

## THE DIFFERENT OTHER AND DIALOGUE

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*Received 4 January 2016; accepted 2 March*

The main theses of the article show the ways that various groups, whether ethnic, racial, religious or even ideological fall prey to monological positions without recognizing their own limitations. Thus they assume a “universal” position as all inclusive and true to reality itself. Those who hold such a position are not cognizant that without dialogical engagement there would not be a position. In this sense, the dialogical encounter allows one to have a position and its limitation. Moreover, monological positions tend to define others in such a way, that the others accept such definitions and become part of a specific monologue. The article is designed to show the ways of extricating oneself from monological posturing.

**Keywords:** dialogue, difference, limit, monologue, race, universality.

### Introduction

By now the debates, analyses, and descriptions of dialogue and its variations cover one of the major theoretical trends of this century. At times these trends are confused – intertwined with various systems of dialectics. Martin Buber, Mikhail Bakhtin, and more recently various schools of phenomenology, articulated by Bernhard Waldenfels, Richard Grathoff, Merab Mamardashvili, Tassilo von Heydebrand und der Lasa, ending with postmoderns such as Carl Schmidt, Rolf Günter Renner, Soraya de Chadarevian, point to dialogue as an essential ground of all other ventures. Indeed, there are writers who attempt to posit dialogue

as a fundamental theoretical-methodological problematic (Guba 1990). Given this plethora of concerns with dialogue, it is imperative to decipher its “priority” over other modes of thinking, without reducing it to some specific interpretation, such as may be offered by “lingualisms”, inclusive of hermeneutics, semiotics, and even postmodern notions of discursive practices, or to sociological theses that posit the primacy of society over the individual, or even to the claims that individuals possess some inherent drive to form communication with other individuals. These are notable theoretical constructions that founded numerous, even antagonistic ideological, economic, and even militaristic confrontations. In other words, they

have created various theoretical and ideological “others” who, supposedly, were innocent of the truth of their lives. Yet what could not, and indeed in principle cannot be excluded even by ideologies and theories, is the presence of the other as a condition for reflection upon one’s own positionality. This means that the limits of understanding and awareness, regardless of whatever theoretical and ideological ilk these may possess, are not offered within a given position. They require reflection from a different, an alternate domain that, even if not completely understood, indeed, even if rejected, compels its recognition. This suggests that dialogical thinking is granted even in cases of transcultural, transnational, transideological, and even transdisciplinary engagements. Radically speaking “the other” is affirmed even in its negation. Thus the very effort to deal with dialogue as a theory, in contrast to other types of theories, is already dialogical by virtue of the recognition of other theories. Dialogical awareness, it seems, cannot be limited to other theories and their presumed grounds, such as social, cultural, material, historical, biological and even mythical. It comprises a domain that must be articulated by some other, not yet obvious means. The effort, nonetheless, is worthy of the reward, specifically if the latter compels us to recognize the essential and inevitable affirmation of the other at whatever level the other is encountered. Indeed, the very encounter already grants our recognition of the “sense of the other” that is not absolutely alien, that is different and yet not radically transcendent from some sense of ourselves, regardless of how this “ourselves” is culturally designated. To reach this level of the “sense of the other” requires a scrupulous observance of numerous steps, each presupposed for the building of other steps.

### **Methodological issues**

In light of the various methodologies in currency, ranging from qualitative to quantitative,

