

THE CONCEPT OF AN AESTHETIC EVENT IN BAKHTIN'S PHILOSOPHY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR CONTEMPORARY AESTHETICS

VADIM PROZERSKY, ARTEM RADEEV

Vadim Prozersky (1940-2019)

D. Sc. in Philosophy, Professor, St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia

Artem Radeev

D. Sc. in Philosophy, St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia
E-mail: artem_radeew@mail.ru, a.radeev@spbu.ru

The article is dedicated to the concept of an aesthetic event in M. M. Bakhtin's philosophy and concerned with its question. The presence of category "event" in Bakhtin's philosophy and aesthetics is considered and the axiological constants of an "aesthetic event" are defined; and the further development of this concept in Bakhtin's aesthetics is revealed. The Problem of the "event of deing" in Bakhtin's Philosophy, the dialogical character of an aesthetic event are the subjects of this article also. It should be emphasized that the aesthetic event in Bakhtin's interpretation not only occurs in the work of art and represents a meeting of two incongruous consciousnesses of the author and the hero; moreover, it is also characterized by such features as "efficiency" and "unicity". The importance of Bakhtin's concept of an aesthetic event for the contemporary aesthetics is worth noting. Also, the article discusses some previously unexplored aspects of Bakhtin's theory of the aesthetic event connected with his discovery of the "outsideness" of the author, with the transition from the linguistic analy-

sis to a meta-linguistics, with the discovery of performativity and dramatization in a literary narration. The authors conclude that these discoveries considerably supplement the existing approaches towards the nature of the aesthetic event.

Key words: Russian philosophy, Bakhtin, event, aesthetic event, dialogism

ПОНЯТИЕ ЭСТЕТИЧЕСКОГО СОБЫТИЯ У М. М. БАХТИНА И ЕГО ЗНАЧЕНИЕ ДЛЯ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ЭСТЕТИКИ

Вадим Викторович Прозерский (1940-2019) — доктор философских наук, профессор, Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет, Санкт-Петербург, Россия

Артём Евгеньевич Радеев — доктор философских наук, доцент, Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет, Санкт-Петербург, Россия
E-mail: artem_radeew@mail.ru, a.radeev@spbu.ru

Статья посвящена понятию эстетического события в его трактовке у М. М. Бахтина. Для этого авторы предлагают рассматривать категорию события с точки зрения аксиологических констант. Также в статье раскрывается развитие проблематики события у Бахтина, определяются особенности «события бытия» в трактовке Бахтина, выявляются черты диалогического характера эстетического события в этой трактовке. Отдельно подчеркивается, что проблематика эстетического события рассматривается не только с точки зрения его отношения к произведению искусства, но также и с точки зрения феномена встречи двух сознаний — автора и героя. В этой связи раскрываются такие особенности эстетического события, как единство и производство, и показывается значение этой проблематики для современной эстетики. Кроме того, в статье предлагаются нереализованные ранее ракурсы исследования М. М. Бахтиным эстетического события, связанные с открытием момента «внезапности» автора и героя произведения, выходом из лингвистического анализа текста в металингвистический, обнаружением в литературной наррации перформативности и драматизации. В статье утверждается, что эти открытия, существенно дополняют имеющиеся подходы к определению природы эстетического события.

Ключевые слова: Эстетическое событие, художественный текст, поступок, ответственность, автор, герой, читатель, слушатель, коммуникация, язык, интонация, речевые жанры

§ 1. Problem of an Aesthetic Event in Contemporary Philosophy

Contemporary aesthetics cannot be introduced out the processes in philosophy and humanities, where the category of “event”, along with “body” and “time”, has become one of the key concepts and the subject matter. And although the history of understanding the event in the twentieth century philosophy hasn't been composed, because a lot in this history deserves attention, and for sure one of its dimensions is close affinity between the “event” and “aesthesis” — so close that it is not always possible to distinguish one from another (if there is a need to do it at all).

