

Chapter 10

Rehabilitation of Power in Democratic Dialogic Education¹

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The issue of legitimacy or illegitimacy of power is central for practices of democracy, critical dialogue, and education. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the legitimacy of power among the participants in Democratic Dialogic Education.

Although in the modern practices of political democracy and existing institutionalized education, the presence of power is not an issue—they all are heavily based on power—the question is whether and how much this power is legitimate and desired for flourishing democracy, dialogue, and education. Starting from the Age of Enlightenment, if not before in ancient Greece, the legitimacy of authority and power in general has been under suspicion. There have been philosophical efforts to delegitimize power and authority, fully eliminate them, or at least subordinate them to intellectual endeavors of a pursuit of reason, science, hard facts, laws of nature, smart democratic procedures, and rational consensus. However, some other scholars argue that this approach ironically leads to results opposite to those that have been envisioned by the Enlightenment movement: violence, intolerance, wars, illiberalism, dogmatism, corruption, fanaticism, irrationality, repressions, and suppression of dissent. Following this criticism, we will try to rehabilitate the notion of authority and power in Democratic Dialogic Education (and, in our lesser focus, in democracy) and discuss what diverse interplays between power and critical dialogue may look like as a result of this legitimacy of power.

Before we start, we want to provide a few definitions of the terms we use here. In our view, “power” involves the imposition of ideas, wills, and demands on people who would not engage in these ideas, wills, and demands on their own without this imposition. We define “authority” as *legitimate* power recognized by the people on whom power is imposed. We view “critical dialogue” as (primarily) ontological testing of ideas similar to Mikhail M. Bakhtin’s (1991) notion of “internally persuasive discourse”, where “internal” is defined as internal to the discourse and not necessarily to an individual (Matusov and von Duyke, 2010).

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We define “Democratic Dialogic Education” as a leisurely² endeavor of critical examination of the self and the world through development of one’s own authorial positions and voices, testing them against alternative ideas that historically emerged in the Big Dialogue (i.e., the never-ending dialogue across the time and space of humanity), and gaining ownership of one’s own life. We believe that education is essentially autodidactic (involving a learner’s self-education), with the teacher’s role being to assist this process when asked by the student.

We will start our chapter with a brief critique of the Enlightenment project. Then we will focus on rehabilitation of power and authority in Democratic Dialogic Education. Finally, we discuss the principle of the opaqueness of consciousness and desirability of dissensus in and for critical dialogue in Democratic Dialogic Education.

Critique of the Enlightenment Project

The Age of Enlightenment has tried to abolish violence against dissent—religious wars, torture, capricious rulers—launched by a dogmatic or absolutist power. As the Age of Enlightenment emerged in its struggle with authority—mostly with the religious orthodoxy and monarchic absolutism—there were constant calls for abandoning power and replacing it with reason, science, hard facts, laws of nature, the rule of law, and rational consensus. The Enlightenment thinkers did not necessarily argue for the dismissal of authority and power per se, but for subordinating the legitimacy of power and authority to the non-power procedures and reasons listed above. They believed that critical dialogue, hard facts, science, procedure, justice, reason, and consensus may exist without and outside of power. Thus, for example, the famous “moral imperative” proposed by Kant was backed up by reason, appealing to the universalism: “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.” Thus, for instance, in a democratic society, people should willingly obey traffic laws and regulations because they find these laws and regulations reasonable.

The Enlightenment emphasized autonomy because it gives an actor the right and power to act on the basis of universal reason and not on unconditional obedience to, and influences by, others, corrupting one’s own reason. It also relates to the Enlightenment’s commitment to universality, making autonomous actors mutually replaceable and, thus, potentially agreeable. The role of education in this Enlightenment project is to produce reasonable (discursive), rational (relational), logical (abstract, impersonal, and decontextualized), informed, moral, and well-intended autonomous citizens.

