



ARE YOU 'AVIN A LAFF?

Carnavalesque in ECE

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PESA Conference 2011



BAKHTIN'S PHILOSOPHY OF LAUGHTER

- Rabelais – Bakhtin's 1946 thesis : Francois Rabelais in the history of realism
- Medieval laughter as “an almost elemental condition” of freedom against renaissance “artistic awareness and purposefulness” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 73)
- Employs the novel in 1930's to celebrate “linguistic and stylistic variety as a counter to tight canonical formulas” (Holquist, in Bakhtin, 1984, p. xvii)
- Influenced by Lunacharsky's “The social role of laughter”

“a return to the mother’s womb, the tradition of the ancient ritual and spectacle” (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 77)

It was here that “laughter made its unofficial but almost legal nest under the shelter of almost every feast” (p. 82)





FEATURES OF CARNIVALESQUE

Ridicule; Suspension of hierarchy; Ambiguity; Ambivalence; Contradiction; Extremes of abuse, grotesque and laughter; Emphasis on the body; Decrowning of authority
To allow for regeneration and growth that exemplifies the “awakened man”

Elements of the earth that “swallow up (the grave, the womb) and at the same time an element of birth a renascence (the maternal breasts)...” (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 21)



CARNIVALESQUE IN EDUCATION

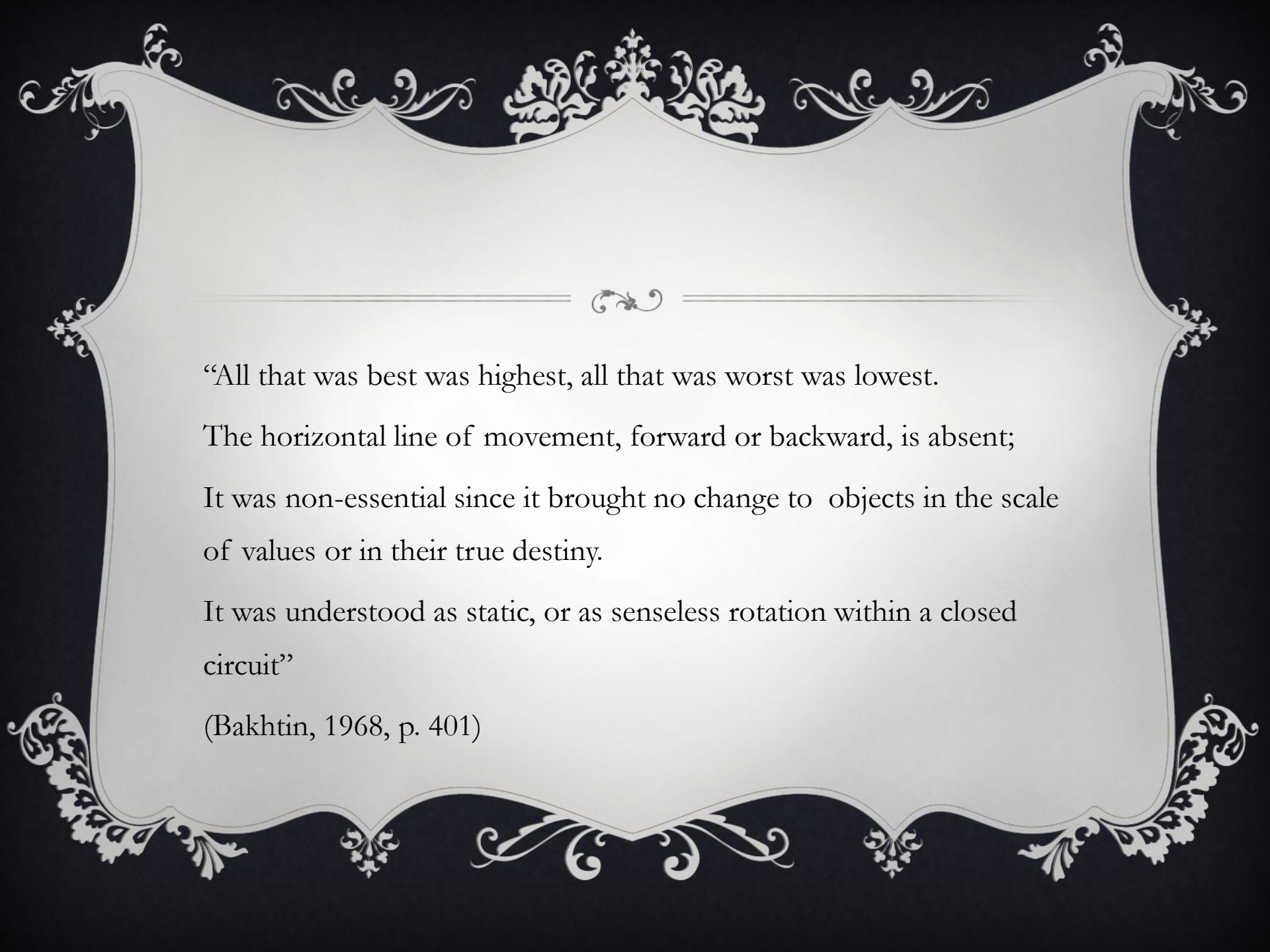
“.. Can occur in the interstices of assigned activities ... can be nurtured as a legitimate activity of the classroom instead of being punished or dismissed as off-task behaviour” (Da Silva Iddings & McCafferty, 2007, p. 42)

