

Introduction

Reading Bakhtin Educationally

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Reading Bakhtin is a literary experience that leaves the reader gasping for air yet wanting more. His ideas are elusive, foreign, and dark, while at the same time alluring, hopeful, and joyous. To read Bakhtin and the work of other members of his circle calls the reader to a place of instability and confusion—not only in reading the seemingly contradictory nature of the text and grappling with translated misunderstandings, but also in grasping the Aesopian style of writing that characterizes his work. For those who attempt to interpret his ideas in a practical sense, there is unnerving appeal and challenge—a mood that is also captured in the work of artist and poet Marc Chagall, explained by Harshav (2004) as “steeped in multicultural allusions and subtexts” (p. 960). Yet despite such dizzying effort, a growing number of educationalists are turning to Bakhtin’s writings as a source of guidance, inspiration, and scholarship. As such, his works are no longer exclusive to their Russian heritage or located in the bowels of literary or linguistic disciplines alone. The effort of reading Bakhtin is therefore not only characterized in the literal “reading” of text but in the painful emergence of his ideas in the West. It is thanks to the concerted efforts of translators such as Michael Holquist, Caryl Emerson, and members of the Sheffield University Bakhtin Centre—not least of which includes Craig Brandist—that his work has been accessible across nations, languages, and disciplines. With the insight of writers such as Sidorkin (1999), Matusov (2007a, 2007b, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c; Matusov & Smith, 2005), and

Werstch (2000, 2009), the texts of Bakhtin and other members of the Circle have now become accessible to educationalists also. In this edited collection we present some of the contemporary fruits of such effort and bring them to bear on contemporary pedagogical issues facing educationalists across the globe. In doing so we suggest that there is much to be gained from reading Bakhtin educationally and significant potential for his ideas to influence educational practice, pedagogy, and policy today.

Curiously, as yet, there is no Bakhtinian philosophy of education. Despite the fact that Bakhtin was a teacher and teacher educator, he wrote only one paper on pedagogy. While his personal biography indicates the centrality of teaching to Bakhtin and his principles of dialogism can be considered a philosophy of culture, there is still a great deal of work to be done before it is possible to think of a Bakhtinian philosophy of education. We are, that is to say, only at the very early stages of being able to articulate this philosophy and we would argue that like the great philosophers of education—those who took education seriously, from Plato to Gadamer, from Wittgenstein and Marx to Freire and the postmoderns such as Foucault and Rorty—the process is an ongoing one of scholarship and interpretation. What binds these thinkers together is that within the Western tradition they see dialogue as a principle of pedagogy and culture, and their precise contributions to a large extent depend upon the novelistic ways in which they interpret the notion of dialogue and add to this tradition—philosophy, pedagogy, and culture as dialogue, as somehow essentially dialogical.

Although Bakhtin, the man, is often solely credited with the ideas that take his name, his earliest and undeniably influential work is recognized as having developed out of an eclectic group of intellectuals called the “Bakhtin Circle” who met regularly in St Petersburg, Russia, during the early 20th century (Brandist, 2002). Comprised of an eclectic group of men who had been profoundly influenced by their recent and varied experiences with the Marburg School, Marxism and German philosophy, law and philology (to name but a few), the Bakhtin Circle was attended by Medvedev, Voloshinov, Kagan, Zubakin, Pumpianski, Iudina, Sollertinski, and other scholars, artists, and thinkers. However, like most anti-official intellectual endeavors of the era, the dialogues and writings of the Circle were cut short due to political interventions in the late 1920s that saw the demise of several significant members and the temporary exile of Bakhtin himself.

Despite numerous setbacks (including ill health) Bakhtin went on to write during the tumultuous years that followed. Over the remaining years of his life (1936–1975) Bakhtin continued to develop the ideas of the Circle in tandem with his teaching career. His ongoing scholarship is evident in the development of key ideas, particularly those inspired by Dostoevskian polyphonics and Rabelaisian carnivalesque, that provide a route to theories of heteroglossia and genre—both of

which feature heavily throughout this volume. Such thinking provided a platform from which to explore the methodological problems Bakhtin faced in bringing his work to life. Combined with earlier notions of authorship, alterity, symbolism, aesthetics, and the living nature of language, a fuller consideration of Bakhtinian ideas can now be located under the broader notion of “dialogism” (Ferryhough, 1996; Frank, 2005; Hamston, 2006; Holquist, 1990; Linell, 2009; Todorov, 1984; White, 2009), an approach that is dealt with in varying ways throughout this book.