Reasonable people can legitimately disagree (i.e., they can agree to disagree). Reasonable disagreements among such citizens are welcome and necessary, and

² Cf. the etymology of the word “school” is leisure, a free time, providing opportunities to do anything that a person desires and undertakes freely and voluntarily.

regarded as being merely temporary—reason, logic, science, hard facts, and laws of nature will unavoidably lead these citizens to a rational consensus based on the universality of reason. Through these temporary reasonable disagreements, reason, logic, science, hard facts, and the law of nature will be discovered, tested, verified, and hardened. Reasonable consensus among rational, well-informed, and well-intended autonomous actors signifies arrival at the truth and, thus, becomes a proxy for truth. Reasonable consensus among rational, informed, and well-intended autonomous actors can be temporary as well—it may collapse under the pressure of new evidence, new reason, and new argument brought by autonomous, rational, informed, unbiased, well-intended actors. What is important here is that power and authority do not have the primary legitimate role in this process and have to be excluded. However, power may have a secondary legitimate role for the reasonable community. Thus, for example, Kant argued that a reasonable citizen has to obey an unjust law until the law is changed because a reasonable person should rationally accept the universal nature of any law. Hence, this unconditional acceptance of laws is still rooted in a rational argument in its own turn. Moreover, power can be legitimately applied to people who are irrational, ignorant, ill-intended, unwilling, inept, unreasonable, immoral, criminal, and immature as a last resort when reason and logical, rational persuasion does not work with them. Thus, Kant approved and legitimized the use of power and authority in education dealing with immature, ignorant, inept, biased, and under-educated citizens (von Duyke, 2013).

Recently, in political philosophy, such scholars as John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas have also accepted the Enlightenment belief that all *legitimate* human interests, ideological beliefs, and value commitments can be, ought to be, and are rooted in logic, reason, material nature, objective facts, universal principles and laws, democratic proceduralism, etc., and can be resolved in the assembly of reasonable, unbiased, informed, well-intended autonomous actors. Thus, Habermas wrote:

This concept of *communicative rationality* carries with it connotations based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying consensus bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views and, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their lifeworld. (Habermas, 1984, p. 10, italics in original)

The proponents of the Enlightenment project believe that if only reasonable, rational, informed, well-intended people dialogued about a disputed issue with each other long and intensively enough, they will come to a satisfying rationally best solution. They believe that power struggle, politics, and authority can be transcended in a democratic society, at least for reasonable people. In its ideal and desirable extreme, political parties, as well as imposition of the will of the majority by voting, should become obsolete and unnecessary. The proponents of this

approach want to be apolitical and stay above any partisan position and political polarization. They believe that a genuine attempt to understand all the diverse positions and rational dialogue among diverse and opposing parties can replace politics, power, authority, and violence (see Schuman, 2013, as an example of such an approach).³ Truth is not rooted in a majority vote but in a reasonable, informed, well-intended discourse. Rational deliberations in a disinterested search for the truth should replace (dirty and manipulative) political debates, campaigns, and ads. The state's major role should be limited to protect this process and enforce decisions made by the reasonable people. In its extreme projection of the desired future, liberty "is governed by the necessary conditions for liberty itself" (Rawls, 1971, p. 215).

Democracy as a form of governance requires a collective action, which is imposed on members of the society who disagree with this action. In contrast to democratic power-based governance, science, art, and education arguably have even less, if any, need for power. Thus, a Russian philosopher of literary art, Mikhail Bakhtin, introduced the oppositional notions of power-based "authoritative discourse" and powerless "internally persuasive discourse" in order to argue for the latter as a regime for genuine dialogue (Bakhtin, 1991, 1999). Bakhtin argued that power, politics, policies, and authority (Sidorkin, 1999) are essentially monologic and are incompatible with true dialogue in which truth is "dialogically tested and forever testable" (Morson, 2004, p. 319). Power and authority impose, whereas dialogue persuades. Although Bakhtin did not subscribe fully to the Enlightenment project—as he did not argue for rationality, autonomy, and universality as the basis of the dialogic testing of ideas—nevertheless, he seemed to accept illegitimacy of power, politics, and authority for genuine dialogue:⁴ "For ... Baxtin [Bakhtin] ... politics is a distortion and a burden" (Emerson, 1988, p. 520).

Several deep and ethically troublesome problems have been raised concerning the Enlightenment project. First, although the Enlightenment project tries to minimize or even entirely eliminate power from democratic process and critical dialogue, it actually legitimizes the use of power against people who are outside the "community of rational, well-intended people" and, thus, might resort to outbursts of violence that this approach tries to prevent in the first place:

To negate the ineradicable character of antagonism and to aim at a universal rational consensus—this is the real threat to democracy. Indeed, this can lead to violence being unrecognized and hidden behind appeals to "rationality," as is often the case in liberal thinking which disguises the necessary frontiers and forms of exclusion behind pretenses of "neutrality" (Mouffe, 2000, p. 22).

3 In modern politics, there have been ideas of the political middle ground that would rationally incorporate and, thus, transcend the existing Left and the existing Right (see an anti-utopian parody on US "byparticipants" in Shteyngart, 2010).

