Saying And Silence

Frank Farmer

Published by Utah State University Press
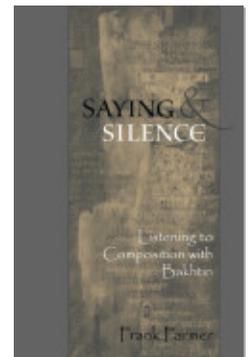
➡ For additional information about this book

https://muse.jhu.edu/book/9323

ENDNOTES

1. Crewe here is paraphrasing Knapp and Michaels's argument, a position with which he disagrees.

2. After de Man's early observation of the same, this acknowledgment might by now seem to be an unnecessary one (*Resistance* 110-11). The enlistment of Bakhtin as antitheorist is a more recent development and, as I try to show, a more problematic one. No less concerned with the epistemological features of Bakhtin's thought, Michael Bernard-Donals has offered a somewhat dichotomized version of Bakhtin's ideas, one that posits a continual shifting between the Marxist and phenomenological poles found in his works (*Between*).

3. Bakhtin appears to be heading toward the same kind of ironic distinction that besets pragmatists when speaking of belief and true belief. Bakhtin (at least in this work) seems to want to have it both ways: an absolute truth subsumed into the unrepeatable event of being, yet somehow able to retain a quality of absoluteness. The implied distinction, of course, is between a *theoretical* absoluteness and an *experiential* absoluteness, the former imposed from without, the latter lived from within. The same distinction is at play in his later conception of the superaddressee.

4. Two key pragmatist answers to the charge of relativism can be found in Rorty (*Consequences* 166-69) and Davidson ("On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme"). Thomas Kent, who, like many others, finds social constructionism (one version of antifoundationalism) to be particularly vulnerable to the relativist charge ("Discourse Community"), offers an excellent discussion of Davidson.

5. Bakhtin's distinction between theory and a sense of theory occurs in an appendix to *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Written in 1961 and published posthumously, this appendix is a collection of notes presented in varying degrees of elaboration. One of the least developed ideas found here, in fact, is Bakhtin's cryptic distinction about theory.

6. There is an intriguing (though limited) parallel here with Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action. For Habermas, the conditions for a just understanding can be found in actual discourse, no matter how ideologically distorted any particular discourse may be. As Terry Eagleton points out, Habermas is thus able to "anchor the desirable in what is actual" to the extent that "the very *act* of enunciation can become a normative judgment." There is, in other words, a necessity for utterances (and the truth claims they imply or express) to "refer themselves forward to some altered social condition where they might be 'redeemed'" (*Ideology* 130-31).

    This sounds very much like the function of Bakhtin's superaddressee, except for one crucial difference: Habermas moves from this observation to the search for a regulative model of the "ideal speech situation" (*Theory* 25) for what Thomas Kent refers to as "the *langue* of *parole*" ("Hermeneutics" 284n). Habermas thus seeks to identify what is universal, rule-governed, and repeatable in instances of perfect communication. Bakhtin has no such desire, since to generalize such qualities is to fall prey to the very theoretism that he disavows.

7. There is much in Bakhtin's idea of the superaddressee that merits further discussion: his intimation that superaddressees are, to some degree, historically constrained; his problematic silence on the question of how people come to *share* a superaddressee and whether or not it is possible to do so architectonically, that is, without yielding to the temptation to cast the superaddressee as a spokesperson for a generalized, monologic truth; and finally, his claim that absolutes can be subsumed as constituent moments of unrepeatable lived experience. In all these aspects, Bakhtin's superaddressee should continue to pose interesting problems and useful challenges to come.

8. For one mapping of these intersections and departures, see Bialostosky ("Pragmatic" 107-11).

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 2

1. This point is further emphasized in an interview with Vadim Kozhinov, one of Bakhtin's literary executors. Kozhinov, upon first meeting Bakhtin, was greeted by the Russian thinker's preemptive admonishment: "Do not think I am a literary scholar, I am a philosopher" (Rzhevsky 56).

