

Languages As Philosophies : A Reading of Bakhtin's Rabelais and His World

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Abstract

My present paper presents a way of reading Mikhail Bakhtin's famous work Rabelais and His World on the basis of a key passage near the end of the seventh chapter: "Languages are philosophies--not abstract but concrete, social philosophies, penetrated by a system of values inseparable from living practice and class struggle." Here the term "Languages" refers neither to the official language of the ruling class nor to the system of the unitary language, but to the heteroglossia of language or, more precisely, to the various forms of speech genres. For Bakhtin, these languages or speech genres have no abstract thought, but the living practice of the people. And the term "philosophies" does not mean the study of theories about the nature of existence and knowledge or about morality; in Bakhtin's context, it suggests the complex and combined ways of understanding and interpretation, and also the complex ways of philosophical thinking; and these ways are simultaneously linguistic, social, and ideological. And the key statement "Languages are philosophies" denotes that it is from the philosophical point of view that Bakhtin analyzes a variety of forms of speech genres in Rabelais' novel Gargantua and Pantagruel.

Key Words: Languages, philosophies, speech genres, heteroglossia

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Near the end of the seventh and last chapter in his work Rabelais and His World, Mikhail Bakhtin argues that the Renaissance is an exceptional period in the history of European literature--a period of the extermination of old languages and of the birth of new languages. The Renaissance, Bakhtin points out, is the only period which marked the end of Latin and the vernacular and, at the same time, the rise of national languages. In the Middle Ages and, to some extent, in the Renaissance, three languages were interwoven: medieval Latin, classical Latin (that is, Cicero's Latin), and the vernacular. This complex intersection led to exceptional linguistic consciousness and freedom. In this mutual linguistic intersection, new concepts, new points of view, and new value judgments were formed. Moreover, the variety of dialects within the same vernacular began to disclose themselves and to clarify each other. Gradually, these dialects became images of thought and types of speech and revealed their own peculiar local qualities. Meanwhile, the national language began to develop; primarily by means of translation, it absorbed a new sphere of vocabulary and of strange objects and finally became the medium of literature.

Because of this complex intersection of languages and dialects, according to Bakhtin, a series of things occurred: first, the century-old hidden linguistic dogmatism was exposed and overcome; second, the phenomenon of the primitive co-existence of languages and dialects disappeared; and third, a new system of values was formed. All these things were made possible only in the exceptional period of the Renaissance. Bakhtin remarks significantly:

Languages are philosophies--not abstract but concrete, social philosophies, penetrated by a system of values inseparable from li-

ing practice and class struggle. This is why every object, every concept, every point of view, as well as every intonation found their place at this intersection of linguistic philosophies and was drawn into an intense ideological struggle. In these exceptional conditions, linguistic dogmatism or naivety became impossible. (Rabelais, 471)

This passage, it seems to me, is very important and deserves our special attention. It is important in the sense that it not only briefly sums up Bakhtin's theory of language but also serves as a guideline to our reading of his great work Rabelais and His World at the same time, to the chief concepts in Rabelais' novel, Gargantua and Pantagruel. The purpose of the present paper is to present a reading of Bakhtin's book through an analysis of this passage and, by this act of reading, to formulate his theory of languages as philosophies or, more precisely, as the process of philosophization.

The logic of the above-cited passage is evident. "Every object, every concept, every point of view, as well as every intonation found their place at this intersection of linguistic philosophies." It is because of the complex interorientation of languages and dialects in the Renaissance that any objects, any concepts, any viewpoints, and any intonations took a new dimension. These languages and dialects were no longer isolated or individualized, but social, ideological, and philosophical. The key point in the passage, however, is that "Languages are philosophies." What does Bakhtin really mean by saying that "Languages are philosophies"? In what sense are languages philosophies? What languages or what kind of language does he talk about? And above all, what do objects, concepts, points of view, and intonations signify? Are they related to or even equivalent to Bakhtin's famous theory of speech genres?