4 See Matusov (2007, p. 233) for a problematization of Bakhtin's apparently ambivalent position on the opposition of authoritative and internally persuasive discourses.

Consensus in a liberal-democratic society is—and will always be—the expression of a hegemony and the crystallization of power relations. (Ibid., p. 49)

As Chantal Mouffe (2000) powerfully points out, the definition of John Rawls's or Jürgen Habermas's "reasonable people" is rather circular. For instance, for Rawls, reasonable persons are persons "who have realized their two moral powers to a degree sufficient to be free and equal citizens in a constitutional regime, and who have an enduring desire to honor fair terms of cooperation and to be fully cooperating members of society" (Rawls, 1993, p. 55). Thus, "reasonable people" are those with whom other "reasonable people" reasonably agree or reasonably disagree. Chandran Kukathas (2003) argues that this circularity leads to illiberalism, intolerance, and violence against dissent—for two reasons. First, a person may be committed to rationality and liberalism from his/her point of view but may be viewed as "unreasonable," "irrational," and "illiberal" by the mainstream. Second, a person may be not committed to rationality and/or liberalism at all. In both cases, the powerful mainstream will violently strike, silence, and suppress the person as "unreasonable." Similarly, Jacques Rancière claims that the recent illiberal rebellions against democracy should be viewed as the logical consequences of this reasonable consensus-based democracy rather than its aberrations:

... the triumph of consensual democracy brought with it some strange counter-effects. "Consensus" was presented as the pacification of conflicts that arose from ideologies of social struggle, and yet it brought about anything but peace. Not only have a number of states liberated from the Soviet system fallen prey to ethnic and religious conflicts—occasionally in radical forms—but a number of consensual-democratic states have also witnessed the re-emergence and success of racist and xenophobic movements.

At the time, these new forms of violence disturbing the consensual idyll were seen in two ways. First, they were thought from within the logic of consensus. That is, they were understood as exceptions to the consensus and, as exceptions, they were presented as remnants of the past or temporary regressions. The success of the extreme right in France and then in other European countries was accordingly explained away as the reaction of social strata threatened by modernisation.

My thinking took the reverse tack: these phenomena had to be thought not as exceptions to but as consequences of the logic of consensus. (Rancière, 2004, p. 4)

Another big problem with the Enlightenment project is that it leaves a rather small role for agency for a "reasonable" individual: to recognize universality through his/her reason and study of nature and to subordinate his/her will to it (Matusov, 2014). A rational person of modernity is willing to surrender his/her personal judgment and responsibility to science, hard facts, logic, rule of law, and the laws of Nature and history. Kant's own universal reasoning for unconditional

obedience to unjust laws or justification of injustice to people born out of wedlock (“bastards,” literally “born outside of law”) provides gruesome examples of arguably immoral and unethical consequences of such irresponsible rationalism running amok. Using Bakhtin’s (1993) term, a rational person of modernity seeks absolution from personal responsibility by searching for an “alibi in being” in science, logic, laws of nature, rule of law, democratic proceduralism, and history (Arendt, 1966; Bakhtin, 1993; Gorz, 1989; Žižek, Fiennes, and Wilson, 2013). Now we will turn to an alternative approach to power in Democratic Dialogic Education rooted in Bakhtin’s dialogic framework.

Rehabilitation of Power and Authority in Democratic Dialogic Education

Apparently, it was US philologist Gary Saul Morson (2004) who first tried to rehabilitate teacher authority and, thus, teacher imposition in dialogic education. He argued that internally persuasive discourse in dialogic education is impossible without the teacher’s exercise of his/her epistemological authority of guiding the students’ attention to culturally important points of views emerging in human history. Morson distinguished monologically authoritarian and dialogically authoritative teacher authority. Monologically authoritarian teacher epistemological authority is aimed at imposing “the correct” views on students and tries to be the “final word” on a subject matter. In contrast, dialogically authoritative teacher epistemological authority serves as a dialogic provocation seeking the students’ questions, challenges, inquiries, disagreements, agreements, and emerging personal points of view that may or may not agree with the presented authoritative positions that humankind views as important to consider. These important views, alternative to the students’ own ideas, world-views, and provocations are impositions on the students by the teacher: “An authoritative word of this nonauthoritarian kind functions not as a voice speaking the Truth, but as a voice speaking *the one point of view that must be attended to*” (Morson, 2004, p. 320, italics in original).

