Mikhail Bakhtin

edited by Michael E. Gardiner.

MIKHAIL BAKHTIN

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The Domestication of M. M. Bakhtin

Ken Hirschkop

Fifty years ago Bakhtin attacked contemporary literary studies because it 'ignores the social life of discourse beyond the artist's study, out in the open spaces of public squares, streets, cities and villages, social groups, generations and epochs'.[1] The situation has not really changed in the intervening time. Literary analysis is still principally devoted to the formal dissection of a small group of works it deems artistic, implicitly devaluing those practices of speech and language which live outside the limits of so-called high culture. In the essay I've quoted from, 'Discourse in the Novel', Bakhtin makes plain that literary studies does not restrict its attention for politically neutral reasons – its project is to marginalize the 'social life of discourse' in relation to a higher, authoritative poetic language. This general situation has been much commented upon recently (although less so in Russian literary studies) so I don't propose to discuss it at any length. Instead I want to explore how the work of the man who produced the above polemical statement has been turned into another prop of the cultural practice it attacked. This is not a question of theoretical misjudgement: although Bakhtin adduced complex theoretical arguments against formalist literary studies, his case was also a moral and political one.[2]

The cultural practice of formalist analysis was seen as part of a larger project of political oppression. It is impossible, therefore, not to feel a twinge of disappointment when we see Bakhtin deified and appropriated by the institutions of literary criticism.

Of course, it would have been naive in the extreme to have expected anything else. Bakhtin was not a political organizer or proletarian militant but a literary intellectual of middle-class provenance whose work is, despite its much vaunted eccentricity, scholarly and erudite in tone and breadth of reference. In writing about the politics of culture he uses a difficult and

Source: *Journal of the British Neo-Formalist School*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1986, pp. 76–87.

specialized terminology and adopts points of reference which are hardly popular. But it's perfectly possible to construct an argument against an institution from within it. Bakhtin did exactly this, but in what follows I will trace how his arguments have been construed so that he may be securely placed in the pantheon of Western liberal thinkers. In particular I wish to make four points. First, that Bakhtin's division between novelistic and poetic discourse is not a subdivision of the literary canon, and that his account of the novel is not simply a reconstruction of the prehistory of that familiar genre. Secondly, that the concepts of dialogism and monologism, which underlie the novelistic/poetic division, are anti-formalist: they enunciate distinctions which cannot be made on the basis of formal criteria and they demand that texts be assessed historically and provisionally. Thirdly, that this should lead us to recognize the institutional nature of discourse. Finally, that this prescribes a particular role for criticism, in which it is conscious of its commitments to social values and interests. What all of these arguments oppose is the belief that Bakhtin has provided us only with more subtle tools for the analysis of literary texts. Although interest in Bakhtin has come from many quarters I think it is fair to say that this is generally the way his work has been used.

For many, Bakhtin's importance lies in his theory of the novel. There is a consensus that this theory is unusual, both because of the range of works it subsumes under the category of the novel and the historical antecedents it identifies for the accepted modern canon. It is even admitted that Bakhtin stretches the bounds of the literary in his definition of novelistic discourse. The heterogeneity of Bakhtin's novelistic tradition is bound to cause some problems, however. I myself have difficulty amalgamating the effects of medieval popular carnival with those of nineteenth-century realist novels produced for and read by an audience which may have been substantial but was assuredly not popular. We should keep in mind, though, that this heterogeneity is an effect of the fact that Bakhtin's redrawing of the discursive map disrupts generic continuities we have come to accept as natural. The boundaries it violates – between the poetic and the prosaic, the literary and the non-literary, the serious and the frivolous – are not naturally given but are themselves cultural constructs: one could as easily say that the tradition of literature is a remarkably heterogenous one, given the extraordinary diversity of the forms of writing included within it. This ought to call attention to the polemical status of Bakhtin's history of discourse: it challenges the history on offer from academic literary criticism, which singles out certain works for a specific kind of extended attention and relegates the rest to the category of mass or popular culture. Bakhtin not only provides the modern novel with exotic ancestors, he changes the content and significance of the classification itself. In an important passage he claims: 'if the novelist is deaf to organic double-voicedness and the internal dialogicity of living, developing discourse, then he will never figure out or fulfill the true possibilities and tasks of the genre of the novel. He can, of course, create a work which compositionally and thematically will be very similar to a novel, that will be "made" exactly

like a novel, but he will not have created a novel.'[3] In other words, this failed effort is not a had novel, it is not a novel at all because dialogicity is a constitutive trait of the genre. A new concept of the novel is at work here, not either narrower or more inclusive than other definitions but appealing to new criteria of generic division.

These new criteria effectively reorganize the entire cultural field, threatening to displace the category of literature and its secret creator, literary criticism, with new categories requiring a different sort of critical activity. The initial breach is made within the literary canon itself, when certain works are detached from it and connected with popular cultural forms of a non-literary kind. The use of the term 'novelistic' to designate this detached fragment of the canon is misleading, as it implies that one literary genre has been moved wholesale out of the canon and into a different cultural area. But the body of work which is detached in fact cuts across traditional generic boundaries: it includes prose fiction, poetry, treatises, parodies, dramatic works and so on. The new oppositions of novelistic and poetic, dialogical and monological, serious and carnivalistic, leave on each side of the divide a part of what we had previously thought of as a unity, literature. Bakhtin is not merely reversing the evaluation of the literary tradition; to do that would be to accept the ideological basis of the division of literary and non-literary. Instead he proposes a different principle of division, for which the literary/non-literary distinction is largely irrelevant. Within this gesture the dialogical novel figures as a point of leverage within the literary tradition, the area in which the forces of the poetic attempt to contain and inflect popular impulses by institutionalizing them in the literary.

This principle of division entails the conscious and explicit rejection of formalism: no extended consideration of a work's internal composition or form can determine its place in this scheme. The question of generic identity is decisively thrust outside of the text, for dialogism describes not an inner structure but the relation of a text to that which is exterior to it. To decide the question reference must be made to the conditions of ideological struggle in which a work is located. As these change through history texts are thus capable of being monologized and dialogized at different moments. Nor is the phenomenon of dialogism purely formal in the sense of being a *linguistic* conflict, taking place within the structures of language. Its origin is in ideological conflict which, depending on the state of social struggle, will coalesce around particular relevant issues. Different historical conflicts will produce different semantic 'sites' of dialogization. It is a question of content: dialogism will be possible in certain thematic areas and not in others just as there are topics which, however serious, are material for humour (nuclear war for instance) and others, which simply cannot be joked about.

