



**Mikhail Bakhtin, *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*, ca. 1920-1923.**

"By way of introspective observation, it can easily be ascertained that I focus on my outward expressedness least of all when performing a physical action. Strictly speaking, I act, I grasp an object not with my hand as an externally complete image or configuration; rather, I grasp it with my internally experienced muscular feeling corresponding to my hand. And what I grasp is not the object as an externally complete image, but rather my tactile experience corresponding to the object, and my muscular feeling of the object's resistance, its heaviness, compactness, and so forth.

What is seen merely complements what is internally experienced and is of secondary significance in the actualization of an action. And, in general, all that which is given, present-on-hand, already realized and available recedes, as such, into the background of the action-performing consciousness. This consciousness is directed toward a goal, and the given course followed in performing the action as well as the means of achieving the goal are both experienced from within. The path followed in performing an action is a purely internal one, and the continuity of this path is internal as well...

For example, when I walk along the street, I am internally directed forward, I calculate and evaluate all of my movements internally. In doing so, of course, I may occasionally need to see some things as distinctly as possible (at times even within myself). But this outer seeing during the performance of an action is always



one-sided. That is, what I perceive in an object in such outer seeing is only that which is immediately relevant to a given action; as a result, such a way of seeing destroys the object's fullness as an intuitable given. What is present-on-hand, given, determined in the visual image or configuration of an object located in the area of action is eroded and decomposed during the performance of an action by what is yet-to-be, what is still in the future, what is still being actualized in relation to the given object by my action: I see an object from the standpoint of a future inner experience, and this is a standpoint which is most unjust in regard to the externally completed character of an object.

Thus, to pursue our earlier example, when I was walking along the street and suddenly saw a person walking toward me from the opposite direction, I quickly shifted to the right to avoid colliding with him; what was in the foreground for me in my seeing of that person was the possible jolt I was anticipating—a jolt I would have experienced from within myself—and my (internally directed) shift to the right followed directly from this...

The world of action is a world of the internally anticipated future.”