2.   Permission granted from the author of the student texts used in
      this essay.

3.   As I point out at the beginning of the next chapter, there are, of
      course, other frames within which we can understand student resis-
      tance to our teaching of Freire. Richard Miller has recently com-
      mented on the frustrations he encounters when, in teaching Freire,
      the usual occurs: students either resist the "politicization" of the
      classroom, or they parrot ideas they don't comprehend or believe.
      Miller asks us to understand this phenomenon in terms of James C.
      Scott's division between "public" and "hidden" transcripts, the for-
      mer consisting of what the dominant and the dominated say to
      each other in open contexts; the latter what they say among them-
      selves when "offstage." This dynamic bears a remarkable similarity
      to the requirements of Aesopian language; and, in fact, Devlyn's
      responses can be understood as a partial, somewhat guarded
      "breaking through" of the hidden transcript into a public sphere
      where it may very well risk assorted reprisals and consequences.

4.   For an excellent discussion of the complexities involved in
      Bakhtinian understandings of audience, see Halasek (57-82).

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 3

1.   In composition studies, voice has long been the concern of expres-
      sivist rhetorics and, for that reason, our received understandings of
      voice tend to derive from the work of Elbow, Murray, Coles, et al.
      What's to be avoided in offering any "new" understanding of voice,
      then, is the temptation to make expressivist rhetorics into a kind of
      uniform straw man, which is hardly necessary. It is just as easy—
      and mistaken—to ignore the differences among those who speak
      for expressivist rhetorics as to ignore the similarities between
      expressivist understandings of voice and the ones I discuss here.
      Expressivist rhetorics, for example, have always understood that
      voice bears a direct relation to the self and that the intonational
      qualities of language are rhetorically compelling, insofar as they
      reveal the perspectives, values, and attitudes "behind" the explicit
      message or argument. The key difference, however, resides in the
      origins and nature of the self that is expressed. As I understand
      expressivist rhetorics, the voicing self is social to the extent that it
      addresses, and is *influenced by* other voices. But the self I argue for

here is *constituted of* those other voices. In his more recent explorations of voice, Elbow seems to move cautiously toward this viewpoint, allowing that "a self is deeply social—an entity made up largely of strands or voices from others and subject to powerful forces outside itself" ("Pleasures," 230). I say "cautiously" because in describing the self as an "entity" that is "subject to" outside forces and is "largely" composed of other voices, Elbow reveals a measure of uneasiness, I believe, in subscribing to a wholly social understanding of selfhood, the kind upon which my argument is based. For a recent explication of dialogic selfhood, see Taylor ("Dialogical").

2. Discussing Vygotsky in tandem with Bakhtin is by now fairly common. One reason for such a pairing derives from the notion that Bakhtin is considered to have elaborated what is merely implied by Vygotsky's research (see Emerson, "Outer"; Wertsch, "Significance" and *Voices*). It must be acknowledged, though, that Vygotsky is somewhat more reserved in his views regarding the extent to which language is able to account for the totality of experience. His refusal to equate thought with speech (a necessity if one posits a relationship between the two) and his recognition that language is but one of many sign systems (albeit the most important one) able to mediate psychological activity—these mark off certain nonlinguistic aspects of experience unattended to by Bakhtin. And yet, for both Vygotsky and Bakhtin, the word is *"the significant* humanizing event," since as Caryl Emerson points out, "one makes a self through the words one has learned, fashions one's own voice and inner speech by a selective appropriation of the voices of others" ("Outer," 255).