In response to Morson, Matusov argues that teacher epistemological authority has to undergo a phoenix cycle in internally persuasive discourse. Internally persuasive discourse (IPD) is jump-started by teacher epistemological authority. In the midst of IPD, teacher epistemological authority must die only to rise again from the past internally persuasive discourse for a new one. The IPD starts from the teacher’s bringing diverse important points of view emergent in the history of humankind, provoking the students to generate their own positions and test their positions against the alternative ones. However, in the mature IPD, it is the students who become the final judges of whether the diverse ideas survive the test (i.e., the death of teacher epistemological authority). They also become the final authority for their own positions that they author, commit to, and accept. Finally, the students themselves judge the usefulness of teacher epistemological authority, and this judgment can lead to the students’ growing (or diminishing)

trust in teacher epistemological authority for future IPD (i.e., the rebirth of teacher epistemological authority) (Matusov, 2007; Matusov and von Duyke, 2010).

Now we want to add new points to this discussion based on our past pedagogical experience and experimentation in higher education.⁵ Besides teacher epistemological authority, we see some other legitimate authorities in Democratic Dialogic Education (DDE).⁶ The first one is teacher pedagogical authority. It is a legitimate role of the teacher to design a pedagogical regime—learning activities for possible important learning experiences—for the students' DDE. This imposed initial pedagogical design is usually based on the teacher's past pedagogical experiences, past students' inputs, the teacher's anticipation of the new particular students in the particular time and place, the teacher's own participation in the ongoing public historical pedagogical discourse, and the teacher's educational philosophy and innovations.⁷ Also, the school institutions, local communities, historical and cultural traditions, and the larger society (via laws and regulations) often shape this pedagogical design introduced by the teacher. Again, this teacher pedagogical authority should die and be resurrected in Democratic Dialogic Education. It should die as the students start taking responsibility for designing their own learning journey—i.e., the active exercising of their own self-generating authorial agency—that may involve rejection or modification of the teacher's pedagogical design. Also, as the students experience and are exposed to the learning journey imposed by the teacher through his/her pedagogical authority, the students may legitimately reject the overall learning journey proposed by the teacher (e.g., a student may learn that he/she is not interested in math, at least for now). Finally, based on the usefulness of the teacher's pedagogical design in the past, the students develop trust (or a lack of it) in the teacher's pedagogical authority for the future.

In the same vein, teacher community-leadership authority is also legitimate and important. The *initial* communal values, dealing with disagreements and conflicts,

5 Our theoretical ideas have been shaped by our own innovative practices and experimentation with dialogic pedagogy in certain conventional institutional contexts of higher education. It is interesting to examine authority and its legitimacy in diverse innovate pedagogical practices, different from ours, and compare with our description and analysis here.

6 "This seems to apply generally to DDE at the university level, where students seek pedagogical authority (which is assumed in university enrollment, and a condition of enrollment). At TCS [The Circle School, a Democratic school], it seems to me this role of the teacher becomes legitimate not as a condition of enrollment, but from time to time when students seek pedagogical authority (as a subset of their education, rather than a central focus, as it is in university). I'm not disagreeing with what you wrote; just applying it to TCS" (James Rietmulder, a founder of The Circle School, TCS, a democratic K-12 school, personal communication, June 22, 2014).

7 In the Democratic Education school movement (e.g., Summerhill School), this imposed pedagogical design comes from a living tradition for a new generation of students from the school's past learning community.

definition of communal peace and its maintenance, are legitimately designed by the teacher for the students to socialize in it, experience it, critically examine it, judge it, and then modify it, entirely reject it, and replace it with something else.⁸ Again, the phoenix cycle of teacher community-leadership authority is in place here again—jump-starting a learning community in order to die in it and rise again. As the students will take over the development and maintenance of their learning community, teacher community-leadership authority will die. However, the usefulness of the teacher’s initial design judged by the students may generate the students’ trust in the teacher, whose advice about community matters may be regarded extra-seriously in the future.

Finally, students also have legitimate diverse types of student authority in Democratic Dialogic Education, both in regard to the teacher and to each other. We see legitimacy of student epistemological authority in the fact that in Democratic Dialogic Education, students’ inquiries, questions, and interests are only legitimate and should be prioritized over those of the teacher.⁹ Thus, for example, in Plato’s Meno dialogue, Socrates (the teacher) prioritized Meno’s (the student’s) inquiry over his own:

If I were directing you, Meno, and not only myself, we would not have investigated whether virtue is teachable or not before we had investigated what virtue itself is. But because you do not even attempt to rule yourself, in order that you may be free, but you try to rule me and do so, I will agree with you—for what can I do? So we must, it appears, inquire into the qualities of something the nature of which we do not yet know. (Plato, 1997, p. 887, 86d).