“Within this space the teacher abandons her monologue and follows the child, takes up new, supportive relations in order to encourage, amplify, intuit the beginning, whispered, unuttered future words of the next generation” (Lensmire, 1997, p. 381)

PEDAGOGICAL TENSIONS

- Polyphonic styles of teaching (Lensmire, 1997, 2011)
- Turning “the social order topsy-turvey” (Da Silva Iddings & McCafferty, 2007)
- Avoiding extremes of “mob-rule” or zealously (Sullivan, Smith & Matusov, 2009)

**“Special pathos of advance” versus “the concrete visible model
of the earth”** (Bakhtin 1968, p. 401)



“All that was best was highest, all that was worst was lowest.

The horizontal line of movement, forward or backward, is absent;

It was non-essential since it brought no change to objects in the scale of values or in their true destiny.

It was understood as static, or as senseless rotation within a closed circuit”

(Bakhtin, 1968, p. 401)



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

- ❖ Laughter typically lodged within psychological domains (see Piaget, 1959, Winner, 1988 for instance)
- ❖ Laughter a means of self-regulation (see Loizou, 2007; Varga, 2000)
- ❖ Early laughter characterised by incongruities (Chaney, 1993; Loizou, 2007; Ministry of Education, 1996)
- ❖ Laughter as social orientation (Alcock, 2007; Cameron, Kennedy & Cameron, 2008; Marjanovic-Shane, 1996; Hoicka & Akhtar, 2011)
- ❖ Laughter as a celebration of ‘cheekiness’ (Rameka, 2010; White et al, 2009)
- ❖ Nonsense to be quashed, toleration or intervention by adults (Smeed, in press)