from neo-positivistic, to culturally relativistic, we maintain (despite the postmodern claims that anything essential is dead) that any subject matter requires an articulation of its own access. This is to say, it would be not only inadvertent, but also arbitrary to “apply” our favorite method, dogma, or theory on all phenomena. Since this procedure would be another variant of negation and thus affirmation of the presence of other methods and dogmas, it would be already within the domain of dialogue. Hence, to access the dialogical requires its own “way”. The latter could only be reached through the steps of testing the limits of various methods and theories regardless of how much these may be established and promoted. One of the most prevalent views of communicative dialogue is composed of the triad of sender-message-receiver, with a variant inherent in the term “message”. The latter may be regarded as a channel, and the channel, as is the case with Marshall McLuhan, may be the message. The empirical study of this triad must be quantitative, regardless at what level the study may be undertaken. One may count the frequency of specific sounds; one may measure the decibels and the reactions they evoke; one may measure the physiological channels transmitting light waves emitted by a sequence of marks on a page; one may measure the waves emitted by satellite technology, etc. The utility of such studies is obvious. Yet this model and the empirical method leave some aspects of communication untouched. First, the message is more complex and can be at variance with the channel. Messages are understandable to the extent that they efface themselves in order to signify, point to, delimit some “object”. Second, the latter may be cultural, physical, psychological, mythical, science-fictional, etc., yet in all cases it is required as a dialogical focus. In the case of this essay, the focus is dialogue and the other, and specifically the other as different, either racially, ethnically, or culturally. Third, despite the disagreements that may occur concerning the delimitation of the subject matter, the latter is a required condition for the

continuity of communicative engagement. If the common subject matter is lost, the question will arise: are we talking about the same thing?

The other theoretical side, the rational-logical, with its *a priori* structures, has been shown to be limited to the extent that the connection between such structures and the world of experience is not implied by them. The rational structures, such as logic or mathematics, must be applied from some situated and dialogical position. The latter may be articulated as a point of interest, a hermeneutical setting, or available on the basis of tacit prejudgments. In all cases, reason is mediated and hence cannot take priority as the sole arbiter of human encounters. Specifically in such cases as race, there is no *a priori* structure that would be obvious to all concerned parties. Moreover, cultural others may have a different logic that could reveal our culture's limits of rationality. Even within one's own culture's rationality, there arise ambivalences whenever human action is introduced: the latter constantly defies strict rules and indeed reveals its own and the contingency of presumed fixed logics. These considerations suggest that the requirements to understand dialogue and the other are more complex and can only be unfolded dialogically. While this may appear to be circular, theoretically speaking some principles that delimit a region cannot be denied without denying the very region through which such principles appear. This is to say, the dialogical understanding is a principle which is involved in the very explication of dialogue, and, as mentioned above, involved in the acceptance-rejection of the other (Pilotta, Mickunas 1990). In this sense, any method, any theoretical controversy, any question of the racial other, are dialogical. What is required, then, is to delimit the dialogical morphology and to show what types of dialogue attempt to negate the other, even though the other never leaves the dialogical setting and what are the dialogical modalities that in principle affirm the other. It is important to note that even the modes of denial are revelations of the elevation of the other's importance,

and, in cases of race, even an over importance of the other (Fanon 1963: 50).

## Dialogical world

At the outset it must be emphasized that dialogical world is intersubjective and is one major way of resolving the protracted controversy between the proponents of the priority of individual over society and those who claim the supremacy of society. In the first instance, society is regarded as a sum of separate and indeed solipsistic individuals having solely antagonistic relationships, while in the second, the individual is a conjunction of social, events wherein society (at times interpreted in the form of institutions) is the defining dimension. It will be noted that institutions, such as science, may in fact lead to the negation of the other and promote racism. Meanwhile, the composition of dialogue has to be understood as prior to and pervasive of any claims to individualism and societalism (Waldenfels 1971: 132ff).

First, in dialogue the other is not present as an object, a given entity, a mind inhabiting a body, but as a copresence engaged in a common venture. One speaks with someone about something, some topic, concern, subject matter, before to regarding the other as other. The commonality, here, is a subject matter in which WE are engaged, which WE confront, dispute, or agree upon. There is granted an orientation toward something prior to an orientation of a self to the other.

Second, the notion of sender-message-receiver must be modified away from a sequence of activity-passivity, where the sender acts, while the receiver accepts the message. Rather, it is a complex process of the establishment of both sender and receiver in a way that they both are contemporaneously active-passive as a mutual articulation and interrogation of a subject matter. Each partner finds the dialogue and in turn is founded by it. There is neither the priority of the individual, as the ultimate

foundation, nor of the dialogical WE as the more encompassing. They are mutual and can be regarded analogously to a melody: each note is an individual and without it there would be no melody, but the melody also allows a note to have its say as position in the melody. Change in either one is mutually a change in the other.

