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**DIALOGIC ENCOUNTERS:  
THE SCHOOL OF PANAMERICAN UNREST**

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and

Women's Studies

by

Adetty R. Pérez de Miles

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The dissertation of Adetty R. Pérez de Miles was reviewed and approved\* by the following:

Karen T. Keifer-Boyd  
Professor of Art Education & Affiliate Professor of Women's Studies  
Dissertation Advisor  
Chair of Committee  
Department Head of Graduate Program

Patricia M. Amburgy  
Associate Professor of Art Education

Simone Osthoff  
Associate Professor of Art

Mrinalini Sinha  
Professor of History

\*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

**ABSTRACT**

This dissertation is a theoretical investigation of the nexus between Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's theory of *dialogism* and Pablo Helguera's *The School of Panamerican Unrest* (2006). *The School of Panamerican Unrest* (SPU) was an extensive public art project that involved an intercontinental road trip throughout the Americas. At each stop, which included traditional and non-traditional art venues, Helguera conducted artist workshops, round-table discussions, and performances. I use Bakhtin's theory of dialogism as a lens to analyze the discourses that developed in-situ at the SPU performances. In this study, I bring Bakhtin's philosophy of language (dialogism) into a new context, that is, a contemporary art practice, as (re)read and (re)written through feminist perspectives.

I use a qualitative case study research design to analyze and interpret the data. The dialogue-interactions of SPU participants provide the case study in this dissertation. The case study research design guides my effort to particularize, i.e., retell, cite, analyze, understand, and interpret, what is significant about the case's or the SPU's dialogue-interactions own issues in the time, place, and context in which the case took place.

From the interpretive frame of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, I examine the kinds of dialogues and dialogic exchanges participants performed when they engaged with *The School of Panamerican Unrest*. In my analysis of the SPU, I use Bakhtinian theory to underscore that separateness and difference (*autonomous-communion*) are essential to the dialogues of the SPU. Throughout the dissertation, I analyze Bakhtin's theories of

dialogism in relationship to reciprocity, difference, and situated knowledge. Though these ideas align with feminist theory, this study is not a feminist analysis of the SPU.

Dialogue in the work of Bakhtin and Helguera means much more than language or communication. Dialogue is not simply about verbal exchange between people but about philosophy of communication. Bakhtin's theories and Helguera's artistic praxis advance the notion that dialogue is a way to understand and create the self in relation to another person, and a practice of active listening and *responsive understanding* and action. Bakhtin's and Helguera's approach to dialogue and voice encourage complex and multifaceted theoretical engagements with language. Accordingly, their theories can assist educators and students in challenging superficial, under-theorized, and uncritical notions of dialogue.

Bakhtin's and Helguera's inquiry can be used as a methodology through which artists, educators, and students, can critically examine and challenge practices that regulate and restrict dialogue in public spaces, including art exhibitions, classrooms, and other learning environments. The research findings of this study suggests that a dialogic approach to communication and pedagogy creates spaces for open-endedness, difference of opinions, ambiguity, critical reflection, and the possibility for learners to develop their own voice in relationship to social others across difference. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and Helguera's artistic praxis facilitate insights that can be used to envision dialogue or dialogism in pedagogical spaces that embody relational, participatory, and responsible acts.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE POTENTIALITY OF BAKHTIN'S THEORY OF DIALOGISM AND HELGUERA'S ARTISTIC PRAXIS FOR ART EDUCATION

In this study, I bring the work of Russian philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin to bear on the work of Pablo Helguera, a prolific<sup>1</sup> New York–based artist whose work includes performance, installation, and various experimental formats such as symposiums, phonographic recordings, opera arias, and intercontinental road trips. Specifically, I use Bakhtin's philosophy of language, i.e., his theory of *dialogism*, and its attendant concepts: *polyphony*, *heteroglossia*, *monoglossia*, *polyglossia*, and the *utterance*, as a lens to analyze the discourses that developed in-situ at Helguera's different *School of Panamerican Unrest* (2006) performances. I participated in these performances as an observer<sup>2</sup> in New York City; Tempe, Arizona; San Francisco, California; Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Santiago de Chile, Chile; and Buenos Aires, Argentina. Ultimately, the purpose of the study is to envision, through a Bakhtinian lens, the nexus between dialogism and art in a contemporary public art practice, namely, *The School of Panamerican Unrest* (SPU) or *Escuela Panamericana del Desasosiego* (EPD). I consider these encounters and intersections for their implications, that is, their limitations and possibilities for art and pedagogy.

*The School of Panamerican Unrest* was an extensive public art project that involved an intercontinental road trip along the length of the Pan-American Highway, from Anchorage, Alaska to Ushuaia, Argentina. At each stop, which included traditional and non-traditional art venues, Helguera conducted artist workshops, round-table

discussions, and performances. The topics and ideas for each site unfolded in relation to the specificity of each location, including such factors as socio-political history and culture; and in collaboration with the interests and visions of local organizers, artists, and participants. At each location, Helguera collaborated with artists, curators, and audience members who created art manifestos and performed civic proclamations. For Helguera, the project sought to generate inter-cultural dialogue, to forge “connections between the different regions of the Americas through discussions, performances, film screenings, and short-term and long-term collaborations between organizations and individuals” (P. Helguera, personal communication, May 5, 2006).