Here we come to two central problems in Bakhtin's writings: the problem of languages and the problem of speech genres. These two central problems are related to each other and may even be interrelated or intermingled. But it seems to me that, as we shall examine, they are two distinct and different problems. And Rebelais and His World is primarily concerned with these two problems. In Bakhtin's essay "The Problem of the Text in Linguistics, Philology, and Human Sciences: An Experiment in Philosophical Analysis," Speech Genres & Other Late Essays, we find an interesting and pertinent passage which simultaneously deals with speech genres, language and Rebelais:

The immense and as yet unstudied diversity of speech genres : from the unpublished spheres of inner speech to artistic works and scientific treatises. The diversity of street genres (see Rabelais), intimate genres, and so forth. In various epochs, in various genres, the emerging of language goes on. (Speech Genres, 118)

Here we clearly see (1) the immense diversity of speech genres, which includes the sphere of inner speech, street genres, intimate genres, and so on; (2) the emerging of language; and (3) Rabelais. And the speech genres in Rabelais, in the Renaissance, and even in literary works and scientific treatises of all ages are extremely immense and are, in Bakhtin's opinion, ignored or "unstudied" by writers and scholars.

Hence, based on this passage and another passage cited earlier, we can say that Rabelais and His World is a study of Bakhtin's theory of language and, especially, of his theory of speech genres. And when Bakhtin talks about "Every object, every concept, every opint of view, as well as every into-

nation [which] found their place at this intersection of linguistic philosophies," he must imply his theoretical problem of the extreme diversity of speech genres. And these speech genres include concepts, viewpoints, intonations, strange objects, street genres, and intimate genres in Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel.

First of all, let us consider the problem of language. In his study on Rabelais' novel, Bakhtin apparently discusses two different kinds of languages. On the one hand, there are the official language of the ruling class in the Middle Ages, the official or literary language of medieval literature, and the official or literary language in western literature for the last four hundred years. On the other hand, there is the popular and familiar language of the people in Rabelais' novel, in his time, and even in folk culture over thousands of years. This second kind of language--the popular and familiar language of the people--is exactly what Bakhtin talks about in his essay "The Problem of the Text": "The immense and as yet unstudied diversity of speech genres: from the unpublished spheres of inner speech to artistic works and scientific treatises." And Bakhtin, in his study of Rabelais; and His World, concerns himself chiefly with the second kind of language, the is, the popular and familiar language of the people, with emphasis on Rabelais' novel.

In the second chapter, "Language of the Marketplace," of Rabelais and His World, Bakhtin distinguishes these two kinds of languages: first, the official language of the ruling classes in the Middle Ages, like the language of the palace and the church and, second, the festive and the marketplace in the Middle Ages and even in the Renaissance was a particular territory in the world of strict hierarchy and official order. He asserts: "[I]n the marketplace a special kind of speech was heard, almost a language of its own,

quite unlike the language of Church, palace, courts, and institutions. It was also unlike the tongue of official literature or of the ruling classes." Then he asks: "The festive marketplace combined many genres and forms, all filled with the same unofficial spirit" (Rabelais, 154). And in the second chapter, he narrates Rabelais' own experience of the marketplace and fairs of his time and analyzes various forms or images in Rabelais' novel, like the image of excrement, the concept of the physician, billingsgate abuses, profanities and oaths, and the street cries.

In the fifth chapter, "The Grotesque Image of the Body and Its Sources," Bakhtin distinguishes the popular and familiar language of the people from the official or literary language which has existed in western literature for the last four hundred years. He claims: "There is a sharp line of division between familiar speech and 'correct' language" (320). Here, the familiar speech refers to the comic or unofficial speech of the people for thousands of years. In this kind of speech, the body is represented in a grotesque mode. The grotesque body in this speech drinks, defecates, is sick and dying, fecundates and is fecundated, gives birth and is born, devours and is devoured; sometimes, the grotesque body is cosmic and universal, being related to the earth, the sun, and the stars. The "correct" language, on the other hand, is the official or literary language in western literature for the last four hundred years. The new canon of this official or literary language is new and "correct" because it "presents an entirely finished, completed, strictly limited body, which is shown from the outside as something individual" (320). In the new canon of official or literary language, each part of the body conveys merely an individual or isolated meaning and fulfills purely its own experience and function. In the organs of this body, we cannot find any symbolic or universal meaning; they are not associated with the social life or with

any element of the cosmos. In the new canon of literary language, the bodies eat, drink, defecate, and make sex; but they, as Bakhtin points out, carry no longer "on their former philosophical function" (321). Therefore, the official or literary language, unlike the popular speech of the people, is not "philosophical."