However, it should be understood that *an event given aesthetically* is one thing and *givenness of an aesthetic event* is a different matter. The first implied a lot of different factors, due to which the event is given as something aesthetic. For example, an event is a field of arrangement of symbolic and substantive qualities, the correlation between aesthesis and logos (Griakalov, 2004, 7), or an event is like a creator for the possibility of truth, which is the truth of art as well (Bad'iu, 2013, 17). In all these cases of the event's conceptualization we experience not the concept of an aesthetic event, but an *event which is also given aesthetically*.

This *aesthetical givenness* can be associated with various factors either relating to the concept of the event itself, or referring to a particular understanding of the aesthetic field, and the presence there allows the event to be (or be given) aesthetically. In the case of an *aesthetic event* we deal with a completely different picture. In this case, it is supposed that we do not deal with an event as it is in-itself is, which can be given aesthetically, but with a *particular aesthetic event* as a moment of aesthetic experience. The very concept of an aesthetic event implies that there may be other non-aesthetic events, because not every event is given to us in the aesthetic experience.

If accepting this distinction, then, for the understanding of aesthetic processes both in theory and history and practice of aesthetics the attention should be focused on an aesthetic event's conceptualization, what facets of its understanding were highlighted.

A variety of arguments about the nature of an aesthetic event in different aesthetic theories can be easily found since the beginning

of the twentieth century. However, these reasonings are often limited by what the analyst of an aesthetic event is only expected to achieve, or that aesthetic theory is only approaches to the problem of making an aesthetic event an instrument for analyzing the world of daily life or contemporary art practices. Thus, M. Mitias, the author of the book with the promising title “What makes the experience aesthetic?”, persistently appeals perhaps to abandon the concept of aesthetic experience in favor of “aesthetic event”, or at least to study their relatedness (Mitias, 1988, 4). Several decades earlier M. Lipman, the founder of the “philosophy for children”, wrote on the basis of his ideas of education: “Shouldn’t we admit that the primary object of aesthetics should be not art or a perceived object... but an aesthetic event itself?” (Lipman, 1973, 3). However, these and some other authors suppose the concept of an aesthetic event as a picture of what is necessary to address to in further developments.

On this evidence the appeal to Bakhtin’s philosophy seems to be of current concern, as he gives detailed understanding of what an aesthetic event is.

Although the creative legacy of this thinker has had a lot of researchers’ attention, heuristic principles in his writings define culture *as an event in the world of being*, in our opinion, his works keep a great potential for further development and new discoveries in various fields of the humanities, including aesthetics.

While discussing this category it can’t be ignored that what Bakhtin’s philosophy is remains undecided question. It can be viewed in different ways depending on the interpreter’s purposes. And the explanation given by the researcher of his work T. V. Schittsova can be accepted: that “Bakhtin’s legacy can be compared to the half-open fan as its intriguing and complex pattern is not always formed into an entire picture, hiding in the folds, holding secret prospects” (Schittsova, 2002, 13).

Nevertheless, it is obvious that in Bakhtin’s theorizations the concept of an event has a special place: Bakhtin writes about the event as it is in-itself is, the “event of being” and the “ethical event”, but also particularly about the “aesthetical event.”

To define the frames of Bakhtin’s aesthetic event concept, we will consider the place of the category of “event” in Bakhtin’s philosophy and aesthetics; identify the axiological constants of an “aes-

thetic event”, point out the further development of this concept in Bakhtin’s aesthetics and demonstrate the significance of the aesthetic event concept for contemporary aesthetics.

§ 2. The Problem of the “Event of Being” in Bakhtin’s Philosophy

In philosophy of the early XX century attention was drawn to the crisis of culture, expressed in the conflict between culture and life. Man seems to live simultaneously in two realities — on the one hand, in the world of theoretical and normative culture systems, on the other hand — in the world of individual actions and life experiences. In addition to the above a person has a feeling that objectified world of culture knows nothing about his individual existence and expresses no interest to him. The conflict between life and culture leads to inner conflicts and frustrations of personality. But also the cultural system, if not introduced to life, remains dewless, lifeless abstraction, that according to Bakhtin falls into “fatal theoretism”.