Dialogue in the work of Bakhtin and in the work of Helguera means much more than language or communication. Dialogue is not simply about verbal exchange between two or more people but a philosophy of language or communication. It is the constituent factor of dynamic inter-relations between self and other or dialogic encounters, a way of understanding and creating the self in relation to the other, i.e., intersubjectivity, and a practice of active listening, responsive understanding, and action or an ethics based on reciprocity. I expand on these concepts and on my approach to Bakhtin’s theories and Helguera’s critical discursive practices in the following section.

### **Reciprocal Encounters Between Bakhtin’s Theory of Dialogism and the Dialogic Exchanges of *The School of Panamerican Unrest***

In considering Bakhtin’s theories, my objective is not to propose an exhaustive study of Bakhtin’s archive, or a monograph about his life, philosophical influences, intellectual development, or engage in the polemics concerning the authorship of the

disputed text.<sup>3</sup> My goal is to invoke an *encounter* with Bakhtin's philosophy of language or dialogism in relation to discussions at the SPU events that I attended. The dialogues of the SPU interlocutors were integral to Helguera's public art project. I develop these ideas and relationships in Chapter 4. In consideration of Bakhtin's work, I give serious attention to Ken Hirschkop's (1989) argument that to use Bakhtin's theories out of context and without historical specificity is to depoliticize Bakhtin's work. Hirschkop's position informs my efforts not only to avoid depoliticizing Bakhtin, but moreover to re-politicize Bakhtin's work in a new context: the SPU.

In bringing Bakhtin's ideas into the *new context* of a contemporary art practice, as (re)read and (re)written through feminist and postcolonial critical perspectives, I do not attempt to recuperate or extract the original or correct meaning of Bakhtin's theories, or to simply *apply* Bakhtin's theories to the research object or artifact. Understandings of the past are necessarily fragmentary, i.e., what is noteworthy in the past is established by later events. Or as Columbia University's Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy, Arthur C. Danto (1985) states: "for the whole point of history, is not to experience knowing about actions as witnesses might, but as historians do, in connection with later events and as part of temporal wholes" (p. 185). Thus, extracting original meaning is impossible. While strategic application takes place in the process of using dialogism as a conceptual lens to focus the study, the idea that concepts are inherently migratory is significant. In his 1989 essay, "On the Borders of Bakhtin: Dialogization, Decolonization," Graham Pechey argues that "to propose the 'circulation' of Bakhtinian concepts is not to propose anything that is foreign to their mode of being: movement or *migration*" (p. 40). In fact, Pechey affirms that Bakhtin's concepts are "constitutively migratory" and already "in

‘translation’ from one context to another” (p. 40). It is this movement of being, always already in translation, or the unfinalizability of language, that ruptures structuralist notions of application (Pechey, 1989). In this way, a researcher uses a concept, for example dialogism, or feminist epistemology, as a “master” construct. The “master” construct is then used to explain, or is simply applied, to the object of study, e.g., *The School of Panamerican Unrest* or to another discipline. Pechey’s proposition is in accord with Bakhtin’s own thought. Bakhtin sought to define the “object” of investigation in terms of active tensions, which emphasizes the necessity to (re)produce rather than duplicate the event or to elevate one discourse over another. Again, the intent of this study is not to passively recover and apply Bakhtin’s theories to the research subject but to invoke a dialogic, contrapuntal encounter with the discourses of the SPU.

Analogous to Bakhtin’s understanding of the subject in literary criticism, critical feminist qualitative research methods refract the intersubjective nature of the research process (Butler, 2005; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007; Weir, 2008). The research object/artifact is not constituted by theory; rather, the object of research can shape and be shaped by its encounters with theoretical discourses. To put the point in slightly different terms, the subject is not the object of the author’s—i.e., the writer’s, researcher’s, or artist’s—intent. The subject is not inert. The subject has a voice and can talk back. Thus, in this dissertation, I call upon an encounter with Bakhtin’s summon for a reciprocal relationship of exchange between his theory of dialogism and the dialogic exchanges of Helguera’s SPU. I want to be clear, however, that by reciprocity, I do not mean a conciliatory or equal, democratic, utopian, or “politically correct” model of exchange that ignores the uneven structure of power in language. Reciprocity in this study is dialogic. A

provocation to Bakhtin's theories, and dialogic exchanges of the SPU, this study both invites and resists various points of views, arguments, and counter-arguments. I reveal such tensions through an analysis of the centripetal (centering) and centrifugal (decentering) dialogue-interactions of the SPU participants.