What distinguishes this from the practice of dividing texts up into literary and non-literary ones is not that it appeals to historical rather than formal criteria. The same is true of the work of literary criticism. The difference is that Bakhtin is explicit about this fact whereas recent criticism has sought to

hide the necessarily historical and political basis of its judgements behind the claim that Literature is a body of writing easily demarcated on the basis of its formal qualities.

This point merits some theoretical elaboration. Bakhtin's theory consistently refuses to treat the text as an object defined by material form alone. His analytical categories differentiate not among linguistic phenomena or literary forms but among discursive phenomena – the effects produced by different instituted combinations of texts, authors and readerships. The estimation of a text's dialogism or lack thereof cannot proceed by examining the "words on the page" which, as Bakhtin dramatically puts it, are but "the sclerotic deposits of the intentional process".[4] The actual meaning of a text, in contradiction, is its significance as an intervention in particular historical conditions. In the Medvedev study the Formalists are castigated for their 'fear of meaning with its "not here" and "not now"' – its dependence on social and temporal context – which destroys the pure objectivity of the work and the fullness of its presence.[5] The text is dispersed because its meaning is a *relation* to specific historical and ideological conditions. This relation is created in the process of signification; it is not a thing (idea, experience, intention or referent) which is expressed or communicated. The dependence of textual meaning on social situation is by now an accepted Bakhtinian axiom. But the full import of this relational definition of meaning is often evaded, as when the social situation of discourse is conceptualized as a context, which uses the text as its medium (Bakhtin himself, particularly in his earlier writings, frequently falls into this trap). Such a conception simply makes the context into a bigger but still self-enclosed text, a set of meanings or understandings which grounds the discursive text. But the context itself can only be meaningful as a relation to the adjacent social and historical situation, which contextualizes it in turn; and there is thus a potentially endless chain of relations with no final ground.

It is difficult to avoid thinking of the text as an object endowed with meaning by something outside of it because this perspective is rooted in the way we think about language. In Saussure's theoretical model language is a system of signs, each of which is composed of a signifier, a 'sound image', and a signified, a concept. Communication is a process of encoding and decoding in which intended meanings – signified – are translated into utterable signifiers and then decoded by the listener. Now Saussure is able to treat the signifier as having a definite material identity and unity only because the meaning to which it corresponds seems to exist before it. The material unity of the signifier is guaranteed by the ideal unity of the signified but this takes the formation of concepts outside of the communication process itself. The ideal unities can then only be shaped by the direct impress of the external 'real' world on our consciousness. The categories in which we think about the world cease to be categories of a process of social interaction – speech – but seem to exist in the world itself, independently of thought. As Michel Pêcheux has pointed out, a formalist linguistics, which abstracts signifiers from social interaction, turning them into self-sufficient things, always carries in its wake

an empiricist semantics: a conception of thought as passive reflection of the external world.[6] In insisting that meaning derives from the social use of a word as well as its external referent, Bakhtin is striving to reject this formalism and empiricism. The latter deprives discourse of any power to affect the way in which we perceive and experience the world. The text is not a material thing animated by ideal intentions, which precede it, it is an historical fact, which must be defined in terms of specific configurations of texts and contexts. Meaning lies neither in text or context but in the relation between them. This is the sense in which meaning can be said to be, as Julia Kristeva describes it, *intertextual*.[7] Because context is not meaningful in itself, there is a sense in which it is also 'textual', meaningful only relationally. In Derrida's famous phrase 'there is nothing outside the text'.[8] Seen from this perspective, dialogism and monologism are not different kinds of texts, but different kinds of intertextual configurations.

It may seem that intertextuality is one of those poststructuralist mazes which we enter only at our peril. Once we have accepted the notion that contexts are themselves textual, thus dismissing what looked like a promising new ground of meaning, it might appear that nothing remains to halt an endless chain of relations. But although there may be no transcendental signifier – something meaningful 'in itself' – which grounds the whole operation, there are relatively stable and effective practices of discourse embedded in social institutions. The historical ground of language, the source or reason for the existence of relatively stable intertextual configurations, is that it is called upon to perform certain tasks in certain social situations regularly. Within the various social institutions in which we work and live there are consistent functions for discourse, and the stability of these functions provides an historically limited but effective ground. Such a stable discursive practice is at least one of the things Bakhtin means by the concept of genre. Michel Foucault, whose theory of discourse reaches in many fruitful ways beyond Bakhtin's, calls these unities of discourse and social situation apparatuses.[9] The operation of apparatuses or, as I would call them, institutions, which are composed of real objects and places, modes of behaviour, ideologies, conventions of language, political relations and so on; requires definite relations between what is discursive and what is not discursive; these relations, however, cannot be described in terms of reflection or expression. To say that discourse has social functions is to emphasize that in these institutions it plays a variety of roles; it does not only passively reflect.

The distinction I aim to make could be summed up in the claim that discourse cannot be reduced to a process of communication. It needs to be seen as something 'performative', to borrow J L Austin's term.[10] It not only communicates meanings but performs different social tasks: it obfuscates, intimidates, commands, promises, encourages and so forth. These effects are not reducible to expression or communication, but they are important and common functions of discourse within the institutions which compose our society. Bakhtin recognized that this social aspect of discourse had been

relegated to the hinterlands of stylistics, and wished to relocate it at the heart of the study of discourse. Interestingly, this social functioning of discourse only became visible for Bakhtin in those acts of speech in which there was a conflict of social functions. These dialogical utterances revealed the concrete, social nature of meaning.

Now criticism is no more capable of merely reflecting its object, literature, than any other discourse. As part of intertextuality the critical discourse actually participates in making the meaning of the literary work. Criticism does not consider, as an analytical question, whether or not a given text is dialogical because it determines the state of affairs by helping to dialogize or monologize the work. Bakhtin's own practice acknowledges this fact by being a notably committed criticism, connecting its rereading of the tradition to an advocacy of larger values. But the principal goal of the domestication of Bakhtin has been the neutralization of this project, substituting for it something, which looks like commitment but is actually a restatement of criticism's self-conception as a politically neutral discourse. In brief, whereas Bakhtin dialogizes and subverts, we are being asked in recent Western Bakhtin studies to recognize dialogism as a newly discovered structural reality of discourse.[11] The constitutive link between dialogical discourse and active social struggle, made by Bakhtin in the 1930s, is ignored.

This oppositional impetus in Bakhtin has been erased by the substitution of the *everyday* for the *popular*. For Bakhtin, popular culture continually takes ruling discourse and challenges its ideological authority by dialogizing it. It is, in essence, oppositional and its style is determined by this crucial social fact. To adopt Brecht's phrase Bakhtin has a 'fighting conception of the popular': his 'people' are always defined against the ruling or official stratum which oppresses them. However, in much Bakhtin criticism the popular sphere is defined very differently: dialogism becomes popular in the sense that it takes place in the everyday reality of ordinary language use, not just in literature.[12] This isn't a gross falsification of Bakhtin's position: he himself seemed to conceive this popular-novelistic discourse as simply the manifestation of the hidden essence of all discourse. But it takes an extraordinary critical labour to so thoroughly cleanse Bakhtin of his subversive element.