In approaching the ideas of Bakhtin and members of his circle, we therefore suggest it is useful to take several paces back from the contemporary scene to locate these works within their political, social, and philosophical context. Although the writing of these men began only a century ago, their philosophical influences can be sourced from previous decades through the influence of significant philosophers such as Kant, Schiller, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Rabelais, Cassirer, and Marx and in reaction to political ideologies of the time. Bakhtin’s work is therefore aptly described as a series of “complex hybridizations” (Brandist, 2002, p. 87) that need to be read accordingly if they are to be fully appreciated in contemporary society. They reside in several epochs that, for the purposes of this collection, can be best understood within three central eras of Bakhtin’s life:

- i) Language, aesthetics, morality and authorship; (Bakhtin, 1981, 1990; Medvedev & Bakhtin, 1978; Voloshinov, 1973)
- ii) Carnavalesque and polyphony. The Novel (Bakhtin, 1968, 1984)
- iii) Methodology and genre (Bakhtin, 1986a, 1986b, 1993)

There are traces of each in the pedagogical contributions throughout this book.

For this reason Bakhtin’s writings, read in isolation, can appear quite contradictory. Yet, when considered in chronotopic time (a Bakhtinian concept we explore in this volume), we concur with Brandist (2002) that they should be viewed cumulatively. As well as philosophical, collaboratorial, and sociohistorical applications to Bakhtin’s text, the reader should also pay attention to the ordering of publication and the style of writing since the ability of these texts to reach their public audience was considerably impaired by political maneuvers afoot in Stalinist Russia during the era in which Bakhtin lived. For example, one of the key texts (authored by Voloshinov), written in the 1920s but only published in English during 1973, highlights some of the central ideas that Bakhtin later develops. This text signals the early beginnings of Bakhtin’s ideas as a member of the Bakhtin Circle, yet its authorship and publication date have rendered it elusive to the Bakhtinian reader in the West until recent years. Read in isolation, however, this text does not provide a fuller appreciation of Bakhtin’s subsequent attention to polyphony, carniva-

lesque and other important notions that contribute to the heteroglossic genius of his heritage. Other texts—those that were written later but published first—build on these notions and provide the reader with a methodological application of key ideas. Taken together, the texts provide a rich philosophical and pedagogical exploration of Bakhtin’s ideas that is broadly described as “dialogism.”

Seen in this way, an educational reading of Bakhtin must take into account this wider context rather than drawing on isolated concepts since any one text represents only a fragment of the fuller ideas Bakhtin grappled with over his lifetime. Caryl Emerson describes Bakhtin as “an intellectual with eclectic interdisciplinary interests and a philosophizing bent” (1997, p. 73)—characteristics that have led to the wide and varied interpretations of his work that exist today in fields such as literature, linguistics, and art (to name a few). In response to this eclecticism and complexity, Matusov (2007a) cautions educationalists against adopting a simplistic approach to interpretation. He suggests that Bakhtinian text should be approached in three ways:

- i) from Russian to English;
- ii) from literacy and philosophy to education; and
- iii) from Russian social, political, cultural, historical contexts to those of the modern West (and, we would add, local, disciplinary, and contextual variations of these).

While the first of these is undeniably the work of translators and scholars who are fortunate enough to share both languages, an appreciation of the nuances between both should, at the very least, be of concern to educationalists. The second and third approaches, however, are central to engagement for educationalists who seek to interpret Bakhtin’s ideas. As we have already argued, such attention is necessary in appreciating a fuller and more authentic interpretation of Bakhtinian dialogism. The opportunity this book affords, for scholars across the globe to apply Bakhtinian ideas to their local educational contexts, is an extension of these ideals. Readers should note, therefore, not only how each contributor draws on Bakhtin’s writing, but also which aspects are privileged, and why this is so. As a result it will be possible to consider their relevance to issues in contemporary society. Here, we invite a critical reading of the text against such considerations.

