

Title: Bakhtin, Goethe, Tolstoy, and the Visualization of the Chronotope
Author: Sarah Mohler, Truman State University

This paper strives to do two things: to show that Bakhtin is a better critic of Goethe's visuality than he is often reputed to be, and to draw attention to the Goethe-Tolstoy affinity revealed in Bakhtin's unfinished manuscript, *The Bildungsroman and its Significance in the History of Realism*, 1936-38.

According to Bakhtin, Goethe fuses the spatial-temporal becoming of the fictional world with the hero's own development and represents it visually within the narrative (*Estetika* 216). Some critics dismiss Bakhtin's celebration of Goethe as nostalgia for the idyll (Tihanov 242). Such criticism ignores the connection between Goethe's delicate empiricism [zarte Empirie] and the visualization of the novelistic chronotope. Once this connection is revealed, Bakhtin's analysis becomes a case study for how authors extend dialogism into the visual realm.

Bakhtin often disparaged Tolstoy in order to elevate Dostoevsky. The passages in the 1963 revision of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* that contrast Dostoevsky's "pure voice" [chistyĭ golos] (*Sobranie* 6:63) with Tolstoy's "fixed image" [tverdyĭ obraz] (*Sobranie* 6:66), are often quoted as proof that Bakhtin considered Tolstoy the quintessential monologic author. A comparison of the shared attributes of Goethe and Tolstoy (an emphasis on becoming and temporal order, attention to the concrete and the ordinary, understanding through close examination) suggests that Bakhtin's appreciative analysis of Goethe's visuality substitutes for the critical attention he would not give to Tolstoy, who was lionized by the Soviet regime (Sloane 64-65).

Bakhtin, M. M. *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1986.

_____. *Sobranie sochinenii*. Ed. S. G. Bocharov. 6 vols. Moscow: Russkie Slovari Iazyki Slavianskoi Kul'tury, 2002.

Sloane, David. "Rehabilitating Bakhtin's Tolstoy: The Politics of the Utterance." *Tolstoy Studies Journal*. 13 (2001): 59-77.

Tihanov, Galin. *The Master and the Slave: Lukacs, Bakhtin, and the Ideas of Their Time*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.