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## Rosenzweig and Bakhtin. Hermeneutics of Language and Verbal Art in the System of the Philosophy of Dialogue

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**Abstract.** For all the differences in the teachings and fate of Franz Rosenzweig and Mikhail Bakhtin, comparing them with one another is extremely instructive and reveals important and often lost meanings of 20th-century philosophy. Bakhtin made his debut in 1929 as the author of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art*, but then went into exile for sufficient years and emerged from oblivion only in the 1960s. Rosenzweig died in 1929 and was almost forgotten for many years. Now, almost a century later, we see in Bakhtin's philosophy, especially in his early works, and in Rosenzweig's philosophy very much in common. Both sought to create a new philosophical system that radically rethinks the subject of philosophy. Both went beyond the traditional New European ontology, both recognized the fundamentality of language and language arts in the philosophy of the future, and, finally, both became the creators of the philosophy of dialogue as an important trend in 20th-century thought. For all that, there were many cultural, religious, and intellectual differences between Bakhtin and Rosenzweig. However, consideration of both the commonalities and differences in their philosophical systems is extremely fruitful not only for the cultural history of the 20th century but also for philosophical studies of the future.

**Keywords:** Bakhtin, Rosenzweig, philosophy of dialogue, philosophical system, ontology, grammatical organon, verbal art

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### 1. Rosenzweig's and Bakhtin's Philosophy of Dialogue

Although the simultaneous emergence of the philosophy of dialogue in Russia and Germany has been noted numerous times, the ideas and teachings of Buber and Bakhtin are usually compared [1; 2]. That should be of no surprise as these two

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names are forefront in minds when considering dialogue. Meanwhile, the comparison of Bakhtin's and Rosenzweig's ideas is not less but more meaningful and productive<sup>1</sup>. In the teachings of these two thinkers, there are sufficient overlaps and similarities. There are important differences, the study of which is fruitful for the development of philosophy. However, before examining them, it is worth asking whether the two authors knew each other. As for Rosenzweig, it is hard to suppose that he had ever heard Bakhtin's name, for he had been ill since 1922, and his social circle was severely limited. Until the 1929 publication of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art*, only a narrow circle of his friends knew of Bakhtin. As for Rosenzweig's prominence in Bakhtin's circle, the situation is quite different. The first Russian reactions to *The Star of Redemption* appeared immediately after its publication<sup>2</sup>. We can assume that Bakhtin's circle heard about Rosenzweig and his book in the 1920s. It should be noted that Bakhtin's closest friend, M.I. Kagan, who was a close student of H. Cohen during the years 1912—1918, could not help but cross paths with Rosenzweig, who saw himself as an authentic continuator of Cohen's philosophy in his Berlin period. Despite these circumstances, we do not find Rosenzweig's direct influence on Bakhtin's work. Even more interesting are the numerous cross-references between their ideas. The comparison of the teachings of Bakhtin and Rosenzweig is not because of the possibility of their mutual influence but to the extreme closeness of their interests, the common fate, and the significant similarity in their very teachings. The most important reason for such a comparison is that both thinkers were ardent followers of Hermann Cohen and independent philosophers who created their multi-faceted systematic doctrine. Both Bakhtin [6. P. 224—226; 7. P. 437—442] and Rosenzweig [8. P. 27—29; 9. P. 85—86] have kept many enthusiastic references to Cohen, yet both authors insisted on opposing their teachings to Cohen and on their originality<sup>3</sup>. From this, a comparison of the teachings of Bakhtin and Rosenzweig requires, on the one hand, a comparison with Cohen's doctrine, and, on the other hand, a study of their other sources and their original ways of constructing their philosophy.

Besides the relationship with Cohen, one cannot ignore the proximity of Bakhtin and Rosenzweig to other sources. First of all, we are discussing the German intellectual tradition — Goethe, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and others. The names of these authors do not just frequently appear in the works of Rosenzweig and Bakhtin but are fundamental to their perception of

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<sup>1</sup> One of the first studies comparing Bakhtin's dialogical philosophy not only with Buber but also with Rosenzweig was carried out by V.L. Makhlin [3].

<sup>2</sup> As V.N. Belov notes, the first review of Rosenzweig's book was published in *Mysl'* [Thought] journal in 1922 in the *Criticism and Bibliography* section. In 1926, S.L. Frank published an article *Rosenzweig's Mystical Philosophy* [4], which later became widely known [5].

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the correlation between Bakhtin's and Cohen's philosophical systems ref. [10. P. 4—6; 11. S. 29—50; 7. P. 436—456] On Rosenzweig's attitude to the philosophy of Cohen [12].

culture. It is also important to note that the authors listed above not only influenced our two philosophers but also evoked a close reaction from them<sup>4</sup>.

Along with the common range of sources, Bakhtin and Rosenzweig have significant differences. Rosenzweig relies on German mysticism and even more on classical Jewish texts. Bakhtin turns much more often to Russian and French literature. For all his reverence for Russian literature, Rosenzweig was not familiar with it<sup>5</sup>.

Of course, all the above is rather a background for comparing the works of Bakhtin and Rosenzweig. The main topic of our study is the striking proximity of their philosophical systems. Let us list a few points of such proximity: the orientation towards the creation of a new philosophical system, the construction of an alternative ontology, and the centrality of language and verbalism in philosophy. We can also note significant differences in the authors' teachings. They address the aesthetics of religious and artistic text in quite different ways and plan differently the philosophy of dialogue and the nature of interpersonal relations. Let us consider in more detail the similarities and differences between the philosophies of Bakhtin and Rosenzweig.