Third, the dialogical partner is not merely the currently copresent other, but the others whose orientations toward the world, their perceptions of the topic, the subject matter, are equally copresent. The books I read, the conversations I had with others – perhaps long forgotten – comprise an extension of my perceptions and constitute a polycentric dialogical field. I perceive with the perceptions of the others, perceptions that contest, extend, and modify my own regard of a given subject matter. The same is true of my current dialogical partner; she too is founding of and founded by a polycentric field, and in our dialogue we mutually involve our polycentric awareness and hence extend our polycentric participation (Pilotta, Mickunas 1990: chapter III). This also constitutes the basis for transcendence of one's own limitations and resultantly for openness and freedom. Without the other, and without our being copresent to a polycentric field, we would lack the transcending movement.

Fourth, polycentric dialogue defies the traditional notions of sequential history; this dialogue constitutes a field of temporal depth wherein the “past” dialogical partners are not passive, but participate equally in articulating, challenging, and interrogating a specific issue, topic, or subject matter. Thus, it is quite normal to say, for example, that for the Egyptians humans were not articulated in terms of some presumed racial features, but in accordance with hierarchies of social positions and tasks. Of course, the focus of our dialogue is the human, while the others, the Egyptians, open and extend our perception by showing our own limitations and positionality. Here, their perceptions contest actively our own perceptions. At the dialogical level we are constantly decentered

from our limitations even when we would reject the others perceptions of a given subject matter. Indeed, the very preoccupation with rejection, the efforts to demonstrate the inadequacy, the mistaken understanding, and downright error, shows the extraordinary credence and copresence of the other. Thus, the copresence of the other is the condition of transcendence.

Fifth, the dialogical copresence of the other not only decenters mutually absolute positionality, but also constitutes the initial awareness of human situatedness as well as a reflective self identification each through the other. It could be argued that dialogical process comprises the domain of inter-positional reflexivity such that one recognizes oneself only due to the difference from the other in modes of awareness of a subject matter. This is the transparency principle: I know myself to the extent that I reflect from the other, from the how that she articulates a specific theme. I see myself through the different perceptions offered by the other that connect us by way of a common theme, task, subject matter, and allows us our recognition of our own positions. Another aspect of this dialogical morphology must be mentioned in order to avoid misunderstandings inherent in the efforts to objectify the other. Even if we engage in a dialogue about the other, we shall find that she cannot be understood apart from her perceptions of something, of some concerns inherent in her world. We shall understand her only to the extent that she is engaged in some task or concern, and thus is an aspect of our own polycentric field. After all, to discuss Virginia Woolf, is to discuss her views about something and thus introduce her as our dialogical partner. Even if we were so crude as to intrude into her “private feelings” we would still understand them as “feelings about something”. She, as well as we, are comprehensible only with respect to the world we address, contest, and share in our different ways. An all-encompassing, undifferentiated, homogeneous thesis would not be recognizable, would not possess an identity, and would cease to be dialogical; it would be a

divine speaking without any copresence of the other. It would be a denial of the other's existence as copresence through difference. That such divine positions are assumed is obvious from numerous examples across cultures and even within specific cultural institutions. It behooves us, therefore, to explicate such positions which, while dramatically paradoxical due to their emphasis on the other, they attempt to abolish the other's existence.

We know that there are numerous institutions in cultures, such as scientific or theological, that purport to "explain" everything and specifically the other. Not all such theories need be explored; what is required is to articulate their common principles that will inhere in such explanations. In turn, we shall not rank such theories with respect to their "higher" status in a given culture, not because we wish to insult the adherents to such theories, but due to the comparative nature that seeks essential commonalities.