According to Bakhtin, the complicated issue of uniting the vital reality of the Ego and the systematic unity of the valuable and axiological sphere of culture can be solved, because the way from action to the axiological sphere exists; “because the act is actually fulfilled in being” (Bakhtin, 1986, 112). At once the opposite way — from the normative system of culture to a human being — is prospectless, since it depersonalizes him, and turns him into any other person who learnt the same rules (Bakhtin, 1986, 83).

In other words, the social inclusion of human life position into the axiological values of the society can only be achieved through accomplishing *an act of moral responsibility*. The act guided by responsibility joins theory to a really performed moral event — and it can be achieved when the integral act of cognition with all of its matter is included “in the unity of my responsibility, and that’s the real reason for my living” (Bakhtin, 1986, 105).

Summarizing Bakhtin’s theory on responsible action, we can conclude that for the Russian thinker being is always an event of being, an event of meeting of my own Ego with the Other. The world view from my only place in existence is in following: there is myself and there is other lovingly settled in life evaluative terms in his own space-time surroundings. Bakhtin emphasizes: no general people

exist, there is every single Other with his unique space-time world (later called chronotopos).

The philosophy of a responsible act, catching two plans of human existence — creativity of life and the area of social meanings, according to Bakhtin, should be not a theory, but phenomenological contemplation, which means grasping the common points of *architectonics of actions*. Firstly, he outlines the description of the architectonics of the existential world of an action, i. e. the creation of a phenomenological ethics, and then — phenomenology of an aesthetic act and finally phenomenology of religion. However, it happened so that among Bakhtin's intentions his idea of phenomenological aesthetics was mostly developed, it was closely related to the philosophy of language, while the other research areas were included into corpus of philological works.

§ 3. From an event of being — to an aesthetic event

What's the solution to the problem of responsibility in moral action changing to the sphere of the aesthetic made by Bakhtin? In his opinion, the most important principle is the preservation of personal responsibility in all three forms of its activity — existential, moral, scientific and aesthetic (in art). It was in his first publication — the article "Art and Responsibility" — in which Bakhtin stated his creed. It says:

Three areas of human culture — science, art and life — gain unity only in a personality that attaches them to its unity. [...] So, what ensures internal integrity of elements in personality? It's only the unity of responsibility. For my experience and comprehension in art, I have to answer with my own life, to make sure that everything in it that has been experienced and understood does not remain inactive. Art and life is not an integrity, but it should be unity in myself, in the unity of my responsibility. (Bakhtin, 1979b, 5-7)

Thus, the theme of a responsible event is turned into aesthetics. The study of the aesthetic nature of an event was carried out by Bakhtin in an article "Problem of Content, Material and Form in Verbal Artwork" in 1924.

Starting a discussion about the aesthetic event with an analysis of the situation in the aesthetic research to the beginning of the twentieth century, the scholar notes that none of the schools existing

at that time could solve the main ontological problem of aesthetics, that is to show that *aesthetic existence is the third kind of being*, along with the material and mental forms of being. The meaning and essence of the aesthetic as a special existential substance was not revealed.

According to Bakhtin's view, it can be achieved only by overcoming psychologism and abstract formalism of the recent aesthetic studies with the help of heuristic moments given by the phenomenological approach. First of all, for successful analysis it is essential to clarify the meaning of the basic categories of the object under study (the work of art) — its content and form. It should be clearly understood that the material of which the form is constructed, whether it's stone, paints, sounds or language (the material of poetry), is absolutely neutral aesthetically. In the same way the "mental material", which is believed to be used to organize content of a work of art, is also neutral. The aim of the researcher is to enlighten the change of these neutral elements into an aesthetically colored form and aesthetically organized content that creates the third type of being — aesthetic or artistic being. It represents a new qualitative unity that can't be resolved into its constituent elements any more.

The main thesis of this Bakhtin's work claims that change of material into form and form into content is fulfilled *through culture*, through fullness of material and form with the values of culture. According to Bakhtin culture is a system of creative viewpoints, creative positions which can be defined as the meeting or communicative events (Bahtin, 1975, 25).