### ***The Systematic Principle in the Philosophical Systems of Rosenzweig and Bakhtin***

Already in his first work *Art and Answerability* [13. P. 1—3] Bakhtin outlines a philosophical system. Later on, in the unfinished fragment entitled *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, he states repeatedly that he is developing a new “first philosophy” [14. P. 19—21, 27—28]. This philosophy, similarly to Aristotelian metaphysics, should become the foundation of Bakhtin's philosophical system. The main task here is to determine the central subject, which, from the author's point of view, should be responsible action.

Rosenzweig in *The Star of Redemption* deals rigorously with the notion of a philosophical system, primarily in connection with Hegel, but says nothing about his system. However, in his 1925 article *The New Thinking*, which is a kind of post factum preface to *The Star of Redemption*, he emphasizes his book is a statement of a philosophical system:

“[My book] nor does it claim to be a philosophy of religion. How could it do this, given that the word “religion” does not even occur in it. Rather it is merely a system of philosophy”. [15. P. 110]

Of course, Bakhtin's and Rosenzweig's focus on the philosophical system did not pass the researchers by. As they point out, for both our authors the foundations of the systematic principle lay in Cohen's philosophy but differed significantly, firstly, in the very order in which the system is presented, and secondly, in its

<sup>4</sup> For instance, Bakhtin and Rosenzweig both criticize Hegel from similar positions, both prefer Schelling, and both contrast him with Nietzsche and Kierkegaard.

<sup>5</sup> His treatment of Dostoevsky is extremely interesting but not at all in the same way as Bakhtin's [8].

subject matter [7. P. 442—445]. Bakhtin considers as his subject the partaking or participative being of an event. As V.L. Makhlin puts it, “Bakhtin “postulates a new type of system <...> — a system or “whole,” whose elements enter the system <...> as elements of the partake free, partake outside to its own system” [16. P. 81]. Unfolding his system in a different way from Bakhtin’s, Rosenzweig arrives at a close result — his philosophical system, as well as the subject matter it examines, are both closed and open. In his remarkable book on Rosenzweig’s philosophy, B. Pollock sums up Rosenzweig’s attitude to the philosophical system: “a human being who stands in the midst of all things, in the middle of the system” [17. P. 314]. This position of standing amid all things is not self-contained and closed, rather, according to Rosenzweig, is directed into the future. As a result, “Everyone must itself be taken responsibility <...> This responsibility occurs in the everyday [Alltag] of life” [17. P. 312]. Here the expression *everyday* (*Alltag* literally means *everyday*) becomes a key since it is, according to Rosenzweig, the day which contains the All. The system is the singular and singular man himself in the integrity of his inner world and external behavior. As we can see, the similarities between Rosenzweig’s position and Bakhtin’s concerning the philosophical system are striking. But their differences are also quite significant, especially in their attitude to ontology.

### ***Relation to Ontology***

Rosenzweig specifies that ontological “philosophy from Parmenides to Hegel” belongs to the past and that the new philosophy goes beyond the relationship of thinking and being [8. P. 20—21]. For Rosenzweig, this statement denotes a critique of ontology as such. The philosopher sees in ontology the impossibility of solving the problem of death and the imprisonment of thinking in the closed circle of being. He finds a way out of this in the idea of speech thinking, which is open in nature. In doing so, Rosenzweig constructs his theory of Dasein, which he defined long before Heidegger as “here being” (Da-Sein). Rosenzweig describes open-ended actual being by the biblical term “creation” [8. P. 131].

Bakhtin, like Rosenzweig and — later — Heidegger, repels from the idea of being as the existence and designs his concept of actual being as event being. According to his ideas, in the act of doing, being does not manifest itself as a present given, but as a process, an answerable act, an event. Both original conceptions of being, meta-ontological by nature, lead to an entirely new ontology in which language is not a means of expressing being, but an actual creative force.

### ***The Place of Language and Literature***

Both of our philosophers are distinguished from various others as they produced a real revolution in the understanding of speech and language. Rosenzweig proclaims a grammatical organon, which turns out to be a kind of logical tool for the realization of inter-elemental dynamics [18]. In the second part of his book, Rosenzweig derives a grammar of language. He consistently unfolds

the language of creation, the language of revelation, and the language of deliverance, which together can be seen as the foundations for a new linguistic philosophy. Characteristically, this philosophy appears not in the first but rather in the second part of the book. The first and third parts, by the author's intention, are in a world of silence.

We find something similar in Bakhtin's philosophy. Language becomes a significant foundation of his teaching already at the stage of maturity. Initially, Bakhtin builds concepts of an answerable act, moral philosophy, participative being of the event, etc. And only when these philosophical foundations become clear, does it turn out that the way to express them is through verbal art. In his later works, Bakhtin immerses in literary studies. This transition from philosophy to the study of literature is caused not only by the impossibility of practicing philosophy in the Soviet Union but also by the author's inner motivations for thinking.