The two kinds of languages--first, the official language of the ruling class in the Middle Ages, the literary language of medieval literature, and the Middle Ages, the literary language of medieval literature, and the literary language in western literature and, second, the popular and familiar speech of the people--are, it seems to me, parallel to the two opposite categories of language in Bakhtin's famous essay "Discourse in the Novel" in The Dialogic Imagination : Four Essays.

In this essay, he holds that, in a single national language, there are always two opposite categories or two extreme roles : on the one hand, the system of a unitary language and, on the other, the extreme heterogeneity of language or what he calls the social heteroglossia of language. The system of unitary language, it must be pointed out, is not a system of syntactical and grammatical categories in conventional linguistics which, according to Bakhtin, is too abstract and too general. Conventional descriptive linguistics is abstract and general because it is divorced from living experience. Indeed, Bakhtin's theory of language has nothing to do with general linguistics, that is, with abstract study of phonetic, morphological, and grammatical elements in general linguistics. Rather, the unitary language, in Bakhtin's view, is "an expression of the centripetal forces of language" which are inclined to unify different verbal styles, linguistic norms, and ideological thoughts into a fixedly official or literary language or into "the one language of truth" (Dialogic Imagination, 269-70). These centripetal forces, which in-

clude linguistic stylistics, and the philosophy of language in the current of the centralizing tendencies of European languages, "have sought first and foremost for *unity in diversity*" (274, Bakhtin's italics).

These centripetal forces of language struggle to overcome what Bakhtin calls "the realities of heteroglossia" or "the heteroglossia of language" into a unity of reigning literary or correct language. Bakhtin's examples of the unitary language in "Discourse in the Novel" are thus : Aristotelian poetics, the poetics of Augustine, the poetics of the medieval church, the Cartesian poetics of neoclassicism, the abstract grammatical Universalism of Leibniz. All these unified languages well express "the same centripetal forces in sociolinguistic and ideological life; they serve one and the same project of centralizing and unifying the European language" (271). By "poetics" here, Bakhtin does not just mean a treaty on poetry, but broadly refers to a system of specific literary or official language or to a language of an authoritative scholar. In addition, the languages of all those who hold power and who are well set up in life, in society, and in history--the languages of kings, knights, priests, wealthy bourgeois, scholars, poets, philosophers--all belong to the category of unitary language.

However, though the centripetal forces of the unitary language are opposed to the heteroglossia of language, they are operating "in the midst of heteroglossia" (271), that is, in the midst of heteroglossia of lower or popular languages. Bakhtin remarks : "Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward" (272). Hence, for Bakhtin, language is capable of two different forces : unification and, at the same time, disunification or stratification. In the process of its evolution,

language is disunified or stratified not only into various linguistic dialects, but also into socio-ideological groups, like professional languages and languages of social classes, of regions, and of generations. Owing to such a disunification or stratification, the official or literary language itself becomes only one of these heterogeneous languages and, in its turn, is also stratified into generic languages. As long as a national language is alive and is developing, stratification and heteroglossia will continue to operate.

Heteroglossia, Bakhtin asserts, is opposed to the unitary language and, more accurately, to its higher official and social-ideological genres, like the languages of philosophers, poets, scholars, monks, knights, and kings. Heteroglossia, unlike the unitary language, is organized in the lower levels or genres, like the languages of clowns, buffoons, and rogues, and the various forms of street songs, folk speeches, and legends. In the heteroglossia of language, there is no unity or center at all. Heteroglossia, Bakhtin asserts, "was parodic, and aimed sharply and polemically against the official languages of its given time" (273). We can say that, in the evolution of language, heteroglossia is the expression or the embodiment of the centrifugal forces of language; and it is ignored by the centralizing forces of the unitary language because the traditional linguistics and stylistics have concentrated only on the system of the unitary language, on "the firmest, most stable, least changeable and most mono-semantic aspects of discourse--on the phonetic aspects first of all--that are furthest removed from the changing socio-semantic spheres of discourse" (274, Bakhtin's italics).