Dialoguing with Bakhtin from the West

Dialogue has taken many different forms in Western philosophy: from dialogue based on dialectics and elenchus, through redemption of validity claims inherent in

ordinary discourse (Habermas) and the “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer), to the “great conversation of mankind” (Oakeshott) and minimalist conversational ethics as the basis for civility (Rorty). Indeed, we can roughly categorize the tradition beginning with Socrates and Plato and emerging in the 20th and 21st centuries with the works of the neo-Kantians Habermas and Apel, of Heidegger and Gadamer, of Kierkegaard and Buber, of Wittgenstein, Oakeshott, and Rorty. For educationalists the work of Freire, especially as it is presented in the classic *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, provides us with a particular existential Marxist version of dialogue strongly influenced by the rediscovery of the humanist Marx of the 1844 Manuscripts, Sartre, and a combination of sources in Catholic liberation theology, phenomenology, and postcolonial writings, including Fanon and others.

We might depict something of this history of the philosophy of dialogue in the following schema:

1. Socratic/Plato—dialogos: dialectic, elenchus, and eristic in the classical era.
2. Neo-Kantian—rational reconstruction:
 - a. Karl-Otto Apel—discourse ethics;
 - b. Jurgen Habermas—communicative action.
3. Martin Heidegger to Hans-Georg Gadamer—philosophical hermeneutics.
4. Hegelian and Neo-Marxist dialectics:
 - a. Hegel—dialectic;
 - b. Freire—pedagogy of the oppressed.
5. Søren Kierkegaard to Martin Buber—forms of religious dialogue:
 - a. Feuerbach, Stirner, Hermann Cohen, Ferdinand Ebner, Eugen Rosenstock and Franz Rosenzweig.
6. Ludwig Wittgenstein—“family resemblances” and “language games.”
7. Michael Oakeshott and Richard Rorty—conversation as the medium of liberal learning.
8. Bakhtin and Voloshinov—“polysemany” and dialogism

Bakhtin was aware of many of the classical sources of the philosophy of dialogue and he developed these ideas in the 1920s and 1930s, well before Freire came on the scene in the 1960s, even if he did not explicitly adopt dialogue as a theory of education. Dialogue and dialogism implicitly defined Bakhtin’s philosophy of culture but not for the formulation of the political goal of emancipation. The encounter between Freire and Bakhtin has yet to take place. We mention Freire in this context only because he has taken hold of the educational imagination especially for those who define themselves in the tradition of critical pedagogy. We might surmise that each has something different and perhaps even complementary (or con-

versely confrontational) to add to the philosophical tradition of dialogue; and while Freire is more overtly political it is clear that both theorists embrace a materialist and historical account of language and culture. Bakhtin's dialogism, in one sense, offers a literary concept that emerges from his earliest collection of essays. The concept contrasts monologic with dialogic works of literature to suggest that dialogic works are those which carry on the "conversation" of the Western tradition by commenting on, informing, and extending previous works in the tradition. This is why Kristeva (in Moi, 1986) coins the term "intertextuality" based on Bakhtin's concept. Yet the term applies not just to literature but indeed lies at the basis of all language and thought. Bakhtin's later dialogical philosophy is a substantial philosophy about the nature of language and the social world. In this context it is easy to see why some scholars suggest a relational view of language and communication that emerges in the exchange of everyday conversation and, as formed in this pragmatic context, is a comprehensive view of language and culture from which all other aspects of his work flow.

A dialogic encounter with Bakhtin and members of the Circle refers not only to the way his ideas might be understood in relation to contemporary issues but draws on his central attention to the Russian concept of *Lebensphilosophie*, that is, philosophy of life (Tihanov, 1998). Here a living requirement and ontological provocation arises out of such encounter since, according to this view, language draws from multiple meaning and ideologies in play. Perhaps it is for this reason that Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) aptly describe dialogism, in its practical sense, as an experience of uncertainty that promotes the suspension of clarity to ambiguity; relinquished allegiance to superior forms of knowledge; and is characterized by an established lack of control: "Authenticity is achieved when the person takes into account not only their own emotions but also the emotions of the other-in-the-self and the actual other, with attention to the learning processes that are connected with them" (p. 15). In saying this they see dialogism and American pragmatism in tandem—providing a means of breaking away from dichotomous interpretations of the individual and culture, to view the individual as infused with in a complex world of space and time.

