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Chapter 1

Chronotopic Analysis of Values in Critical Ontological Dialogic Pedagogy

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The purpose of this chapter is to deepen my discussion of the role of values in critical dialogic pedagogy that I started in my article with Jay Lemke (Matusov & Lemke, 2015).¹ In that past article, I considered two common opposite approaches to “teaching values” in education. The first common approach argues for active socializing students in “good values” such as honesty, industry, patriotism, voluntarism, social justice, democracy, nationalism, collaboration, empathy, and so on. In contrast, the second common approach argues for restraining education from teaching any values by teaching only facts, tools, laws, and practices to let students make their own value-based decisions, informed by education, later on. In my 2015 article, I both appreciated truths in each of the common approaches and criticized them for being both impossible and undesirable. Let me briefly summarize my findings.

In the first approach of “teaching good values,” I appreciated the ubiquity and essence of values in defining any alive organism. What makes any organism alive is the presence of simple values, like biases of attraction, repulsion, and neutrality to environmental clues. This fact makes any human endeavor, including education, unavoidably value-driven. Any educational practice is value-loaded. It unavoidably throws its participants to socialize in values of this practice. On the other hand, I argued in my 2015 paper that setting the goal of education as students’ socialization in “good values,” selected by the society, is highly problematic. To summarize my expensive argumentation, the goodness of value is rooted not in its content (e.g., such values as honesty, social justice, and patriotism) but in a participant’s authorial and responsible judgment of what goodness means in a particular context and for

¹In that 2015 article, Jay and I wrote separate parts. Here, I will refer only to my part when I refer to “my article” or “this article”.

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whom. For example, during the WWII, an honest, truthful, answer to a Nazi German officer about where Jews were hiding might arguably be dishonest, dishonorable, cowardly, or simply stupid. Thus, I argue that the goal of education should become not instilling “good values” in students but engaging students in critical evaluations of the goodness of values in context.

In the second approach of not teaching values, I appreciated the approach’s emphasis on and respect for students’ own authorial judgment, informed by education. Students’ informed authorial agency as a goal of education is very attractive, although is insufficient, as I argued in my 2015 paper. Facts, tools, practices, and laws—the primary curriculum in this approach—are also unavoidably value-loaded. For example, a mathematical fact of $2 + 2 = 4$ involves hidden value assumptions about the nature of added entities and their relations (e.g., two friends plus two friends are not necessary four friends). Without revealing and critical analysis of these hidden values behind particular facts and educational practices to and by the students, the hidden values are smuggled—arguably they are taught even more effectively than in the first approach because they are invisible for the students. This defeats the overall educational goal of the second approach to promote informed authorial agency and judgment in the students.

In my current chapter, I argue that critical ontological dialogic pedagogy is one that tries to embrace values as omnipresent, necessary and welcomed in education while focusing on critical deconstruction of them. I defined the goal of critical ontological dialogic education as “a leisurely pursuit of critical examination of the self, the life, and the world,” including education itself (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2015a). Revealing values, bringing them in a contact with alternative values, testing values, and deconstruction of values in a public dialogue guided by a teacher and students becomes the primary goal of critical ontological dialogic pedagogy. Besides being the primary target of education as objects of critical deconstruction, values provide students’ passionate and interested points of entries—ontological engagement (Matusov, 2009)—into emerging inquiries for the participants. They make the learning curriculum personally relevant for the students. Finally, emerging new values in the educational practice can contribute to building a community of learners that can transcend the immediate classroom.

At the same time, the relationship between values and their critical deconstruction in critical ontological dialogic pedagogy is not without their own tensions. Critical ontological dialogic pedagogy demands a certain separation of participants from their own dear values, which can be rather problematic. Values define people and their relations with other people. Critical deconstruction of these values or even freedom of expression of values, that may be offensive to others, so core in the critical ontological dialogic pedagogy, may throw the participants in unwelcome existential crises and/or disrupt relationships with other people that can be very dear and relevant for the participants. Critical ontological dialogic pedagogy is inherently risky and unsafe. Also, deconstructing values of the pedagogical practice demanded by critical ontological dialogic pedagogy undermines the practice and a community of learners.

In this theoretical chapter, I analyze these relationships and tensions between critical ontological dialogic pedagogy and values using chronotopic analysis. Bakhtin introduced the notion of “chronotope” (“time-space” in Greek) for his literary analysis of novels to describe the unity of time and space where the novel events are tied and untied (Bakhtin, 1991). By now, several dialogic educationalists introduced chronotopic analysis in education (e.g., Bloome & Katz, 1997; Brown & Renshaw, 2006; Marjanovic-Shane, 2011, 2016; Matusov, 2009, 2015a; Matusov & Brobst, 2013; Rajala, Hilppö, Lipponen, & Kumpulainen, 2013; Renshaw, 2013; White, 2013).

Paraphrasing Bakhtin, educational chronotope is the unity of time, space, axiology, participants, and relationships where educational events are tied and untied. Similar to Bakhtin’s chronotopic analysis of novels,² for the purpose of my analysis of values in critical ontological dialogic pedagogy, I abstract here two “orthogonal” educational chronotopes: critical (didactic) and ontological. The educational critical (didactic³) chronotope is where critical deconstruction of values occurs for the participants. In the critical (didactic) chronotope, values are revealed, juxtaposed with alternative values, deconstructed, and tested. The educational ontological chronotope is where a community of learners and an educational practice, supporting value deconstruction, occur. The ontological chronotope promotes and affirms values that support the critical chronotope, critically deconstructing values. Below I consider each of the chronotopes and their ambivalent relationships. Finally, I will turn to investigations of values of education themselves since critical ontological dialogic education involves critical examination of education itself (and its values).

Critical Chronotope of Dialogic Pedagogy: Internally Persuasive Discourse

The critical chronotope of dialogic pedagogy involves the unity of time and space where values are revealed, deconstructed, and tested against alternative values. For example, while considering issues of bullying—the topic voted by students to study in our class on that particular class meeting—my undergraduate education students, most of whom are future teachers, are often interested in how they can effectively punish and suppress bullies in their own future classes. Their initial approach to the

²Bakhtin (1991) also discussed two “orthogonal” chronotopes of a novel: one chronotope where the novel characters’ events are tied and untied and the other chronotope where the author’s events of writing the novel are tied and untied.

³I refer the educational critical chronotope as “didactic” because it belongs to curriculum and instruction—cf. “Where are we in our class?—We are in addition of fraction”, i.e., in the fraction didactic space (Matusov, 2009).

issue seems to be instrumental. Their own values apparently remain hidden and unexamined for them. To dialogically provoke their focus on their underlining values in their approach to bullying, my colleagues and I introduce a survey “Bullying: Teacher’s pedagogical desire” with the following prompt:

In my future classroom, as a teacher, I want my future students to say, “I don’t want to bully my peers because... [choose as many as applied].

A class of mine with 25 teacher education students (fall 2015) provided diverse justifications to their responses and ways to promote and guide their future students. Please notice from the Table 1.1 that a high majority of the future teachers’ replies focused on their axiological rather than instrumental desires. According to the survey, my future students mostly wanted their future students to be prosocial because their genuine commitment to prosocial values (see items 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9) and not so much because effective punishments, fears, and/or rewards (see items 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 11). As one student wrote, “I picked the ideas that generally regard bullying as something morally wrong; students should not avoid bullying due to consequences [i.e., punishments], but should avoid because it is generally a morally wrong and unethical thing to do. The focus needs to be on students’ characters and how they as citizens should act towards others.”

In our class meeting on bullying, we also discussed the minority opinions, focusing on their instrumental desires to suppress bullying (items 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, and 11). The discussion revealed these future teachers’ care and responsibility for victims of bullying, general classroom atmosphere (i.e., safe learning environment), urgency to stop bullying immediately, and concerns about the teachers’ institutional safety (i.e., their stand with the school administration and parents). This discussion led to revealing diverse roles and obligations of a teacher and their prioritization: teacher-as-educator, teacher-as-police(wo)man, teacher-as-peacekeeper, teacher-as-lawmaker, teacher-as-social-worker, and so on. Although we, as the class, agreed that the overall role of the teacher-as-educator should be prioritized, we came up with diverse scenarios when, for example, teacher-as-police(wo)man should take over teacher-as-educator.