In *Rabelais and His World*, what Bakhtin puts stress is precisely on "the changing socio-semantic spheres of discourse," on the social and historical heteroglossia of language, and on the popular and familiar speech of the people, but not on the system of the unitary language.

At the very end of the seventh and last chapter in his work on Rabelais, Bakhtin concludes: "Though he [Rabelais] led the popular chorus of only one time, the Renaissance, he so fully and clearly revealed the peculiar and difficult language of the laughing people that his work sheds its light on the folk culture of humor belonging to other ages" (Rabelais, 474). Here, "the peculiar and difficult language of the laughing people" is Bakhtin's major concern in his work; and this language is exactly what I have just said of the second kind of language in his theory: the popular and familiar speech of the people. And in his novel Gargantua and Pantagruel, Rabelais gives a comprehensive account of the familiar and popular language of the laughing people. The language of the people is "peculiar" in the sense that it is concrete and humorous, as contrasted with the serious and conceptual language of the ruling class in the Middle Ages. And the popular language is "difficult" because it has been long neglected or unstudied by writers and scholars and is thus difficult for the modern reader to grasp or understand. Implicit in this phrase is the idea that the popular speech, that is, the peculiar and difficult language of the people, is easily understood by Rabelais and his contemporaries. And Rabelais' account of the language of the people is "so full and clear" that his novel, like Cervantes' Don Quixote and Shakespeare's drama, becomes a loophole to the thousand-year-old tradition of folk culture and its humor.

What is Bakhtin's concept of speech genres, after all? They are, as Bakhtin defines in his essay "The Problem of Speech Genres," *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*, are "the stable *generic* forms of the utterance" (78, Bakhtin's italics). That is, a speaker or writer, in his speech or utterance, always tends to choose a particular generic form. A speaker's utterance, with its own style and its own function, is apt to move toward a certain

generic form; it is shaped and developed to a given genre. "Such genres exist above all in the great and multifarious sphere of everyday oral communication, including the most familiar and the most intimate" (78). In other words, we use speech genres in all occasions in our daily life. And we use speech genres in practice and in theory, in oral language and in written language. Very often, in our daily conversation, we speak in diverse genres without being aware of their existence. And "Speech genres organize our speech in almost the same way as grammatical (syntactical) forms do" (78-9). Hence, speech genres, like the grammatical and compositional structure of our everyday language, dominate our speech and our thought. Without speech genres, according to Bakhtin, our speech communication would be impossible.

"A speech genre," Bakhtin emphasizes, "is not a form of language, but a typical form of utterance, as such the genre also includes a certain typical kind of expression that inheres in it" (87). This passage tells us two important things about speech genres. First, speech genres are different from language forms and, second, a fundamental feature of a speech genre is expression. First of all, it is clear that, for Bakhtin, the genre forms or the forms of utterance differ from language forms. By "language forms," he means the forms of the national language, like the forms of logical composition and grammatical structure. These language forms are rather strict and compulsory, and are the subject matter of linguists. Speech genres, on the other hand, are more flexible and more diverse, and are usually ignored by linguists and even by scholars of literature, precisely because speech genres are extremely diverse not only in compositional structure but also in oral practice. "Thus, speech genres appear [to linguists] incommensurable and unacceptable as units of speech" (82).

