ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The chapters in this book were written over the span of several years and thus represent a chronicle of a sometimes orthodox, sometimes idiosyncratic engagement with the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin. They also represent, I think, a measure of how my particular struggles with Bakhtin are both reflected in, and refracted through, the momentous shifts in our disciplinary conversation over the last decade or so. On a more personal level, these chapters may even serve to chart those occasions when I have seen fit to change my mind about some aspect or consequence of Bakhtin’s thought.

Yet more than this, the chapters gathered here represent a record of the people and universities who provided me with encouragement and support. I would first like to thank the English Departments of East Carolina University and the University of Kansas, both of which extended to me the kinds of institutional assistance without which this book would not have been possible. Nor can I begin to do justice here to the editorial advice and encouragement I received from Michael Spooner, whose optimism and patience sustained this project (and its author) through those predictable, but still critical, hurdles in its coming to print. I also wish to thank my anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful suggestions, as well as Red O’Laughlin for his valuable (and remarkably cheerful) help with all the last-minute preparations of this manuscript.

Over the last several years, there have been many colleagues who generously contributed to the completion of this manuscript—whether they did so through conversations about ideas, or through comments on earlier drafts, or simply through their abiding friendship and enthusiasm.
I would thus be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank Todd Goodson, David Stacey, Carol Mattingly, Bruce McComiskey, Sandy Young, Collett Dilworth, Pat Bizzaro, and Nancy Zeller. I especially wish to extend my thanks to Jeffrey Williams and Lillian Robinson for some of the most politically and theoretically challenging breakfast conversations I have known and to my former graduate students—Denise Machala-Woods, Tony Atkins, Deanya Lattimore, and Faydra Womble—for their collective ability to make me question my own certainties, even when they did not realize they were doing so. My thanks also to Devlyn McCreight, for his willingness to participate in the experiment that eventually became chapter two of this book.

Among Bakhtinians, I owe a debt of gratitude to Jim Zappen, Michael Bernard-Donals, and Andreas Kriefall. Caryl Emerson continues to amaze me with her professional generosity, and I cannot say enough about the many good turns—professional, scholarly, and otherwise—extended to me by Don Bialostosky. I am a better scholar for having had the opportunity to know, and occasionally work with, such exceptional colleagues.

And for Linda, intimate outsider, without whose loving perspective these words find no hearing, my deepest gratitude.
Note: Unless otherwise cited by keyword or full title, references to Bakhtin’s texts use the following abbreviations:

AA = Art and Answerability
DI = The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays
PDP = Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics
RW = Rabelais and His World
SG = Speech Genres & Other Late Essays
TPA = Toward a Philosophy of the Act