One future teacher of mine came up with a paradoxical conclusion that having a bullying incident in her future classroom might be an important lesson for the entire class. I supported the development of this idea by showing a fragment video from a Japanese preschool classroom where Japanese educators apparently argued similar point that children’s conflicts, fights, and even bullying have important educational potentials for teaching/learning moments (Tobin, Davidson, & Wu, 1989). Other students of mine disagreed, prioritizing children’s well-being and safety. Some of my future students criticized the classroom management unilateralism common in many conventional US classrooms where teacher is considered to be “a monarch”, solely responsible for solving all problems and making all decisions. They introduced ideas of engaging their future students in democratic self-governance and conflict resolution that we practiced in our class, including Town Hall meetings.

Table 1.1 Teachers’ pedagogical desire for their students’ reasons not to bully (*N* = 25)

Possible answers	% (<i>N</i> = 25)
1. “...I do not want to be punished by my teacher”	4
2. “...I want to get rewards from my teacher”	8
3. “...I want to be a good, kind, fair, respectful, friendly person”	100
4. “...I don’t want to be treated by my peers as another bully”	76
5. “...I’m afraid my parents would learn about my bullying, shame, and/or punish me”	4
6. “...I know how handle conflicts with my peers without bullying”	100
7. “...we as a class not like that”	76
8. “...I’m afraid to violate the class’ rules”	8
9. “...bullying is bad”	84
10. “...grown-up bullies may go to jail”	24
11. “...I’m afraid to be caught by the school authorities”	4

After you select your choices, please briefly explain/justify them. How do you, as a teacher, think you can support them? Develop teaching strategies in your group that will promote and support these choices. Write them down here

Also, I introduced my students to a teaching dilemma, I discussed in my previous classes: can and should teacher make all his/her students morally good as the goal of education. We discussed that responsibility for our own deeds implies a possibility of being evil for us. Without our free will, involving a choice to be evil, with or without excellent education, we cannot be human. Education is not about molding people in some preset form of goodness but critical consideration of what constitutes “good” in each particular case against all other possible values in a critical dialogue.

This critical dialogue helped to reveal, evaluate, and prioritize my students’ diverse and conflicting concerns, fears, desires, and excitements. Rather than being colonized by these concerns, desires, and values, through our critical dialogue, the students became authors of their informed judgments.

The space of the critical chronotope of dialogic pedagogy is the space of ideas, values, concerns, fears, excitements, and so on. This didactic space is not limited to our class participants’ own idea but involved research (e.g., Tobin’s), ideas from my past students, ideas that my students and I had heard and read before the class, and so on. This space does not have limits. It does not involve any physical space—rather it is space of meanings.

The time of the critical (didactic) chronotope involves revealing the students’ own dear ideas, concerns, values, and excitements, evaluation and testing them against alternative ideas, and prioritization of these ideas overall and in particular situations. Again, the critical chronotopic time is semantic and not physical. There is no urgency to make a judgment. The students have “eternity” to consider emerging issues. Postponement of their authorial judgments is neither risky nor costly. Uncertainty, ambivalence, and indecisiveness are fine.

I argue that the critical chronotope of dialogic pedagogy is “the internally persuasive discourse” (Bakhtin, 1991). Bakhtin (1991) coined the notion of “the internally persuasive discourse” (IPD) in his opposition to “the authoritative discourse” (AD) to contrast a discursive process of free persuasion versus a discourse process of imposition and coercion. There have been different interpretations among educationalists of what IPD exactly means. Specifically, what “internal” means in “the *internally* persuasive discourse”? “Internal” to what? Some educationalists assume that “internal” defines the individual, the psychological, and internal to the individual: the individual’s cognition and psyche (see many examples of this interpretation here, in Ball & Freedman, 2004). In this interpretation, the most salient characteristic of IPD is its demands for and recognition of the *autonomous* individual. In contrast, my colleague and I (Matusov & von Duyke, 2010) argue that “internal” defines the discourse itself, *internal to the discourse*—both localized in time, space, and among the immediate participants and distributed in time, space, and among diverse remote participants. In our interpretation, the most salient characteristic of IPD is that it is *dialogically critical and critically dialogic*. This means that any critique (e.g., of values) should be embedded in a never-ending public, interpersonal and intrapersonal, and historical dialogue. Also, any of such dialogue has to challenge any opinions, positions, paradigms, world-views, and values.

As Morson (2004) characterizes IPD similar to our interpretation, in IPD “Truth becomes dialogically tested and forever testable” (p. 319). Paraphrasing Morson’s statement about truth in IPD for values, we can state, “In IPD, values become dialogically tested and forever testable.”

Based on my pedagogical practice, I see three types of values in education:

- (1) *discussed values*—educational and noneducational values that are brought for public forum among students and the teachers⁴ (and beyond them),
- (2) *espoused values*—values that the participants claim as their own ones aimed at guiding their practices and deeds inside and outside of education, and
- (3) *in-action values*—values that emerge and actually guide their actions and deeds inside and outside of education.

I argue that all these three types of values have to be a part of IPD testing. Dialogic IPD testing of values both involves and extends “self-contained rationality” (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2015b). Marjanovic-Shane and I define “self-contained rationality” as a self-contained discourse limited by the universal logic and the consideration of relations in one sphere at expense of all others. We contrast self-contained rationality with dialogic testing where “...what

⁴In my view, there is nothing wrong for a teacher to share her/his values with the students in dialogic pedagogy, IF the teacher does not aim at making the students to accept them. Teacher’s values are just some particular values among other values worth of investigation.

has been tacitly naturalized in self-contained rationality of one paradigm becomes problematized, replied, and, thus, relativized (“ratio”—brought in the relationship with an alien other)...” (p. 214). Dialogic testing involves “diverse spheres of life, diverse opaque consciousnesses, and personal mediated or unmediated biases—rational or not—come together in a dramatic tension of critical deconstruction of values and power relations through dialogue. We believe that an unmediated personal bias—an initial personal emotional relationship of attraction, repulsion, disorientation, or indifference—is the basis of any rationality. However, we think that only public critical dialogue can justify rationality and point at its limits” (p. 214).

IPD and the Ontology of Values

In the critical chronotope of the internally persuasive discourse, deconstruction of values occurs through their critical examination. I argue that there is a rather ambivalent relationship between IPD and the ontological nature of values in the critical chronotope of dialogic pedagogy. On the one hand, IPD tries to capitalize on the ontological nature of values involving in deconstruction. First, IPD benefits from the students’ ontological engagement in examination of particular values. For example, majority of my students URGENTLY WANTED to discuss the educational issues of bullying in our particular class meetings. In campaigning for this topic to their peers, they told that they experienced or observed bullying in the school past, they felt clueless how to address it, they worried about the school administration and parents, and it was a hot topic in the national media at the time (especially cyberbullying). Second, IPD benefits from the students’ ontological tensions, worries, fears, excitements, and interests—both pre-existing IPD in class and emerging. This helps students generate their dear ideas, values, concerns, opinions, and so on. Third, IPD benefits from emerging ontological dramatic tensions when students agree and disagree with each other (as a particular dialogic teacher, I try to avoid sharing my own views unless asked by my students or it is needed as one of the alternatives to students’ views⁵). For example, in the case above my students split on the issue of whether moderate bullying can be beneficial for education or not by revealing their own diverse values.

Fourth, IPD benefits from ontological testing values. For example, in one of my graduate classes, because of their paradigmatic differences, the students could not come to agreement of topic choices for next classes on a systematic basis. They decided to split the class on two and have two different topics to study at the same time. While experiencing this new practice, they realized that they needed both—nurture their own paradigmatic ideas and having critique of them from an

⁵In the latter case, I do not reveal that this view is mine.

unfriendly paradigm. This realization leads to more ontological testing ideas and values. In sum, the ontology makes IPD more personally and culturally relevant for the participants (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and provides important testing opportunities.