### *The Philosophy of Dialogue*

Both of our authors are considered classics of the philosophy of dialogue. Yet neither Bakhtin nor Rosenzweig are in a hurry to declare their philosophy dialogic. Bakhtin mentions dialogue in his early philosophical works but calls his philosophy "moral philosophy," "participatory thinking," and "aesthetics of verbal art," but not a philosophy of dialogue. Dialogue is one of the central themes in Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art* (1929) as well as in his later works. Yet even there he does not discuss the philosophy of dialogue. Makhlin suggests using the term "ontology of partaking" [19. P. 268] in relation to Bakhtin's philosophy, and warns against reducing it to dialogism. The same is true of Rosenzweig. Although there is a chapter in *The Star of Redemption* entitled *Dialogic Form* [8. P. 181], *dialogue* is more of a passing theme in this book than a central one. Rosenzweig prefers to call his philosophy "New Thinking" or "narrative philosophy" [15. P. 121]. This gives the impression that falling into the category of *philosophy of dialogue* is not the result of the authors' intentional aspiration but rather turned out to be a consequence of the historical-philosophical process. A line of thought that includes the works of such different philosophers as Cohen, Ebner, Rosenzweig, Buber, Rosenstock-Huessy, Marcel, Levinas, Bibler, and others turned out to be united by the common denominator of the philosophy of dialogue<sup>6</sup>. Considering that each of the above authors had their original philosophy, the study of their place in the philosophy of dialogue consists not so much in examining their formulation of that philosophy, but in considering the contribution of their ideas and concepts to a general philosophical direction, which can be defined as the philosophy of dialogue.

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<sup>6</sup> Casper's work examining the teachings of Rosenzweig, Buber [20], and Ebner from a unified dialogical standpoint was published in 1967 [21]. Thus it is possible to speak of the philosophy of dialogue as a well-known direction starting from the 1950s and 1960s.

### ***Research Method***

From the aforementioned list of similarities and differences in the philosophical systems of Bakhtin and Rosenzweig, it is clear that they worked on similar problems, but found completely different ways of solving them.

We should not forget that Rosenzweig displayed his philosophy in a masterpiece treatise, while Bakhtin, for historical reasons, did not set out his philosophy at all, and we are left with only scraps and drafts, which came out posthumously. Bakhtin developed his ideas throughout his long life in numerous literary works, in which his philosophical system is quite traceable. A look at Rosenzweig's and Bakhtin's philosophy from the inside, but with an eye to each other, will help us see more clearly the problems and solutions they address and to chart the way forward.

## **2. The Place of Dialogue and Speech Thinking in F. Rosenzweig's Philosophical System**

### ***The Philosophical System***

As I noted, both Rosenzweig's and Bakhtin's philosophy is emphatically systematic, meaning, it produces a single principle for everything that is subject to our thinking, speaking, and acting. But such a unified principle presupposes a closed and complete system. However, it is this closure and completeness that is the main object of both Bakhtin's and Rosenzweig's criticism. How can integrity and consistency be combined with openness and dynamism? Rosenzweig tackles the answer to this question in the first part of *The Star of Redemption*. The main topic and the subject of the most thoughtful criticism here is Hegel's philosophy. According to Rosenzweig, Hegelian philosophy is the completion of the Western philosophical tradition:

“This happened when Hegel enclosed the history of philosophy in the system. It seems that thinking cannot go any further than to present itself visibly, that is to say the innermost reality that is known to it, as a part of the systematic edifice, and naturally as the part that finishes it off” [8. P. 12].

Including the history of philosophy in the philosophical system, according to Rosenzweig, signifies indeed its completion, for now, all philosophical achievements of the past and, potentially, of the future become part of the said system. But it is precisely at this point, according to Rosenzweig, that the philosophical system breaks up and self-discovers itself. After all, history is not an abstraction but a specific individual. And are particular singular people part of philosophy? For instance, by completing philosophy, did Hegel himself become part of it? According to Rosenzweig, the negative answer to this question is given by Schopenhauer, who, while criticizing Hegel, was not prepared to consider a philosophical system unless it was his philosophy. Each unique single individual philosopher is here above the system, or rather, he is the beginning of the end of the system:

“At any rate, this was already an unheard-of thing in philosophy, that a human type and not a concept closed the arch of the system, really closed it as its keystone, and did not complete it as an ethical ornament or trifling appendage. <...> here there was a man at the beginning of the system” [8. P. 14].

Rosenzweig thus retains the systematic character of philosophy but makes it open by virtue of the fact that it always has the singular individual at its base. Hegelian dialectics and universality remain in place but philosophy becomes quite different:

“If one more step from this height is to be taken without falling into the abyss, the foundations must be shifted; a different concept of philosophy must come to light” [8. P. 114].

Of course, the content of *The Star of Redemption* is not in such declarations but a specific philosophical movement. How does Rosenzweig intend to respond to the challenge of Hegelian wholeness and totality? In the first and second parts of the book, Rosenzweig gives different answers to this question. In the first part, he formulates his metalogics, metaethics, and metaphysics in which the whole is compared not with Nothing as in Hegel, but with Nothing that does not fit into the framework of the whole and requires singularity. Rosenzweig defines the whole as an element and finds that philosophy investigates three such elements — the world, God, and man. Classical ontological philosophy “from Parmenides to Hegel” considered these elements as a whole, as a system. Now, however, these elements are three, and each, being closed and complete to itself, is open to the others.

In the second part of the book, Rosenzweig, drawing on the logic of Cohen’s origins, describes paths, i.e., the processes that occur among these elements. Being transcendent to the elements themselves, paths are the sphere of an actual unique being, the sphere of the singular, which is characteristic of creation, revelation, and redemption. Rosenzweig’s philosophical system thus combines completeness and openness.

### ***The Relation to Ontology***

If within the elements the concept of being keeps its classical outlines within the limits of ontology “from Parmenides to Hegel,” it is necessary to follow the paths to go beyond these limits and rethink the very nature of being.

every ethics ended by emerging again in a doctrine of the community that forms a part of being. It did not sufficiently offer guarantees against such an emergence when one was content to emphasize the particularity of acting in relation to being; one more step back was indispensable to anchor action in the principle, where being is real, of a “character” nevertheless detached from all being; it is only thus that it could have been guaranteed as its world facing the world. [8. P. 16].