To speak in principle, all theories that posit inevitable causes for, and outcomes of human actions, engage in homogenization and thus a denial of human presence as a diversity. In the final analysis it is the will of divinities, universal laws, forces clashing in the cosmic night, childhood violations, historical market forces, and even cultural habits that speak. Here one cannot claim a situated, responsible, dialogical, contesting, limited but open human presence. An example from American politics of the past, which is still in vogue today, is Newt Gingrich who once announced, addressing a case of the killing of a woman in Chicago in order to cut out her unborn fetus, that this is a result of a welfare system. The same can be said of the many claims, including Gingrich's friend, Bob Dole's that the entertainment media are the forces that make persons do what they do. In principle, this is an abolition of the subject in favor of an object as a product of causes, an engagement in monological and all encompassing presence that attempts to silence the other.

The situated, dialogical individual is replaced by an abstract set of factors: the human is subject to the force of institutions, such as mass media, that are deemed to be in a position to posit the individual as an object and to determine her course. In brief, the other does not exist as a dialogical other, but is an object without any situational perception and identity through dialogical differentiation. What is of note is that the speakers proclaim these theses – even if for a moment – *ex cathedra*, from a homogeneous position, without a reflective moment that such a position is an aspect of their own dialogical differentiation from other positions. They claim to be unsituated, apart from, and untainted by the very institutions which they posit as grounds for all explanations. This is their dramatic paradox: peoples are dominated by institutions, but our proclamations are from a position of unaffected privilege. We are the subject and our discourse is homogeneously absolute. The other, here, does not exist as a speaking, dialogical subject. One specific result of this homogeneity is the tacit assumption that the other cannot be held responsible; she is innocent. Indeed, in some discourses, she may be defined as a victim, and indeed an innocent victim.

Yet an unavoidable dialogical reflexivity comes into play, and in principle. The very claim to innocence and victimization is a position, differentiated from other positions in a dialogical field of claims and counter-claims, accusations and excuses. The first moment of such a dialogical interplay is the pointing out that the objectifiers of the other must either belong to the same explanation and hence cannot claim to be responsible subjects, or they are cynical (Sloterdijk 1983: 33). The second moment appears in all cases when the victimized proclaim their innocence and accuse the other as the victimizer. The victimized joyfully-sorrowfully exhibits the scars of being "crucified" and oppressed and, therefore, of having a greater moral authority by dint of their suffering, to judge all others. This is the

syndrome of the “colonized” other around the globe, articulated in neo-colonial theories. In the current breakdown of major empires, the other, the third world, the minority “nationalities”, are vying for the privilege of being the greatest sufferers, the most violated, and hence the most qualified to judge and demand of the other all sorts of retributions (Shafarivic 1991: 389ff). What is characteristic of these claims, as a third moment, is equally an abstract universal posture: the Germans did this to us, the Soviets have crucified us, the Japanese owe us an apology, eurocentrism is a neo-colonial privileged invasion. The fourth, moment shows that the other, the colonizer, the oppressor, is not another at all, not a dialogical partner, but a monstrous object, an anonymous blind force bereft of human features.

Here the denial of the dialogical other, in the other’s very forceful presence, takes on a dual abstraction. The oppressor sees the other as a lesser being, and if this view is pushed to the limit, the other is denied human existence. The other belongs to a race that cannot be characterized as human; she is on a lower level of evolution and per force is best suited for subservient tasks. Here the oppressor, the racist, denies his own positionality and dialogical situatedness and regards the other from a divine position. The other may offer her deeds, achievements, trajectory of her life, but the racist has presumed the sole and true standards such that the other can never offer adequate evidence that she has a right to human existence. If her deeds, history, achievements, as correlations to the world are excluded, then she is left as a pure body, an entity that does not resemble anything human. But the ethnically or racially oppressed are equally exposed to the same logic. They must regard the oppressor in terms of decontextualized abstraction. The oppressor, the racist is equally lacking in human characteristics. He lacks conscience, is a brutish barbarian and, as all lower creatures, is a predator. Moreover, he is incapable of providing for his own needs; all his possessions stem from theft. All his deeds,

his life’s achievements, do not belong to him but to those he oppresses and exploits. He is a body bereft of significance, a greedy biochemical mechanism. This too constitutes a non-dialogical attitude and establishes a divine gaze toward the other. On both sides the dialogical transcendence and hence human situated and yet decentered freedom is abandoned.