Bakhtin's attention to morality, undoubtedly an outcry of his Kantian and religious background, coupled with his experiences in Stalinist Russia, cannot be ignored in any interpretation of his works. Here, the reader is called to reflect on their treatment of other as a responsive and accountable act of the self—in a Levinasian sense. Through such interaction, Bakhtin urges his readers to consider their relational impact on other, and their potential to both give and receive from such encounter. In this regard, Bakhtinian interpretations are responsible acts that are highly reflexive in nature. They are eternally answerable, since they are always

in a process of becoming. Such a stance can be deeply confronting and alarmingly frustrating in the contemporary era of certainty that characterizes much of Western ideology.

Bringing Bakhtin to Bear on Education

A reading of Bakhtin, therefore, leaves one perplexed yet provoked into action—we suggest that this belies an imperative to apply the ideas to aspects of contemporary experience. Indeed, this imperative has provoked scholars to approach Bakhtin educationally since the uncertain dialogues that take place in learning contexts are central to pedagogy in the dialogic classroom (Matusov, 2009b). Bakhtin’s dual attention to language as a living act of both form and content, combined with his heteroglossic attention to discourse, offers inspiration to classrooms across the world. In this location we are not asked to abandon the authoritarian discourses that govern teachers’ lives, but recognize that in order for cultures to regenerate, shift, or hybridize, it is essential that dispositions and skills of inquiry, dialogue, and debate are nurtured, and modeled. As Solomadin and Kurganov (2009) highlight, a dialogic approach is also concerned with *content* knowledge so that participants of dialogue can stand between philosophical and cultural perspectives (seen from multiple points of view) to generate dialogue and new knowledge. This dual conceptualization poses a necessary paradox to the profession—if specific content is to be understood, how can curriculum be moveable? Conversely—if the curriculum is fluid, how can specific content be grasped? Yet by bringing Bakhtin to bear on both content (curriculum) and practice (pedagogy), teaching can be viewed as a dialogic endeavor that lies at the heart of such epistemological-ontological “rubs” teachers across the globe face daily (White, 2011). According to Matusov (2010), such an emphasis signals a fundamental shift in focus:

From instilling the correct knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions into, conceived of as internal to the students; to organizing and supporting internally persuasive discourses on the subject matter, promoting the emergence and development of the students’ voices in this discourse and their informed authorship of answerable replies to others. (p. 197)

We suggest that, on this basis, there are many dimensions for future scholarship in the area of dialogic educational philosophy. More specifically, we believe that by building on existing research concerning the philological, linguistic, literary, and philosophical aspects of his works, this work will help to elucidate Bakhtinian dialogism and its application in contemporary education in the following ways:

- By undertaking historical research on Bakhtin himself through exploration of the relationship between the man and his work as a pedagogue (teacher, educator, lecturer in various Russian institutions);
- By undertaking historical research on members of the Bakhtin Circle, its personages, contributions by theorists from different disciplines, and examining the various dialogues that took place at different times over many years (surely itself an historical working example of dialogism?);
- In exploring contemporary appropriations of dialogic work in education and its application in working methodologies. Such work would involve ongoing dialogues across and between countries, sectors and disciplines;
- Through the development of Bakhtin's dialogism as a philosophy of education that locates education in relation to semiotics, linguistics, humanism, and culture. This means an understanding of the way in which subjects of education are produced through language, through dialogue and through literature—what we might call reading, writing, and speaking the self.