Another aspect of student epistemological authority is to bring legitimately to a critical dialogue whatever outrageous, offensive, controversial, or unpopular idea

8 “This seems to apply well to formal classes, since each represents a new community with a well-defined beginning and ending in time, and a (mostly) stable membership. This could be university classes or classes at TCS ... From this perspective, TCS’s initial community-leadership authority has been obscured in the school’s history. Unlike a university or TCS class, the school community is ongoing in time and its membership is dynamic. If we think of each new school year as the establishment of a new community, then its initial communal values are inherited from its last incarnation” (James Rietmulder, personal communication, June 22, 2014).

9 “With regard to TCS, I’m thinking of classes that are dialogic, but the teacher is really a co-learner—assisting the students, but (explicitly) without much epistemological authority. The teacher’s role in this situation seems more about their pedagogical authority. In such classes, the teacher’s “inquiries, questions, and interests” are just as legitimate as the students.’ Well, maybe we would just say the teacher is also a student—acting in two roles—and distinct legitimacies arise from each role. At the university level, the teacher is generally expected (by the university and by society) to have much epistemological authority, so the dual role would be uncommon. Is that true???” (James Rietmulder, personal communication, June 22, 2014).

is possible because education should be a safe public space for consideration of any fantasy, possibility, or idea. Student epistemological authority collapses when the students become disoriented through testing their own ideas and until new ideas and, thus, new epistemological authority emerges in the students (with or without the help of the teacher).

Similarly, we recognize student pedagogical authority for the students to design their own learning activities, experiences, assignments, commitments, and learning journeys that should take priority over the ones designed and imposed by the teacher and by other students. The students also have the legitimate pedagogical authority of selecting and rejecting (i.e., hiring and firing) the teacher and the teacher's guidance partially or entirely. Student pedagogical authority collapses when they do not know what could be a good learning activity, learning experience, or learning journey for them. And this authority will re-emerge when students find an answer to this question (with or without help of the teacher).

Finally, we acknowledge the student community-leadership authority for defining and designing their own community, resolving conflicts and disagreements, and defining and maintaining peace (and its values). This calls for a student to be a "spoilsport" who legitimately disrupts communal assumptions or projects for critical testing values and ideas behind it. Following Marjanovic-Shane (in preparation), we, as particular educators, believe that Democratic Dialogic Education prioritizes deconstruction over construction of values and carrying out projects. Another aspect of this student community-leadership authority is the unilateral right of each member to leave a particular learning community at any time, which arguably is an aspect of any liberal assembly and not education-specific (Kukathas, 2003). Finally, the question of whether an educational community has to be legitimately open to tolerance of a student's intolerance (not necessarily as an idea to practice in life, but as a possibility for thinking and being to consider and test) remains open for us (Carson, 2012; Kukathas, 2003). Student community-leadership authority collapses when students become disoriented about the nature of their learning community and their commitment to it (e.g., becoming confused about whether a student belongs to the community or not). Students regain this authority when these issues become cleared up for them. Thus, like teacher authority, student authority also goes through a phoenix cycle of life, death, and rebirth in Democratic Dialogic Education. We wonder whether this cycle of rebirth of power goes on in any other democratic dialogic practice.

As to non-authority power (i.e., power to which its recipient does not grant his/her own legitimacy), we believe that an educational community has the right to expel its members—teachers and students—without their consent. If it is OK for a person to leave a community without the community's consent, a community has a right to leave a person without the person's consent. A community should not have a right to imprison a person, nor should a person have a right to imprison a community. This right has been practiced for years by the Democratic Education school movement: Summerhill School (Neill, 1960), Sudbury Valley School (Greenberg, 1992), The Circle School (Rietmulder, 2009) to name but a few.

In all these Democratic schools, students vote on issues of hiring, firing, canceling, or renewing teacher contracts. Also, students have the right to exclude teachers and other students from their activities. Similarly, teachers have right to exclude students from their activities. Both Sudbury Valley School and The Circle School report rare occasions of expulsion of their students by a general school meeting, consisting of the students and teachers.

We have discussed only two sources of legitimate power in Democratic Dialogic Education: teachers and students. However, there are several more: school institutions, parents, local communities, the society, and the state. There is an interesting issue of interplay and prioritization of these sources of power among these diverse parties. Of course, this prioritization can be based on local, unique circumstances and emergencies. However, in general, elsewhere we argue that the highest priority should be given to the students to have the biggest say in their own education; then to the teachers as agents of the students, and then to the rest (Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane, 2014, submitted). In the following section, we turn to a consideration of diverse types of critical dialogue in Democratic Dialogic Education and a role of politics in it.