Derrida remarks in the essay 'Force and Signification': 'Form fascinates when one no longer has the force to understand force from within. That is, to create. That is why literary criticism is structuralist in every age in its essence and its destiny.'[13] The fundamental critical gesture is to renounce force, to conveniently forget that one's own discourse affects the object by adding to the intertextual situation. Intertextual meaning is rethought as a meaning located within the text itself, which is now a closed aesthetic whole available for critical contemplation. Dialogism, when conceived of as an inherent formal property of texts, is no different. Where practical critics see 'felt life' and structuralists see a spatial structure, Bakhtinian critics find a play of forces or interaction of personalities.[14] The critic becomes the revealer or observer of force, never a force in his or her own right.

The consequence of this is a criticism which can quite legitimately be called formalist in a pejorative sense. The effect of dialogization – a relativization of previously authoritative discourse – is construed as the meaning of dialogism; its force is reduced to a structure. The meaning of every dialogical novel becomes its form: the message that emerges from dialogical interpretation is that all positions are relative. As Derrida puts it: 'Thus the relief and design of structures appears more clearly when content, which is the living energy of meaning, is neutralized.'[15] When the critic pretends to only observe dialogism it appears as a structure whose actual content is not crucially relevant.

When dialogism means some general open-mindedness or consciousness of the relativity of things the Bakhtinian critic is left with little else to do but flaunt a theoretically glorified liberal hesitancy in public. The critic, armed to the teeth with Bakhtin's theoretical insight, uses it only to demonstrate ad nauseam the dialogicity of all discourse, an eternal reminder that everything we say is limited and relative. Open-mindedness is an entirely desirable feature of intelligent argument, aiding us in a common search for truth. Liberal relativism is its caricature, making argument itself pointless because there is no longer any criterion by which to distinguish the false from the true. Unfortunately, most of us lack the time to stand awestruck before the relativity of all truth; we have to get along with the best truth available. This is where formalist interpretations of Bakhtin wreak the severest damage. For if the subjective, ideological aspect of discourse is a limit on its truthfulness, then authority in discourse will increase with its ability to appear disinterested or neutral – precisely the monological mystification of language.

It should be noted that in this formulation dialogism ceases to be a 'social way of discursive life' and becomes an entirely subjective and individual affair.[16] Dialogism and monologism cease to be different historical uses of language: all language is inherently dialogical and monologism is a matter of ignorantly or willfully refusing to recognize this. Every text is dialogical; some critics, smarter perhaps, or maybe nicer, see this, others miss it. The only conditions of this recognition are subjective (critical intelligence or personal disposition) and the result is equally subjective as the text remains 'dialogized' only for those who happen to share these admirable personal qualities.

I have argued, however, that dialogization is very different from the above because opposition to the ideological thrust of the discourse responded to is necessary for its subversion. The revelation of a text's historical limitations and the subversion of its authority requires another socio-ideological discourse drawn from heteroglossia: no amount of critical expertise or good intention will do the trick. What will be revealed is not that the dialogical text is incapable of asserting anything but that what it says is connected to a particular historical project and particular social interests. It still may be right or wrong but its authority will not be grounded in claims of divinity, disinterestedness or advanced culture.

To dialogize an authoritative, monological discourse we must take sides, oppose it, recontextualizing it so that its social impetus becomes visible. The social and historical nature of language, its materiality can be perceived only when it is forced into contradiction with a language which opposes it. But one doesn't dialogize so that you can then retreat to a fictitiously disinterested critical stance; one struggles against some interests on behalf of others. This doesn't necessarily make the oppositional critic as monological as that which he opposes. Popular discourse, because it is justified in part by the generality of the interests it represents, has no need or reason to present itself in the guise of monological objectivity. If it is the case that the popular in Bakhtin seems to be interested in dialogical struggle *per se* rather than struggle for particular objectives this is because for 'the people' the accomplishment of political objectives is inseparable from struggle and the achievement of realistic political consciousness is at the same time an awareness of social conflict. A dialogical form of discourse is forced on them by their social conditions; does anyone seriously imagine that the discourse of unemployed urban youth would or could pretend to be sacred or otherwise authoritative? This possibility is simply closed to it, given the social conditions in which it operates. Likewise the targets of dialogization are socially defined: those ruling languages which dominate by disguising their social and political interestedness. The aim of dialogization is to subvert this pretence and to subvert it for *reasons*. Relativization and historicization are tactics and processes, the form of dialogism, not its impetus or content. As Ann Jefferson pointed out in a paper given at the Fall 1984 Neo-Formalist Conference, dialogical subversion is motivated by the inadequacy of a monological discourse to the referent, an inadequacy which it intends to make good.[17]

The difference between dialogical and monological criticism, then, revolves around the connection of criticism to the advocacy of larger social and political values. Dialogizing the text means ceasing to pretend that the text speaks for itself; its meaning is its meaning for us and our understanding is inevitable tied to our social concerns and interests. Furthermore, these social and political values must be those of the earthy materialist people not the gloomy abstractions of their oppressors. Popular discourse exposes the official discourse by revealing the social and material content of the latter's abstract formulations. The formal political freedom of bourgeois liberalism, which some believe dialogism celebrates, is just such a gloomy abstraction; its dialogization would reveal its true content of social inequality.

What does all of this have to do with the analysis of texts? It provides us with a new description of what we actually do in criticism. Critical discourse is never neutral. This does not mean that we should call a halt to the careful analysis and evaluation of texts, only that we should acknowledge the social and historical bases or our analysis and evaluation. These social and historical bases themselves require justification, but that is another matter. As critics and teachers our constant recontextualizing of literary works will aim to reinforce some positive literary moments and subvert negative ones. This

also means that we advocate some forms of writing over others for reasons which are inevitably social, political and moral. This kind of advocacy has a bad name in Russian studies, for understandable reasons. But it is something we do all the time, pretending, however, that we only object to 'bad literature'. We ought to be unafraid of evaluating and promoting certain kinds of writing because we think they have positive effects of a social kind – bowing down before a mythical artistic freedom is only an evasion of this responsibility. The critic, as Walter Benjamin said, is the strategist in the literary battle. Bakhtin's own criticism shows that he took this responsibility seriously and the result is a compelling map of the cultural forces arrayed on each side. When we think of following in his tradition, we ought to bear in mind that he did not feel that the making of maps precluded the taking of sides.