These words of Rosenzweig are undoubtedly close to Bakhtin. For both thinkers, it seems, the task was not only to go beyond the concept of being but to

find a new content for this concept. Rosenzweig addresses this in the second part of his book. Being in the perspective of the processes of creation, revelation, and redemption, being as the only, unique one, is no longer at all like the known being of the ontological tradition.

If the first part of *The Star of Redemption* is concerned with a world that exists in itself, as Rosenzweig describes it as *pre-world* (Vorwelt), the second part considers the world as constantly being created and renewed. As created, each thing is singular and unique, Rosenzweig characterizes it:

“when we understand existence as being-there (Da-sein), already-being-there (Schon-da-sein), no longer as a simple universal being, but as being which gathers all the singular in itself” [8. P. 143].

It is worth noting the important similarity and the important difference between Rosenzweig’s Da-sein (being-there) and Heidegger’s Da-sein. What they have in common is openness. For both philosophers, being is not a self-contained static reality that we can characterize as something that exists. But while for Heidegger the actual being of Dasein represents the goal and the limit of aspiration, for Rosenzweig it is the starting point of movement. This distinction is very clear in their attitude to death. For Heidegger, death is the inevitable companion of being as finite; for Rosenzweig, death represents the challenge that leads to overcoming the finitude of being that is contained in the concept of life. Therefore, Heidegger’s philosophy can be called a fundamental ontology, and Rosenzweig’s philosophy a super-ontology or meta-ontology.

### ***The Place of Language and Literature***

The critique of ontology in the second part of *The Star of Redemption* demands that Rosenzweig radically change the method of philosophy. If the unity of thought and being, characteristic of the ontological tradition, is insufficient for a new philosophy, it requires a new methodological organon. In this guise, for Rosenzweig, his philosophical grammar acts. If the completed world of the first part is described mathematically as existing in a continuing past, then the renewing world of the second part is always carried out in the present tense. Language, as Rosenzweig understands it, is at the same time speech, not only a potentially inherent ability but the very actuality of the present. According to Rosenzweig’s thought, language is described according to its three unfolding paths: the grammar of creation, the grammar of revelation, and the grammar of redemption. Rosenzweig’s awareness of the fundamentality of language unites Rosenzweig with Bakhtin but he constructs his linguistic philosophy quite differently.

The grammar of creation describes the object level of language, but, unlike Aristotle’s concept of language, it is not about language as a way of denoting existing objects. For Rosenzweig, objects do not exist, but are created and born in the very process of language. However, this does not mean that things result from arbitrary human activity. The world is created — states Rosenzweig: “What we learn here is that the world is there before everything” [8. P. 142—143]. The task



of man is not to discover the pre-existing objects and not to create new objects, but to participate in the creation's process of the created world. Hence, Rosenzweig draws a linguistically important conclusion that the basis of grammar of creation is the world of pronouns, or, as Rosenzweig states, "the form of the predicate is the specific configuration of the adjective" [8. P. 138], that begets the entire system of language. It is important to note that Rosenzweig does not consider personal pronouns at this stage. They appear in his next stage of language, in which the primary role passes to the relationship between God and man on the paths of redemption. At this stage, language becomes the medium of dialogue. For Rosenzweig, the language of creation and the language of revelation are not the same, for in revelation, the most important thing is human freedom. Thus, for Rosenzweig, there is an inner opposition between the different levels of language. It must be resolved on the third level of language in the grammar of redemption. However, Rosenzweig does not elaborate on this grammar in any detail. The future-oriented grammar of redemption is realized in prayer, and its purest expression is joint choral singing, as Rosenzweig calls it, "the dialogical song, the song for several voices" [8. P. 249]. The third level of language, which Rosenzweig interprets as a verbal compatibility of the human collective, is not developed by him at the level of grammar but becomes the basis of the closing part of philosophy, devoted to Judaism and Christianity. Thus, it turns out that the grammar of redemption is no longer realized on the grammatical paths but on the supremacist level of the gestalt. In this concept of dialogic or polyphonic song, Rosenzweig approaches the problem of language with which Bakhtin begins his study of dialogue.

### *The Philosophy of Dialogue*

As we have noted, neither Bakhtin nor Rosenzweig ever created a special philosophy of dialogue, but their contribution to this philosophical direction is undeniable. In the second book of the second part of *The Star of Redemption*, Rosenzweig explores dialogic speech, which expresses the relationship of the persons I, You, Him, etc. to each other [8. P. 187—202]. Rosenzweig's dialogical principle is not reduced to these relations, however, but touches upon almost all of his philosophy. Let's enumerate the most striking ideas which express Rosenzweig's contribution to the philosophy of dialogue:

- Taking dialogic philosophy beyond ontology through an exploration of the inter-elemental transcendent dynamics of universals.
- Philosophy appeals to the unique and the singular in all its manifestations. Introducing the unique human person at the center of philosophy.
- Exploring the relationship of persons — I, You, Him, It, Her, Us.
- A new concept of man as an interpersonal being.
- Construction of a new dialogical concept of time.
- Reorientation of philosophy from pure thought to language and speech, creating a grammatical organon.
- A new dialogic view of religion and myth.