On the other hand, IPD tries to de-ontologize ideas, beliefs, concerns, and values making them objects of open-minded, fair, and even dispassionate deconstructive analysis. IPD welcomes all ideas and values for consideration—however, offensive, painful, humiliating, disgusting, degrading, ridiculous, and crazy they may feel for some of its participants. Where else these ideas and values can be publically discussed, if not in education?! The critical chronotope of IPD calls for a moratorium on the participants' responsibility, belief, commitment, and passion in deconstructing both objectionable and dear ideas. In IPD, participants are required to suspend their ethics and passion—i.e., their ontology (unless they become discursive ideas in themselves). In the critical chronotope, a person who expresses a hideous view for testing ideas and values must not be defined by this hideous view or be responsible for its negative (if not harmful) effect on other participants. In the IPD, ideas should be criticized, not people. In sum, the IPD tries to stay above the ontology.⁶ Excessive ontology can suppress unpopular ideas and, thus, make IPD shallow or can create balkanization and, thus, collapse of IPD. In contrast, excessive de-ontologization of IPD can transform it into an intellectual game without much investments, passion, relevancy, and commitments by the participants.

IPD often creates pressures on the participants' ontology. Some ideas, concerns, values, and beliefs can be deeply rooted in a person and provide the foundation for the person's relationship with significant others. For example, in one of my classes for future teachers, we discussed issues of homosexuality in education in the mid of the 2000s. I raised a provocative question of whether the current political struggle of the LGBTQ+ community was similar or different from the civil rights struggle of Black people in the 1950s and 1960s in the US. I did not even finish asking my question for the class as a highly religious African American male student Tom (pseudonym) passionately replied from his seat, "They are nothing to do with each other!" I asked why. Tom replied that because while Black people could not choose their skin color—they were genetically born with it—gays chose their "sinful lifestyle." He quickly added that he was not a homophobe because he "loves a sinner but hates the sin." Tom was a very religious Christian. He often brought religious arguments, which were welcomed by the class. This was the second part of the semester and, by that time, Tom had developed a high reputation of an open-minded critical learner, a keen observer, and a passionate educator.

⁶Of course, the IPD practice—critical examination of the self, the life, and the world (and values)—is a value and ontology in itself promoted and imposed on the students by dialogically minded educators. The latter can be addressed by IPD by engaging in deconstruction of critical dialogic pedagogy itself and its values within the IPD (Matusov & Lemke, 2015).

The class had a teaching practicum at a local afterschool center serving working class African American children and Tom was very helpful for many of his peers connecting them to the kids. The class erupted after his last comment. Some people were talking to the class from their seats without raising hands, and some split in their small groups (sitting in clusters) and talking without much attempts to gain the class floor. I was patiently waiting for an emergence of this public floor. I could hear three major topics of their discussions: (1) whether nonheterosexuality is a lifestyle or inborn, (2) what constitutes homophobia (i.e., is Tom homophobe?), (3) how can Tom, such a nice, kind, and deep person they knew, be so closed minded and hurtful toward “the other” (i.e., the LGBTQ + community). While I was waiting for the class to regain a common focus, I was thinking how I was going to help them. However, my own focus was on a different issue—I heard hidden racism in Tom’s statement that Black people cannot choose their skin color, which justifies their rights. Suddenly, a student who was sitting at the end of class yelled over all noise, “Eugene, what do you think on this issue? Help us!”

I told my students that as being born outside of the US, sometimes I had trouble understanding common ideas in the US. “For example,” said I, “Tom and many other people justified the civil rights by the fact that Black people cannot change their skin color. Let us conduct an imaginary experiment. What if scientists invented a pill that changes skin color from black to white—can Blacks who refuse to take this pill be legitimately discriminated because it was their choice?” I turned to Tom and asked him if he would take this pill. He strongly replied, “No!” So, I continued, “So, now we, White people, could discriminate you because now, your race is your choice, your lifestyle, right?” I told him, “When I hear this nativist argument, ‘We are born with this skin color that is why you—White people—should respect us,’ I hear a hidden message, ‘Black is bad but unfortunately, nothing can be done about that—it is not their fault so we have to grant them rights’.” I said that for me justification of the civil rights should be in these rights being unalienated for all humans and not because something is inborn and nothing can be done about that. There was silence in the class for a while. Then Tom replied, “I disagree,” but his tone showed that he was not sure. I was able to not ask him about what he disagreed or what the other students thought because the class was over.

In a few days, I got an email from Tom asking us to meet. We met at my office and he told me that he was thinking constantly about our last class’s discussion and what I said and he admitted to himself that indeed the nativist justification of the civil rights—because nothing can be done with the born skin color—was indeed self-inflicted racism and, thus, self-hatred. When he realized that he was shocked that he did not notice that before. He went to his church and talked about our class to his preacher, who encouraged him to share it with the entire church.

Meanwhile, related discussions continued on our class online forum, in which Tom and some other students participated. One of such memorable discussions was about Christianity's promotion of racism (slavery) and homophobia. One student brought a link to the Brick Bible (<http://www.thebricktestament.com/>) and brought scenes on slavery (http://www.thebricktestament.com/the_law/slavery/ex21_02a.html) and homosexuality/homophobia (http://www.thebricktestament.com/the_law/homosexuality/lv18_22.html). She was an atheist and argued that modern Christians cherry-picked what they liked or disliked in the Bible. Some liberal Christian students replied that Jesus did not justify slavery or talk against homosexuality. Some (very few) religious students of mine sided with Tom, condemning "homosexual lifestyle" as being sinful, immoral, and "unnatural." Other online discussions involved nativism of diverse sexual orientations, supporting non-heterosexual students by teachers, homophobia discourse among kids at the after-school center where they had practicum, and high rates of suicide among LGBTQ+ youth.

Tom kept informing me about the development in his church. After he made his presentation there, the congregation split. Somehow, the issues of race and homosexuality kept interacting with each other there. Being very active in his nature, Tom set up a Bible group studying issues of slavery (interpreted by him as "racism") and homophobia in the Holy texts of the Old and New Testaments (I do not know how much our class online forum encourage him to do so). Later, almost a year after our class was over, I bumped into Tom on a campus, and he informed me that his church split on two as a result of the turmoil created by our class. He told me that he realized that his old church was racist and homophobic. Again being socially active, he organized support for Black gay men, welcoming them to the new church. He also reported about tensions that he experienced with parents, family, and some of his friends that he had to manage.

Bakhtin (1999) introduced the notion of "person-idea" that involved: (1) person's commitment to live the espoused idea, (2) person's taking responsibility of his/her idea in challenging dialogues with others, and (3) testing his/her ideas with his/her life.

The idea *lives* not in one person's *isolated* individual consciousness—if it remains there only, it degenerates and dies. The idea begins to live, that is, to take shape, to develop, to find and renew its verbal expression, and to give birth to new ideas, *only* when it enters into genuine dialogic relationships with other ideas, with the ideas of *others*. Human thought becomes genuine thought, that is, an idea, *only* under conditions of living contact with another and alien thought, a thought embodied in someone else's voice, that is, in someone else's consciousness expressed in discourse. At that point of contact between voice and consciousnesses, the idea is born and lives.

The idea—as it was *seen* by Dostoevsky the artist—is not a subjective individual psychological formation with "permanent resident rights" in a person's head; no, the idea is inter-individual and intersubjective—the realm of its existence is not individual

consciousness but dialogic communion *between* consciousnesses. The idea is a *live event*, played out at the point of dialogic meeting between two or several consciousnesses (Bakhtin, 1999, pp. 87–88, italics is original).

In Dostoevsky, the adventure plot is combined with the posing of profound and acute problems; and it is, in addition, placed wholly at the service of the idea. It places a person in extraordinary positions that expose and provoke him, and it connects him and makes him collide with other people under unusual and unexpected conditions precisely for the purpose of testing the idea and the man of the idea, that is, for testing the “man in man” (Bakhtin, 1999, p. 105).

It is clear to me that Tom put himself on the adventure journey as a part of our IPD.