Such a dual abstraction, indeed disembodied reification, is extended to include various moves toward liberation from racism, ethnocentrism and their modes of oppression. In this case, those to be liberated must be passively ideal, voiceless. They cannot have any faults; any faults are the results of oppression. In this sense the oppressors are completely faulty, corrupting and immoral. Unless one grants the oppressor a status of pure reification, one will have to lend him a position of subjectivity, intentionality and responsibility for his morally unjustifiable racist activities. The ideal oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, will have to surrender the status of a subject, the being of intentionality, of making decisions. In order to retain their purity and innocence, they will have to parade their passivity, their life as death as the ultimate virtue. It is an ideality that is equally without position, although it may proclaim that it is the highest bearer of moral virtues. For example, when the Baltic tribes declared their independence from the Soviet Union, they also declared a status of being victims and thus the bearers, exemplars, and teachers of unconditional universal morality. Here no situated human appeared, and no dialogical positionality and differentiation could be offered: no human presence. There are “divine” pronouncements and hence pure, universal objectivity. This abolition of their own situated dialogical transcendence abolishes their own humanity.

Obviously, the denied presence of the other in racist and ethnically antagonistic world appears quite frequently in institutionalized styles of rhetoric. Scientific research, as one of the major institutional practices, purports to offer truths that are impartial, objective, and universal.

It seeks and claims to offer most basic explanations of human events. Thus the notorious research in genetics, and the uses of genetic model, resulting in such writings as *The Bell Curve* (Herrnstein, Murray 1994), “demonstrated” the “truth of failures” of some minority groups, of the other. Their failures are obvious from the institutionalized universal discourse of science. Here society is excused because it is not at fault with respect to its racism and the failure of the other. The other is equally not at fault with respect to her capacities or their lack. Both, the scientific institution and the other are subjected to a non-dialogical universality, such that the scientific discourse is regarded as valid under all conditions, while the other, as an incapacitated body, not yet adequate to be called human must also be understood with respect to the laws advanced by the scientific institution. What is of essence, here, is that the scientific institutions themselves define the social functions which are deemed to be human. In a technocratically militaristic world, each human activity is subjected to calculated functional requirements and efficiencies, regarded equally to be universal expressions of human intelligence. This decontextualization strips away all dialogical partnerships in correlation to tasks and their varied significations, and reduces them to a system of discrete signals, to a macrophilic body that cannot have any slack. Each body part is a function reacting to and inserted into a system of functional parts, each equivalent to, and replaceable by, other parts. Those bodies that retain slack, deviate from efficient use of energy, time and motion in the technocratic world, are regarded as irrational. The other, the minority, the ethnically different, is thus the one who bears the very traces of inefficiency and indeed irrationality in her total comportment. This irrationality, then, is discovered by scientific institutions to be, in reality, built in by the very metaphysics of universal geneticism. Here racism is universal, and the very technocratic functions of this society must equally support racism, not for economic reasons but for the

very legitimization of the denial of the other as human, denial of the others right to exist. Thus, as unfit, the other is excised from the functional system and punished by numerous disadvantages. Obviously, the institutionalized scientific regard will always prove its case, since the social functions that it requires are its own invention – technical. Only those who subject themselves to such a functional society will be regarded as “human” although the very fact that they cease to function dialogically and become a system of homogeneous and interchangeable parts without a loss, they too will accept racism as a universal necessity.

This type of institutional racism is, at this level, now regarded as a universal logic. It is a standard that decides the other’s status as belonging to either a race or an ethnic group that is inadequate. The inadequacy may be regarded as either scientifically demonstrated fact, or as a result of social, cultural superstitions. Thus, for example, the women of the others have no intelligence concerning their sexuality regarding their over productivity, and the ability to use scientific means for birth control. To speak functionally, they are inefficient with respect to the good life. If it is not their intelligence, then at least their cultures are flawed. Thus, they must be extricated from their “irrational superstitions” and made to function in a technocratic, truly “objective” environment, constituted by the racially superior intelligence. Their culture will have to be surrendered as the faulty system of irrational, subjective beliefs that has hindered the other to enter into objective “world history”. Of course, surrendering the faulty culture is not a guarantee that the other, excised from her dialogical setting, is adequate to function in the non-dialogical context of institutionalized science and social technocracy. At best, the other will be placed in tasks requiring no intelligence. The racist will have to be benevolent, have some pity to the lesser others, so well paraded in *The Bell Curve*. There is proffered *universal evidence* as to the objective embodiment of material inferiority of the racial other. In this