### *Rosenzweig as Philosopher of the Future*

Already a list of Rosenzweig's most fundamental dialogical ideas testifies to him as a great philosopher. Rosenzweig's late discovery and the growing number of studies of his philosophy indicate that his main potential has not yet been revealed. A comparison of his ideas with Bakhtin's philosophy allows us to outline new ways of studying Rosenzweig's philosophical system.

### **3. The Place of Dialogue and Literature in Bakhtin's Philosophical System** *Philosophical System*

While Rosenzweig, in constructing his philosophical system, draws most from Hegel, which is not surprising for a professional researcher of this author, Bakhtin is more focused on the systematic notion of Kant's philosophy. As for Kant, for Bakhtin, the method of unfolding the system is the study of the architectonic, but whereas for Kant it is architectonic of reason, for Bakhtin it is architectonic of answerable act<sup>7</sup>.

Like Kant's [23. P. 691], the most important feature of Bakhtin's architectonic is the unity of philosophy as an integral form and its subject as content. Bakhtin fully borrows here the Kantian method but criticizes the idea of the subject of philosophy. Already in *Art and Answerability*, Bakhtin declares that neither cognition nor artistic creation are originally united with the integral personality [13. P. 1—3]. Thus, according to Bakhtin, the subject of the first and third Kantian critiques does not constitute the real subject of the first philosophy he seeks. It is to be an answerable act. This moves the center of the philosophical search into the sphere of ethics. And indeed, the first major work on which Bakhtin worked in the early 1920s was to be called *Subject of Morality and Subject of Law* [24. P. 343, 415—416, 504]. The stated problems of this work follow from Cohen's thesis that morality is not reducible to ethics, which expresses just the legal relations between people [25. P. 20—21]. Bakhtin's probably preserved text published under the title *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* was precisely a fragment of this work. Already at the beginning of the text, Bakhtin repeats the most important idea of *Art and Answerability* that in describing the subject

“all these activities establish a fundamental split between the content or sense of a given act/activity and the historical actuality of its being, the actual and once-occurrent experiencing of it. And it is in consequence of this that the given act loses its valuableness and the unity of its actual becoming and self-determination” [14. P. 2].

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<sup>7</sup> In *A Few Unpretentious Recommendations for Readers of Bakhtin* Vadim Lyapunov gives a detailed and very fruitful list of the meanings of the word “architectonic” [22. P. 195—199]. As I see it, these explanations are important for understanding Bakhtin's literary and cultural studies works, but somewhat detract from the main Kantian meaning of “architectonic” necessary for the formation of a philosophical system. Also ref. [7. P. 445—446; 10. P. 146—178].

This rift cannot be bridged by either epistemology or aesthetics:

“Thus, neither theoretical cognition nor aesthetic intuition can provide an approach to the once-occurrent real Being of an event” [14. P. 18].

Meanwhile, in the mentioned fragments, Bakhtin does not consider the ethical subject, the subject of the second Kantian critique. This is, of course, not accidental, because it is the concept of the answerable act, which is largely based on Cohen’s ethics, that is the key to Bakhtin’s entire construction [7. P. 442—443]. This forces him to dwell thoroughly on the ethical problem:

When we spoke of the theoretical world and opposed it to the answerable act, we said nothing about contemporary ethical constructions, which have to do, after all, precisely with the answerable act [14. P. 21].

According to Bakhtin, ethics is also characterized by “fatal theoreticism (the abstracting from my unique self)” [14. P. 27]. Bakhtin builds his moral philosophy based on ethics but understands it more broadly.

It is another matter when ethics seeks to become the logic of social sciences. <...> a moral philosophy of this kind can be and should be created, but one can and should also create another kind of moral philosophy, which deserves this name even more, if not exclusively [14. P. 27].

What is the descriptive feature of moral philosophy that distinguishes it from theoretical ethics?

A first philosophy can orient itself only with respect to that actually performed act [14. P. 28].

Thus, it is not the ethical subject taken as a theoretical concept that should become the subject of the new first philosophy, but “the actually performed act-not from the aspect of its content, but in its very performance” [14. P. 28]. As M. Soboleva shows, the moral act, as understood by Bakhtin, fills the gap between the content of the act and its fulfillment, arising because of the autonomy of oughtness in relation to being [11. S. 14]. The unique singular act combines in itself the closedness of the content and the openness of the fulfillment. For this very reason, according to Bakhtin, it should become the basis of the new first philosophy. One cannot ignore here how close Bakhtin’s thought is to Rosenzweig’s philosophical teaching, yet the methods of unfolding their systems are essentially different.

Bakhtin rejects the interpretation of an act in terms of the philosophy of life, psychologism, historical materialism, theosophy, and other doctrines. All of them view an act from outside as a possibility of action, which according to Bakhtin has its merits [14. P. 13—21] or from inside in terms of content, which gives rise to “fatal theoreticism.” As an alternative to these truncated versions, the subject of philosophy, according to Bakhtin, is participative thinking.

“*Participative* thinking predominates in all great systems of philosophy” [14. P. 8].

Although according to Bakhtin's position, participative thinking is a characteristic feature of philosophy as such, it appears in its purest form in Plato's philosophy. "But in this case we have to do with an instance of participative thinking (which seeks to overcome its own givenness for the sake of what-is-to-be-attained) sustained in a penitent tone; this participative thinking, however, proceeds within that architectonic of Being-as-event which is affirmed and founded by us" [14. P. 11].

Describing Platonism in a pronounced neo-Kantian interpretation, Bakhtin restores the line of philosophical continuity as Cohen understood it — from Plato to Kant and back to Plato again [26. P. 34].