Notes

1. 'Slovo v romane', in *Voprosy literatury i estetiki*, Khudozhestvennaja literatura, Moscow 1975, p. 72.
2. The use of Bakhtin for formalist literary criticism is by now so widespread that it should be unnecessary to specify instances. But its major theorists would be Michael Holquist and Katerina Clark, Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson. Their contributions to the Forum on Mikhail Bakhtin in *Critical Inquiry* 10:2 (December 1983) serve to outline the general position. The master statement of this interpretation is undoubtedly Clark and Holquist's recent biography *Mikhail Bakhtin*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1985.
3. 'Slovo v romane', p. 140.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
5. P.N. Medvedev, *Formalnyj metod v literaturovedenii*, Priboj, Leningrad 1928, p. 145.
6. See his *Language, Semantics and Ideology*, trans. Harbans Nagpal, McMillan, London 1982, pp. 36–40.
7. See 'The ruin of a poetics', translated in *Russian Formalism* ed. Stephen Bann and John Bowlt, Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh 1973.
8. 'Linguistics and Grammatology', in *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1976, p. 158.
9. See *The History of Sexuality, Volume One: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1981, and 'The Confession of the Flesh', trans. Colin Gordon in *Power/Knowledge*, Harvester Press, Brighton 1980, especially pp. 194–8.
10. See *How To Do Things With Words*, Oxford University Press, London 1963.
11. See Clark and Holquist, Morson's article and Tzvetan Todorov, *The Dialogical Principle*, trans. Wlad Godzich, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1984.
12. See Clark and Holquist, especially the Introduction and Conclusion.
13. In *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1978, pp. 4–5.
14. This is most graphically illustrated by the conversational form of some Bakhtin articles, for instance Gary Saul Morson's in *Critical Inquiry*. Certainly Bakhtin's *Problemi poetiki Dostoevskogo*, Sovetskij pisatel, Moscow 1963, provides ample evidence for this interpretation, but only if one ignores the intertextual power of Bakhtin's criticism

itself. If Dostoevsky's polyphony were purely formal, surely someone before Bakhtin would have noticed it.

15. *Writing and Difference*, p. 5.
16. Bakhtin, 'Slovo v romane', p. 73.
17. 'Realism Reconsidered: Bakhtin's Dialogism and the "Will to Reference"', forthcoming in the *Australian Journal of French Studies*, January 1985.
18. See Clark and Holquist, p. 11.

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The Baxtin Industry

Gary Saul Morson

Most of us remember a time when submissions to *PMLA* routinely cited Northrop Frye, and when articles on Slavic linguistics or poetics inevitably mentioned Roman Jakobson. A scanning of literary journals suggests that Slavists and non-Slavists alike may now be approaching the age of Baxtin.

You will know that age has arrived when you are no longer surprised at journals filled with articles like "Carnivalization in the Quebecois Novel," "Dialogical Midwifery," "Nuclear Dialogism," "Aesopian Language in Baxtin's Analyses of Aesop," "The Poetry of Dialogue and the Dialogue of Poetry," and "The Chronotope of the Road [or the bridge, or the canal, or the square, or the city, or the bathhouse] in the works of [fill in the author's name]."[1]

Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist know that epigones follow success as surely as bad translations precede it. "It is in fact all too easy," they correctly observe, "to deploy such characteristically Bakhtinian terms as *heteroglossia* or *chronotope*, if only as incantations to dignify already existing analytic habits that have not been affected by Bakhtin's thought in any meaningful way. What is difficult about Bakhtin is ... the demand to change the basic categories that most of us use to organize thought itself."[2] This demand is not easy to satisfy; indeed, it may not even be desirable to satisfy it fully, if doing so means the exclusion of all other ways of "organizing thought" about literature. I imagine that Holquist and Clark would not take so extreme a position, but would rather allow a multiplicity of critical and theoretical perspectives. Given the atmosphere in which critical theory has been formulated in recent years, however, it is likely that others will be less tolerant of previous or alternative approaches. I make a point of the need for tolerance and pluralism, because, at least since the rise of structuralism, intolerance and

Source: *Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 30, no. 1, 1986, pp. 81–90.

dogmatism (including the dogmatism of radical skeptics) have become all too common among the best theoretical minds.

The Rhetoric of Polyphony

The best known "pluralist" in Anglo-American criticism is surely Wayne Booth, who has written an introduction to Caryl Emerson's new translation of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics.* Booth discovers in Baxtin's "dialogism" a powerful extension of and challenge to his own views. His introduction not only testifies to the important status Baxtin has achieved in the non-Slavic critical world, but also constitutes an interesting dialogical reception of Baxtin's dialogism.

According to Booth, Baxtin's most important contribution was to find a way of avoiding the traditional opposition of form to content by treating "form itself ... [as] inherently ideological."[3] Booth regards this approach as preferable both to all types of "formalism" (including New Criticism and neo-Aristotelianism) and to all types of "ideologism" (such as Marxism). In his view, an emphasis on either form or content inevitably leads to an impoverished understanding of both. Baxtin thus understands form better than formalists, and content better than ideologists. As a neo-Aristotelian formalist himself, Booth openly concedes that Baxtin solved his [Booth's] favorite problems better and earlier than he did. "As I see it now," Booth writes,

> my own reply to such arguments [about authorial point of view] were almost as superficial as those of my targets. If I had not been ignorant, like almost everyone else, of the work of Bakhtin and his circle, I might have grappled with a much more sophisticated attack on the "author's voice" in fiction, one that would have forced me to reformulate, if not fundamentally to modify, my claim that "the author's judgment is always present, always evident to anyone who knows how to look for it" ... The author cannot choose whether to use rhetorical heightening. His only choice is of the kind of rhetoric he will use.

Most impressive to Booth is Baxtin's work on problems related to *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,* which was not just the title of Baxtin's first, unpublished book, but also a critical preoccupation of Baxtin throughout his life.[4] As Booth suspects, and as Holquist and Clark demonstrate, this topic is closely connected to Baxtin's theological concerns, a connection that will be evident if one substitutes "God and man" for "author and hero." To pursue this analogy (as Baxtin did): the theological problem of free will is "reincarnated" as the "hero's" project of developing his own voice and his own view of the world within the confines of a work authored by someone else. However, if literary authorship is a god-like act (the cliché beloved by the Romantics), then most authors, when measured by Baxtinian standards are

imperfect gods, mere demiurges, at best. Their shortcoming is to create heroes *monologically,* to make their heroes' actions and thoughts fit the author's plan rather than their own. In contrast to such heroes, real people live in an "unfinalized" world, in a world without plan or closure; to represent that world correctly, one must represent this "unfinalizedness." Inasmuch as literary works must have some kind of plan and closure to be coherent, indeed to be literary works at all, Baxtin's demand on authors would appear to be self-contradictory, and, indeed, to be a neat definition of the difference between God and human authors. At least, that is what we might be tempted to conclude, if we did not have the "polyphonic" works of Dostoevskij.[5]

Booth's account of polyphony is brief but perceptive. Before Baxtin was known in the West, one traditional argument among critics centered on the degree of authorial presence or overtness in a work. Booth addressed this argument in his famous book *The Rhetoric of Fiction* and himself succeeded in displacing the Jamesian idea that the less an author revealed his or her face, the less he or she "told" rather than "showed" and the less "rhetoric" he or she used, then the more "objective" (read, "the better") the work. Booth countered that rhetoric and the author's point of view are never absent, and that the very distinction between "telling" and "showing" is a problematic one.