The systematic unity of culture is composed of "atoms of cultural life" that "are inseparable from the system of culture and not immersed in it while maintaining their own autonomy". This means that the domain of culture is not a continuous territory but it entirely consists of boundaries, understood as ley lines of involvements and interactions of cultural life atoms.

Being included in the culture, a work of art can be defined neither as a physical object nor as a mental phenomenon. Actually, as Bakhtin noted it is a special cultural entity that exists in "the world of the value of inter-response atmosphere of all its component parts." The content of a work of art forms a world of knowledge and morality, "the aesthetic factor" is added. The emergence of "the aesthetic

factor” is associated with transformation of real life events into the new evaluative plan constituted with the help of imaginative work, turning real into fictional. The incorporation of the real events into the imagination plan releases creative activity, because it is here — in the space of imagination where a person feels his freedom and is able to “freely perform and complete the event” (Bakhtin, 1975, 60). Consequently, the artistic content, including all the values of the real world, but in a different character i. e. in their completion, reconciliation and benevolence, creates the warm-heartedness and compassion, which cause an aesthetic pleasure.

The analysis of an artistic form is conducted by Bakhtin in continuous debate — open and hidden — with the formal school representatives (in his terminology — “material aesthetics”), who were able to understand the “art form as a form of given material, no more, as a combination within the material in its natural-scientific and linguistic clarity and regularity” (Bakhtin, 1975, 11). According to Bakhtin, the form being understood only as a structure created from the material, such as stone, colors, sounds and vocabulary, then it can’t be the medium of axiological values. It remains unclear where emotional and volitional tension of the form comes from, which is immediately passed to anyone who comes into contact with the work of art. It can only be explained by the fact that the artist has to deal not only and not so much with the matter of the material, but mainly with *culturally significant and valuable events of life*, that are reorganised with the help of the form into the content of the work of art. In other words, it is not the emptiness that the aesthetic form embraces but “obstinate self-guided axiological orientation of life.” The benefit of these efforts is the birth of *an aesthetic object*. Bakhtin defines the aesthetic object as *an event of meeting of the artist’s creative energy with the viewer’s perceptual activity* (Bakhtin, 1975, 68).

§ 4. What is an aesthetic event?

At this point Bakhtin defines a problem: how can the gap in the work of art (understood as the product of verbal creativity), which takes place between the author and his literary hero be determined? Of course a work of art itself is not the message of the author, referring to the abstract reader, it is a special meeting place for the au-

thor and his hero; something that received the name of an aesthetic event happens at this venue.

For the event to happen, there should be two members (an author and a hero), who are two *incongruous* consciousnesses. For an aesthetic event to happen the world of the author and the world of the character must not coincide: there must be discrepancy between value attitudes of one and the other: “When the character and the author are the same, or are close to each other in the face of common values or against each other as enemies, an aesthetic event ends and an ethical event begins” (Bakhtin, 2006, 103). *An ethical life event is an event of unity* while an aesthetic event is an event of resistance to unity. What is the reason for the presence of this gap between the two consciousnesses in an aesthetic event? The reason for this is not in the subjects of this event, but in its very nature:

There are some events that fundamentally can't be developed in terms of a single and unified consciousness, but suggest two separate consciousnesses, events, an essential and constitutive aspect of which is the relationship of one consciousness to another consciousness, as to a different one — and all creative efficient events are in this, bringing the new, unique and irreversible moments. (Bakhtin, 2006, 159)

This means that in an aesthetic event itself, because it is something singular, because it is irreversible, because it reveals efficiency of the very meeting, there is a certain gap, which two incongruous consciousnesses — the author's and the character's — correspond to. It should be noted that a similar method in relation to the gap which presents in the work of art, was developed, albeit with other intentions, by Umberto Eco. According to Eco any text is a “lazy mechanism”, there is a “black hole” in any work of art which is in the form of understatement and reticence of that literary work's world. It is its replenishment that causes the reader to take an active stand in relation to the work of art, resulting in the text becomes a meeting place for the outstanding author and reader (Eco, 2003, 9).