As Makhlin stresses, it is precisely participative thinking that Bakhtin turns into the main subject of his first philosophy [19. P. 280—287]. This allows Bakhtin, by analogy with Kant's architectonic of pure reason, to formulate an architectonic representing responsible action both outside and inside.

"It is this concrete architectonic of the actual world of the performed act that moral philosophy has to describe, that is, not the abstract scheme but the concrete plan or design of the world of a unitary and once-occurrent act or deed, the basic concrete moments of its construction and their mutual disposition" [14. P. 59].

Bakhtin's conception of partaking extends Cohen's doctrine of proximity and partaking [7. P. 451], but it also has many distinctive qualities. Cohen builds his religion of mind from the sources of Judaism and, in his study, relies on the biblical concept of intimacy with God in a Judaist interpretation. Rosenzweig follows a similar path. Bakhtin speaks of partaking using the Christian concept of communion and proclaims that moral philosophy is essentially an expression of the idea of "Christian morality" [14. P. 75]. All three thinkers see their task as a philosophical rather than a theological definition of their subject. In all of them, the notion of man is at the center of consideration. However, for Cohen and Rosenzweig, man is considered within the framework of the dynamic relation of I and Thou, while for Bakhtin the duality and openness of man are expressed in his concept of the author and the hero. What Bakhtin and Rosenzweig have in common is their discovery of the centrality of language in interpersonal dynamics. This leads Bakhtin to hermeneutics of verbal art, and Rosenzweig to its grammatical organon. Taking different paths, Bakhtin and Rosenzweig arrive at close and complementary results.

### *The Relation to Ontology*

Before turning to Bakhtin's philosophical hermeneutics, we should scrutinize his ontology. Bakhtin's attitude to being has much in common with Rosenzweig's position, but it also has differences. Like Rosenzweig, Bakhtin rejects the classical Aristotelian notion of being as existence. He also criticizes the Kantian concept of being, which he calls "lightweight":

“Historically actual once-occurrent Being is greater and heavier than the unitary Being of theoretical science” [14. P. 8].

Bakhtin’s concept of ontology is based on the concept of the event of being.

“But that once-occurrent event of Being is no longer something that is thought of, but something that is, something that is being actually and inescapably accomplished through me and others (accomplished, inter alia, also in my deed of cognizing); it is actually experienced, affirmed in an emotional-volitional manner” [14. P. 13].

The event of being is more than just being. It is a participative or partaking responsible being that is involved, a being that transcends internal content, but is not limited to external factuality. The word “*event*” [*sobytie*] in Russian means “*being with*” [*so-bytie*], that is, participatory being, being together. Bakhtin was well aware of the wordplay with the particle “so” (Mit) characteristic of Cohen’s philosophy<sup>8</sup>. Heidegger finds a similar use to “Mit” specifically concerning the concept of being — Mitsein (Being with)<sup>9</sup>. The event understood as *being with*, i.e., the act of being together or belonging turns out to be something more powerful than being as a concept of ontology. There is a tendency among Bakhtin’s researchers to consider his teaching as a kind of existentialist philosophy [29. P. 36; 11. S. 24]. V.L. Makhlin encourages utilising the term “ontology of being — being with” regarding Bakhtin’s philosophy [19. P. 268]. Makhlin suggests using the said term [19. P. 268], and also Theunissen’s [30] concept of “social ontology” [19. P. 274] for describing the “being in-between”. This puts Bakhtin on a par with philosophers who are defined by him as “philosophy from below” (Philosophie von unten) [19. P. 276]. Bakhtin’s philosophy from this point of view is defined as a special type of ontology. It seems to me that any ontological treatment of Bakhtin’s philosophy requires serious reservations. At the basis of the ontological approach, however one understands it, lies the idea of the unity of the content of being (i.e., mind, thinking, logos) and being itself. Yet, the necessity of the new first philosophy, according to Bakhtin’s thought, arises precisely because of the gap between the content of being and its actuality. This rupture cannot be bridged from within — neither from the meaning of being nor from the action itself. The free moral act is a radically new level that is not reducible to the syntheses known to ontology. Act transforms being, not follows from it.

“It is only from within the actually performed act, which is once-occurrent, integral, and unitary in its answerability, that we can find an approach to unitary and once-occurrent Being in its concrete actuality. A first philosophy can orient itself only with respect to that actually performed act” [14. P. 28].

<sup>8</sup> In particular, the concept of co-humanity outlined in the synopsis of *Religion of Reason* discussed in Nevel [27. P. 59].

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger, however, refuses to consider participation as going beyond the concept of being, which distinguishes him from philosophers of dialogue [28. S. 114].

Here being appears as one of the moments of an answerable act, not as its equivalent. The center of Bakhtin's philosophy is precisely an act in its duality.

“Everything in me — every movement, gesture, lived-experience, thought, feeling — everything must be such an act or deed; it is only on this condition that I actually live, that I do not sever myself from the ontological roots of actual Being” [14. P. 44].

In these statements, Bakhtin does not say that being is the source or purpose and content of human life — an approach descriptive of Heidegger and existentialist philosophers, but quite alien to Bakhtin. The moral act includes being but is not limited to it. The mention of being is necessary here because we are discussing the construction of the first philosophy, which, since the time of Aristotle, is considered a science of being. Bakhtin, however, stresses that the answerable act is a reality above being itself, a reality that is super-ontological. Being itself cedes a central role in the philosophical system to the moral act. This approach, like Rosenzweig's, is an undeniable step forward from the ontological tradition. It can be characterized as meta-ontology, but neither Bakhtin nor Rosenzweig use such terms, preferring to speak of the event of being, participatory thinking, narrative philosophy, dialogue, etc.