Booth believes that Baxtin changed the terms of this argument in a highly productive way. Baxtin's work, and especially his book on Dostoevskij, replaced the problem of the *degree* of authorial presence with that of the *kind of authorial control.* In this scheme, polyphony constitutes a distinct kind of authorial control. In other words, "polyphony" is neither less overt nor more "objective" than "monology," but, rather, is conceptually different, in a way that allows a work to be unified without being (in the usual sense) planned, plotted, or closed. "Polyphonic" unity – and planning, plotting and closure – exist on a different plane from their monologic counterparts.

If one understands this point, one will avoid raising an objection that is occasionally raised against the Dostoevskij book: the objection that true polyphony is impossible, because without some overarching design, a literary work would not be interpretable, in fact, could not exist. One may reply that polyphony does not involve the absence of authorial design, but a different *way of designing* works.

I have phrased the distinction in this way, because it appears to me that Baxtin's theory rests fundamentally on a notion of the creative process. One could say that monologic authors create "algorithmically," that they proceed according to a set of rules guaranteed to yield a solution that is in some sense already there, whereas polyphonic authors create "heuristically."[6]

As Baxtin describes it, the process of authoring a polyphonic novel begins with a perception of distinct and autonomous personalities (or voices), and the positing of a set of potential conflicts within and among them. A situation is then created to provoke the characters into maximal self-revelation and development, but the direction of the action is not, and should not be, clearly seen. The characters thereby retain the greatest possible freedom to act, and

to react in unforeseen ways to their changing circumstances and to each other. *Unity* in the work arises from the reader's perception of a consistent *method of creation leading to* the work he or she reads, and *not* from a structure detected "in the work itself." The inadequacy of "structural analyses" of complex literary works is notorious but this approach is especially ill-suited for understanding the defining quality of polyphonic works.

In short it would appear that the perception of a work *as* polyphonic depends in part on the reader's intuiting a special method of creation – much as the reading of romantic lyrics may depend in part on the assumption of the poet's ecstatic inspiration, and the reading of a classical tragedy may depend on a picture of an author methodically applying timeless rules. These supposed methods of creation are really a sort of penumbra to the works themselves, an implicit part of their thematics. For all of these types of works, and perhaps for all works, it is important to distinguish between assumed accounts of their creation and the authors' actual creative process. If Baxtin's account of polyphony is accepted, then the many descriptions of Dostoevskij's rushed and "unplanned" work make sense, whether they are factually accurate or a partially fostered legend.

Closing Down Baxtin

Literature and criticism are central to Booth's reading of Baxtin, but they are marginal in Tzvetan Todorov's book, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle.*[7] Todorov's primary interest lies in Baxtin's contributions to "philosophical anthropology," and he treats Baxtin's studies of literature as a sort of applied anthropology, as convenient examples of much broader and more important ideas. This view has much to recommend it, inasmuch as Baxtin was first and foremost a roving intellect, concerned with broad generalizations that transcend the limits of existing disciplines. Nevertheless, although Baxtin's ideas about "philosophical anthropology" and about the nature of the humanities are broad and challenging, they do not seem to be his most durable contribution. To the extent that Todorov presents these ideas correctly, Baxtin appears to be little more than a relatively talented epigone of Dilthey. There is no shortage of such epigones.

The best sections of this book deal with nonliterary themes: for example, the discussion of the book on Freud. Todorov tends to oversimplify or overcodify Baxtin's approach to literary works.

In effect, Todorov remakes Baxtin in his own image. Because Todorov's way of thinking is in fact the polar opposite of Baxtin's, this book can be said to misrepresent its subject not in particular details but in its very spirit. Above all, Todorov is a structuralist, and as a structuralist, a synchronist; thus, he presents Baxtin's ideas as a coherent, orderly "general system" (xii). It is a system in which biography is irrelevant, change immaterial, and development essentially nonexistent. Todorov observes that

> properly speaking, there is no *development* in Bakhtin's work. Bakhtin does change his focus; sometimes he alters his formulations, but, from his first to his last text, from 1922 to 1974, his thinking remains fundamentally the same; one can even find identical sentences written fifty years apart. Instead of development, there is *repetition* ... each one [of Bakhtin's writings] contains, in a way, the whole of this thought ... (12)

This thesis lends unity to Todorov's book, but it is hardly accurate. Baxtin continually changed his ideas, explored new problems, and developed new concepts throughout his life. To be sure, there is a great deal of "repetition" and there are frequent returns to earlier problems; but there is also much that represents a significant, and unexpected, departure. I do not think that anyone who has read only "Art and Answerability," "Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art," or *Freudianism: A Critique* could derive from these works the concept of the chronotope; nor do I think that the central theses of the Rabelais book are present in *Author and Hero.* True, the central theses of *Author and Hero* are developed (and redeveloped) in the first two editions of *Problems of Dostoevskij's Poetics,* but that means they are *really developed,* extended in new and powerful ways, not just repeated in a new context.

Curiously, Todorov's approach to Baxtin is one that Baxtin himself frequently attacked. In the chronotope essay, Baxtin expressed a preference for the genre of the novel over, for example, Plutarch's *Lives.* He observed that in the novel, people develop in unforeseen ways, whereas in ancient biography, character is given and people can only manifest their essential natures (deep structures?) over and over again. Moreover, Baxtin denied that even language, the structuralist's paradigm of a system, was a system: just because a linguist can derive rules and regularities to account for diverse behavior, does not mean that people actually instantiate those rules. According to Baxtin, language, culture, biography, and history are determined as much by the random and particular as by the systematic and general, as much by "centrifugal" forces as by "centripetal" ones.