sense, the denial of employment, education, and the “normal” social background will be the denial of her right to existence and be equivalent to her death. The institutionalized racism and ethnocentrism will not regard these denials as violations, but as an objective necessity: there is nothing you can do for, or with these others. The proclamation, in principle is this: neither the institutionalized racism nor the other can do anything about objective, genetic facts. The latter legitimates the tacit assumption of the superiority of the racist institutions. The very fact that “we discovered” the ultimate explanation of all human capacities, through our technology, is a proof that we are not only the best, the presence of true humanity, but also that we have a “manifest destiny” to manage the affairs of the others. This very claim confirms the racist regard that the other is *a priori* disfunctional, inefficient, an irrational child. But, as noted above, this racist attitude, *vis a vis* the scientific technocratic social world, is equally bereft of the dialogical human presence. Indeed, he too is a result of the same genetic laws that rob him of any claim to humanity. He is a subjected subject, equally explainable by such impartial universal laws that leave no room to claims concerning his achievements. After all, genetic rules have no “personalities” and ply their trade without any regard to the dialogical, intersubjective human world. What this suggests is that the racist, pegging himself on institutionalized science, abolishes his right to claim any superiority.

There are also the components of institutionalized cults, tacitly legitimating racism by proclaiming *the truth* of the chosen peoples. Regardless who makes such a proclamation, the other must be outside of the chosen circle and, minimally speaking, on the verge of evil. This holds despite the fact that there are numerous cults, such as fundamentalist Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, who may vie for outdoing one another’s claim to supremacy and cultic-centric racisms. Each holds its position to be the sole and ultimate truth and may, at times, hold members of other similar

cults as racially inferior, suited, at best, for conversion, subservience, or extinction (Carby 1992: 192ff). Indeed, numerous confrontations today occur among cultic groups, each intent in converting all others into its own proclamations and imposing the latter on all publics. This is well known under the essential rubric of *holy war*, ranging from war with words through “divinely inspired” murder. The suggestion, here, is that despite surface variations among cultic groups, the murder of the other is an extension of the killing, attacking, by words. We must remind ourselves that for cults words are not discursive, dialogical, but rather magical deeds, identical with creation and destruction. A prayer, after all, is a power for the unleashing of events (Carby 1992: 192ff). In this sense, murder of the other is not an individual act, but an embodiment of divine speaking, of carrying out the “word” of a god. Indeed, the other, the enemy of the word, is radically important as the worthy enemy, as the embodiment of evil itself, calling one to destructive acts against the other. The current language of those who carry out *the word* is replete with the terminology of good and evil, with demonization that calls for the cleansing of the world from the other, with blatant exclusion of the other from any consideration as a dialogical partner, and with the presumption of a monological speech, coextensive with the ultimate word of a cult’s divinity.

### Regardless of difference

At the outset, the above delimitations suggest an inevitable “logic”. The monological abstractions, universalities, in their exclusion of the other, revert, constantly to the positionality, specificity, of including the other as the most important aspect of their logic. While denying, these logics allow the other’s freedom and indeed transcendence of the racist’s claims to universality. By freedom is meant the resiliency, the constant requirement to deal with, include the other as never completely subjectable to