3. For a closer look at Vygotsky's quarrel with the "metaphysical" or essential self, see his critique of William Stern's "personalist" psychology in the third chapter of *Thought and Language.*

4. The metaphors implied by these various terms are revealing. Though Vygotsky sticks to *internalization* with regularity, Bakhtin alternately uses *assimilation, appropriation,* and *expropriation.* The latter two terms derive from property relations and lend some force to arguments for a Marxist Bakhtin. Yet Bakhtin is closer to Vygotsky's *internalization,* I believe, when using the term *assimilation,* since both terms imply a conversion process that occurs in early childhood development. Importantly, neither Vygotsky nor

Bakhtin sees the process of internalization (assimilation) as mere duplication, as a simple imprinting of what is already there in outward form. Rather, both see this process as *transformative*—for Vygotsky, functionally transformative; for Bakhtin, ideologically so.

5. The passage referred to is taken from *The Diary of a Writer*. The scene involves a dialogue among six workmen, each of whom uses the same common obscenity to express a number of contextually laden, but perfectly understood meanings.

6. James V. Wertsch has used Vygotsky and Bakhtin to explore the importance of voice for researchers in cognition. Wertsch transcribes several dialogues of teacher-child dyads in an attempt to reveal something of the process whereby the latter appropriates speech genres from the former. Wertsch's research is extremely important, not only for the many concrete illustrations it provides, but for extending the idea of semiotic mediation to include voices. See Wertsch, in particular, *Voices*.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 4

1. Our count of publications about imitation differs considerably from Connors's. Though we do not know his particular methodology or exactly how he defined imitation, we surmise that our study is generally broader in scope and more inclusive of how imitation has been approached in fields adjacent to composition studies (e.g., English education, speech communication, etc.), but not strictly within our disciplinary boundaries proper. Of course, the inclusion of these related disciplines bears precisely upon his argument: when composition studies emerged out of these other disciplines, according to Connors, sentence rhetorics, such as imitation, experienced their greatest popularity. Our trends, for the most part, confirm his own, and we generally agree with his conclusions. Where we depart, however, is on the question of whether or not imitation must be considered exclusively within the province of the sentence.

2. In addition to those postmodern thinkers that Minock identifies as possible sources for a revivified understanding of imitation, the work of René Girard has garnered some recent attention as well. In a response to Richard Boyd's "Imitate Me; Don't Imitate Me," Robert Brooke has sought to understand the mutual resistances

that occur between teachers and their students in the context of Girard's work on mimetic desire and its consequent rivalries. Brooke speculates, as well, that Girard may offer us a framework for understanding how both the freshman student and the freshman writing programs they inhabit can be understood as scapegoats for institutional versions of mimetic rivalry. Conversely, Brooke points out that composition teachers often exercise what Girard calls "renunciative identifications" with the victims of the scapegoating process as, say, when we ally with students and Freire against the structure of institutional oppressions. Brooke doesn't explore the pedagogical implications of Girard's work as much as he does the professional, but he does suggest a promising avenue of inquiry along mimetic lines.

3.   Yet, the idea that there may be some affinity between these two terms is an old one indeed. In his *Handlist of Rhetorical Terms,* Richard Lanham identifies "dialogismus" as a cross-reference for "mimesis," noting the former to be defined as "speaking in another's character" (52). In some considerable measure, of course, it is precisely the complexities of "speaking in character" (broadly understood) that Bakhtin explores.

4.   See especially Sullivan, who identifies three "aspects of the modern temper" that make it difficult, if not impossible, to "appreciate imitation" in the same way our ancestors could (15): "the myth of progress," "the romantic emphasis on genius," and "the technological mindset." The second of these aspects, Sullivan argues, results from the Romantic substitution of "genius for invention" (16). Recent scholarship, however, has challenged this view of Romantic rhetoric and its putative manifestation in expressivist pedagogy. See Roskelly and Ronald; Gradin.

5.   This feature of Bakhtinian subjectivity has recently been critiqued by Jeffrey Nealon. Linking the Bakhtinian subject to the "bourgeois, appropriative self" of Horkheimer and Adorno, Nealon contrasts the Bakhtinian subject with the version of subjectivity proposed by Emanuel Levinas. Bakhtin serves as a rather stark foil for Levinas in Nealon's comparison.