Ultimately, this study performs multiple encounters with Bakhtin. In addition to bringing Bakhtin's work to bear on new SPU contexts, I bring the theories of contemporary scholars to work both alongside and against Bakhtin's theories and examine these theories in conversation with the dialogues that took place in-situ at SPU performances. These intersections facilitate a way for me, as the researcher of this study, to enter into a dialogic encounter with the interlocutors of the SPU. Having briefly outlined how I call upon an encounter with Bakhtin's theories, I expand on the concept of dialogism and its relation to Helguera in this introduction.

Dialogue is at the center of Bakhtin's philosophy of language, a philosophy Bakhtin scholars' term "dialogism" (Emerson, 2000; Gardiner, 2003; Holquist, 2002; Morson & Emerson, 1997). Bakhtin's work examines not only the significance of dialogue but also the structures and relationships that make the renewal or *unfinalizability* of dialogue possible as such (Nikulin, 2006). In other words, for Bakhtin utterances can be *repeated* or inserted onto new contexts, which may in turn produce new meaning. The *unfinalizability* (irrepeatability) of the utterance, therefore, does not necessarily produce straightforward repetition or duplication but entails (re)contextualization and (re)signification. Bakhtin uses the concept of dialogue, dialogic(s), and dialogism as a dynamic, complex, and multifaceted set of ideas. This is analyzed in depth in Chapter 2.

Similarly, dialogue is the central concern of Helguera's meditations on art, explorations that appear throughout his writing, museum work, art education projects, performances, and experimental work. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism can be used as a principle lens to understand Helguera's work and *The School of Panamerican Unrest* in particular, given the ways that this visual text hinges on discourse-based art and dialogic encounters. Analogous with Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, for Helguera, voice is accomplished only when participants in dialogue can produce, rather than repeat (recapitulate) a given discourse. (Re)producing rather than simply copying or repeating is a process that involves a major reworking or responding to and altering other's utterances. In Chapter 4, I analyze how the SPU creates openings for participants to trouble and transform, that is, dialogize the discourses of the SPU.

Bakhtin's understanding of dialogue extends beyond commonsensical concepts of dialogue, and I might add, beyond Cartesian philosophy (i.e., theories based on binary oppositions, such as mind/body and male/female). For Bakhtin:

To live is to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree ... In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his [or her] whole life: with his [her] eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his [or her] whole body and deeds. He [or she] invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium. (PDP, 1984, p. 293) (See Appendix A for Abbreviations of Bakhtin's cited works.)

If Bakhtin is right that "to live is to participate in dialogue" (PDP, 1984, p. 293), then the state of being or human existence and language are inextricable. As such, dialogue, in a Bakhtinian sense of the term, is ontological. Rather, than engage with the metaphysical

understanding of the concept, i.e., an abstract essence of being or the study of existence itself, the dialogic ontology I engage with here is something more in line with a *dialogic ethics* (Nealon, 2003). By this I do not mean an ethics built on a set of universal rules that define ethical values and behavior, but instead I refer to an ethics that is socially grounded and based on reciprocity (Gardiner, 1992; Gramsci, 1992; Lather, 1991, 2007, Lather & Smithies, 1997; Nealon, 2003; Olafson, 1998).

Bakhtin's theory of the utterance, which is the keystone of his philosophy of language or dialogism, advances the notion the dialogue is a relational, participatory, and a responsible act. Insofar as it is a communicative event—that is, a unit of dialogue, speech acts, words, artistic text, verbal or non-verbal communication—the utterance is a joint discourse. Bakhtin uses the term “speech acts” synonymously with the concept of the “utterance.” The multiplicity of voices (*polyphony*) of the many people involved in *The School of Panamerican Unrest* is not what made the project a joint discourse, but rather it is the dialogic convergence, or dialogicity, of these voices. When voices intersect contrapuntally, voices become dialogized. Language becomes dialogized when languages *critically interanimate* one another (DiN, 1981), that is, when meaning is attained with respect to one another's discourses. Thus, the utterance is always directed at an addressee in anticipation of a response. At the SPU–Buenos Aires encounter, the most debated questions regarding the project were, in fact: (a) To whom does Helguera call? (b) Who answers and responds to the call? (c) Does Helguera answer?

Response, I would argue, means an ethics of responsibility or answerability, as Bakhtin suggests. Answerability or responsible understanding entails that interlocutors take that utterance into her or his own conceptual frame of reference to generate different

or new meaning by contextualizing it with past and present discourses, evaluating it, interrupting it, disrupting it, or re-accenting it. In this, Bakhtin's theories of dialogue or dialogism share a common boundary with ethics or the ethical dimension of language, insofar as in dialogue there is a responsibility toward the other's words (Holquist, 2002; Morson & Emerson, 1990; Nikulin, 2006). Bakhtin calls this type of reciprocity *addressivity* and *answerability* (*otvetstvennost*). The latter term is often translated into *responsibility* and *responsive understanding* (Clark & Holquist, 1984; Morson & Emerson, 1990).