A fundamental feature of a speech genre is its expression or its expressive coloring or intonation. The speech genre, Bakhtin states explicitly, "also includes a certain typical kind of expression that inheres in it. "Here, it is noticed that the expression is inherent in the speech genre, not in any language form or any language unit. In the English language, we know that there are emotional words, such as "joy," "sorrow," "cheerful," and "wonderful." But in Bakhtin's view, "these meanings are just as neutral as all the others. They acquire their expressive coloring only in the utterance, and this coloring is independent of their meaning taken individually and abstractly" (87). What he means to say here is that the expressive coloring of a word in speech genres comes from one's own utterance or from someone else's utterance, not from the neutral, abstract form of the word in the dictionary or in the system of language. Bakhtin maintains that, in the process of constructing an utterance, we do not choose words from the dictionary or from *other utterances*, and mainly from utterances that are kindred to ours in genre, that is, in theme, composition, or style. Consequently, we choose words according to their generic specifications" (87, Bakhtin's italics). Hence, the typical expression of the word is inherent in the speech genre or in the utterance, but not in the dictionary. Apparently, for Bakhtin, all dictionary words are neutral and their meanings are abstract, unless they are uttered in one's speech. Here is Bakhtin's example: "Any joy is now only bitterness to me. Here the word 'joy' is given an expressive intonation that resists its own meaning, as it were" (87). Therefore, in Bakhtin's theory of speech genres, a word has the natural tendency to re-accentuate, that is, to mark or to be marked with a new, different tone. In a speech genre, the sorrowful can be made joyful, and vice versa. A word is neutral in the dictionary or in the system of language. But in a speech genre, there are no neutral words.

Another fundamental feature of speech genres is their great diversity and heterogeneity. This is because all human activities are extremely different from one person to another, from one social situation to another, and from one social class to another. Sometimes, a speaker, in his individual speech or utterance, chooses only a particular generic form and its peculiar intonation. For example, there are various genres of greetings, farewells, and congratulations. And even the generic form of greeting varies from the sphere of intimacy or familiarity to the official or formal sphere. Nevertheless, even the official genres of greeting, highly stable and standardized, have different nuances of expressive intonation.

The heterogeneity of speech genres, as Bakhtin argues in his essay "The Problem of Speech Genres," includes various forms of daily dialogue and narration, personal letters, military commands, the various repertoire of business documents and contracts, all kinds of social and political arguments, texts of law, clerical documents, diverse forms of scientific reports or statements, and all kinds of literary genres and commentaries. Indeed, speech genres, in Bakhtin's theory, are so heterogeneous and so diverse that they do not have a single common factor. They range from a single-word daily answer to a voluminous novel. But, according to Bakhtin, speech genres can be roughly divided into two kinds : primary (simple or oral) and secondary (complex or written). Primary or simple genres are oral; they are, among others, types of oral dialogue, of daily conversation, of table talk, of the salon speech, and of one's own aside, and so on. Secondary or complex genres are written; they are all genres of written language, novels, dramas, poems, all kinds of scientific research, major genres of commentary, and so forth. These secondary genres are formulated from various primary genres. And when the primary genres are absorbed and reformulated into the secon-

dary genres, they lose their immediate relation to actual reality and to the real utterances of others. The novel, for instance, is an utterance, just as rejoinders in everyday dialogue or in private letters are utterances, too. But unlike them, the novel is a secondary or complex utterance.

Having thus investigated the two central concepts of language and speech genre in Bakhtin's theory, we are now in a better position to interpret the key point in the above-cited passage of Bakhtin's at the beginning of the present paper : "Languages are philosophies." It seems evident that, here, the word "languages" refers neither to the official language of the ruling class in the Middle Ages nor to the literary language of medieval literature nor to the literary language of western literature for the last four hundred years. Nor does it refer to the system of the unitary language. Rather, the word "languages" suggests socio-semantic spheres of discourse," the social and historical heteroglossia of language, or the popular and familiar speech of the people. More precisely, the word "languages," with its plural form, strongly suggests the various forms of speech genres, including images, types, genres, concepts, viewpoints, and intonations of the popular speech which appear in Rabelais' novel, in his time, and even in folk culture over thousands of years. And the term "philosophies" does not mean the study of theories about the nature of existence and knowledge or about morality, as the term usually means when we say that someone majors in philosophy. Nor does the term "philosophies" mean any particular theory that a philosopher, like Plato or Descartes, has. The term, in Bakhtin's context, with its plural form, obviously suggests the complex and combined ways of understanding and interpretation, and also the complex ways of philosophical thinking; and these ways are simultaneously linguistic, social, and ideological.