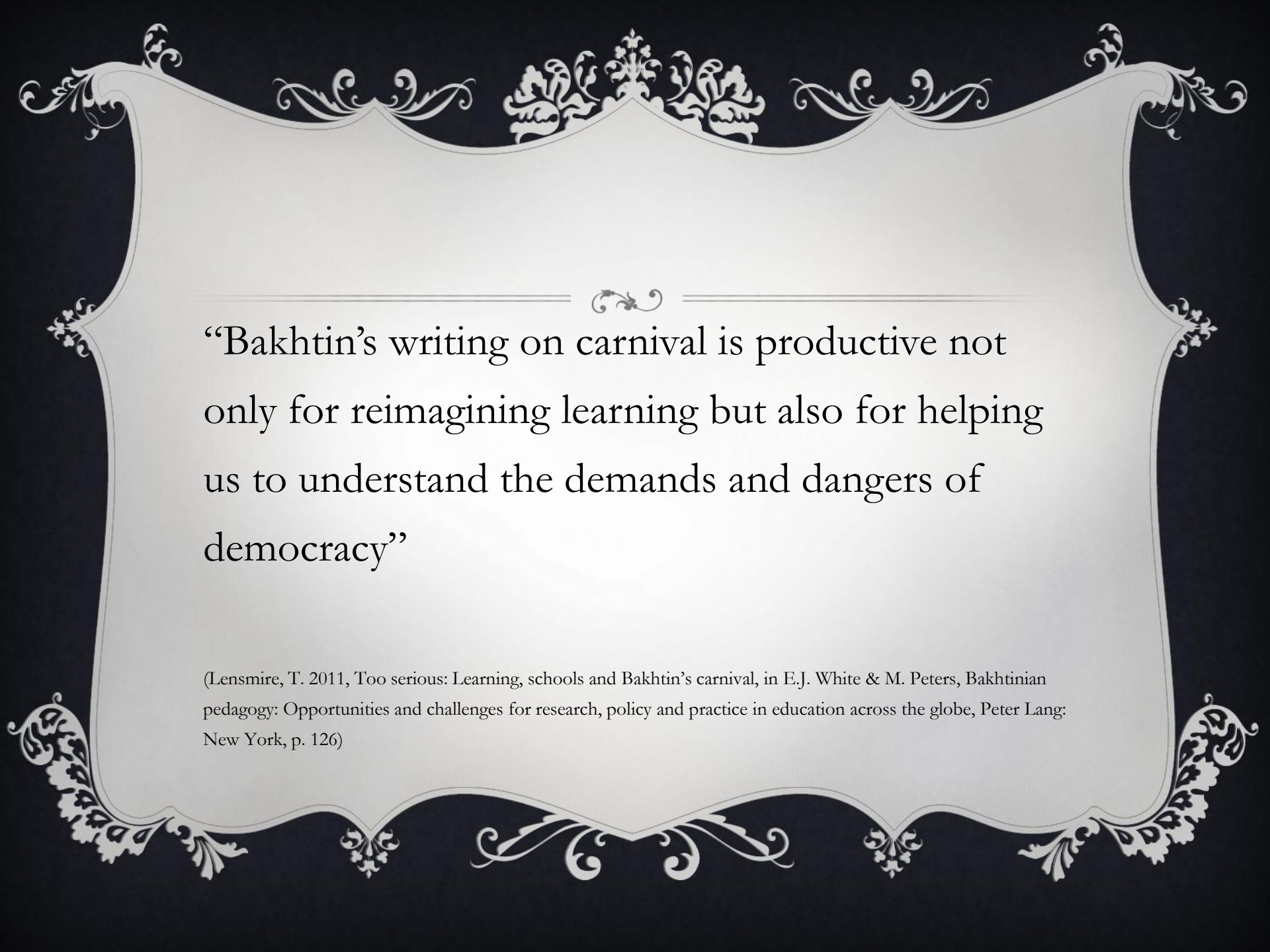




ECE FEAST OF FOOLS

- ❖ Centre underlife (Brennan, 2007) – teacher unaware (Rutanen, 2007)
- ❖ Cultural maintenance (Junefelt, 2010)
- ❖ Relational pedagogy (Odegaard, 2007; Pramling-Samuelsson & Johansson, 2009)
- ❖ Laughter is selective (Berthelsson & Johansson, in press)

“The source of carnival is the source itself” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 131).



“Bakhtin’s writing on carnival is productive not only for reimagining learning but also for helping us to understand the demands and dangers of democracy”

(Lensmire, T. 2011, Too serious: Learning, schools and Bakhtin’s carnival, in E.J. White & M. Peters, Bakhtinian pedagogy: Opportunities and challenges for research, policy and practice in education across the globe, Peter Lang: New York, p. 126)