Additionally, each utterance, Bakhtin proposes, is addressed to past and future utterances. In other words, the utterance has a memory. It carries echoes of its histories, contexts, and meanings (V: MPL, 1973). The utterance is, therefore, fluid and unstable, always in the process of becoming. Reverberation of past and present public art discourses certainly echoed throughout many of the SPU events in which I participated; for instance, discussions of a new current of public art, community-based art, site-specific, and relational art (Relational Aesthetics) stand as a testament to the fluidity and re-signification of language. The continuous (re)signification and (re)contextualization of language is at the core of dialogism and dialogic activity, which proposes that speech acts occupy a space of ongoing contestation and negotiation. In these ways, dialogue and ethics are always embroiled in asymmetrical relations. Most importantly, counter-point discourse, as considered by Bakhtin, is not inimical to dialogue or dialogic relations.

Moreover, Bakhtin's utterance is not only about knowledge itself, or what is true or just, or claims to knowledge (that is, epistemology, what people know or think they know). Dialogue, for Bakhtin, is the basis of ontological-intersubjectivity, how we

become ourselves and how we experience ourselves in relation to the other. As Michael Holquist (2002) and communication scholar Per Linell (1998) observe, Bakhtin's dialogism and attendant concepts, such as the utterance, are epistemological. Linell defines epistemology as a framework "for understanding the human mind, and language, cognition and communication" (1998, p. 37). Thus, participants in dialogue shape and are shaped by discourse. From this perspective, dialogue or dialogism is epistemological. Stated differently, for Bakhtin, subjectivity occurs across language (*logos*), and in being with others (*mitsein*) (Olfason, 1998). What I have tried to convey thus far, is that dialogue involves much more than language; dialogue, or dialogism, can be a semantic interchange between people, a way of understanding and creating the self in relation to the other, or a performative action of addressivity and responsive understanding.

To set the stage for a theoretical investigation of dialogue/dialogism and its particular fissures, ambiguities, and ambivalences, in the remainder of Chapter 1, I introduce the statement of the problem, the study's questions, and significance and limitation of the study. I situate the context and background of the problem, which is structured around a series of contradictions, questions, and concerns surrounding the meaning and function of dialogue and dialogism. A detailed exposition of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism follows in Chapter 2, while Chapter 4 analyzes Helguera's public art project through the theoretical lens of dialogism and the dialogue-interactions of SPU participants.

### Statement of Problem

Some of the most accomplished intellectuals, from Bakhtin to David Bohm, Martin Buber, Judith Butler, and others, from a wide range of disciplines, have taken up the study of language and language theories for the almost limitless possibilities it provides for the study of human existence and relations.<sup>4</sup> Dialogue has been adapted to study a wide range of phenomena, including the educational processes of how people learn, the psychological processes of how people develop an understanding of the self in relation to the other, and the social-political process of achieving cultural and civic consensus in the public sphere (Anderson, Baxter & Cissna 2004; Delacruz, 2009; Deutsche, 1996).

Firstly, I propose that dialogue is often treated as normative and self-evident (Clark & Holquist, 1984; Emerson, 2000; Hirschkop, 1989; Holquist, 2002; Nikulin, 2006). This treatment occurs despite the significance of dialogue for human existence, regardless of the vast quantity of research on language, and even though the *linguistic turn* is one of the most significant philosophical tendencies of present day (Holquist, 1981a; Bruhn & Lundquist, 2001). Accordingly, complex conceptual lenses for thinking about dialogue and dialogic relations are frequently absent from current perspectives in education (Alexander, 2005b; Apple, 2001; Burbules, 1993; Cazden, 2001; Cazden & Beck, 2003; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1997, 2004; Land & Hannafin, 2000; McLaren, 2003, McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2006; Pinar, 2004). To address these disparities, further questions need to be asked, namely, what is the meaning of dialogue/dialogism? What is the pedagogical function of dialogue and dialogism? These questions are explored throughout the study.

Secondly, this study is concerned with social and institutional contexts and practices in education that contribute to the regulation and restriction of dialogic communication. I analyze these circumstances in detail in subsequent sections. Such social and institutional circumstances have led to power imbalances and to an antidialogical curriculum. These methods and practices diminish teacher-to-student and student-to-student dialogue as well as the possibility for dialogic encounters inside and outside the classroom (Alexander, 2005b; Apple, 2001; Apple & Buras, 2006; Alvermann, O'Brien, & Dillon, 1990; Burbules, 1993; Cazden, 2001; Cazden & Beck, 2003; Land & Hannafin, 2000; Mehan, 1979; Palincsar & Herrenkohl, 1986, 2002; Pinar, 2004; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1992; Wells, 1999).