Taking this position, we signal the need to go beyond simplistic adaptations to develop Bakhtin's ideas further in the realm of pedagogy and culture. Bibler (2009) draws our attention to the pitfalls of learned ignorance, where pedagogy ignores the rigor of old and new idealizations—a point that is well placed in contemporary theories where culture is frequently promoted as a transmissive, historical entity. In this respect we are reminded that a key principle of dialogism is that a work is never complete or finished and never entirely in and of itself; but only insofar as it provides a commentary on what has gone before and offers a vehicle to consider novel extensions and additional resources in response to new contexts. On this basis we suggest that Bakhtin and members of the Circle have an important contribution to make to education *in their own right*—as opposed to merely aiding and abetting other educational writers. However, there is also great worth in considering their ideas alongside other philosophers as a means of expanding understanding (a process Bakhtin refers to as interanimation) and transgressing current ways of conceptualizing teaching and learning. We think that the potential for Bakhtin to contribute to philosophies that provoke researchers, teachers, and students to explore education further is presently in its infancy. The contributions in this volume highlight some of the tentative interpretations that can be made, dependent on this positioning—a position we suggest Bakhtin would support if he were here today.

In the context of this publication, what Bakhtin allows us to do, then, is look more closely at the pedagogical role of the teacher within policy contexts both locally and globally. Bakhtin's dialogic principles hold potential to rediscover the relationship between learner and teacher; the potential of living language (and genres) as an intentional act of intersubjectivity and alterity; and the implications of truly

engaging dialogically—ethically, morally, aesthetically, architectronically, and so on. The non-specific discipline of Bakhtin (beyond philology) and the very nature of his beliefs mean that the educationalist reader has permission to interanimate his ideas with their own, employing Bakhtin's notion of chronotype as a means of doing so. In this sense, the posthumous voice(s) of Bakhtin and members of the Bakhtin Circle are central to the dialogue we invoke in the book—not merely as an application, but as an ontological and epistemological call to arms!

Taking a dialogic approach to reading his work, then, we speculate that, were Bakhtin were alive today, he would urge each reader to interpret his ideas philosophically, sociologically, cumulatively and with integrity. It is also our contention that Bakhtin's work should be read in dialogue with other. That is, the reader should approach Bakhtin, and those who follow in his wake, as a conversation, dialogue, provocation, and debate. When interanimated with scholarly considerations of contemporary issues facing educationalists, we suggest that such an approach is the most appreciative encounter with Bakhtin's work. Only in dialogic encounter can his text live on in ways that recognize the significance of form-shaping ideologies that permeate contemporary landscapes—an idea so central to his work. In keeping with this position, we invite you, the reader, to do the same. Based on Bakhtin's life story, his collaborators, and his experiences of and with teaching both adults and children, we think Bakhtin would be most pleased with the educational tenet of this book and that, if he were alive today, he would heartily applaud the efforts of the contributors herein.

An Outline of the Book

This book could have been arranged in a multitude of different ways, since the issues each author discusses are pertinent to all learners and societies and they represent an eclectic educational mix of heteroglossic spaces for inquiry. Each chapter shares a concern to make pedagogy a practice and attitude of meaning for all learners, regardless of culture, subject, topic, or age. To varying degrees each chapter therefore attempts to offer solutions—either through practical example or philosophy—to implementation and policy issues facing teachers across diverse disciplines and cultures today. Taking a Bakhtinian stance, when we use the term pedagogy, we refer to both ontological and epistemological practices that reach far beyond prescribed texts or learning outcomes that determine what will be learnt and how it will be “taught.” Our Bakhtinian writers do not dismiss the unique intellectual, social, and physical experience of the students and teachers they present, nor try to create one cultural conglomerate of thinking. Instead, each tries to find ways of enabling dif-

ference to take root in education as a central means of learning, engagement, and enrichment—for all.

For us, pedagogy, at its most fundamental, is concerned with relationships, attitudes, and approaches that take place *between* people rather than those that are delivered from one person to another. As such, dialogic approaches to pedagogy reject quick-fix demonstrations of technique or practice, since, to be effective, the pedagogy that is applied ought to be responsive to *these* participants in *this* process and in *this* moment of time. The dialogic teacher therefore functions in expert tandem with other, whether that other is the smallest child, the musical companion, or the cyber adult. The policymaker provides merely the platform for expert teachers to do this pedagogical work through ongoing dialogue and targeted support accordingly. Such ethical and ontological tenets underpin each and every chapter in this book.