There is a temptation among dialogic educators to try to throw their students into these adventure journeys to test their dear ideas with their lives similar to what Tom experienced. I used to be among these educators (Matusov & Brobst, 2013). In one of the past graduate classes, I challenged my advanced doctoral students to reply to themselves of why they deeply engaged in scholarship only when being forced by their professors and never on their own (they admitted in that first). This persistent IPD throws some of my students into a deep existential crisis, described by Jane (pseudonym), a student of mine (Edward was my pseudonym in the book):

Jane: I guess it [this IPD] becomes obsessive such that it interferes with other aspects of life... I dunno, Edward, it's so weird and hard to explain but it feels like a ball and chain like a drug or an addiction or something... maybe it's just me though? Maybe I'm too sensitive? Like with my other [personal] issues I have in my life... [these internal dialogues prompted by Edward are] all related to all this stuff... it's all so very penetrating... excuse the French, but it's like a mindf–k. Because maybe it does conflate with personal issues I have, but I'm sure other people have similar issues, so some of your other students could have or could be suffering like me.... but I'm sure it's worse on grad students than undergrads... I think you are very good at asking very important and penetrating questions... and sometimes you can get people to question their existence or their ways of living or why they're doing what they're doing, etc. etc.... you have that blessing that is a curse maybe...

Edward: Of course, by now you can imagine me asking, “What is wrong with that—i.e., asking about life?”...

Jane: because I wonder if you could question someone to despair or death?

Edward: No, it is not my goal. My goal is to ask myself and others out of despair and out of death.

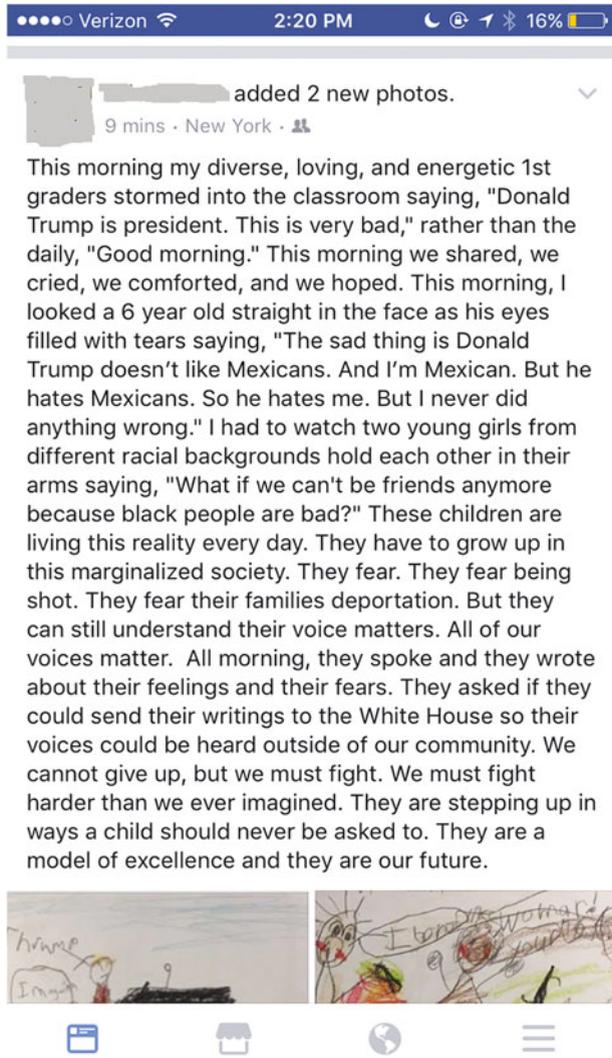
Jane: that may be your intention, but intentions and effects don't always match up... am I now getting you to question.... and possibly be in anxiety [about yourself and your actions] (Matusov & Brobst, 2013, p. 82).

From this pedagogical experience, I have learned to play Dostoevsky or God in throwing my students into existential crises through IPD. My students are not heroes of my novel but authors of their own lives and education (Matusov & Miyazaki, 2014). It is up to the students, and not the teacher, to set themselves on an adventure journey testing their dear ideas and values with their lives.

The critical IPD provides both ontologically centripetal forces and ontologically centrifugal forces (Bakhtin, 1991) in the classroom community. The critical IPD may help to build a community by aligning like-minded students together, by taking each other diverse voices seriously, and by appreciating diversity of ideas/values and mutual challenges when they are respectful and open-minded. However, the critical IPD may also pull the classroom community apart when students' half-baked ideas got prematurely challenged, when students' ideas are not welcome (especially by the teacher) (Marjanovic-Shane, Meacham, Choi, Lopez, & Matusov, 2017, in press), when students' ideas/values undermine the existence of other participants or relevant/loved others (Matusov & Lemke, 2015), when students do not have much interest in each other ideas (e.g., for paradigmatic reasons—see my example of a graduate class splitting in half above), when students are disrespectful to each other, and so on. Thus, in my first article on values in education (Matusov & Lemke, 2015), I described a case of my past class, where an Aztec nationalist student argued for ethnic cleaning of all Whites from Americas. When one older White female student shared that her daughter tried to commit suicide, he said that it was too bad that the student's daughter was not successful—one White person would have been fewer in Americas. I planned to expel this student from my class but the rest of the students, including the female student, argued that they highly benefited from his views, however, personally hostile they were.

Sometimes started as ontologically centrifugal, the IPD can dramatically and eventually promote ontologically centripetal forces in the classroom community. Thus, recently, the election of the controversial President Trump was such a case in my undergraduate fall 2016 course on urban education. Our class meeting was on day of the election and it was canceled by the university because of that. On the class web, a few of my students—openly Democrats—expressed a need to discuss the educational consequences of the elections in our class,

Justa (all mentioned names are pseudonyms): I know it is a sensitive topic; however, I think on Tuesday we should respectfully discuss the election results. I thought the guidelines that Eugene posted [NASP guidelines supporting students after 2016 election, <https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/media-room/press-releases/nasp-guidance-for-reinforcing-safe-supportive-and-positive-school-environments-for-all-students>] were helpful. I think it is important to discuss how the election results affect children and how they view themselves and others. I have attached a Facebook post from a teacher that lives in my town. I think we should also talk about how the election results will impact policies relating to education such as the common core and even just how this will affect urban and minority communities. Also, here is a Huffington Post article about the issue: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/what-should-we-tell-the-children_us_5822aa90e4b0334571e0a30b



(Webtalk, 12 November 2016).

Bea: “I’m very nervous about having this conversation, I think its super important, I’m just scared. It’s been really hard to be on campus and social media lately because I am a Republican, and as you all may have noticed, that’s not the best thing to be right now. If we do have this conversation, I hope we can make it productive and respectful to all sides. I want to hear what everyone has to say and for us to figure out what’s best for many of our future students, I just don’t want world war three to break out like it has been in other places.” (Webtalk, 13 November 2016)

- Stella: “I really do think this is an important conversation to have, although very touchy. I was recently at [the local afterschool center where the students were doing their learning activities with urban minority children] doing some work with the Student Literacy Council. We were making some books with the kids (that we had written and that they were to illustrate). The kids were in a different type of mood than usual. They seemed to not want to engage in the activity and were very keen on making their own books. Although they started out with various topics like vacation and cake making, they ended up talking about the election. Many students stated, ‘Trump won’t like me because I’m Black. He’s probably going to send me back to Africa.’ When they were talking about this, I wasn’t sure what to say. I was almost at a loss for words. I tried to talk about how we should just all focus on loving one another and learning about each other’s differences. I think it might be important to have some discussion about how to talk to children about these kinds of impactful events.” (Webtalk, 14 November 2016).
- Lisa: “I agree that it is important to discuss, but this has been a very intense and emotional election and I am concerned how it will go. Everyone has the right to their opinion, but in my other class we discussed the election results by writing down our thoughts and having them read out loud anonymously. Even through this process, people got upset and I think having an open discussion would be worse. I think talking about it in the context of children, while avoiding (somehow) sharing specific opinions could be beneficial.” (Webtalk, 15 November 2016, in the morning before our class meeting)