Critical Dialogue in Democratic Dialogic Education

There has been a long tradition, intensified by the Enlightenment, to think that Democracy = Critical Dialogue (with no Politics). This belief is based on an underlying assumption about principle and normative transparency of human consciousnesses: when people's consciousnesses become transparent to each other, differences can become resolved, and agreement, and thus action based on consensus becomes possible while politics becomes unnecessary. However it has become increasingly clear to many political philosophers (e.g., Rancière, Mouffe, Kukathas) that this position is not only wrong, but in fact dangerous, leading to the worst type of politics and totalitarianism. People's disagreements are rooted in diverse ontologies, creativities, and axiologies, and in the opaqueness of consciousnesses. Although they are helpful, logic, rationality, "hard facts," democratic proceduralism, and scientific evidence have profound and important limitations, and they can never guarantee an agreement. Thus, Democracy = Critical Dialogue + Political Process, always!

Politics is an art of transforming power into authority—an art of how to impose your decision on people who disagree with you so that it looks legitimate to them (and, ideally, to everybody else). Politics involves compromise, bargaining, manipulation, threat, reward, punishment, reputation, prestige, credibility, trust, exploitation, lies, blackmail, defamation, hegemony, suppression, vanity and violence. What complicates matters even more is that politics is usually deeply intertwined with relationships that are usually viewed as apolitical—i.e., relationships that inherently are not interested, albeit still involved, in power, such as friendship, collegueship, critical dialogue, scientific pursuits, etc. Politics, being based on imposition, is

often viewed (rather legitimately) as a dirty process, and as an aberration to true democracy, true critical dialogue, true education, true collegiality, true friendship. But there is no alternative to politics. Refusal to accept politics is in itself a sly or naïve politics that may quickly lead to oppression and/or to an open eruption of brutal violence. Democracy as a particular organization and process of realization of power embedded in critical dialogue is a dramatic, unfair process that will always have an element of nastiness. But, we agree with Winston Churchill who said, “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.” We believe that politics can be made fairer and more humane when it is embedded in critical dialogue. It is very tough to move constantly between feelings of disgust with democracy and admiration of it. Both feelings are legitimate, but they are especially legitimate when they go together.

The hallmark of the Enlightenment project of democracy and dialogue is the principle of transparency of consciousnesses. It is this principle that arguably delegitimizes power and authority in democracy and dialogue among equals who are informed, capable, reasonable, rational, and well-intended. Matusov defines the principle of transparency of consciousnesses as an assumption of partial or full overlap of consciousnesses—when the content of the subjective positions is more important than the authorship and personal ownership of these positions, and the authors of these positions are mutually interchangeable (Matusov, in press). From the Bakhtinian dialogic framework, the principle of transparency of consciousness strips the voices of the authors from their messages as being irrelevant: the logos (i.e., logic) takes over the dialogue. The transparent consciousnesses of “reasonable citizens,” as defined by Kant, Habermas, or Rawls, merge into one impersonal consciousness of the Universal Logos—cf. the Absolute Spirit (Hegel and Baillie, 1967) or the World Reason (Ilyenkov, 1991). The overlap of the transparent consciousnesses is marked by monologic agreement or monologic consensus. Monologic agreement is different from dialogic agreement in that the former is a logos-based phenomenon whereas the latter is a voice-, authorship-, and subjectivity-based epiphenomenon.

For instance, according to Mouffe, in the Habermasian “deliberative consensus,” supported by democratic proceduralism (Habermas, 1996), “the basis of legitimacy in democratic institutions derives from the fact that those who claim obligatory power do so on the presumption that their decisions represent an *impartial standpoint* which is *equally in the interests of all*” (Mouffe, 2000, p. 47, italics in original). Furthermore, “Habermas believes that such a process of universalization will take place through rational argumentation and that it requires arguments from transculturally valid premises to justify the superiority of western liberalism” (Mouffe, 2000, pp. 66–7). Both Habermas’s and Rawls’s attempts to design liberal democracy based on rational consensus are rooted in their (failed) efforts to “to separate the public from the private or the procedural from the substantial ... What this reveals is ... [that they were] really aiming at ... circumscribing a domain that would not be subject to the pluralism of values and where a consensus without exclusion could be established” (Mouffe, 2000,

p. 91). In all such attempts, a voiceless, authorshipless, personless social territory needs to be mapped out, where either all consciousnesses overlap or at least all follow the same agreed upon procedures of arriving to the rational deliberative consensus. In other words, to enter into such agreements would necessarily mean losing one's own personal voice, perspective and desires and becoming part of the universal monologic logos, hard facts, and democratic procedures.