Of course, one need not adopt Baxtin's ideas in order to write a survey of them. There is nothing wrong with a non-Marxist, even an anti-Marxist, study of Marx. In such a case, however, one might expect some acknowledgment of the disagreement. Todorov, however, asserts (without irony, so far as I can tell) that his book is a paraphrase, almost a translation of Baxtin from a Baxtinian viewpoint:

> I would like ... to present Bakhtin's ideas by constructing a kind of montage, halfway between anthology and commentary, where my sentences would not be quite my own ... Without forgetting that even a minimal commentary can cause distortions, I believe that my name could be added to the pseudonyms – but are they pure pseudonyms? – used by Bakhtin. (xiii)

As a result, this book, for all its intelligent commentary in particular chapters, occasionally reads like Todorov's unconscious self-parody.

Like many uncompromising structuralists, Todorov appears especially weak when he considers historical problems. He begins his chapter on "History of Literature" by postulating three categories into which all historical work, or any "hypothesis concerning history," may be classified. First, there is history "degree zero," which limits itself "to the simple recording of facts, without worrying about their articulation." Second, there is "analytic history," where "one makes use of a limited number of categories to describe historical facts. Finally, there is "systematic history," in which one "asserts the existence of an order of change, which ultimately could lead to foreseeing the future" (76). With some qualification, Todorov locates Baxtin in the final category.

I believe that Todorov is wrong about Baxtin's historical thought, but it is more important to note that his classification, for all its attractive symmetry, is faulty. I am referring not just to the relatively obvious point that what Todorov calls "history degree zero" is inconceivable. After all, some notions of significance, causality, and value must be present, or it would be impossible to select, record, and order "facts" at all. Rather, Todorov's model is faulty because, despite its apparent exhaustiveness, it actually excludes the work of most professional historians. Todorov makes an unwarranted assumption about historical work, an assumption that is characteristic of many literary theoreticians and philosophers, and one that Baxtin attacked in his critiques of formalist or structuralist linguistics.

This assumption is that historians begin with a set of concepts; then examine documents and accumulate facts; then apply their concepts to these facts. According to this view, learning to do history means learning a set of analytic concepts, whether strong or weak, an obvious analogue to the idea that learning to speak one's native language is a matter of learning a set of rules.

Although this assumption is elegant, it is not the way historians usually learn to practice their discipline. As a number of historians who have been puzzled by recent philosophical accounts of historical work have pointed out, professional historical training is primarily a process of absorbing favored pieces of historical research, and, when familiar with them, approaching new questions in their "spirit." Such training does not involve deriving, learning, or formulating what Todorov thinks of as analytic categories. As Bruce Kuklick has recently observed in an article on "New [Theoretically Informed] Directions in European Intellectual History,"

> this [application of theory] is just not how historians work. Graduate training and the whole apprenticeship system suggest that the crucial element of historical practice is the exemplar. Pupils study with mentors; they learn from them about problems and how to solve them; and they are ideally taught how to sort out new problems. Perhaps historians ought not to work this way; perhaps they would be better off trained in theory construction and its applications; but they are not ...

> [Perry Miller's] two volumes of *The New England Mind* paradigmatically expressed his views; for forty years talented epigoni expanded, modified, or rejected his insights. But Miller didn't "have a theory"; he produced substantive work. Those coming after him did not "apply" Miller; they imbibed him.[8]

An archetypal structuralist, Todorov demonstrates a faith that behind or beyond the chaos of the social world, rules can be discovered to reveal its order. In contrast, Baxtin saw a world that was only partially rule-governed, where habits were more powerful than rules, and where a great deal was simply messy, disorderly, open. For Baxtin, openness was freedom; and social life, fortunately, involved the constant possibility of surprise: "*Nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future*" (*PDP*, 166).

Authors and Hero

Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist's *Mikhail Bakhtin* is certainly the most extensive study of this important thinker produced to date. An immense and impressive undertaking, the book contains a wealth of biographical information, and some excellent commentaries on Baxtin's work. Especially noteworthy are the discussion of polyphony and the chapter devoted to the Rabelais book. This chapter situates the book in the context of the changing Party line on "the folk" and, in the process, explores Baxtin's rhetorical strategies and his partial, devious, and unsuccessful attempts to accommodate official pronouncements. As a result of this analysis, *Rabelais and His World* emerges as a better book, because its frequent naiveté about "the people" ceases to be the direct and sincere word of the author.

The great virtues of Clark and Holquist's book will doubtless be evident to everyone who reads it – and people will be reading it for a long time. However, I disagree with one of its central theses, and I think that others may find it troubling, too.

The authors argue that several of Baxtin's early writings and projects can be grouped into a single work, to which they (but not Baxtin) give the title *The Architectonics of Answerability*. They further argue that this early work, an exercise in neo-Kantian thinking, contains all of Baxtin's key ideas. Thus, his later studies are really glosses on or exfoliations of the *Architectonics*. It should be evident that this thesis is closely related to Todorov's; the role played by a hypothetical "deep structure" in Todorov's account is played here by a partially hypothetical "ur-text." What remains the same is that throughout Baxtin's life everything basically remains the same.

I have already indicated why I think this thesis is mistaken, and so I will only add here that Clark and Holquist's rendition leads to an underestimation

of what I believe is really important and innovative in Baxtin's thought. For example, Clark and Holquist regard all of Baxtin's works as attempts to bridge the gap between the individual and society, between self and other. They are correct with respect to the surviving portion of the "*Architectonics*," but mistaken about Baxtin's best works, which argue that the self is in essence social and so there is no gap to bridge. At some point, there appears to have been a decisive transformation in Baxtin's formulation of the traditional neo-Kantian problem, a transformation that allowed him to escape its labyrinths altogether. But as Clark and Holquist present Baxtin, it is hard to see why we should not regard him as just another second-rate thinker, rehashing the same old themes. There is obviously room for disagreement on this point; one can find Baxtin scholars on each side of this question.[9]

Clark and Holquist's chapter on "The Disputed Texts" is uneven – and also disputable. For over a decade now, scholars have taken sides on the contention that Baxtin really wrote the principal works that list Medvedev and Vološinov as their authors. Holquist has been the most eloquent advocate of the "pro-Baxtin" faction. Nevertheless, I found Clark and Holquist's arguments to be confused and occasionally contradictory. On a local level, for instance, there are contradictions like the following; "The dispute in Medvedev's case centers around three texts that deal with the Formalists: 'Scientific Salierism [sic]' (1924), *The Formal Method* (1928), and *Formalism and the Formalists* (1934)" (158); "Eight years later Medvedev published another book on the Formalists, *Formalism and the Formalists* ... No one has ever suggested that Baxtin had anything to do with this later text" (159–60).