Reading these class forum postings made me apprehensive of how to approach this controversial and very important topic in the class while preventing its breaking down. One improvement of our class voted in by the students at the Midterm Town Hall meeting was allocating time at the beginning of the class for discussing current political events relevant to our class on urban education. Just before the class started, while I was already in the classroom, my colleague stepped in and shared with me a local university newspaper describing an incident in a student dormitory of somebody posting a racial slur note against Latino and Black students with justification by Trump’s presidential victory (<http://udreview.com/racial-slurs-posted-on-bulletin-board-in-west-tower/>). I had many concerns about the class that was voted by the students (before the election) to be on “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy for urban students” (Ladson-Billings, 1995). I was also concerned of the Trump election issues taking over our topic and an organic transition to it. I put the following Class Agenda on the blackboard (projected from my laptop). Here is its relevant fragment:

- 1f. Tough class today for me!
 - 1g. Presentations of and reflections on our Learning Activities at the Center
 - 1h. Current educational events:
 - i. Trump & Clinton’s lack of policies and discussions
 - ii. Election and split in education (NASP Guidance for Reinforcing Safe, Supportive and Positive School Environments for All Students)
 - iii. Sharing our hopes and concerns: Trump’s policies and urban education (teacher professionalism controversy)
2. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in urban education.

I shared my concerns and expected difficulties about the current class meeting (1f) while some of my students were relieved but some were tensed that the election was on the Class Agenda. Three students presented about their teaching experiences of the learning activities that they designed at the center. Stella was the third presenter. She described how she had planned to read and discussed a book of children’s interest as she did before but these elementary school African American and Latino children refused to listen to the book—instead they spontaneously started sharing discussing the election of Trump. They were worried that Trump would order to expel them to Africa or to Mexico. Based on our past discussions in class, Stella stopped pursuing her preplanned reading activity and instead suggested the children to discuss how they felt about the election and made a book on that together. The children drew pictures, wrote text, and some younger kids who could not write yet dictated Stella their text. The children’s book was full of worries and fears that the children probably heard from their parents.

I open the whole class discussion about Stella’s teaching experiences by asking how they felt about Stella’s approach to her teaching challenge and what they might have done differently if they were in Stella’s shoes. Many of the students highly praised that Stella did not insist on the preplanned activity but instead focused on what was relevant for the children at time (later I connect this point to our new topic on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy). They also praised high educational quality of her new learning activity of development of a book of worries about Trump’s presidential election. One student, who wanted to be a school psychologist, praised Stella for potential therapeutic nature of her learning activity—this student argued that therapy of a traumatic event often starts with a person public sharing worries and fears, which was exactly what Stella’s learning activity promoted. Then, the floor was taken by Bea who indirectly criticized Stella for a lack of guidance about the election and staying on the periphery of her learning activity. Bea said that if she were in Stella’s shoes she would reassure the children that the President could not expel US citizens from the country. She shared her own experience.

Bea told us that during the week, after the election she babysat a 9-year-old boy. The boy was also very upset and worried about the election of Trump. He said to her that all Republicans who voted for Trump were bad people. Bea asked the boy what he felt about her and then admitted that she was a Republican who voted for Trump. The boy was stunned. Bea immediately explained to us that she disagreed

with many of Trump's positions and statements and she voted for him mostly out of her loyalty to the Republican Party and her family who is traditionally Republican. Bea explained to the boy that the US President could not do many dramatic actions unilaterally being constrained by the Congress, the law, the courts, and the Constitution. She told him about the division of powers and checks-and-balances in the US. Bea suggested that Stella might have included this lesson about the US government structure in her mostly therapeutic learning activity.

Bea ended her discussion by sudden reflection on her voting choice. She asked us and herself if her voting choice was a mistake and she should take responsibility for fears and pains that election of the President Trump would and already did cause. Nobody replied to her and there was an uncomfortable silence in the class. So, Bea replied to our silence that she was going to think more about that but that she felt sorry for her voting choice (she expected Trump to lose essentially making her vote a protest vote against Hillary Clinton).

Stella thanked Bea for her terrific suggestions of more proactive guidance and said that she would definitely try this approach next time. Stella said that Bea-suggested guidance would probably sooth some of the children's worries, while teaching them about the structure of the US government and reasons behind them. I raised an issue of whether political institutions alone could prevent potential power abuses or not (I gave an example of the Weimar Germany, where institutions could not prevent abuses of power by Hitler). We discussed the role of people in preventing power abuses.

The class discussion shifted on how other professors addressed the election at the university if at all. One student shared that her professor reassured possible underdocumented immigrant students that they were saved in her classroom. Some of the students praised this approach but some disagreed that a professor could not promise what she could not deliver. At some point, I introduced the local newspaper article about a racial slur in the dormitory. We discussed our worries and hopes—both education and noneducation in nature—about the election of Trump. We also discussed how to discuss politics in elementary school. Bea, Stella, and other students were very active in these critical discussions.

Finally, I transitioned to discussion of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) by pointing out that Stella's and Bea's learning activities were good examples of CRP, which surprised both of them (and the rest of the class) because they thought that CRP was about celebrating the students' own cultures (like food and heritage).

After the class, Bea commented to me that it was one of most influential classes for her in her school life. Started as ontologically centrifugal, our critical internally persuasive discourse promoted ontologically centripetal forces that made our classroom community stronger. By far, this—preservation of the classroom community in the internally persuasive discourse—cannot be guaranteed in each and every case. For example, I wonder what might happen if Bea were a true believer and follower of Trump—could critical and open-minded examination of the participants' dear and alternative ideas survive in such polarity of antagonistic political division.

Ontological Chronotope of Dialogic Pedagogy: Political Cultural Community of Learners

The ontological chronotope of dialogic pedagogy involves the unity of time and space where the participants live with each other to promote their education and, specifically, IPD. The ontological chronotope includes organization and decision-making about education, negotiation of human ecology and relations, prioritizing diverse concerns and demands of the participants' lives with their educational goals, and so on. The space and time of the ontological chronotope are both physical and meaning-based.

For example, I often start teaching my 3-hour classes (undergraduate and graduate) without having a break. Sometimes (but not always) my students raise concerns about a need for a break because they get hungry or need to get to a toilet or need to walk or need to socialize with each other and me. We discuss consequences of having a break that cuts the time of the class. We discuss why a break is needed when the participants can do almost all of these activities on an individual basis (some students said that they did not want to miss anything when they leave for toilet). The ontological chronotope often does not have clear boundaries between its physical and meaning-based aspects.

The class culture and IPD

One of the most important aspects of the ontological chronotope is that it creates a culture of the classroom community. For example, does the class feel like a flow of assignments imposed by the instructor? Or does the class feel like a flow of exciting opportunities for the participants to educate themselves and each other about something very interesting and important for them? Or a little bit of both? Or something else (e.g., busywork)?

Here is an example of the culture of a community of learners. Five minutes at the end of each of my classes, I asked my students to provide their "Mind attendance"—a brief reflection on the class, written online: what attracted their attention, questions they did not ask, feedback on the class, and what they want to study next (although we usually make decision about that before this activity). Here is one of the students' entry after a class on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995):

1. I learned that we all had varying perspectives on the movie, *Freedom Writers* [fragments]. I did see some pros to the movie that I had never considered before. One was that Eugene pointed out which was the fact that Erin Gruwell [(Freedom Writers & Gruwell, 1999)] really did reflect on her teaching and saw the pros and cons to her first lesson. The idea of growth is really important. Another interesting thing that I've learned is that rubrics put ideas that are out of the box into boxes and that it is hard for a teacher to have expectations of a project before they even see it!
2. What are some other ways that we can be accountable as teachers but not give out grades? Are there any classes doing this right now that Eugene or the class knows about?

3. So exciting and inspiring because I am beginning to see that there is so much value in just the experience of education itself rather than sticking to the plan [the student reflected on the relationship between lesson plan and pedagogical improvisations in learning activities that the students made at an afterschool community centers with urban children].
4. I'm excited to talk about the next topic ["14. Bottom-Up (for failing students) and Up-Bottom (for advanced students) models of education for urban students"] after Thanksgiving! (Mind attendance, 15 November 2016).