6.   I admit to being one of those few. See my "A Language of One's Own."

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 5

1.   In keeping with the accepted method of citing Peirce, all references are to volumes and sections of his *Collected Papers* (*Collected*), except for occasional references to *The Essential Peirce* (*Essential*), where page numbers are indicated.

2.   One recent development on this very point, in fact, emerges from feminist appropriations of Peirce. In particular, Teresa de Lauretis, Susan Jarratt, and, more recently, Kristie Fleckenstein, have all noted the importance of the body in Peircean semiotics.

3.   In a remarkable insight, Peirce denies that, for the pragmatist, there's not much difference between "what one *means* to do and the *meaning* of a word." These two senses of the word, Peirce maintains, are quite kindred, in fact. Peirce thus explains that "when a person *means* to do anything he is in some state in consequence of which the brute reactions between things will be moulded [in] to conformity to which the man's mind is itself moulded, while the meaning of a word really lies in the way in which it might . . . tend to mould the conduct of a person into conformity to that to which it is itself moulded" (*Collected* 1:343). It is difficult to paraphrase Peirce, but I understand him to say that when someone means something, that person anticipates a future event to occur in the way that it has been conceived or imagined, particularly in its intended effects. The meaning of a word, on the other hand, is that which, if believed, brings about the "conduct" intended by the one who utters it. Notice, again, how meaning, whether as intention or definition, is both consequential and conditional, always oriented toward future contingencies.

4.   A recent and noteworthy discussion of the implications of the spatial metaphor can be found in Nedra Reynolds's "Composition's Imagined Geographies." Reynolds's article illustrates just how practically difficult it is to exclude time from discussions of space. Her stated emphasis on space, interestingly enough, relies a great deal on juxtapositions with time, especially in her use of the Marxist concept of "time-space compression." Reynolds notes, moreover, that composition has long relied on the spatial metaphor, citing, among other sources, Darsie Bowden's examination of the "text as container" metaphor so familiar to teachers of writing. What's

missed, though, is the fact that the dominant metaphor in composi-
tion studies has been a *temporal* one, namely, the "writing as
process" movement. Indeed, the process metaphor could very well
be understood as a response to the spatial metaphors that largely
informed current-traditional rhetorics. In like manner, our current
fascination with spatial metaphors could be understood as a chal-
lenge to the hegemony of process approaches, if for no other reason
than spatial metaphors allow us to see the social and political impli-
cations of writing pedagogy.

5.   It may be objected that I have overlooked the distinction between
place and space, a distinction especially important to Michel de
Certeau. In *The Politics of Everyday Life,* de Certeau argues that the
term "place" is characterized by a certain stability, while the term
"space" refers to something more mutable, changing. In de Certeau's
view, my argument would hinge on a confusion of these terms. I
would argue in response that these terms imply each other: it is not
possible to imagine a place that exists within no space whatsoever;
nor is it possible to imagine a space that does not include a place,
even if that place serves only to mark the boundary of the space in
question. It seems to me that de Certeau wants to guarantee for the
spatial metaphor some way to explain movement and change. Again,
I would argue that this is not possible within the province of space
alone. Such a project can only be accomplished chronotopically.

6.   I use the term, overdetermined, here in a more obvious, far less
technical sense, than formulated by Louis Althusser. For a discus-
sion of Althusser's conception, see Althusser and Balibar.

7.   Peirce's "stand-in" recalls Volosinov's "hero" of discourse. In fact,
both Peirce and Volisinov use situated utterances to illuminate
their respective notions of the ways a common, tacit understand-
ing informs, precedes, and, indeed, makes possible any particular
understanding of a given utterance. Volosinov's "Well!" (99) thus
aligns nicely with Peirce's "Fine day!" (*Essential* 407) as examples of
concrete utterances that surpass any strictly linguistic explanation.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 6