I propose that Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and its attendant concepts—as well as the aesthetic and theoretical insights of Helguera's public art project, *The School of Panamerican Unrest*, analyzed through the lens of dialogism—can help address the problem statement in three distinct ways: First, Bakhtin and Helguera's work can be used to call attention to the transparent and negligible presence of dialogue or dialogism in places of learning.<sup>5</sup> In turn, their work can be used to encourage complex and multifaceted theoretical engagements with language, rather than read as superficial and under-theorized notions of dialogue. Second, Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and Helguera's SPU can be used as conduits to problematize practices and methods that regulate and restrict dialogue in the public sphere, visual arts, or classroom. These insights can be used to envision dialogism in pedagogical spaces that support relational, participatory, and responsible acts. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and Helguera's SPU are part of an existing body of work on the philosophy of language and of conceptual, or

discourse-based art, respectively. When examined together, their work broadens, in significant ways, the discourses of language and art.

Last, constructs, theories, and practices of critical feminism travel throughout the dissertation and align with Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. Feminist constructs of reciprocity, dialogue, difference, and social situatedness inform this dissertation by offering important interrogations and contestations of dominant power, although the focus of the study is not a feminist analysis of the SPU. This dissertation does not specifically consider the gender of the SPU's participants and author, nor does it focus on the role that gender plays in the SPU encounters or in my analysis of the SPU. At the same time, critical examinations of dialogue (Who speaks? Who is silenced?), difference (ethnicity, nationality, sexual identity), and social situatedness (social class, socio-historical context), as theorized in this study, are feminist concerns that are contiguous with dialogism and implicitly interrelated with relationships of power that impact gender. However, my analysis of the SPU as dialogic encounters is not a feminist analysis of the SPU in that intersections of gender with race and social class are not explicitly addressed in relationship to power, voice, reciprocity, difference, positionality, and situated knowledge.

### **Research Questions**

Bakhtinian theories of dialogism and its main topics of investigation guide the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of relationships and/or disparities that exist between the artists' work and the two discursive spheres embodied in the SPU: pedagogy

and public art. In this critical investigation of the dialogic encounters of *The School of Panamerican Unrest*, I ask:

1. What kinds of dialogues and dialogic encounters did the SPU engage in?  
What dialogic encounters did it participate in?
2. What *dialogic* discourses did participants perform when they engaged (had an encounter) with the SPU?
3. What is the pedagogical function of dialogue and dialogism?

### **Significance of Study: A Case for Dialogism in Art as Pedagogy**

Although educators believe in the importance of dialogue and dialogic encounters, and often propose to engage their students in discussion, dialogic communication is rarely used in the classroom (Alexander, 2005b; Burbules, 2004; Giroux, 1997; Palincsar & Herrenkohl, 1986; Pinar, 2004). Rather than through relational and substantive conversation, most educational dialogue in public schools is limited to telling, asking one-way questions, and seeking “correct” answers (Alvermann, O’Brien & Dillon, 1990; Cazden, 2001; Cazden & Beck, 2003; Giroux, 2004; Land & Hannafin, 2000; Palincsar & Herrenkohl, 2002; Pinar, 2004). Educational theorists Susan M. Land and Michael J. Hannafin (2000) and Nicholas C. Burbules (1993, 2004) caution that teaching practices and methods that limit dialogue in the classroom predictably encourage asymmetries of power and authoritative relations. Such asymmetries suppress student-to-teacher and student-to-student interaction and communication. The workings of classroom discourse and authority are complex and entangled in both authoritative and horizontal relationships. The power differentials that exist between the teacher and the

student, which is the focus of attention here, inevitably involve authoritative relationships.

Educational practices that place the teacher's voice (that is, her or his own power and knowledge) at the center of education render the role of the teacher, and that of education, problematic. Teacher-centric models—for example, practices and methods that center power over the one that teaches and not the one that is taught—are pervasive in the *banking* system of education. Paulo Freire (1970) characterizes the banking method as an instructional method that reduces pedagogy to a model of transmission (deposits) and reception (repository). This model operates under the supposition that the teacher, or expert, straightforwardly transmits his or her knowledge to the students; and the students, in turn, passively process the information. Freire argues however, that “dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's ‘depositing’ ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be ‘consumed’ by the discussants” (p. 77).

Within a different context, Bakhtin's writing supports a similar argument. He proposes that dialogue is not a singular or static event. Dialogue is relational, and every context “always includes a question, an address, and the anticipation of a response, it always includes two (as a dialogic minimum)” (SG, 1986, p. 170). In addition, unlike in the banking method of transmitting information, dialogue, according to Bakhtin, is dynamic: an answer must generate a new question; otherwise, it falls out of “true” dialogue or dialogic exchange (SG, 1986, p. 168).

A dialogic approach of teaching, in contrast, advances problem solving and exhorts students to take on a dynamic, interested, inquisitive, and probing viewpoint in examining educational concerns (Burbules, 1993, 2004; Darder, Baltodano, & Torres,

2003; Matusov, 2009). Although Bakhtin wrote on literary criticism, philosophy, and culture, but not specifically on pedagogy, his theories (like those of Freire, despite the criticism directed at Freire's work)<sup>6</sup> suggest that voice is accomplished only when participants in dialogue can produce, rather than passively repeat, discourses. Voice is accomplished when participants play an active role in the creation of the discourse and co-author the text under consideration. To reiterate, for Bakhtin, language is dynamic and relational, imbued with new meaning when *repeated* in new contexts. Recognizing students as participants in learning, I believe, means considering students as actively involved in producing and co-authoring classroom dialogue.