This difference arises from the fact that the very character's consciousness is not just a subject to the mind of the author, used to give this or that idea, but “living subjective unity”, with which the consciousness of the author has relations. “The aesthetic consciousness of the author, in contrast to the epistemological,

suggests another consciousness, in relation to which it becomes active. Hence, an aesthetic event may not be developed in terms of one consciousness, an artistic object is not an object but a subject, but not the subject of activity — Ego, as we are experiencing within ourselves — fundamentally uncompleted, but another passive subject” (Bakhtin, 2006, 162).

To these two activities — both of the consciousness of the author to create a consciousness of the character and the character’s consciousness as the subject of the work of art itself — efficiency of an aesthetic event is connected. On the one hand, it is caused by a mismatch between the two consciousnesses, i. e. it is “the tension of its outsidedness and separation, the use of the privilege of its exclusive place beyond other people” (Bakhtin, 2006, 160), on the other hand — it is expressed in creation of the unique, which an event is characterized by.

It can be said that an artwork itself is an aesthetic event — a unique trace left after the meeting of the author and the character. Bakhtin analyses it using specific examples, in particular, the “Parting Due Time” by Pushkin popular among literary critics of his time (“Bound for the shores of your distant homeland...”) and shows the diversity of the points of intersection of the author and the character, confirming that it is the efficiency of the meeting that causes the effect of this poem.

So, let’s sum up the definition of the aesthetic event by Bakhtin in the first phase of his philosophical concept development.

What is an aesthetic event in Bakhtin’s interpretation? Firstly, it occurs in the artwork, secondly, it is a meeting of the author’s consciousness and the consciousness of the character, which are distinct entities (i. e., the author is in the “position of outsidedness” in relation to the character), thirdly, it is efficient since consciousnesses of the author and the character are efficient themselves, and finally, it is singular, just because it represents a “creatively efficient” meeting.

§ 5. *The dialogical character of an aesthetic event*

In linguistic works of the mid-20s, continued in 50-70s, the subject of analysis was the event of meeting (dialogue), a communicative situation that according to Bakhtin plays a crucial role in establishing the position of a person in the world.

Dialogue appears in a communicative situation discreetly and is not immediately recognized. However, when I start talking about a subject, I find it “always, so to say, already specified, contested, evaluated” (Voloshinov, 1995, 69). As between the person and the subject of the statement “lies elastic, often hardly penetrative medium of others, of alien words on the same subject, about the same things,” when expressing my opinion, I mentally relate it with those available before and that is how my speech, an apparent monologue, has in fact started with a dialogue (Voloshinov, 1995, 71).

And this dialogue (under the cover of externally sounding monologue) will continue with the present audience. My statement is not directed to the silent abstract addressee but to the other communicator with an expectation of his understanding, and it provokes him to reply — commenting, clarifying, arguing, and relating to my word, so my word belongs to the listener in the same way as it belongs to me as the speaker. “In a real life verbal situation any particular understanding is active: it attaches what is understood to its subject-expressive horizon and it is inseparably connected with the answer, with a reasoned objection or agreement. In a sense, the primacy belongs to the answer, as it is the active principle: it sets the stage for understanding, active and concerned preparation for it” (Voloshinov, 1995, 74). These ideas emerged in the field of Bakhtin’s theory of language not by chance: his basic anthropological principle appears here: the subject finds itself unfinished within; the completeness, the valuable meaning of its body and soul is given by accumulating, combining activity of the other.

Thus, the statement can’t be considered complete until it receives a completion and graceful expressivity in the response of the other. Message is always an appeal to the other; therefore irresponsiveness and lack of reaction is equivalent to a loss of humanity. These provisions lay the foundations of dialogism ideas, Bakhtin’s theory of two positions of the person in relation to the world: the position of completeness and the position of incomplete being-in-the-world not thought *about the world* but *thought-in-the-world*, not ending someone else’s idea but provoking, exciting, involving into a dialogue.