the racists' universality. After all, the history of racism reveals most diverse, most devious, cunning, banal, sublime and "scientifically sober" efforts to ban, kill, destroy the transcendence of the other. Hence, even the institutionalized modes of racism, that spread their message among collectivities, do so precisely at the level which admits the uncontrollable other, the impossibility of subjecting her completely for institutionalized racism. The spread is a general attitude which sees in every black all blacks, in the lynching of him, a lynching of all of them. Here, the dialogue is reversed, such that the universal rationality of an institution, claiming to abolish the darkness of cultural superstitions, becomes a promoter of another superstition, of an aura that surrounds an entire group. Hence, when the racist reacts to an individual, he does not do so rationally, reacting to this individual, but to a "black, much too black" other. What enters here initially is the notion that racism, such as white racism, is a white problem in the white dialogue. Here, the term "dialogue" can no longer be avoided, since the white constantly address the questions concerning the solution of "black problems". The latter cannot be solved by the blacks, since by institutional definitions they do not possess sufficient human intelligence. Hence they must be saved from themselves. The white, in this racial context, cannot be offered salvation. He can either help, destroy, or get out of the way of, the black; yet at the end any contemplated option is not for the white. Even in cases of white persons seeking racial justice for the other, knows intimately that racial justice is not for him, since he invented this problem of justice. In this sense, to be a white racist is either to be condemned by the other, or to condemn oneself.

The condemnation is a white dialogical issue. Before white racism, black peoples were not black, did not have any ontological reason to regard themselves as such. To become black, and as a specific race, requires the conditions set up by the whites that were external to the other. This is correlative to the notion that the other, in order to become human, must enter

history – the white definition of history. The other, therefore, need not have history, but this lack is not the issue for the other, but for the white. In turn, the universal history of the white is itself dialogical, and hence by drawing the other into its wind, it demands that the other be copresent as an unavoidable player in this universal history. The above mentioned technocratic world is white history, premised on "progress" and hence posited at the head of all others; they lack such progress, hence they either do not have history, or they must look up to the "advanced" peoples for guidance and mastery. History, while demanding the degradation of the other, is also the dialogical "elevation" of the other to a status of positioning the white as superior.

The result of racism for the racially other is not only the constant attention, a constant exclusion through over-study, over-codification, but above all of singularization. While the other is black, any black, a black, the black, he is also noticed, harassed, called upon to justify himself, prove his humanity, masculinity, prove her femininity, beauty, and hence to be the one who must constantly be situated, dialogical, and hence transcendent. Every decision of this other is a risk, an exposure to indeterminacy, chance, and freedom. The institutionalized racist is subject to his racism without notice, as something natural, requiring no unique and singular moment of transcendence. Things take their normal course, society and economy are events to which one is subject, subjected, and even necessitated. Indeed, one could readily admit to this subjection in pride: I do my duty. But for the racially other, the gaze, the institutional look, the surveillance is upon him. Hence his decisions are not for his race, not to beat the institutionalized racism, but to face day after day his unique situation, its demands to transcend the restrictions, and to demonstrate this transcendence under a constant gaze. If we take the historical black figures, we discover that despite their autobiographies, writing about themselves they reveal specific lifeworlds of United States. Their situated transcendence

was a relationship to the moments of history of institutionalized racism. The writing by Frederick Douglass was a recognition of his former situation of being a slave. It was *he* who was a slave and it was *he* who, by dint of his autobiography, became a historical figure in the world of racism. But there is a Douglass who is not a historical figure, who is the singularized person deciding to escape from Maryland. At that moment of *his* black lived history he was no hero. He had to recognize that the real options available to him were materially overwhelming and foreboding, but his choices were not. This is to say, his options were given as historical, institutionalized racist facts, facts created and defined by racism, but his choices were direct, positioned, and transcendent of the options. No doubt, the powers against him were facts beyond his control, yet *his* freedom could only be gained by *his* singular choices and actions. In face of the institutionalized options, *he* was in dialogue with them and extended them by introducing the human, situated, dialogical transcendence premised on singular position and choices. This is to say, *his* transcendence of institutionalized racism in a situation is to be dialogical to the extent that it is a transcendence of the sequential, non-dialogical history of the succession of such institutions. Douglass, the other, is the confirmation of the dialogical engagement even under most dire world of universal history of the racist. This is not to say that racism is thereby condoned. To the contrary, the point is that even under racism, the non-dialogical racist is compelled to recognize dialogue in the other who must live and act as a positioned-positioning singular, situated transcendence and a free human.

