer 'hearing' of the other and other voices, and heightened awareness that OA scientific, electronic publishing contributes to symmetrical information age relations, more balanced and democratic power relationships and, crucially, redefinitions of self interest among key stakeholders (Бахтин 1996-2002; Grunig 2001; Hirschkop 2000; Holquist 2002).

Specifically, a Bakhtinian perspective which stresses dialogic, polyphonic and carnivalistic elements, suggests that OA

- is not only a fully sustainable but a permanent dialogic twin feature of the prevailing and still dominating asymmetrical monologue of traditional subscription-based commercial publishing;
- will not replace traditional subscription-based commercial publishing but will continue to challenge it and provide symmetry, as many polyphonic voices – consonant and dissonant - join in support of and in opposition to, both prevailing publishing patterns and OA;
- represents a healthy celebration of the popular, riotous and democratic carnival, in favour of freedom, in opposition to established and asymmetrical commercial power structures.

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