Linguistic works of mid-20s made adjustments to the previous phenomenological analysis of an artwork. The main thing

about them is that now the work of art is analyzed in the immediate social context of its functioning. Bakhtin wished to reveal the inherent sociality, i. e. the communicative nature of a literary work (which gives opportunity to extend this methodology to other areas of art), or, in other words the objective was to include “ideological”, *that is cultural meaningful value is to be put into the formal structure.*

The main idea, that determined the direction of future research, was declared as follows: “The reality of the artistic image, its development in the real time of social interaction and ideological significance of the depicted events interpenetrate each other in the unity of the poetic *construction...*” (Bakhtin, 2003, 139).

In the unity of the poetic construction sound and meaning being transformed, create a unique structure- the sound ceases to be a physical sound, purely acoustic phenomenon, meaning ceases to be an abstract sense, it gets emotional and volitional overtone and becomes sounding poetical sense.

...But this construction cannot be completely understood — Bakhtin continues — apart from the social conditions of its implementation. After all, the real development of the artwork, for example, a story or tale, is all the time focused on the audience and without the relationship of the speaker with the audience or the author with readers it cannot be understood. (Bakhtin, 2003, 139)

It is important to emphasize that it is not just the technique of transition of material into form as it was postulated by the “formal school”, for example, by Shklovsky, but here it is a specific communicative situation, which is also a scenario, or rather, a synopsis, or a record of a social and cultural event, which it refers to by the linguistic and paralinguistic layers of the statement.

The book “Problems of Dostoevsky’s creative work” published in 1929 and reprinted in the 60s under the title “Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics”, made significant adjustments to the previous Bakhtin’s positions.

New issues which made Bakhtin find new ways for solving many aesthetic problems, while he was working on Dostoevsky’s works should be specified in a separate section. These issues refer primarily to two topics: the interpretation of the image of the character by Dostoevsky and his presentation of the idea.

What fundamentally new did Dostoevsky present to artistic practice of his time? First of all — it is a completely different interpretation of the image of a person in comparison to the one that was adopted as the norm in art literature. Dostoevsky revealed the personality as a different, more lively and full-blooded mind, that *resists the conclusive activity of the author* (Bakhtin, 1979b, 116). The second discovery is *the artistic description of the idea*. In contrast to the philosophical treatises in Dostoevsky's novels this idea is revealed not in the form of discourse but in the "terms of a human event". The third is that *the interaction between consciousness, which are equipollent and have equal, is a dialogical form of communication* (Bakhtin, 1979b, 313).

Due to the new discoveries Bakhtin has to reconsider the question of the author's attitude to the literary character. Previously, he believed that the image of the character can only be created in the field of the vision of the author's consciousness, assembling and finalising him, but now he is convinced that there is another way to treat the character of a person. Someone else's consciousness may not be inserted into the frame of the author's consciousness but reveals itself as the outside and close standing. The author then has neither "excess of vision" nor "semantic excess" in relation to the character, the author gets into the dialogical relationship with the character. Now he defines artistic completion even as "a kind of violence" (Bakhtin, 1979b, 317).

However, Bakhtin insists that the new understanding of the relationship of the author and the character does not abolish the activity of the author, the author does not become a passive recorder of the ongoing dialogue around him (Bakhtin was sometimes blamed for this by some literary critics).

The author is very active, but this activity has a special dialogical character [...] It is questioning, provocative, responding, consenting, objecting, etc. activity. It is dialogical activity, not less active than the accomplishing activity, embodying, causally explanatory, killing and choking the voice of the other with meaningless arguments. (Bakhtin, 1979b, 310)

Creating a literary character, Dostoevsky does not give him a portrait from the position of outsidership and excess of vision; he does not describe the appearance of a hero, and does not even depict his psychology. The subject of art is the self-consciousness of the

character, and everything mentioned above: appearance, costume, environment and people around him are given through the prism of hero's consciousness i. e. how the character sees, estimates and considers them.

Now the question arises: if the subject of Dostoevsky's attention is not the world in which man lives and operates, but the "axiological position" of man in the world, his self-consciousness, and the character has been transformed into a singular point of view on the world and himself, then what means of expression did the writer find, which would correspond to such a radical change of all positions? The mystery of the creative method of Dostoevsky is, according to Bakhtin, in following: the true character is not an ideologist hero who makes decisions on the ultimate questions of existence (it had already been said before Bakhtin), but the *idea of the hero, expressed in his words, his voice* (Bakhtin, 1979a, 26).