To further elaborate on educational contexts, practices, and methods that restrict and regulate dialogue in the classroom, institutional (i.e., federal, city, state, and community social mores and values) pressures upon schools must be considered, as these have seriously curtailed the possibilities for a dialogic education. Educational contexts and methods that restrict and regulate dialogue in the classroom—such as federal education legislation that rewards and penalizes schools based on standardized test scores as sole indicators of student learning—have seriously curtailed the possibilities for a dialogic education (Apple, 2007; Chapman, 2007; Giroux, 2009; Fehr, 2008; Hursh, 2008; McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2006). Schools' emphases on meeting *The No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (NCLB) requirements have created specific areas of concern for arts education in particular, including decreases in both instructional time and resources (Sabol, 2009). Enforcement of NCLB has hindered dialogic encounters by preventing pedagogies of democratization.

In art education, Laura H. Chapman (2007) and Dennis Earl Fehr (2008) have reached similar conclusions. Fehr created *The National Education Taskforce* (The NET), an advisory nonprofit organization that is actively pursuing legislative correctives to the extensive damage NCLB has had in art education in particular. The NET's mantra is to "catch the children left behind" (Fehr, 2008, 2). While there has been much written about NCLB and other problematic attempts at educational reforms, such analyses and arguments are beyond the scope of this study; however, it is possible to point out a few succinct arguments here. For example, Henry Giroux (2009), David W. Hursh (2008), and Laura H. Chapman (2007) propose that educational mandates that rely on rigid standards, assessments, and accountability ultimately devalue and deskill a teacher's role as an educator. In this way, the function of the teacher is reduced to the position of technician, whose purpose becomes to manage and administrate curricular programs. This diminishes opportunity for critical examination and reflection upon the conditions that organize and construct the ideological and material practices of education (Giroux, 2004a, 2009; Kozol, 2005; McSpadden-McNeil 2000).

Robin Alexander (2005a), Jonathan Kozol (2005), and Peter McLaren and Ramin Farahmandpur (2006) demonstrate the same concern when they argue that teaching that is closely focused on standards is counterproductive in that it limits the scope and breadth of education. David Hursh (2008), Jonathan Kozol (2005), Laura Chapman (2007), and bell hooks (2004) explain that ready-made curricula and standardized education have mostly served to amplify inequality between advantaged and disadvantaged students by promoting uniformity and single-voiced discourses in the *what*, *why*, and *how* of learning.

Institutional mandates that regulate and restrict dialogue contribute to the kinds of power imbalances that can lead to intolerant social and educational practices, such as heteronormative mores and androcentrism. In most educational settings, this asymmetry of power limits, or only superficially, recognizes social differences, such as gender, race, or disability. Moreover, these asymmetries fail to acknowledge a curriculum that does not privilege the voices of the dominant (Apple, 2007; Apple & Buras, 2006; Giroux, 2009; hooks, 2004, McLaren, 2001, 2003; Spivak, 1988). Ignoring the socio-cultural specificity of linguistic diversity (voice) of students, as well as that of the teacher, is tantamount to complicity in creating and sustaining hegemonic ideologies.

These power differentials are further evidenced by the inequality in education and growing achievement gaps between advantaged middle-class or White students, on the one hand, and minority or disadvantaged working-class students on the other (Hursh, 2004; Kozol, 2005; McSpadden-McNeil, 2000). These practices sponsor a transparent view of society and education that does not require critical thought or dialogic encounters. I do not mean to imply that student agency and resistance, counter-discourses, or “unofficial” knowledge are not at play; yet, privilege, as noted by Zeus Leonardo (2005), equally threatens White and non-White students. White privilege, in particular, “saturates everyday school life and one of the first steps to articulating its features is coming to terms with its specific modes of discourse” (Leonardo, 2005, p. 144).

I propose that art educators consider, in their research and teaching practices, Bakhtinian theories of dialogism and artwork grounded on dialogic encounters, such as Helguera’s *The School of Panamerican Unrest*. Bakhtin’s and Helguera’s work are

important because their theories each advance a language of critique and possibility that can be used to interrogate antidialogical power structures embedded in everyday life, art, and education. In this way, Bakhtin and Helguera's work can be used to come to terms with, and fully engage with, monologic discourses, from racism and sexism to elitism. Monologism, I would argue, encompasses all single-voiced discourses, or overarching frameworks, that attempt to foreclose the possibility of many voices (*polyphony*) and many languages (*heteroglossia*). In fact, Bakhtin's philosophy of dialogue, or dialogism, must be understood as a counter-theory to monologism (Clark & Holquist, 1984; Crowley, 1989; Linell, 1998, 2005; Morson & Emerson, 1990). Crucially, dialogism can be used as a tool to challenge monologism in places of learning, an aspect of dialogism that I explore further in Chapter 5.