The dialogical situation for the racially other is very unique in the following variations. Frantz Fanon points out that the authors, writing about black experience, would have to be incognizant of their *historical* location in order to liberate themselves not as black, but as humans, and indeed in order to be dialogical (Gebser 1986: chapter III, 3). Such writers had

to understand themselves not just as subjects to this history, but as willing and positioning-positioned, passive-active processes in dialogue. Yet as soon as these writers confirm their position in history, then they also confirm a history which made them black and allotted them a position of non-being, of death. In the text of Fanon, there is a recognition that while black liberation is necessary, it cannot be a liberation to be black. The black, as the other, is, of course, thrown in a setting as a total and concrete being; such a setting escapes the racist. The latter, like the bourgeois who claim that there are no classes, can claim that there is no racism. This claim, *a la* Fanon, is possible because the racist is not simply the dialogical other, but the monological master, either as institutionalized, or as a pervasive gaze (Fanon 1963: 135). Yet one must also understand that the institutions and the gaze, comprising a history of the racist, are contingent, indeed transitory. This is to say, the loss of all “ultimate” explanations forced the racist to posit his superiority as historical, as the most advanced and progressive. Yet this history is not a given, but a result of temporary, contingent *human* activity. History, the racist history, in short, is the factual situation that has become a tool to subject the other to racist demands. But once this is recognized, the other, who has demanded and maintained her humanity by her transcendence of the conditions through choices, reveals her and the racist’s humanity. She draws both into a dialogue by showing the situated transcendence of both and the need of each for the other as dialogical humans. As Fanon suggests, “I find myself suddenly in the world and I recognize that I have one right alone: That of not renouncing my freedom through my choices [...]. I, the man of color, want only this: That the tool never possesses the man. That the enslavement of man by man cease forever [...]. That it be possible for me to discover and to love man, whoever he may be” (Fanon 1963: 112). The tool as history is an invention, an institutionalized racism. The liberation from it must be human-dialogical.

Any other option will be racist. The black person, by dint of her situation, is the human who transcends by her choices (and not factual options) the racist history and is the situation where dialogue is maintained. Indeed, she is already beyond racial color and cannot demand to remain black without returning to the white racism imposed on her by contingent history (Fanon 1963: 229f).

### Conclusions, or postscript

Other variations on racism and ethno-cultural centrism may be offered. Our focus, nonetheless, had to be on our own situation, our own self-illumination of the constant shift toward “divine”, unsituated, universal monologues that pretend to explain our humanity, our being with (and even against) one another. Yet such efforts constantly reveal the heightened significance of the other, her presence as a background across which such monologues plays out their destiny. In case of the modern racist monologues, under the various guises of science, theology, history, and functional efficiency, the other is the final dialogical bulwark, the ultimate situated transcendence that, against all odds, manifests dialogical essence of being human. Yet the other will fail if she allows herself to become an all encompassing, universal voice, the clarion call of unsituated morality and finally an institutionalized racist. The liberation of a race

from a racist society is not enough to pronounce a tolerance of the other, but to discard race as an irrelevant residua of monological thinking.

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## KITOKS KITAS IR DIALOGAS

Algis MICKŪNAS

Šiame straipsnyje parodoma, kaip įvairios grupės – gentys, rasės, religinės ar ideologinės bendruomenės – patenka į monologinę poziciją, nepastebėdamos savo pačių ribotumo. Šiuo atveju jos laikosi prielaidos, kad yra „visuotinės“, visa aprėpiančios ir atstovaujančios „tikrajai“ tikrovei. Tie, kurie laikosi tokios pozicijos, nepastebi, kad be dialoginio įsivėlimo išvis nebūtų jokios pozicijos. Šiuo atveju dialoginis įsivėlimas drauge leidžia suvokti savąją poziciją ir jos ribas pagal santykį su kitomis pozicijomis. Be to, monologinė pozicija turi tendenciją apibūdinti kitus kaip priimančius tuos apibūdinimus ir tampančius monologo dalimi. Straipsnyje aptariami būdai, kaip išsivaduoti iš monologinio būvio.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** dialogas, skirtumas, riba, monologas, rasė, visuotinumas.