Considering the mentioned points, one cannot but admit that the problem of being concerns Bakhtin, just as it troubles Rosenzweig. In particular, Bakhtin contemplates the link between being and death that has been characteristic of the European ontological tradition since Plato's time. Considering the architectonic of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the philosopher says that its “action is also set into immediate proximity to the ultimate bounds of Being” [14. P. 54]. Thus, the finitude of being and its connection with the problem of death turns out to be the most important moment in the unfolding of Bakhtin's philosophy. But, as with Rosenzweig, death does not prove to be self-sufficient but appears solely to sharpen the question of the centrality of the concepts of life and love.

### ***The Place of Language and Literature in Bakhtin's Philosophy***

First, we need to understand the relation of Bakhtin's ideas of the answerable act and the participatory event of being to his doctrine of the aesthetics of verbal art. As we have noted, Bakhtin's idea of participation or partaking leads to the splitting of subjectivity. The wholeness of the one and only being of the event is no longer expressed in the self-consciousness of the detached subject, but in the interpersonal process. For Bakhtin, the relation of the individual to the other is expressed in the concept of the author and the hero, and the realization of this relationship is expressed in verbal art. This course of Bakhtin's thought is similar to Rosenzweig's one. However, Bakhtin comes to the problem of language and speech more directly than Rosenzweig.

Bakhtin moves to the aesthetics of verbal art in two ways. On the one hand, in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, he considers Pushkin's lyrical poem *Parting* as a

way of expressing the interpersonal relationship as an “author-hero” relationship [14. P. 66]. As a result, it is the literary text, not thinking, that becomes the subject of his philosophical study. Then, in his work *The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art* [13. P. 257—325], he writes of the philosophical aspects of the text. Bakhtin queries the very nature of the aesthetic. He writes:

“We observe in the history of philosophy a constantly recurring tendency toward a substitution of the yet-to-be-achieved unity of cognition and action by the concrete intuitive, and as it were given, present-on-hand unity of aesthetic vision” [13. P. 280].

Here Bakhtin moves in the footsteps of Kantian and Cohenian aesthetics, which act as a synthesizing basis for the formation of the philosophical system. For Kant, the feeling is the connecting element between reason and the will. But now it is no longer simply a question of reason and will but of the unity of cognition and action. In this way, he approaches the problem of the aesthetics of verbal art from the architectonic of a philosophical system.

Bakhtin’s expression of the complicity of being an event in the aesthetics of the verbal art leads to an understanding of language and the literary text in general. Whereas Rosenzweig moves from the individual elements of language to literature within the processes of creation, revelation, and deliverance, for Bakhtin the literary text appears immediately as a whole as an expression of the participatory event of being. Thus, Bakhtin’s verbal art is a synthetic rather than an analytical concept. Such a movement is, in various ways, the opposite of Rosenzweig’s.

Meanwhile, the method of considering verbal art as an environment of interpersonal interaction, which alone makes human reality integral, turns out to be an effective method of literary research. Literature itself, its forms, and genres become a subject of theory.

Bakhtin’s notions of the author and hero arising at the end of *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* and making it into the spotlight in *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity* is the result of a fundamental philosophical inquiry. Equally fundamental is Bakhtin’s move from Kantian transcendental aesthetics to an exploration of the spatial and temporal form of the hero. The next step is the study of categories, which are now seen not as categories of the detached subject, but as categories of interpersonal relations. Inquiries regarding appearance, corporeality, and causality appear by themselves.

At the next stage in the novel’s study, Bakhtin is confronted with the splitting of the hero himself. The famous Bakhtinian polyphony emerges<sup>10</sup>.

It is well known that Bakhtin said many times that he was not a literary scholar, but a philosopher. For his followers and students, these insistent statements were an oddity. Meanwhile, it is clear from what we have said above that Bakhtin’s reference to literature as an expression of interpersonal relations was part of his

<sup>10</sup> Worth noting that the idea of the polyphonic novel is not the result of researching Dostoevsky but the original premise and emerges in the very first pages of the book [31. P. 11—12].

philosophy. At a more mature stage, however, Bakhtin moved on to a broader consideration of culture as an environment of interpersonal communication. And here the results obtained in the study of literature work effectively. It turns out that the concepts of *polyphony*, *chronotope*, and *carnival* developed at the previous stage work not only in the analysis of an artistic text but also in the study of culture as a whole.

### ***The Philosophy of Dialogue***

As in Rosenzweig's case, the philosophy of dialogue results from Bakhtin's thinking rather than its original goal. In developing his philosophical system, Bakhtin eventually arrived at a dialogical approach. If we compare *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art*, and *Discourse in the Novel*, we see how the ideas of dialogic philosophy are gradually strengthened in him. However, if we consider Bakhtin's philosophical and literary studies, it is intelligible that dialogism was not an accidental result of his work but was its backbone [11. S. 124]. Almost all of Bakhtin's fundamental ideas are, in one way or another, connected with the philosophy of dialogue. Let us plan some of Bakhtin's main themes concerning the latter:

- Rethinking the concept of being and the transition from the isolated being of the New European subject to the idea of the participatory being of the event.
- Philosophy's return to the singular, unique being of the individual.
- Interpretation of subjectivity as a creative relationship between the author and the hero.
- Establishing a fundamental connection between ethics and aesthetics through the study of the architectonic of the answerable act.
- A new interpretation of the problems of space, time, and categories by replacing the concept of the transcendental subject with a concept of the world of the event of being. Introducing the doctrine of chronotope, corporeality, carnivality, etc.
- Turning the aesthetics of verbal art into the conceptual center of philosophy, creating the concept of polyphony, the inner dialogue of the creative text.
- Creation of dialogic literary criticism and dialogic cultural studies.

