



Saying And Silence

Frank Farmer

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In composition studies for the last two or three decades, Bakhtin has been especially influential through his theories of language, dialogue, and genre. His work is required reading in upper division and graduate rhetoric courses and is included in the recent major surveys of rhetoric.

Frank Farmer has contributed important essays to the study of Bakhtin in composition, and in *Saying and Silence* he gathers some of those, along with several new essays, into a single volume. Scholars who specialize in Bakhtin will find this work engaging, but equally Farmer wants to explicate and apply Bakhtin for readers whose focus is teaching or some other nonspecialist dimension of writing scholarship.

Farmer explores the relationship between the meaningful word and the meaningful pause, between saying and silence, especially as the relationship emerges in our classrooms, our disciplinary conversations, and encounters with publics beyond the academy. Each of his chapters here addresses some aspect of how we and our students, colleagues, and critics have our say and speak our piece, often under conditions where silence is the institutionally sanctioned and preferred alternative. He has enlisted a number of Bakhtinian ideas (the superaddressee, outsideness, voice in dialogue) to help in the project of interpreting the silences we hear, naming the silences we do not hear, and of encouraging all silences to speak in ways that are freely chosen, not enforced.

What he offers, then, is a compact collection that addresses major areas of Bakhtinian thought and influence on composition practice to date. And he does this in a voice and style that will be accessible to the general scholar as well as the specialist and will be suitable for use with the advanced composition student, too.

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