In my judgment, this student's Mind attendance reflects our class culture as a place of exciting learning opportunities that the student was looking forward for. In a community of learners classroom culture, students can be critical about some aspects of the class expecting the instructor (and other participants) to address these concerns:

I think I learned a lot more today than last class and that the discussion was a lot more interesting. While I like our open curriculum, I've gotten used to the structure of a closed curriculum and I find it a little uncomfortable to have all of this freedom in the course. I liked watching the videos today and learning about the different perspectives of the children and what they had to say about science. I thought it was really interesting how we compared it to Bea's [classmate, pseudonym] experience as well before watching the videos. I found it really cool how engaged the children were and how they didn't just reject all the prompts they were given by saying 'I don't know.' I'm excited for our next topic about flexible academic curriculums impact on testing, but I'm hoping to spend more of the class talking about it. I still feel like for most of class today we talked about how our class was going to work, instead of the topic (Mind attendance, 6 September 2016).

In contrast, the following Mind attendance seems to reflect the classroom culture of imposed assignments, "1. Today I learned about privileges and disadvantages [summarizing the class' topic]. 2. None. How long should Self-Study be? 3. OK, useful. 4. Whatever" (Mind attendance, 12 March 2015). The student seemed to be mainly concerned about fulfilling the class assignments, while seeing some usefulness of them for himself. Alternatively, it is plausible that this student views the class as simply a busywork being insincere about usefulness of the class. However, for some other classes, he posted "None" for the class feedback. Another possibility was that this particular class topic and instruction did not click with him. For some further classes, the same student became excited, apparently changing his attitude toward the class,

- (1) I found it interesting that there could be so many positive aspects to cliques and that in some situations it could actually better to have them. Before I thought that cliques [the topic of the class] were all bad.
- (2) I wanted to see if individual students [in our class] had experience with cliques and their thoughts on them.
- (3) Class was pretty good, I didn't know that much about the nature of cliques so it was interesting to study it from a different perspective. Should teachers promote and guide cliques rather than only suppress them? Exciting class!

- (4) I want to study immigration—legal and illegal—in education. I am doing my MLP [Main Learning Project] on immigration so it would be interesting to touch on that subject. This is a topic of [my] long-term interest. I'll try to convince the class to select it (Mind attendance, 23 April 2015).

The class culture of the ontological chronotope seems to be related to the critical chronotope of IPD. The more a student got ontologically engaged in critical IPD, the more he or she might perceive the class as a community of learners.

However, as I discussed above, some dramatic ontological engagement in critical IPD may also try to turn a classroom community of learners apart.

Political and Cultural Aspects of Ontological Chronotope

However, not only IPD contributes to the participants' sense of class culture. For example, at the beginning of the undergraduate teacher education class in spring 2015, described above, the students voted to allow the teacher (me) to call only on students who raised their hands, despite the fact that the teacher warned the students before their voting that it might lead to a negative consequence of only a few students talking in the class. During the Midterm Town Hall meeting, some students noticed the problem and suggested to fix it, "I think that only calling on people when they raise their hand isn't working very well. Some students aren't participating at all and it is not helping to better themselves or the other students. Perhaps we could take another vote on that" (Midterm Town Hall meeting survey, 26 March 2015). "I disagree with the raising hands. I feel as though this is a course that requires participation and I find that sometimes people may feel disengaged from the class if they are not concerned about the potential to have to participate. The 5th amendment⁷ keeps people participating who might otherwise not feel comfortable or may wish to be somewhere else. I think we could increase our participation by implementing the '5th Amendment' rule. I feel as though some individuals will not otherwise participate if not given the explicit opportunity first" (Midterm Town Hall meeting survey, 26 March 2015). After discussing PROs and CONs of the current and proposed class policy on calling students, the class voted 74% in favor of the 5th Amendment rule. The new classroom policy changed the class culture. Before it was a small vocal group of students who talked, and the rest were a silent majority. After the 5th Amendment rule, everybody spoke in the class. Some (shy?) students reported that our class was the only where they spoke up.

I argue that the ontological chronotope of dialogic pedagogy is a political cultural community of learners. Ontological community of learners involves viewing the participants as autodidact "learners" genuinely interested in pursuing their own

⁷"The 5th Amendment rule" refers to the following class policy, "Eugene can call on people who don't raise a hand but people will have the right to say 'pass' without any explanation" (cf. Shor, 1996). The 5th Amendment refers to the US Constitution, according to which an accused has the right not self-incriminate him/herself and remain silent.

education rather than in pleasing the teachers' demands (i.e., "students") (Matusov, von Duyke, & Han, 2012). The teacher's role is Learner#1 in the classroom with and from the students on the subject matter (Matusov, 2009). While the cultural aspect of the ontological chronotope is about the emergence of attitudes and relations supporting a sense of the IPD community in the class, the political aspect of ontological chronotope is about decision-making about the organization of education in narrow and broader contexts of the students' lives.

In a conventional classroom, usually the teacher, school administration, educational experts, test designers, and the entire society, not students, are those who make decisions about students' education: what to study, how, with whom, whether to engage in education, under what conditions, to what aim, what constitutes the quality of education, and so on. As one of my undergraduate freshman teacher education students exclaimed during the Midterm Town Hall Meeting, "A few months ago [in the student's High School], I had to ask the teacher's permission to go to pee. But now I'm deciding what it is good for my education, what I want to study and why I should want it, and how!"

Democratic self-governance that I introduce in my undergraduate and graduate classes often contributes to the class culture as many students comment how it gives ownership of their own education and life and they are treated "as adults." In anonymous after class evaluation, a student wrote, "I thought the professor was really respectful about all the students' perspectives and allowed us to voice our own opinions and teach us about differing perspectives on every topic. He treated us as adults. I loved to make decisions about our class because it made me want to learn more" (Online anonymous class evaluation, December 2016). Similarly, a graduate student wrote, "I really appreciate Eugene's continued effort to allow us to choose topics that interest us rather than just what he thinks we should learn. This is a really nice way to foster engagement in the material at the graduate level" (Online anonymous class evaluation, December 2016).

However, democratic self-governance can go against the class culture as well. For example, at the end of my undergraduate 2015 class described above, some students raised objections against engaging them too early in democratic self-governance. They argued that although it was nice to taste democratic self-governance from the day one of the class, when I had engaged them in my teaching dilemma about whom I should call: (a) only those who raised their hands, (b) randomly, and (c) the 5th Amendment rule; it was also counterproductive. These students argued that the democratic self-governance robbed the class from inclusive discussions during the first part of the semester. They insisted that they had not been ready for the democratic self-governance because they had not had a taste for the class and wrongly prioritized their own comfort over educational opportunities, based on their past experiences in conventional classrooms where many had not had safety to speak. They suggested me to introduce democratic self-governance gradually: initially through voting on a next topic for the class (i.e., Open Curriculum) and then through the Midterm Town Hall Meeting, where all aspects of the class are open for evaluation, critique, and change. Listening to their reasoning and reflecting on my own pedagogical experimentation, I had to agree with

them and since that I use the 5th Amendment rule unilaterally from the beginning of the class. So far, students never suggest revising this rule in their Midterm Town Hall Meetings.

The tension between the democratic self-governance and the class culture manifests itself about several other issues. Thus, when I run my classes as Open Syllabus where my students had an opportunity to fully design the class from scratch on our first class meetings, some students complained that the democratic self-governance takes too much time from the studies on the subject matter themselves. A famous British writer, Oscar Wilde, captured this tension in the following way: “The trouble with Socialism is that it takes too many evenings.” The class culture shifts from a community of learners to a community of education designers. Another issue with introduction of the intensive democratic self-governance from day one is that, as my 2015 students pointed out, often there is a shallow nature of their decision-making, guided by their past experiences in the Closed Syllabus pedagogical regime, where teachers make organizational and pedagogical decisions unilaterally and when the class culture of pleasing the teacher’s demands and assignments prevailed (see Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2017, for more description and analysis of these tensions).