To begin to shed light on Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in relation to the problem statement, this dissertation draws on the work of David Bohm (2004) and Dmitri Nikulin (2006). Bohm and Nikulin are especially suited for the present analysis and its emphasis on dialogue because of their rigorous and sustained engagement with theories of communication and philosophy and linguistics, respectively. Additionally, their work brings a contemporary view of language theories in their respective fields of study, which I use to elaborate and develop Bakhtin's concepts. The work of educational theorist Nicholas C. Burbules (1993, 2004) is of particular importance to the study, in the sense that his work emphasizes the relationship between dialogue and pedagogy, which is a focus of this dissertation research. To further guide my exploration of dialogism, I look to dialogic pedagogy, namely, the work of educational theorist Eugene Matusov (2009).

Burbules and Matusov's work characterize two different paradigms of educational dialogue: dialogue as instruction and dialogue as an ontological event, respectively.

Furthermore, this dissertation is informed by critical feminist theory, in particular, feminist investigations of language and dialogue. Lynne Pearce, the author of *Reading Dialogics* (1994), maintains that, "as an epistemological category—'dialogue' has vied with 'difference' as one of the key (re)structuring principles of feminist thought" (p. 110). From a feminist perspective, and from Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, difference is something to be valued and sustained. Instead of assimilation or sameness—that is, difference measured from the center, or from essentialist ideas of normalcy and universality—feminists advocate difference as a theory of no center (Butler, 2005; Jaggar & Young, 2000). The strength of feminist theory lies partially in its ability to work within the tensions of polyphony, within, that is, the tensions of many different voices. Stated differently, feminist scholars continuously trouble and resignify feminist perspectives, or feminisms. Feminists do not speak with one voice but through multiple and different languages.

Clark and Holquist (1984) write that Bakhtin, like Derrida, was preoccupied with difference and alterity. I analyze Bakhtin's interest in difference through his concept of *unfinalizability*, or the irrepeatability of the utterance, in detail in Chapter 2. Specifically, Bakhtin proposed that relationships based on difference are significant for understanding the self and for defining each other. Consequently, the encounter that takes place in constructing one's identity in relation to another is a site of conflicting discourses and negotiation of disparate languages (heteroglossia); in this way, the self is not reducible to the other. Bakhtin rejected the idea of "loss of self" and the "false tendency" of dominant

paradigms to merge everything into a single consciousness or worldview (SG, 1986, p. 141). In Chapter 5, I propose that Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, as mediated through a feminist lens, is useful for rethinking pedagogical strategies in terms other than through conceptions of the self and dialogue that are based on assimilation (merger with the other) and consensus (unitary language) (Boler, 2004, Check, 2004; deCastell, 2004; Jones, 2004; Fehr, Fehr & Keifer-Boyd, 2000; Keifer-Boyd, 2010, 2011; Lampela, 2001, 2007).

Bakhtin places great value on embodiment and the social context of voice of every speech act. Bakhtin contends that, for language to mean, for the sign to be transformed into a living utterance, language must be embodied. For Bakhtin, speech acts must be considered against the context, or social situatedness, in which language is lived. The constructs of "embodiment," or what feminist critics like Donna Haraway and others have term "situated knowledge," are significant to my investigation of dialogue and power relations (Butler, 2005; Grosz, 2003; Haraway, 1991, 2003; Hayles, 1999). Many feminist scholars have used the concept of personal voice, especially as it relates to women's bodies, to critically examine and disrupt authoritative discourses (such as those that seek to silence, speak-for, or to "other" those who are marginalized).

In the arts, as in other disciplines, the examination and critique of centralizing discourses became an important critical interpretative framework for feminists. Similar to the analysis Bakhtin initiated in the 1920s and 1930s, the critique of centralizing discourses provided a methodology through which to resist, disrupt, and transform the hegemonic epistemologies and practices that excise women's discourses and experiences (Bauer & McKinstry, 1991; Halasek, 1992; Hohne & Wussow, 1994; Nealon, 2003;

Pearce, 1994; Shohat & Stam, 1994; Stam, 1989; Vice, 1997; Wolosky, 2010). As a theoretical lens, voice becomes a way for feminist to raise important questions about feminist art and ways of knowing: Is there a feminist voice, art, *and écriture*? Are there feminist ways of knowing? What does it mean to read, paint, live, and write as a “woman”? (Alcoff 2006, Anzaldúa, 1999; Chicago & Shapiro, 2003; Fusco & Wallis, 2003; hooks, 2000; Irigaray, 1992, 2003; Kristeva, 1984; Lippard, 1997; Nochlin, 2003; Parker & Pollock, 1981; Piper, 2003, 1990; Pollock, 2003). My analysis of Bakhtin’s theories explores voice in relationship to dialogue and difference. Dialogue, especially as understood through the construct of voice, is significant for education, particularly in terms of questions about whose voices are heard, valued, denied, or marginalized in places of learning. Chapter 5 investigates concepts of dialogue and pedagogy, as well as the relationship between these two concepts. These are inquiries that educators and students can use as pedagogical strategies to create learning environments that forge connections and relationships across difference.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In the spirit of Bakhtinian dialogism, this exploratory study is not designed to be conclusive, but an ongoing dialogue. The focus of the data collection and analysis is delimited to the theoretical framework marked out by dialogism and its main topics of investigation: *polyphony*, *heteroglossia*, *monoglossia*, *polyglossia*, and the *utterance*. These analytical criteria represent the primary lens through which I view, analyze, interpret, and present my findings. In particular, my analytical focus is delimited to Helguera’s SPU project, primary source data of participant interactions (verbal audience