As you would expect in a Bakhtinian-inspired text, while these dialogic principles are shared, not all authors express a common application. The contributors write from research conducted across a range of pedagogical settings, including early childhood education, music education, tertiary teaching, and technology as well as theoretical domains, including linguistics and philosophy. Combined with attention to contextual and cultural domains from different societies, the chapters respond to issues and trends that are unique yet echo familiar refrains across any system where there are powerful and less powerful discourses at play. These include aspects of contemporary pedagogy that Bakhtin was never exposed to—such as online platforms, formalized assessment frameworks, testing regimes, and instructional directives in an era of renewed educational accountability. In this regard we draw the readers' attention to the diversity offered in this international text and the potential for Bakhtinian ideas to be interpreted and reinterpreted by different audiences where dialogue is permitted between discourses, as Bakhtin would have us do.

By paying attention to the emphasis each writer places on key texts, the philosophical position they privilege and the purpose of their pedagogical quest, Bakhtin's Janus-like approach is evident throughout. This is the genesis of several contemporary issues that are explored in the text surrounding the role of the teacher and the state, the status of the learner, and the purpose of learning. As editors we do not seek to determine that position for each author but rather to illuminate the potential for Bakhtin's work to speak across societies and systems in the 21st century. The contributions of this book suggest that there is much to be gained when such dialogue takes place within and between contemporary and historical educational discourse, and the individuals who struggle to reside within. It is our greatest hope that this book will further that dialogue internationally, since we acknowledge that this text is merely scratching the surface of the potential Bakhtin's work holds for educational scholarship, practice, and policy globally.

The book is therefore organized around key Bakhtinian ideas that underpin the dialogic principles each author brings to bear on pedagogical issues throughout the book. In this location each author is by no means isolated to singular applications, since it is clear that their strength is multiplied when dialogic concepts can be viewed as parts of a greater whole (yet another Bakhtinian tenet we invoke). However, there are different emphases between chapters that we highlight in the structuring of the text. We hope that our associated structuring of these will be helpful for the reader in navigating their way through the text.

The first sections of the book emphasize notions of authorship within pedagogy—grappling with serious challenges teachers face in contemporary practice within accountability regimes. In the section that follows, the authors deal with Bakhtin’s notion of answerability through non-conventional pedagogical approaches such as musicality, humor, and online dialogic provocations that contribute to democratic pedagogies and enhance learning. A related emphasis is approached in relation to the pedagogic potential of dialogue when it is encountered alterically, particularly in relation to alternative language forms, such as those of the infant. The third section focuses on Bakhtin’s notion of chronotope, drawing on dimensions of time and space to consider dialogic encounter as a moment in, across and between time. We conclude with further provocation regarding future scholarship in the field.

We begin, as it were, in the beginning, with the inspirations of **Eugene Matusov**, who has played a pivotal role in bringing Bakhtin to bear on education in the Western world. It is appropriate to have Eugene lead us into this book since his work around dialogic pedagogy (see in particular, Matusov, 2009b) has contributed so much to Bakhtin’s arrival in educational activity and overtly interanimates almost every chapter accordingly. Eugene elucidates Bakhtin’s authorship claims through several examples from his own teaching, as well as those of others. He argues for what he describes as an “authorial approach to education” in opposition to technological approaches that ignore student agency. Drawing on Bakhtin’s notion of language as knowledge, Eugene demonstrates how learning (and what constitutes learning for both the teacher and the student) comes about through engagement with a range of discourses that can challenge and even alter fixed knowledge claims, provided the teacher is open to the potential of such moments.

An authorial consideration is also taken up by **E. Jayne White**, who proposes a dialogic antidote to assessment regimes that are comprised of frameworks within authoritarian regimes of accountability. While Eugene claims that teachers do not author students, Jayne provides examples, from New Zealand educational contexts, of teachers being asked to (formally) do exactly that. The irony is obvious in this regard since, if we are to adopt Bakhtin’s moral entreaty, authorship is a complex process that takes place within and outside of relationships. Summoning Bakhtin’s principles of carnivalesque and authorship, the chapter poignantly intro-

duces Bakhtin's moral entreaty as a central consideration in assessment activity, and argues for a re-emphasis of assessment *as* aesthetic pedagogy rather than an accountability addendum. In doing so, Jayne presents a case for pedagogical relationships that are both intimate and evaluative and, with Bakhtin's conviction, argues that neither are exclusive concepts in assessment.