In addition to such local contradictions, there is a global one that muddles the argument of the whole chapter. Clark and Holquist move between two quite different theses, apparently assuming that they are identical or compatible. For most of the chapter and in the rest of the book, they contend that Baxtin was the author of the disputed texts in the most obvious sense of "author": he wrote them, even though Medvedev's and Vološinov's names misleadingly appear on the title pages. Thus we have statements like the following: "Yet there is good reason to conclude that the disputed works were written by Bakhtin to the extent that he should be listed as the sole author, Medvedev and Voloshinov having played a largely editorial role in each instance" (147); "The earliest 'Voloshinov' text that seems a candidate for Bakhtin's authorship is 'Beyond the Social,' which was published in *The Star* early in 1925. Many sections in this article are similar to sections in 'Voloshinov's' later *Freudianism*, published in the summer of 1927, which is also by Bakhtin" (162); "The next 'Voloshinov' publication, 'The Latest Trends in Linguistic Thought in the West,' was published in 1928. It is presented as a synopsis of three chapters of 'Voloshinov's' forthcoming book *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Inasmuch as the book is Bakhtin's, the article is presumably his likewise, though Bakhtin could have assigned to Voloshinov the onerous task of preparing a synopsis. The authorship of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, published in 1929, is clearly Bakhtin's" (166). In these

and other passages, Vološinov's role ranges from essentially nothing to the mechanical (or editorial) task of preparing a synopsis: hence, the quotation marks around Vološinov's name, and the unqualified ascription to Baxtin of the disputed texts.

Clark and Holquist's second argument is advanced towards the end of the chapter, and is far more subtle (which, of course, does not *necessarily* mean more accurate). Here they contend that the works were in some way authored communally; they were in a genuine sense the product of a circle, in which Baxtin probably played the leading role most of the time, but in which Medvedev and Vološinov also played important parts. Authorship thus becomes "a question about proportion and ratio rather than about identity as such" (170). Unfortunately, this excellent argument is partially spoiled in the last paragraph of the chapter by its unnecessary expansion: "Voloshinov, Medvedev, and Kanaev were coauthors in the texts published under their names, but so were Dostoevsky, Goethe, and Rabelais in other works" (170). To be sure, Dostoevskij was coauthor of Baxtin's works *in the sense that* he influenced them, that Baxtin was "in dialogue" with him, and that without him, *Problems of Dostoevskij's Poetics* would of course be unthinkable. But that is not the issue at stake when people argue about Vološinov's role in authoring *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Clark and Holquist's argument works a lot better when it is taken in a more restricted sense to allow Vološinov, but not Dostoevskij, coauthorship of *Marxism*.

These two arguments are obviously incompatible. In the first case, if Baxtin is "sole author" then Vološinov, Medvedev, and Kanaev contributed essentially nothing more than an excellent and active editor at a university press; in the second case, they may have contributed a great deal. Indeed, the second argument would also allow the conclusion (although Clark and Holquist do not say so) that Vološinov may also be the coauthor of Baxtin's *Problems of Dostoevskij's Poetics*!

I would hope that the second argument represents Clark and Holquist's real position, because it is a strong one. By contrast, the evidence and reasoning supporting the first conclusion are not so strong. To begin with, Clark and Holquist argue as if the burden of proof were on the other side to show that Vološinov *did* write the books published under his name: "For one thing, nothing has established that Baxtin could *not* have written the disputed texts and published them under friends' names" (147). But surely, since Vološinov's name does appear on the title pages, and since no one disputed his authorship for some forty years, the burden of proof is to show that Vološinov could *not* have written them, rather than to show that Baxtin *could* have.

Clark and Holquist also contend that the undisputed texts of Vološinov are of a lower quality, and the undisputed texts of Medvedev of a much lower quality, than the undisputed texts of Baxtin, and, therefore that Vološinov, and especially Medvedev, were not intelligent enough to have written anything but the poorer passages of *Marxism*, *Freudianism*, and *The Formal Method*. So Shakespeare scholars used to argue that only the best passages of his plays

were written by Shakespeare, and that worse ones must have been written by someone else – an argument that assumes that a great writer must be consistently great, and a less great one consistently less great. But I think each of us knows of people who seem to surpass themselves, and of truly fine minds that occasionally fall down on the job. Moreover, it might also follow from this line of reasoning that not Baxtin, but Vološinov, wrote Medvedev's book, because Vološinov was also more talented than Medvedev. One might also add that judgments about the quality of a work are notoriously subjective and unreliable.[10]

Despite some faults, *Mikhail Bakhtin* is a remarkable achievement. Years of painstaking research have revealed numerous facts about Baxtin's life, thought, and milieu, and this detail alone would make the book indispensable. Moreover, Clark and Holquist offer a coherent vision and a powerful synthesis of Baxtin's works and thought. Even if one does not accept that synthesis, one must, I think, come to terms with it. As long as people are interested in Mikhail Baxtin, they will read and admire *Mikhail Bakhtin*.

The Smoking Manuscript

It has often been said that Baxtin was careless with his writing and manuscripts. One of his works literally went up in smoke when he used it for cigarette paper; others were never finished; he may have allowed still others to be published under friends' names; and the texts he did publish under his own name show his tendency not to finish works, but rather to abandon them. Critics have often pronounced his books to be "repetitious" or sloppy; lengthy parts of *Author and Hero* might be considered either unintelligible or self-contradictory. In general, one could say that a Baxtinian text often reads like an eighteenth-century English novel "of process," which gives the impression of having been "created on the spot out of the events it describes," the event in this case being the performance of dialogic utterances.[11]

Although this kind of writing might fairly be considered a fault, it may nevertheless be closely connected with the meaning of Baxtin's works. So Caryl Emerson notes in the preface to her new translation of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, a preface that might well become a classic of Baxtin criticism. After a perceptive description of what it feels like to read Baxtin, she asks whether a translator should strive to preserve that "feel" as well as the "content." Translation, she correctly observes, is always a matter of establishing and negotiating a "hierarchy of fidelities" and constraints; one must trade some things in order to preserve others. One might plausibly argue that inasmuch as critics are read primarily for their ideas rather than their style, significant concessions to "readability" might be made – concessions that one might not be willing to make in translating a novel. In the case of Baxtin, however, the self-referentiality of the texts, which *enact* their own themes of language, dialogicality, and voice, may make it impossible to render "content" if some effort is not made to preserve "style" as well. And yet "preserve" is not quite the right word if one understands Baxtin.

For Baxtin, all speech or writing involves "translation" in a broad sense, because two people never quite speak the same "language." One understands another not by passively recording or deciphering his or her speech, but by actively recreating it, by establishing a dialogicality between the voice one hears and the "innerly persuasive voice" one calls one's self. We do not "preserve" another's voice, even when we record or memorize it; rather, we address it. Baxtin's own analogy for active understanding is translation; an analogy Emerson takes to heart when she reverses it, and makes active understanding, the act of dialogical relation to another's voice, the explicit basis of her own translation.