Saying it differently, the subject of description is the *word of the character* about himself and about the world, "Dostoevsky's character is not an objectified image, but a full value word, clear voice; we do not see him but hear" (Bakhtin, 1979a, 70). The metamorphosis of the novel from picture of the world, as it was traditionally, into the "sound picture", which draws the reader directly into this sound space, filled with voice polyphony, colliding, sounding words, opinions, feelings and passions.

Bakhtin notes that Dostoevsky's interpretation of the idea coincides with the interpretation of a person as its subject. It may be noted that in order to explain the image of man in Dostoevsky's books Bakhtin applies the same principles, which we met in his ontology and anthropology: a human is open to the world being, who does not coincide with himself, and whose existence is given and projected in future, he is completely "ahead of himself". Bakhtin sees the same features in the characters of Dostoevsky's novels: "the formula of identity 'A is A' can't be applied to them. In Dostoevsky's artistic thought real life of personality seems to occur at the point of human mismatch with himself, at the point of going beyond everything that one is as a material being" (Bakhtin, 1979a, 69).

Just the same thing can be said about the idea the hero bears. If a person is not completed, his idea is not completed either, if real life of a personality is only revealed in the dialogical penetration of the

other consciousness inside it, “to which it responsively and freely reveals itself”, then the idea gets its vital meaning only facing the other idea. The idea is born at the point of contact with someone else’s idea; it lives only in the dialogical relationship with the other idea. But since the idea is expressed in words, the words used by the writer-ideologist should be special, not the same as in the monologists novel. In the polyphonic novels by Dostoevsky

the author’s word can’t embrace the character and his word from all sides, can’t lock up and complete the character and his word. It can only appeal to him. Dostoevsky does not know any corresponding word which, without interfering in the internal dialogue of the character, would neutrally and objectively build him as a complete image. (Bakhtin, 1979a, 293)

Bakhtin calls this method *polyphonic* writing, and the word which is used — *dialogical word*. The concept of polyphony being applied to the novel does not mean parallel movement of the voices of different characters but it is explained as *an inclusion of one voice into another, the simultaneous sounding of different voices in one*. The character’s voice in the monologue is filled with other people’s voices, the voices act like drama characters inside the hero.

§ 6. The Significance of Bakhtin’s Theory of “Aesthetic Event” for Contemporary Aesthetics

The stages of Bakhtin’s work on the problem of an aesthetic event studied here leads to the conclusion that we are dealing with the development of the ontological doctrine of an aesthetic event, which has some points of intersection with some existentialist aesthetics’ ideas by M. Heidegger, J.-P. Sartre, M. Merleau-Ponty, and philosophical dialogism movements, but on the whole, Bakhtin’s concept is an original deeply philosophically substantiated concept.

Besides, Bakhtin’s polyphonic novel theory was interpreted in post-structuralism aesthetics in the spirit of deconstruction ideas. J. Kristeva was one of the first interpreters of Bakhtin. She develops the idea of polyphony in the following way. According to Bakhtin, the word becomes polyphonic, when the voices of the other characters are heard in the voice of the person who pronounces it. According to Kristeva, this means that several discourses at once are introduced in the character’s speech and the characters’ identity is

disordered. At first, he constitutes the other with the word about him, and then he becomes the other in relation to himself. Dual affiliation of word — I and the other — transforms the character from the psychological subject into the verbal space, where discursive instances collide, and the novel transforms itself into a lot voices scene, which includes a variety of ideologies, neutralizing themselves (Kristeva, 2000).

Nevertheless, the concept of an aesthetic event and the ideas associated with it, own a huge resource for the development of contemporary aesthetics. The idea that an “aesthetic event” should be viewed through incongruity of two consciousnesses, and a statement can’t be considered complete until it receives a complete response; all these largely determined the dispute on the nature of aesthetics and the role of the Other in the humanities. Bakhtin’s philosophical reflection on the aesthetic event became an event for the culture of the twentieth century itself.

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