Matusov (in press) argues that Bakhtin developed an alternative to the Enlightenment framework based on the principle of non-transparency, or opacity, of consciousnesses. According to this principle, consciousnesses always remain opaque to each other and cannot overlap. Agreement is a special relationship between consciousnesses that, for different practical reasons, are not interested in further investigation of the existing differences. One of the consequences of the principle of non-transparency/opacity of consciousnesses is considering truth as essentially dialogic in nature. In contrast to the principle of transparency of consciousnesses, where it is assumed that truth lives in individual statements such as $2 + 2 = 4$, the principle of opacity of consciousnesses assumes that truth lives on the boundaries of people's authorial positions, questions, and answers in a dialogue. Statements like $2 + 2 = 4$ gain their (mathematical) meanings and truths only when they are located in a critical dialogue about math practice (and beyond) among seriously interested people. Paraphrasing Bakhtin, Matusov claims: "Truth does not have internal territory" (Matusov, 2014).

The principle of opacity of consciousnesses rejects the hidden assumption of a bird's eye's view on diverse consciousnesses, rooted in the Enlightenment. The dialogic relationship among people is based on interaddressivity—on the inexhaustible mutual interest in each other (Matusov, 2011)—rather than on a desire to squeeze out (or "appropriate") the unknown subjectivity of "a more knowledgeable" person, and, after the knowledge is fully squeezed out from him/her, leave this knowledgeable person behind. The monologic relationships in the Enlightenment project are purely instrumental and exploitative—people need each other only to accomplish something that they cannot do alone. From the Enlightenment project perspective, education is about moving the standardized informed subjectivity of the teacher (or society) into the mind of the student, in such a way that it can be verified by a high-stakes standardized assessment. In this project, disagreement is monologic, leading to the deficit model—where (students') deficit is defined as a temporary gap between two transparent consciousnesses, a gap that needs to be closed (cf. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of "the zone of proximal development").

So what does disagreement look like among non-transparent consciousnesses? First, disagreement is there in principle and for good. Dialogic disagreement is permanent. Thus, from a Bakhtinian dialogic framework, the goal of dialogic disagreement is not to convince people of one's own truth, shift to the truth of the others, or come to some kind of third emerging truth, nor is it to overrule or eliminate the opponents—i.e., reach or impose an agreement or consensus—as it is in monologic disagreement, but something entirely different. Currently, we have

found three different types of critical dialogue among non-transparent disagreeing consciousnesses (see our following chapter in this book). The first type, the agonistic dialogue—critical dialogue among the friendly enemies—is about the natural and the self-contained rationality (see Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane, Chapter 11 in this volume). Such disagreement is a disagreement between two (political or scientific) paradigms, and in that “clash,” the paradigmatic boundaries and limitations of their own truths become visible to all participants. This kind of critical dialogue is impossible without both paradigms being taken into account as legitimate ways to approach the issues at hand. Thus, such agonistic critical dialogue may lead to revisions and transcendence of the points of view and beliefs by all or some of the participants, but it does not necessarily lead to an agreement among them. Whereas in democratic governance, agonistic dialogues may escalate to actual antagonisms, including even violence, in Dialogic Democratic Education, agonistic critical dialogue makes all the participants aware of the legitimacy of the existence of other paradigms without necessarily expecting or demanding that any participants “accept” any “right” point of view. Rather, it is about exploring the limits of all the paradigms for their proponents and opponents.

The second type—dialogue among friendly strangers—is about authorial personal self-growth based on the inspiring new points of view of the others. “In a dialogue with a friendly stranger, the other provides inspiration, nutrition, and provocation for one’s own subjectivity ... Others are regarded as provocations for the author’s self-growth” (Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane, Chapter 11 in this volume, p. 216). Disagreements, are thus seen as not only normal, but also as welcome, as they provide new possibilities and opportunities for the self. One could say that in Dialogic Democratic Education, critical dialogue among friendly strangers can be seen as an opportunity for each participant to become engaged with transformations of their own subjectivities, unbeknown to the others, and without a need to witness the transformations of the other. As long as such dialogue sparks transformations in the learners, it can be considered as fruitful in terms of Democratic Dialogic Education.