Olga Dysthe also considers the authorial role of the teacher in her investigation of a teacher in an American classroom. She makes a compelling argument for a consideration of dialogic pedagogy even in classrooms where there are large accountabilities. Describing the responses of students in a diverse literature classroom, Olga shows how the pedagogical techniques employed by a teacher can indeed cross this divide, suggesting that the teacher needs to both instruct students in strategies (since they aren't inherent for every student) as well as invite wonderment. She concludes that it is possible to work with internally persuasive discourses and authorial discourses in pedagogy successfully when, and only when, the teacher anchors herself in dialogic principles in tandem with the requirements of the state. This chapter is both optimistic and inspirational for teachers who are located within such regimes, since Olga positions the teacher as emancipatory and agentic in her own right.

Panagiotis Kanellopoulos brings Bakhtin's novelistic approaches to bear on music education, in particular improvisation that he describes as a route to musical and democratic freedom. His emphasis is on the "oughtness of freedom," "othering otherness," "outsidedness" and "finalization of the incomplete" as components of a dialogic process between student and teacher—their past, present, and future experience. He argues that improvisation creates a musical context that embraces Bakhtinian principles of dialogue. In doing so, it celebrates the uniqueness of musical invention by creating a sense of obligation to determine the course of musical action as participants draw on monologues within dialogue. Panagiotis suggests that musical improvisation is therefore emancipatory, transformative, and political. He expands on contemporary approaches to improvisation that position it as a transferable pedagogical package, since he views improvisation as a dialogic encounter. In this location, improvisation is less concerned with end-products than deepening the cultural basis of democracy. As such, the teaching of composition is a conversation between musicians rather than an authoritative text to be assimilated.

Similarly, **Tim Lensmire's** attention to Rabelaisian carnivalesque and its important role in the classroom, a sentiment shared by Bakhtin, offers a refreshing democratic response to pedagogy. Adopting democratic principles such as i) participation of all; ii) free and familiar contact with all; and iii) playful familiar relation to the world, Tim suggests that there is much potential for classrooms to embrace the anti-official decrowning nature of carnival as a means of engaging effectively with learners. He suggests that a pedagogical environment that invites a kind of mocking of

truth—rather than presenting truth as established reality—provides a means of engaging more fully with the embodied and complex nature of learning in its deepest sense. For Tim, carnivalesque is relevant for learner and teacher alike and signals an essential shift from serious pedagogies that privilege some at the expense of others to those that recognize, and embrace, the essential uncertainty of knowledge and its location within educational systems and societies.

Sarah Pollack and **Yifat Ben-David Kolikant** also summon Bakhtin to argue for democratic dialogues. Drawing on their classroom experiences with Jewish and Arab/Palestinian students in Israel, Sarah and Yifat invoke Bakhtin’s heteroglossic concept of internally persuasive discourse. They do this in order to deliberately provoke debate about political issues in an instructional model they employ as part of a web-based writing assignment. Their quest to uncover ontological truths and their alternatives among students with diverse political and social experiences reveals the significant role of interactions that are characterized by an awareness of other. Like many of the chapters in this book, the role of the teacher is considered pivotal to this process. Despite associated challenges, the authors highlight the importance of embracing hard issues in order to illuminate the experience and perspective of “other” in diverse classrooms, communities, and societies.

Fran Hagstrom, **David Deggs**, and **Craig Thompson** join with several authors in this book to issue a call for teachers to first and foremost strive for dialogue among learners. They argue that the tenets of effective pedagogy exist across both digital and face-to-face classrooms, suggesting that this dialogic principle is no less true for online multiple users. The authors claim that digital methods should be employed according to their potential for learning rather than their technological appeal per se. With Voloshinov’s inspiration, they suggest that there are increased opportunities to view digital learning as a social experience that holds potential for ideologies to be exchanged through e-dialogue. Here, Fran, David, and Craig expand on Bakhtin’s ideas regarding the use of social languages by suggesting that, in a digital world, these languages are infused into shared spaces that bridge both information age and national languages. In doing so, they suggest that educationists could pay further attention to the mediating quality of e-learning by developing a greater appreciation of the role of technology in promoting dialogic learning environments and its potential for pedagogy.