It becomes evident that the two words "languages" and "philosophies" in the statement "Languages are philosophies" have special meanings. The "philosophies" in Bakhtin's context are related to the origin and development of language, to social and concrete experience of life, to ideological and cultural spheres, and to class struggle. And for Bakhtin, the "languages" indicate the linguistic forms of folk culture; these languages are always social and ideological, and are certainly not private or isolated events. And they are always material and bodily, not abstract and general. For Bakhtin and for Rabelais as well, the popular and familiar speech has no abstract thought; it only has the living practice of the people. To put it in a different way, the key point-"Languages are philosophies"--implies that it is from the philosophical point of view that Bakhtin analyzes a variety of forms, concepts, genres, types, images, intonations, objects, and viewpoints of popular speech in Rabelais' novel and in the Renaissance.

In Rabelais and His World, the "languages" which Bakhtin analyzes include the following items:

- Introduction: carnival imagery, the verbal forms of the marketplace, abusive languages
- Chapter One: the concepts of laughter and the feast
- Chapter Two: the images of urine and excrement, the concept of the physician, and the types of the street cries
- Chapter Three: the images of thrashing, games, prophetic, riddle, and dismemberment
- Chapter Four: the banquet imagery
- Chapter Five: the images of the grotesque body, the gaping mouth, and pregnant death

Chapter Six: the concept of the underworld, the forms of negation and of verbal absurdities, the fusion of praise and abuse

Chapter Seven: Rabelais' positions and points of view, his verbal style, and his use of number

Sometimes, some concepts, like carnival and the feast, are examined in two or more chapters. Very often, in his investigation of forms or concepts, Bakhtin traces their historical and cultural genesis.

It is important to note that, though Rabelais' major concern in Gargantua and Pantagruel is the popular culture and its languages or speech genres, he does not overlook the official language of the ruling class in the Middle Ages and even in the Renaissance and the literary language of medieval and Renaissance literature. As a matter of fact, his liberal use of the popular speech of the people aims at exposing and overcoming the system of the unified language. Bakhtin states significantly : "The influence of the century-old hidden linguistic dogmatism on human thought, and especially on artistic imagery, is of great importance" (Rabelais, 471). Like his contemporary writers, Rabelais was influenced by the literary and official language of the sixteenth century. And certainly, linguistic and official dogmatism went deep into his sensitive mind. And like his contemporaries, he must be deeply aware of the breakdown of old languages and saw the rise of his national language. For Bakhtin, and for Rabelais as well, to adopt a language is to take an attitude, a point of view, and a way of looking at the world. Bakhtin stresses: "Rabelais' basic goal [in using the languages of popular culture] was to destroy the official picture of events. He strove to take a new look at them, to interpret the tragedy or comedy they represented from the

point of view of the laughing chorus of the marketplace" (437). And Rabelais, by taking advantage of encountering the unusual interorientation of languages and dialects and, at the same time, by means of being immersed in popular culture and using the great wealth of its peculiar languages, was able to see the system of unitary language not only within the sphere of his own literary language, but also from the outside. Indeed, it is impossible for one to discern and overcome linguistic dogmatism within the system of the unified, dogmatic language itself. Bakhtin writes well : "If the creative spirit lives in one language only, or if several languages coexist but remain strictly divided without struggling for supremacy, it is impossible to overcome the dogmatism buried in the depths of linguistic consciousness" (471). Nevertheless, Rabelais' concentration is on speech genres which are a loophole, through which Bakhtin and his reader can see and understand the popular culture over thousands of years in western history.

Most important of all, however, is that, when Bakhtin analyzes a linguistic image or a speech genre in his study of Rabelais, he often asks pertinent questions about its universal, ideological, functional, or philosophical significance. For example :

What did the *cris* [the cries of Paris] mean to Rabelais? (182, Bakhtin's italics)

What is the general world outlook expressed in the popular-festive carnival forms? (244)

All these [all elements in Goethe's "Roman Carnival"] are contained in Rabelais' world, and they have all the same philosophic meaning.