1.   I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge Alan France's evaluation
of *Ways of Reading,* particularly the third edition, which I used.
France is congenially disposed to this work but finds in its strong

textual emphasis "an acquiescence in the extant distribution of power" that rivals "expressivism's autonomous subject" (602). The authors' (post)structural textualism is set against France's preferred "materialist reading," and while the third edition receives greater praise than the earlier two, it likewise comes up short in its wavering "commitment to a Marxist critique" (606). This rather severe judgment upon the leftist credentials of *Ways of Reading,* interestingly enough, recalls a criticism leveled at cultural studies in general—a criticism, according to Michael Bérubé, inclined to describe cultural studies as "Marxism Lite," hegemony as a "kinder and gentler" domination, and the practice of cultural studies as "a way for neopopulist intellectuals to get down with the people by writing about how much everybody loves *Terminator 2* and *Murphy Brown*" (*Public* 139-40). While not denying that cultural studies departs from received forms of Marxist thought, Bérubé defends cultural studies against these charges, pointing out where it differs significantly from traditional Marxisms in ways that are clearly useful, compelling, and historically appropriate. Though I feel no similar need to defend *Ways of Reading* against France's critique, I would suggest that France lends credence to the strong textualism he decries by apparently suggesting that teachers and students are unable to appropriate this text in ways that the editors did not intend or could not imagine.

2. Knowing that my students were aware of my sympathies both for cultural studies and for their resistance to it and self-conscious of my obvious affiliation with that caste of "privileged revealers" who inhabit English departments, I specified myself as the audience for this assignment. I did so believing that having to write for *this* (very) familiar audience might complicate their writerly task in ways that could be rhetorically instructive—or failing that, occasionally interesting. What emerged, though, were papers whose collective need to answer Miller and Fiske encouraged my students to write for each other, perhaps as a community under siege, rather than for their originally-stated audience. In fact, this served as the occasion to draw an ironic parallel to a charge I heard often in our class discussions, that critics like Miller and Fiske are capable of writing only for other critics like themselves.

3. The author would like to express gratitude to all members of his English 3810-001 class, Spring of 1995, especially to those whose

work is cited here. Permission to use excerpts from student authors was obtained prior to the submission of this manuscript. All names are fictional.

4. In one sense, what Alex offers here is a version of what Bernard Williams (after Aristotle) calls the *Coriolanus paradox,* a reference to those who "tend to defeat themselves by making themselves dependent on those to whom they aim to be superior" (39).

5. For a fuller discussion of Bakhtin's appropriation of Socrates, see Zappen.

6. See, for example, Eagleton's *Literary Theory*, especially 205-217. It might be suggested that I have confused a traditional Aristotelian rhetoric of persuasion with the redefinition offered by Eagleton that emphasizes the effects of discourse in social and cultural contexts. But these are hardly unrelated concerns. Any understanding of cultural studies will proceed on the assumption that the question of how minds are made cannot be separated from the problem of how minds are changed.

7. In identifying "attitude" as the "sixth term" of his Pentad, Kenneth Burke may help explain this point. Burke defines attitude as *incipient* action, and since for Bakhtin, the tones of our words reveal, more than anything else, our attitudes, our "slants on the world," then every utterance we make is not simply a "literal" act; it is also the positing of a future act that has yet to come to fruition but that nonetheless motivates what we utter in the immediate contexts in which we speak (Burke 443).

8. In fact, Bakhtin will often allude to this problem in other essays of the period, as well as in comments that he made before his death in 1975. In an interview with Sergei Bocharov, Bakhtin reveals that he "was fascinated by the problem of distant contexts—I started working on it several times back in the 1920s, but I didn't get very far, beyond starting." After which, Bakhtin adds ironically, "There was no distant context for such a work" (Bocharov 1021).

9. The most obvious difference is that Habermas wants to identify a regulative model of the "ideal speech situation." As noted earlier, Habermas thinks it possible to apprehend what is universal, rule-governed, and repeatable in instances of perfect communication, to ascertain what Thomas Kent has called "the *langue* of *parole*" (284n). Unlike Habermas, Bakhtin has no such desire.