The class culture is also shaped by the students’ life demands—institutional, economic, and personal—outside of the class. For some of my students, the Open Syllabus pedagogical regime did not work because without having any pressure, they moved the class resources (primary time and efforts) to address other demands of their life, which were less exciting than the class for them. This is what one of my Open Syllabus undergraduate students wrote in a non-solicited email to the instructor (me), addressing her often absences from the class,

In short, I am having a terrible semester. I have bit off more than I can chew in having a part time job and taking 2 honors classes as well as extracurricular activities. When I miss class it is because I am either working extra hours at work or I am cramming for my next exam. I realize I have not been the ideal participant in our class but I can assure you I do really enjoy our EducXXX class and the topics we discuss. Urban education is a passion of mine and I looked forward to this class until I became so stressed this semester. It probably obvious to you, as well as to myself, that because of our open syllabus and “no grades” policy, that I have used this class as a cushion for my heavy workload. I apologize because I know I have taken advantage of what was supposed to be beneficial to my learning and our class. I don’t know how to make up for the class time that I have missed except to tell you that I really have enjoyed what I have been there for and that I have tried to use webtalk to understand the days I missed. I hope you see that when I am in class I enjoy participating and have a lot to offer (email, November, 2012) (Matusov, 2015b, pp. A198–A199).

In this email, the student started with a list of burdens that she faced in her semester in parallel with our Open Syllabus class, but then she shifted her reflection on the non-coercive nature of the Open Syllabus that allowed her to neglect her commitments to her own educational self-actualization. This indicates a lack of culture of taking responsibility and care for one’s own self-actualization while prioritizing other responsibilities mostly coming from instrumental necessities and resting from these instrumental necessities coming from outside of the class.

However, without this culture of commitment to one's own self-actualization, the life feels like an empty struggle for survival (Arendt, 1958).

Thus, I switched from the Open Syllabus pedagogical regime, where the democratic self-governance is introduced from day one to the Opening Syllabus pedagogical regime, where the democratic self-governance is introduced gradually. First, as Open Curriculum, where students are engaged in deciding the next topic of the class from the Curriculum Map list, developed by the teacher and amended by the students. Second, through the Midterm Town Hall Meeting, where students are engaged in evaluation of all aspects of the class, proposing improvements, analyzing their PROs and CONs, and finally voting on the proposed changes.

Still, the Opening Syllabus pedagogical regime is not without its own tensions between the democratic self-governance and the class culture—some of these tensions go in the opposite direction now. Thus, one graduate student who chose Open Syllabus for herself (i.e., deciding the organization of the class by herself) commented in her online class evaluation, “I am not sure the structure of the class is the most conducive environment for the open syllabus students. The structure gives students an uncomfortable feeling of deviating from the prescribed path and venturing out into the open syllabus world” (Online anonymous class evaluation, December 2016). It seems the class culture of Opening Syllabus, which highest majority of the students chose to stay (what the student refers as “the structure of the class”), does not promote emergence of the class culture of Open Syllabus for the students who chose it. The collective expectations, attitudes, excitements, and relations did not emerge around Open Syllabus for the minority of students who chose this pedagogical regime. I had to learn how to support two (or more) class cultures in my classes.

The Class Culture and the Class Ecology

The educational ecology is a part of the educational ontological chronotope. Ecology involves the participants' emergence of emotions, moods, relations rooted in the chronotopic unity of the time and space, affecting their participation. The class ecology can contribute to the class culture. For example, students' sitting arrangements can promote or hinder the emergence of certain relationships among participants. For example, in my small undergraduate class of 9 students, students' sitting in clusters promoted their working together in small groups but hindered whole class discussions. Also, our classroom without windows and sterile walls made the room and, thus, our communications more impersonal. The students suggested changing the room at the Midterm Town Hall Meeting and during our following-up online discussions. We discussed both PROs and CONs of changing the current classroom,

PROs: We have a sterile, not inviting, not stimulating, and poor environment in our class. Is it a goal of conventional education ... to make the classroom environment very sterile and

poor so the students won't be distracted their attention [away] from the teacher? Also, our class is often either too cold or too hot. Outside of the class may allow us to do learning activities that are difficult to [do] in class. Exciting and rich places may stimulate our creativity and improvisation and make us less tired.

There is another room that is upstairs in [the building] that [another professor] would take us to in [another class] to get a change of scenery. The room has a conference feel, there are 'spiny' chairs and a big open space to move around. This way we would have internet, no noise from other people, and could watch videos and share web posts. Maybe we could look and see if it is open during our class period?

I think it would liven up the class and make it more exciting, as well as promote discussion! Maybe we could use a different room or something or go somewhere!

I think that switching it up would be very refreshing and help us partake in conversations and discussions more easily.

CONs: Noise and people around may distract us. There is difficult to watch videos or share documents/webs. There may be no Internet or electricity. Sometimes we need privacy (e.g., during our discussions and simulation of Learning Activities) (Webtalk, 2–6 November 2016).

We voted on the proposal and it passed unanimously. I found different cozy conference rooms for our class meetings until the end of the semester. The students were sitting around a long table on very comfortable soft chairs surrounded by art pictures on the walls and having a window. Interestingly enough, students commented on that ecological change causing cultural change in their attitudes in their Mind attendance notes, "I really enjoyed today's class, specifically the change in scenery. It made the class room discussion much easier" (Mind Attendance, 29 November 2016). Some students made oral remarks that the conference rooms made them feel being "adults" and "respected".

Encouraging students to bring food and eating during our long 3-hour class not only made students less hungry and less tired but eating together also contributed to the development of a sense of community. Having mid-class break and me coming 15 min before the class allowed some students to informally communicate with me about diverse issues of our class and provide both informal academic advisement and even consulting about diverse issues of students' lives (e.g., about a student's conflict with her parents). At the beginning of each class meeting, I provide space for students' brief sharing issues and events of their lives that can be broadly relevant to our class. Students share education related to local and national news, and tensions they experience in their other classes. For example, one student who loved to teach yoga—she did this learning activity at the afterschool center with urban children—was criticized by another professor for "stealing", "commercializing", and "secularizing" this Indian spiritual activity. They also share their birthdays—leading to an interesting discussion of possible controversies of celebrating birthdays in classrooms, for some students' cultures or religions might strongly reject this tradition. This practice of sharing at the beginning of the class contributed to both critical IPD on topics initiated by the students and creating a sense of a community of learners.

My fall 2016 undergraduate class for preservice teachers described above generated unusual and very thought-provoking ecological issues during our Midterm Town Hall meeting. Thus, a student raised an issue that our Self-Studies—in-class learning activities to explore the discussed topic in depth—should not be in writing only. She proposed, “no written self-studies, still have exploration, just do not write down answers, discussion only instead” (Webtalk, 2 November 2016). Our follow-up discussion revealed the following PROs and CONs:

PROs: Some people are more oral. Some people need to talk in order to think. Sometimes writing can extinguish collective exploration and creativity. CONs: Individual exploration is also very important. Writing has its own strengths that orality may not have (e.g., a possibility to reread and edit, fixating ideas and points making the points more visible and durable). Writing discourse is very important professionally and in general in our society and sometimes (over?) prioritized. It may be a good idea to challenge people who is not comfortable with writing (Webtalk, 2 November 2016).

Some students insisted on having writing. The compromised proposal that passed involved diversification of means—some students could do Self-Studies orally and some in writing (at the end all but on student were writing their Self-Studies). Another issue was giving choices to do Self-Studies individually or in group. Diversification of medium and organization of Self-Studies made this learning activity more meaningful and personally relevant for students.

Axiological Aspect of the Critical Chronotope: Values of Education Itself

Finally, I want to discuss axiology of education itself—what value education has for the participants. Axiology of education is an aspect of the critical chronotope. It is interesting that in his early literary analysis in the early 1920s, Bakhtin (1990) always emphasized the unnamed triad—time, space, and axiology—while later, in the mid-1930s, he focused only on the unity of time and space in his notion of chronotope (Bakhtin, 1991). Elsewhere (Matusov, 2015a), I argued that chronotope has many more aspects that only two—time and space—and includes such aspects as axiology, participants, relations, and so on.

