

## EPILOGUE

In the preceding chapters I have, if not very explicitly, then implicitly at least, suggested what I think are some of Bakhtin's most useful potentials. There still remain, however, a few observations I would like to make.

Entering the dialogue begun by Todorov's "A Dialogic Criticism?", Bialostosky recognizes dialogics as an alternative art of discourse on the same level as the arts of dialectic and rhetoric. (Bialostosky 1986) He therefore argues against a reduction of dialogics into the rhetoric or the dialectic. "Dialogics as an art of discursive practice supplements the dialogical principle as a theory of discourse; whereas the the dialogic principle models the possible relations among voices in diverse areas of inquiry, dialogics projects a world of fully articulated relations among voices and a practice of actualizing multiple relations among internally divergent voices in such a world". (Bialostosky 1989: 224) A dialectical transumption

or a rhetorical reduction goes against the grain of Bakhtinian dialogics.

Bakhtinian dialogics does not belong to a fixed system of belief but overreaches the traditional boundaries of the human sciences. "Our study will move in the liminal spheres, that is, on the borders of ... the disciplines, at their junctures and intersections". (Bakhtin 1986: 103) What is needed is a fuller appreciation of the 'whole' of his oeuvre, rather than the expropriation of 'parts', that serve a particular critic's or school's purpose.

In keeping with assertions like those of Said (who also argues for analytic heterogeneity), literary theory should take account of the text's situation in the world.

Textuality must not become dissociated from history:

As it is practised in the American academy today, literary theory has for the most part isolated textuality from the circumstances, the events, the physical senses that made it possible and

render it intelligible as the result of human work.

(Said 1984: 4)

Critical noninterference and a narrow definition of the philosophy of textuality can be seen as related to the rise of Reaganism (and Thatcherism in the United Kingdom) and the dominance of right-wing attitudes in the late 1970s and 1980s. What needs to be affirmed is the "connection between texts and the existential actualities of human life, politics, societies, and events". (Said 1984: 5) Bakhtin's so-called textualism or extra-textualism must be brought together with Foucault's preoccupation with the relation between discourse and power. Bakhtin's failure to theorize power relations in depth can be rectified by Foucault's formulations which can, for instance, lead to a better understanding of the positioning of the subject by discourse.

Bakhtin's discursive strategies, I think, ought to be utilized to provide ways of broadening our conventions of reading. His work draws attention, albeit implicitly, to the need to remain aware of the social

relations and institutional factors outside of which no private reading or definition of any text can be understood in its entirety. Bakhtin can be fruitfully read, in other words, to theorize the text's situation in the world so that the primacy which it is conventionally granted is interrogated. This would lead us to a position where decanonization would have to be accepted: high art must learn to coexist shoulder to shoulder, with low or popular art. A large-scale deployment of Bakhtin's arsenal of theory in this direction still awaits its homecoming festival.