What is this meaning?(255)

How can such an exceptional and universal role of the banquet theme

be explained? (281)

What are the functions of the banquet images in the medieval tradition described above? (295)

How can one explain this "crossroads" character of hell, and what is its philosophic meaning? (386)

What is the artistic and ideological meaning of this genre [of verbal absurdities]? (423)

Sometimes, we find such significant, philosophical remarks about concepts or genres as:

The feast had always an essential, meaningful philosophical content. (8)

This genre [of the street cries], which later became in literature a mere picture of mores, was filled with philosophic meaning for our author. (185)

Games were not as yet thought of as a part of ordinary life and even less of its frivolous aspect. Instead they had preserved their philosophical meaning. (236)

Here we shall be content with the discussion of two subjects : the basic philosophic meaning of the folk carnival and its special function in Rabelais' novel. (244)

It [The image of the gaping mouth] was completely ordinary in their [Rabelais' and his contemporaries'] eyes; equally familiar was its universal, cosmic connotation. (349)

From such questions and remarks as listed above, we can properly inte-

interpret Bakhtin's statement "Languages are philosophies" in this manner : linguistic concepts and speech genres are assimilated into philosophy or theory. In other words, linguistic signs and speech genres are considered in a philosophical or theoretical style. They are philosophized into a theoretical pattern. And the essence of Bakhtin's theory of language is to take a philosophical, symbolical, universal, and historical view about important concepts of popular speech in Rabelais' novel. Bakhtin's theory of language, in this sense, can be said to be a theory of the process of philosophization of language.

For the rest of the paper, I would like to give an example from Rabelais and His World for illustrating how Bakhtin philosophizes languages in Rabelais' novel and in popular culture. The example is the concept of the feast or banquet which Bakhtin discusses in his "Introduction" and in Chapters Three and Four.

In his "Introduction," Bakhtin argues that one important form of human activity is the feast. However, it is very superficial to explain it away as merely an isolated or private event which affords sensual pleasure in a community; it is even more superficial to consider the feast as an act of fulfillment of the physiological need for periodical rest. Such an explanation or a consideration is meaningless, trivial and even negative. For Bakhtin, every feast has a positive element. He maintains that the feast is related to the change of agricultural seasons, to the death and renewal of vegetation, and to the phases of the sun and the moon. And this positive element may extend to a greater and deeper meaning: it signifies the people's hopes of a happier future, of a better social and economic order, just as the Roman Saturnalia expressed the return of the golden age. And the medieval feast had dual meaning: the official feast and the marketplace festival. In its off-

icial or ecclesiastical level, the feast sanctioned the present existing order of hierarchy and, at the same time, looked back to the past. But the feast of the people of the marketplace, on the other hand, looked into the future. Opposed to the stably established order, the market place feast looked into the future and gave stress to the process of change and renewal. In a philosophical and historical content, the feasts are "moments of death and revival, of change and renewal [which] always led to a festive perception of the world" (9). In this sense, the feasts create a second world and a second life outside the world of official and serious culture. "They were the second life of the people, who for a time entered the utopian realm of community, freedom, equality, and abundance" (9).

In Chapter Three, "Popular-Festive Forms and Images in Rabelais," Bakhtin analyzes the image of the feast or banquet in Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel. A typical example he takes is the feast at the time of Gargantua's birth (Gargantua, Book 1, Chapters 4, 5, and 6, pp. 15-22). For this feast, a great number of fat oxen, 367, 014, were killed. And because the tripe of the slaughtered oxen will soon rot and cannot be preserved a long time, Grandgousier, Gargantua's father, invites all the citizens of all the neighboring villages to the feast. The feast is, therefore, a popular one, full of gay spirit. Bakhtin remarks: "Thus, the feast for which thousands of oxen were slaughtered has a widely popular character. It is a feast for the world.' And such was the essence of every carnivalesque celebration" (223). Hence, a carnivalesque atmosphere dominates the whole feast. Meanwhile, Grandgousier warns his wife, Gargamelle, not to eat too much of the tripe, since she is in labor; and animal intestines always have excrement. However, in spite of her husband's warning, she eats sixteen barrels, two casks, and six pots of tripe. Then, at the time of her delivery, Gargamelle has her own

right intestines fallen off because she has eaten too much of tripe. In this way, human organs and animal organs are interwoven into a single grotesque image of the body. Bakhtin remarks : "The limits between animal flesh and the consuming human flesh are dimmed, very nearly erased. The bodies are interwoven and begin to be fused in one grotesque image of a devoured and devouring world" (221). According to Bakhtin, the image of the grotesque body is characterized by its open and unfinished nature. In the act of eating, man and the world are interrelated to each other; man triumphs over the world. The essence of the feast is, therefore, to celebrate a victory. On the entire episode of Gargamelle's childbirth, Bakhtin comments: "Then the episode of Gargamelle's labor will appear to us as a high and at the same time gay drama of the body and of the earth" (224).