Finally the third type of the critical dialogue we abstracted is hanging-out dialogue among friends. “Critical dialogue among friends is about being together through deep interest in and enjoyment of each other’s subjectivity and taking care of each other. The subjectivity of the friend is accessible but never fully known in the tension between genuine question and serious answer” (Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane, Chapter 11 in this volume, p. 219). However, at the same time, relationships among friends are infused with power, imposition on each other, competing for authority, etc. We see critical dialogue among friends as being simultaneously open to many diverse issues, thus providing opportunities for the serendipitous meeting of different issues and topics, fertilizing each other in ways that “task-oriented” dialogues among friendly enemies and among friendly strangers cannot provide. Again, the goal of critical dialogue among friends in Democratic Dialogic Education is not agreement but a possibility of deconstruction

and transcendence of any existing paradigms and subjectivity of the participants (see Chapter 11 in this volume for more discussion).

Conclusions

We argue that from Bakhtinian dialogic framework, communicational relations such as disagreement, misunderstanding, incomprehension, and dissensus are primary, essential, and permanent among people. Agreement and consensus are secondary, temporary, and epiphenomenal. Agreement is not an overlap of consciousnesses, transparent to each other. Rather, agreement is only a temporary, local, and constructed disregard for disagreements for practical reasons. In short, agreement is a social construction and a provincial stop in a dialogue. On a close look, beyond any agreement there are disagreements. For example, consider Mouffe's acute observation:

I agree with those who affirm that a pluralist democracy demands a certain amount of consensus and that it requires allegiance to the values which constitute its "ethico-political principles." But since those ethico-political principles can only exist through many different and conflicting interpretations, such a consensus is bound to be a "conflictual consensus." (Mouffe, 2000, p. 103)

Thus, in the same vein, any agreement is a "dissenting agreement."

Disagreement is rooted in a diversity of human ontologies, histories, relations, axiologies, paradigms, ideologies, and in the principle of non-transparency/opaqueness of human consciousness. When an agreement needs to be reached for a practical reason, although helpful, rationality, hard facts, science, good intentions, smart procedures, and, ultimately, even dialogue cannot guarantee an agreement. A power of imposition legitimized in critical dialogue is always there.

Critical dialogue needs power. Power objectivizes and creates new realities for critical dialogue. Power also creates a communal focus and "rules of engagement" for dialogue (Morson, 2004). Attempts to ultimately dialogize the choice for the communal focus and the rules of engagement will lead to the endless dialogic loop of meta-discussions. The power of imposition (and, thus, authority and politics) is not only unavoidable in dialogue, dialogic education, and democracy, but is needed and desirable there. Power is desirable for dialogue because it imposes collective focus, alternative undesirable and unwelcome ideas, values, topics, concerns, questions, replies, foci of attention, and approaches, and sets boundaries for, and provides freedom to, communities and individuals, defends democratic regimes, etc. Critical dialogue is based on the violent power of unilateral divorce and of leaving the dialogue at any time. Critical dialogue itself is impositional in its nature and that cannot be avoided.

The reverse is also true. Critical dialogue is necessary for power. Critical dialogue gives meaning and sets limits to (i.e., curbs) power and, thus,

humanizes it. In this sense, liberal democracy is power-fertilized and checked by critical dialogue.

Finally, we want to address the issue of what kind of political regime supports

a critical dialogue that humanizes and limits power itself. We call this political regime of liberal democracy. It involves at least five types based on the relationship with the self, the friendly other, the friendly stranger, agonistic other (friendly enemy), and antagonistic other (antagonistic enemy). First, the relationship with the self is defined by an assertion of one's own vision and values (i.e., personal bias). Second, the loyal relationship with a friend is defined by expectation of friendly disagreements, which will not undermine the relationship of friendship and the friends' unconditional support. Third, the relationship with a friendly stranger is defined by mutual support for task-oriented self-growth. Fourth, the agonistic relationship with a friendly enemy is defined by the motto wrongly attributed to Voltaire, "I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it." Fifth, the self-defensive relationship with the antagonistic enemy, demanding the elimination of my existence is defined by the oppressive means of the law, police, due process, and, if necessary, the military to stop antagonistic enemy's aggressive actions (but not necessarily words) aiming at the physical elimination of members of liberal democracy, their visions, and liberal democracy itself. Our next chapter will primarily focus on the fourth, third, and second types of relationship in Democratic Dialogic Education, while keeping the first and the fifth in the background of our analysis and discussion.

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