Applying a linguistic application of Voloshinovian and Bakhtinian dialogic principles to a consideration of infant-teacher pedagogy, **Karin Junefelt** expands on the notion of intersubjectivity to suggest that Bakhtin’s alteric tenet alerts the teacher to adaptable engagement in dialogue with infants. Based on this notion, she provides useful examples of Swedish infants and blind learners, and their capacity to engage with a wide range of language forms with attuned adults. Language forms include a consideration of gesture and babble but are also linked to Bakhtin’s wider

notion of genre and linguistic features that indicate the social nature of language—a point shared by Voloshinov and Bakhtin. Junefelt suggests that paying attention to these forms of language holds great potential to expand on interpretations of infant-adult dialogue, as well as offering a more complex view of intersubjectivity and its alteric capacity. Karin's message presents an important challenge to policymakers who locate the education and care of infants outside of the pedagogical domain. Instead, she positions infant pedagogy as a series of finely attuned dialogic acts that call upon specialized and adaptive practice on the part of the teacher.

Elin Ødegaard also emphasizes the dialogic social context and the role of the teacher in her careful explanation of the constructed co-narratives of very young children in early years settings (called *barnehages*) in Norway. Drawing on Bakhtin's notion of chronotope, Elin analyzes the experience of time and space on children's meaning-making with their teachers. Of striking significance is the way children's dialogue is sustained or shortened on the basis of such treatment, and the importance of experience and context in any interpretation that can be made by researcher or pedagogue alike. The potential for sustained dialogue is greatly enhanced through such consideration.

Ana Marjanovic-Shane examines play as three chronotopes she describes in terms of time, space and rules of interpretation—imaginative, reality and community. Employing the Russian term *postupok*, an answerable act or deed, Ana recasts play as dialogic activity within the relational boundaries of these three chronotopes. She therefore promotes the ontological significance of play to learners in educational practice, suggesting that play is only play when imaginative tenets of uncertainty and answerability can be upheld. Once it is manifested purely as artistic presentation, or reduced to a predetermined learning outcome, she purports that play loses its dialogicity and therefore ceases to be. Ana's argument has special significance for early years teachers who, in many countries, are being asked to plan for play or, conversely, stand back from play as the singular domain of the child.

Carolyn Shields brings Bakhtin to bear on educational leadership, summoning concepts such as chronotype to consider the history and future of pedagogical practice. Carolyn suggests that a revised theory of communication is needed—one that recognizes the heteroglossic nature of language and its transformative potential. As such she makes the important point that policymakers presenting documents that dictate practice do not recognize the importance of imbued meanings that teachers will give to them in action. Instead, she advocates for leaders who listen and engage in meaningful dialogue with teachers and students. For Bakhtin, as Carolyn reminds her readers, dialogue is about relationships rather than mere words, and about comprehension rather than explanation. Working within educational domains should therefore be approached as a dialogic engagement that is

characterized by a sense of parody, irony, fun, and laughter that invites alterity rather than fixed certainties. These are salutary messages for educational leaders indeed!

Lastly, **Michael Peters** draws the reader's attention to the work of one member of the Bakhtin Circle in particular—Voloshinov. Michael argues that Voloshinov's work provides not only a philosophy of language (and philosophy of education) but also a psychology and learning theory. Implicit in Michael's account is an emphasis on a philosophy of education that locates Bakhtin with Voloshinov in the philosophical tradition of dialogue that has its own intertextuality and might even be described as the basis of the Western philosophical, educational, and political tradition. This is an appropriate ending for a book that signals future Bakhtinian scholarship in education, since Michael suggests that Voloshinov's philosophy of language alone opens up new possibilities for research at the level of the production of the utterance; but also in relation to policy in an age characterized by the privatization of education.

We offer this collection as a starting point to explore and perhaps even exploit some of the ramifications of Bakhtin's dialogic work; and in doing so consider its relevance for educational theory, practice, and policy across the globe. We welcome the potential for dialogical engagement within this collection by educationalists and others, and look forward to the resulting dialogues—pedagogies and policy encounters—this book will, hopefully, invoke.

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