In Chapter Four, "Banquet Imagery in Rabelais," Bakhtin further argues that the banquet is not only a celebration of triumph and renewal, but also an occasion for "wise discourse" and for "the gay truth" (283). In other words, the feast is associated with the origin and development of human language, with the increase of wisdom, and with the philosophical problem of truth. The human language, Bakhtin suggests, probably originated when ancient people sat down and ate together. That is, language began to develop during the feast. "There is an ancient tie between the feast and the spoken word" (283). This statement hints that the feast was not only the source of human speech, but also the source of frank truth and gay wisdom. The ancient symposium recorded by Plato is a fine example. Only in the banquet or in table can frank and gay truth be uttered. "Even for the authors of the antique symposium, for Plato, for Xenophon, Plutarch, Athenaeus, Macrobius, Lucian, and others, the link between eating and speaking was not an obsolete remnant of this past but had a living meaning"

(284). The official feast in the Middle Ages sanctioned the present existing order and reinforced the stability and the unchanging state of all things. During official feasts, rank was carefully observed and inequality was consecrated. The official feast, therefore, celebrated the triumph of an established truth, a truth that was set forth as indisputable, prevailing, and eternal. Contrary to the official feast was the marketplace festival which celebrated temporary liberation from the established order and the predominant truth of hierarchy. During the marketplace festivals, all hierarchical order was suspended. And this suspension led to the breaking away of all the barriers of rank and class, and thus to the expression of a free, gay, and materialistic truth.

In Rabelais' novel, eating and drinking always play an important role in popular culture. In the novel, the themes in the feast or in table talk are always "sublime" and always filled with "profound wisdom." In Gargantua's education, for instance, eating and drinking occupy a substantial part. And Panurge's consultations with the theologian, the physician, and the philosopher are held during a dinner. The free discussion about women and marriage also takes place during the feast. Indeed, the feast offers the best milieu for gay truth. Bakhtin remarks : "The grotesque symposium, the carnivalesque, popular-festive of antique table talks provided him [Rabelais] with the laughing tone, the vocabulary, the entire system of images which expressed his own conception of truth" (285).

At the end of Chapter Four, Bakhtin makes a comparison between the feast image in the bourgeois culture in the nineteenth century and the banquet imagery in the popular-festive tradition and in Rabelais. In the bourgeois culture or literature in the nineteenth century, the feast is removed from the marketplace and is often held in the house or in the private chamber.

The bourgeois feast is, therefore, essentially a private one, with hungry beggars at the door, not a banquet for all the world. The image which the bourgeois feast presents is private gluttony and personal drunkenness, without social significance; and there is no symbolic meaning and universal openness. The popular-festive banquet is different. In this kind of feast, the images of eating and drinking are gay, free, and triumphant, for they express the process of man's struggle as a whole against the world. Bakhtin concludes: "They [the popular images of food and drink] are universal and organically combined with the concept of the free and sober truth, ignoring fear and piousness and therefore linked with wise speech. Finally, they are infused with gay time, moving toward a better future that changes and renews everything in its path" (302).

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語言即哲學：巴赫汀著「拉伯雷和他的世界」的一種讀法

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摘要

本論文旨在提供巴赫汀名著「拉伯雷和他的世界」的一種讀法——「語言即哲學」。藉此讀法來探討巴氏對於「語言」一詞的正確意義，並詳細說明其語言理論中的幾個重要觀念，如 heteroglossia(異種融合)，speech genres(語類)等。這裏所謂的「哲學」，並非指形而上學、宇宙論、或道德規範等之研究，而是指哲學思考方式，或指各種不同的理解和詮釋之方式；這些方式同時是語言的、社會的、歷史的和意識形態的。簡言之，「語言即哲學」乃是由一種哲學觀點來分析拉伯雷小說「Gargantua and Pantagruel」中的各種不同之語類。

關鍵詞：語言、哲學、語類、異種融合

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