There is a common expectation in education that the goal of education is unproblematic and it often pre-exists the educational practice itself, thus making the latter *poiesis*, using the Aristotelian term (Carr, 2006). In conventional education, the goal of education is often viewed as students’ predictably arriving at the curricular endpoints, preset by the teacher and the society under the guidance of the teacher (Matusov, 2009). Students are expected by the society to be willing subjects of teacher’s instruction, to unconditionally comply with teacher’s demands and requirements, to do diligently all assignments on time, to guess actively what the teacher wants from them, and to please skillfully and pro-actively teachers’ pedagogical desires. They are expected to be a willing object of teachers’ pedagogical

actions, to study hard, to be cooperative, thankful to teachers' efforts, to postpone their own desires and goals—that may be in any conflict with the teachers' pedagogical plans, objectives and desires—to self-discipline themselves, to provide self-surveillance to avoid any distraction from teacher-defined activities, and to prioritize the study over all other possible life demands. Meanwhile, teachers are expected to make (i.e., instruct, force, police, surveil, support, reward, and punish) the students arrive at the preset curricular endpoints through moving them through the predesigned sequence of lectures, texts, demonstrations, assignments, tests, and grades.

In critical ontological dialogic pedagogy, an educational practice is viewed as *praxis of praxis* (Matusov & Marjanovic-Shane, 2012). The goal of the educational practice emerges in the practice itself and does not pre-exist it—i.e., it is *praxis*, using the Aristotelian term (Carr, 2006). But even, the goal of education is a subject of critical examination (as anything else) for its participants, making an educational practice praxis of praxis. In contrast to conventional views on education where education is viewed instrumentally as the primary concern by the society, in critical ontological dialogic pedagogy, education is viewed as an inherently personal endeavor. It expects the participants to have diverse goals for their education—ontological and/or instrumental—that may dynamically change depending on topics, changing interests and needs of the participants, and on their critical reflections concerning their education. Here is a non-exhaustive list of possible participatory goals and roles in education.

Professional practitioners, researchers, and advocates of the targeted practice

To share professional experiences, critical reflections, resources, achievements, difficulties, successes, puzzlements, frustrations, and inquiries; to ask questions; to ask for help; to help others; to build professional networks; to challenge and struggle with the professional (often paradigmatic) opposition; to nurture half-baked ideas; to discuss professional issues (including managing out of practice life issues); and to treat education as an important aspect of their profession. There is no expectation of arriving at the end of their education—never-ending education. Educational environment is a professional forum.

Hobbyists, fans, dilettantes, amateurs, and enthusiasts of the targeted practice

To enjoy the targeted practice as a part of their nonprofessional life; life-long learners; learning as a way of life; and there is no expectation of arriving at the end of their education—never-ending education enriching and supplementing their life. Educational environment is an interest leisure club.

Critical learners of the targeted practice

To evaluate critically the practice; to test ideas, values, and truths against as many alternative ideas, values, and truths as possible; to engage in critical dialogue and self-growth; to play with ideas; and to jailbreak the existing practices. Education is viewed as a never-ending inherent goal in itself (rather than a professional aspect of problem-solving): education for education sake. Educational environment is an inquiry and critical dialogue public forum.

Becoming a professional practitioner of the targeted practice

To learn how to creatively socialize into the practice in order to be recognized by the relevant practitioners and non-practitioners as capable (cf. Lave & Wenger, 1991); to join a community of practice; to apprentice into the practice; to get a job involving the targeted practice; to become skillful and knowledgeable practitioners; to join a professional discourse, worldviews, attitudes, orientations, networks, and knowledge; to get involved into a legitimate peripheral participation; to observe and lurk on the professional forums; to play with ideas; and to jailbreak the existing practices. Education is viewed as socialization into the existing practice. Educational environment is apprenticeship.

Credential students

To get credentials established and recognized by the society, to prepare and pass exams, tests, and other summative assessments aiming at credentials, to follow the roadmap of assignments that will help to pass the credential summative assessments, to cooperate with the teacher who is helping in getting the desired credentials, and to ask the teacher and all other participants for help. Education is equated with getting credentials (e.g., diploma, degrees, class credits, certificates, and mark grades), pre-defined by the society through curricular endpoints, tests, and exams. Education is viewed as space- and time- bounded (e.g., during a lesson online), having a clear end (e.g., course term, semester, and degree term). Credentials are viewed as a gateway to the desired profession and economically good life. Educational environment is a series of challenges with earning the symbolic rewards (i.e., credentials). However, this series of challenges does not need to be rigid, as it is often done in conventional classes—ideally, a student can join at any time, at any point, and for any duration of time (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013).

Uncommitted visitors and lurkers

To observe the educational practice and what other participants do there, to see if one can enjoy the educational and targeted practice and learning, to test one's own commitment to the practice and learning, to find and meet interesting people, and to enjoy time spent in education. Education is viewed as exposure to something new and potentially interesting and as window-shopping. Educational environment is a potentially interesting place to visit.

Reluctant forced students

To resist engagement in the educational practice, to minimize possible negative consequences of this resistance, to smuggle other (educational and noneducational) activities of one's interest, to pass by the educational practice, to try to get out, and to manage one's own fatigue and boredom. Education is viewed as an oppressive practice to fight, resist, and cope with. Educational environment is oppressive imprisonment, imposed by others.

Teachers

To facilitate learning for and among diverse participants; to mediate conflicts; to promote democratic self-governance; to provide learning resources; to build educational networks; to guide and to promote critical dialogue; to design ontological

dialogic provocations, to couch, to encourage, to praise, to offer, and to provide feedback; to help the participants negotiate challenges, with which they are faced; to connect the participants who may be helpful for each other; and to participate in a professional forum with other educators. Education is primarily viewed as support of participants' self-authorship and voices in their education and the targeted practice. It is viewed as both permanent process practice and as bounded in time (for some other participants). Educational environment is a learning environment and ecology for others.

In the critical ontological dialogic education, all these diverse educational goals, values, and roles—their dynamism, multiplicity, ambiguity, emergence, and critical reflection—are recognized as legitimate, requiring educators' support. The diverse educational values and goals provide both synergy and opposition for each other. For example, I had an undergraduate student, a preservice teacher, who, according to my observations, was disengaged in the class and in the afterschool practicum with urban minority children. She was texting and shopping during the class and barely engaged in learning activities. I tried to engage her by trying to find her interests or sending kids to play with her but nothing helped. Although it was difficult in my classes even then (when I did not realize fully the detrimental effects of grades on education), she got C in my class.

Once I bumped into her on a campus street a year after, to my big surprise, she was extremely happy to see me. I was openly perplexed and she told me that our class was the best education that she got. I was even more surprised. She told me that in our class she had realized that she did not want to be a teacher. She said that through my pedagogical engagement efforts (that miserably failed) and promotion of critical reflection on that, she was thinking why she was so disengaged, especially with kids at the afterschool center. She came to the conclusion that she did not want to be a teacher, and transferred to the theater department to become an actress. And she felt happy there. Thus, in our class she embraced diverse roles as reluctant student, credential student, becoming a professional practitioner, and critical learner that led her on an important educational realization. I was ashamed for giving her C because I so narrowly and rigidly defined the goal of education and educational role as becoming a good teacher in the subject matter of my class and critically reflecting on that. I did not include an educational goal of testing whether a teacher profession was good for my students as a legitimate one.

Conclusion

In this theoretical chapter, I argue that the critical ontological dialogic pedagogy has a complex relationship with values. Using a chronotopic analysis, I view three pillars of this relationship. First, it is the critical chronotope of the internally persuasive discourse (IPD) aiming at critical examination and deconstruction of all values. Second, it is the ontological chronotope of the political and cultural community of learners aiming at the affirmation of values ontologically supporting IPD.

Third, it is diversity, multiplicity, dynamism, ambiguity, emergence, and critical reflection on the values of education itself. These three pillars provide both synergy (centripetal forces) and contradictions (centrifugal forces) among and within each other.

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