In the course of explaining her approach to translating Baxtin, Emerson implicitly addresses key issues in the field. We may recall, for instance, that Todorov takes Baxtin's repetitions of the same sentences in different texts as evidence that his thought did not develop. For Emerson, "repetitiveness is not repetitiousness," because Baxtin, true to his own theories of utterance, frequently would set "the same" sentence against a different "dialogizing background," thereby establishing varying kinds of "voice interference" or new implications for "the same" idea (PDP, xxxv). From Emerson's preface a persuasive account of Baxtin's intellectual biography emerges: a set of broad questions remained with him, but his thinking experienced genuine development, real growth, and a capacity to surprise his readers and himself with its "unfinalizability."

When I first read Emerson's preface, I was skeptical of anyone's ability to produce a translation of Baxtin that would be simultaneously readable, stylistically faithful, and (in the usual, non-Baxtinian sense) accurate. Emerson gambled – and won.

Stylistic questions aside, the Emerson translation is far more accurate than the earlier rendition by R. W. Rotsel.[12] Rotsel's translation was important: it made the book available to non-Russian readers early, and from it one can get a good sense of Baxtin's overall argument and general points. Had Baxtin not come to be appreciated as something more than a good critic of Dostoevskij, no subsequent translation would have been urgently needed. But the Dostoevskij book is now a central part of a body of works by the Baxtin circle, and is read closely not only for general observations about Dostoevskij, but also as a treatise on the nature of language, literary genres, the novel, and the self. Many of Baxtin's most significant comments on these matters are marred by carelessness in detail throughout Rotsel's version. Lines are omitted in several places, which occasionally reverses the meaning of a section; *predmetnyj* is rendered "objective" where the meaning is closer to "referential" or "object-oriented"; ideologists (*ideologi*) become ideologies, ethical becomes aesthetic, a letter *of* Dostoevskij becomes a letter *to* Dostoevskij; within is confused with without, and above with below; *osvjaščat* (sanctify) is confused with *osvetit* (elucidate); and the translations of or references to Dostoevskij's works indicate that they

had not been read by the translator for a long time (e.g., the reference to "Myshkin's amazing story of Marya" and to the "speeches of Lukin" in *Crime and Punishment; petit-jeu* [parlor game] becomes *petit-joue* [little cheek?]).[13]

Even without these errors, however, we would still need a new translation of this book, because the publication of other Baxtin works has illuminated the special sense Baxtin attached to certain words, such as *izbytok* (see *Author* and *Hero*). A need also arose to establish a generally accepted translation of key terms, so that readers of different works would be able to see continuity (or discrepancy) in their use. Emerson not only avoided Rotsel's errors, but also *thought* seriously and profoundly about Baxtin as she translated him: this is one of those rare translations that itself represents a *systematic* interpretation of the original author.

In addition to a translation of the second edition of the Dostoevskij book, the introduction by Booth, and the preface by Emerson, this volume also contains Baxtin's notes "Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book" (1961) and three fragments from the 1929 edition of *Problems*. There is also a glossary of proper names and works, where the entries are detailed (really condensed essays). If when reading Baxtin, you have wondered about the *Satyre Menipee de la Vatu du Catholicon d'Espagne*, Teles of Megara, or Abram Aleksandrovič Belkin (*sic*) this is the place to find out about them.

Unless I am mistaken, those interested in Baxtin will return to this edition for some time to come. Eventually, of course, our changing interests and increased knowledge of Baxtin may outpace even this version: for nothing final has been said about Baxtin, and the definitive translation is in the future and will always be in the future. We will have to repeat our efforts (but not entirely); and in the necessity and imperfection of such repetition lies the guarantee of our freedom. Or as Emerson observed to Booth, Mixail Baxtin is "the apostle of the next chance."[14]

Notes

1. Two of these articles actually exist.
2. Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), 6.
3. Wayne C. Booth, introduction to Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (henceforth *PDP*), ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984), xx.
4. Mixail Baxtin, "Avtor i geroj v èstetičeskoj dejatel'nosti," *Èstetika slovesnogo tvorchestva* (M.: Iskusstvo, 1979), 7–180. Vadim Liapunov is currently translating this book-length essay for The University of Texas Press Slavic Series.
5. On Dostoevskij's project of finding a form to represent formlessness, see Roben Louis Jackson, *Dostoevsky's Quest for Form: A Study of His Philosophy of Art* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966); I pursue Baxtin's and Jackson's ideas in *The Boundaries of Genre: Dostoevsky's "Diary of a Writer" and the Traditions of Literary Utopia* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981), esp. in chapter 1, "Dostoevsky's Icon of Chaos," 3–38.

6. I use these terms in the special sense given them in Herbert A. Simon's powerful account of the creative process, *Models of Thought* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1969). I have also benefited from numerous conversations with Aron Katsenelinboigen.
7. Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, trans. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984).
8. Bruce Kuklick, "New Directions in European Intellectual History," *The Intellectual History Newsletter* 6 (Spring 1984): 24–28. A similar point is made by the Russian historian Richard Wortman in "Epilogue: History and Literature" in *Literature and History: Theoretical Problems and Russian Case Studies*, ed. Gary Saul Morson (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, forthcoming 1986).
9. See my articles, "Preface," "Who Speaks for Bakhtin," and "Dialogue, Monologue, and the Social" in *Bakhtin. Essays and Dialogues on His Work*, ed. Gary Saul Morson (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, forthcoming 1986).
10. Note also Wlad Godzich's observations on this problem: "One must be wary of a phenomenon that seems to have grown quite strong in the Soviet Union in recent years: a veritable (though 'unofficial') cult of Bakhtin, who thus becomes the recipient of all praise while the more questionable aspects of the works attributed to him are alleged to be the products of collaborators and name-lenders, especially when it comes to Marxist views. The rewriting of history is not the monopoly of state ideology in the Soviet Union today." The comment is especially pertinent because so much of recent debate on the disputed texts has relied on information provided by current "unofficial" Soviet sources. See Wlad Godzich, foreword to *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics* by M. M. Bakhtin/P. N. Medvedev, trans. Albert J. Wehrle (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985), xi.
11. The citations are from Northrop Frye, "Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility" in *Eighteenth-Century English Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. James L. Clifford (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), 313. (No citation to Jakobson follows.)
12. R. W. Rotsel, trans., *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* by Mikhail Bakhtin (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1973).
13. Missing lines on pages 41, 65, 83, 121 of Rotsel's version; *predmetnyj*, pages 78ff.; ideologists, 91; ethical, 137; within/without, 60; letter, 144; above/below, 66; *osvjaščat*, 89; Marya, 147; Lukin, 200; *petit-joue*, 200.
14. Cited in Booth's introduction to *PDP*, xxvi.