### ***Bakhtin as Philosopher of the Future***

Significantly, Bakhtin became known to the public only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and his philosophy is still not very well researched. As one of the most popular authors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he is also one of the most controversial and ambivalent figures. A comparison of Bakhtin's ideas with Rosenzweig's philosophy allows us to see the inner coherence of his teachings and many new, original ideas. This permits concluding that the study of Bakhtin's philosophy as a systematic whole is just beginning, and important discoveries await us along the way.



#### 4. Rosenzweig and Bakhtin: Differences and Analogies

##### *The Philosophical System*

Both Rosenzweig's and Bakhtin's understanding of the philosophical system marks a steep turn in the history of systematic philosophy. On the one hand, all philosophy should no longer be seen as a single system that historically absorbs all phases of the development of past philosophy. Diversity and dialogue of systems become the norm of thinking. However, this does not denote a postmodern relativism of truth and cultural positions. By abandoning the study of "eternal truths," philosophy does not abandon truth as such, but, on the contrary, finds deeper dialogical grounds for it. The possibility for a systemic dialog of philosophical systems stems from the same state of culture as postmodernism but overcomes its amorphousness and relativism.

##### *Attitude to Ontology*

As we have noted, the departure from traditional ontology in the philosophical teachings of Rosenzweig and Bakhtin does not imply a rejection of the problem of being. From the basis of philosophy, as it has been since Parmenides, being is transformed into the subject of research. Overall, the critique of ontology within the philosophy of dialog can be seen as a transition from static to dynamics. The word dialogue has the same root as ontology. Dialog denotes the transition or movement of thought-language activity. Instead of binding the logos to being, dialogue involves its dynamic transformation. This dynamism of the logos is explored variously by different philosophers. Rosenzweig considers it from more general universal positions and composes it in the concept's framework of dynamic gestalt. In Bakhtin, being is understood as a joint interpersonal process. In both philosophers, the linguistic verbal dynamics seem to hover above being. The criticism of Rosenzweig's ontology is taken up by Levinas, who adds important points to the understanding of interpersonal dynamics and brings a new ethical dimension to philosophy [32].

##### *The Place of Language and Verbal Art*

When speaking of the linguistic turn in 20<sup>th</sup>-century philosophy, one primarily refers to analytic philosophy. Meanwhile, the turn to language and literature in the philosophy of Rosenzweig and Bakhtin is much more fundamental and profound. For these authors, it is not simply a question of a change in the orientation of cognition and its focus on the clarification of language, but a radical transformation of the entire system of thought, a change in the philosophical paradigm that affects all areas of culture. While Rosenzweig and Bakhtin understand the centrality of language and verbalism in the philosophical system, there is a significant difference in their positions. Rosenzweig focuses on a radical revision of the philosophy of language, as expressed in his concept of the grammatical organon. Bakhtin is

concerned with the study of literature as a holistic phenomenon, which leads him to an entirely new theory of literature. Given the intrinsic kinship of these two approaches, they exhibit a surprising mutual complementarity. Rosenzweig's linguistics and Bakhtin's literary studies combine well and provide excellent preconditions for the development of a philosophy of dialogue.

### ***Rosenzweig and Bakhtin in Philosophy of the Dialogue in the Future***

We have already noted that the term *philosophy of the dialogue* is less appropriate for the teachings of Rosenzweig and Bakhtin than for, say, Buber's philosophy. It is these authors who have contributed fundamental and profound ideas to the philosophy of dialogue. They approach this field from different angles and the correlation of their approaches is extremely fruitful for philosophical research. For all these reasons, Rosenzweig and Bakhtin can be seen as crucial sources for the philosophy of dialogue of the future.

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## Розенцвейг и Бахтин. Герменевтика языка и словесного творчества в системе философии диалога

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**Аннотация.** При всем различии учений и судьбы Франца Розенцвейга и Михаила Бахтина их сопоставление друг с другом чрезвычайно поучительно и раскрывает важные и часто потерянные смыслы философии XX века. Бахтин в 1929 году дебютировал как автор «Проблем творчества Достоевского», но после этого отправился в многолетнюю ссылку и вышел из забвения только в 60-е годы, Розенцвейг в 1929 году умер и на долгие годы был почти забыт. Сейчас, почти сто лет спустя мы видим в философии Бахтина, особенно в его ранних работах, и в философии Розенцвейга очень много общего. Оба стремились создать новую философскую систему, радикально переосмысливающую сам предмет философии. Оба вышли за пределы традиционной новоевропейской онтологии, оба осознали фундаментальность языка и словесности в философии будущего, наконец, оба стали создателями философии диалога как важного направления в мысли XX века. При всем, при том, между Бахтиным и Розенцвейгом было немало различий культурного, религиозного и интеллектуального характера. Однако рассмотрение как общих черт, так и различий в философии Бахтина и Розенцвейга чрезвычайно плодотворно не только для истории культуры 20-го века, но и для философских исследований будущего.

**Ключевые слова:** Бахтин, Розенцвейг, философия диалога, философская система, онтология, грамматический органон, словесное творчество

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