responses) to the SPU, and the researcher's critical inquiry, reflections, and interpretations, as framed by Bakhtin's theory of dialogism for its pedagogical possibilities.

### Overview of Chapters

Following from this introduction to my research, Chapter 2 provides a detailed exposition and analysis of the related literature on Bakhtin's philosophy of language or dialogism and its main topics of investigation: *polyphony*, *heteroglossia*, *monoglossia* and *polyglossia*, and the *utterance*. In Chapter 3, I elaborate on the methodology and research processes used in the study and describe the qualitative case study research design. In Chapter 4, I provide a theoretical discussion of the nexus between Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and the dialogue-interactions of *The School of Panamerican Unrest* and synthesize the research findings in relationship to the purpose of the study. In Chapter 5, I discuss the research questions and reflect upon the implications and limitations of the study in connection to pedagogy.

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1. Helguera (Mexico, D. F. b. 1971) is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (2003), The Hirshhorn in Washington, D.C. (2007), The Havana (2003) and Liverpool Biennial (2006), and Performa, the first performance biennial in New York in (2004). Helguera has written numerous plays, operas, monologues, and performance texts. He has contributed reviews and critiques to various art publications, and is the author of four books: *Endingness* (2005), *The Witches of Tepoztlán (and Other Unpublished Operas)* (2008), *The Pablo Helguera Manual of Contemporary Art Style* (2005), and *The Boy Inside the Letter* (2008). Helguera has curated exhibitions, moderated panel discussion, has been juror at several art biennials, and has co-directed international forums of contemporary art in the U.S., Europe, and Latin America. Currently, Helguera is the Director of Adult and Academic Programs at the Education Department of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Prior to that, Helguera was director of public programs at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum from 1998–2005.

2. I discuss my level of participation at SPU events in detail in Chapter 3. Most often, I was identified as a researcher but did not participate in the events (*observation participation*). There were occasions in which I was an *active participant observer*. In qualitative research, this is defined as someone who “participates as a member of the group but is known as a researcher” (McMillan, 2004, p. 263).

3. There are great polemics and ongoing debates concerning the authorship of three books published under V. N. Volosinov and P. N. Medvedev’s name, which have been attributed to Bakhtin. For the purpose of the study, and in the Bakhtinian spirit of co-authorship and *polyphony*, Volosinov and Medvedev are credited as co-authors. This is indicated in the abbreviations used for the different texts: *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929), (*V: MPL*, 1973) and *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch* (1927), (*V: F*) both by V. N. Volosinov, and *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (1928) by P. N. Medvedev (*M: FM*). In regards to authorship questions, when given the opportunity to sign or acknowledge his authorship of the books in question, Bakhtin refused to do so (see Clark and Holquist, 1984). Notwithstanding, Clark and Holquist (1984) support the notion that Bakhtin is the author of the “disputed text” (at least “ninety percent” of it) (p. xxvi). To the contrary, Morson and Emerson (1990) argue for Medvedev and Volosinov authorship of the disputed text.

The complexity of the arguments surrounding the disputed text, would necessitate extensive exploration on its own (Clark & Holquist, 1984). Whether Bakhtin, Volosinov, and Medvedev may or may not have collaborated, the disputed text show significant convergences and divergences in a number of concepts and ideas. Accordingly, authors will be cited giving consideration to these differences. Last, tied to the issue of authorship, there is an ongoing and ardent debate, which questions whether Bakhtin was or was not, a Marxist. When asked this question, in an interview with Sergei Bocharov, Bakhtin replied: “Marxism? Never. Like many others, I was interested in Freudianism and even spiritualism, but never a Marxist, never in the slightest” (cited in Mandelker & Emerson, 1995, p. 192, n. 19).

4. Among a long list of influential post-Kantian scholars, the most well known theorists of dialogue include: Martin Buber (1878-1965) and his work on dialogue and existence or *metaphysical dialogue*, Jürgen Habermas’s (1929) communicative action and the public sphere, Hans-Georg Gadamer’s (1900–2002) philosophical hermeneutics and concept of “language as a vehicle for interpretation,” David Bohm’s (1917–1992) dialogue and thought as a system, and Mikhail M. Bakhtin’s (1895–1975) philosophy of language or dialogism. In addition, the theories of J. L. Austin, Jacques Derrida, Michele Foucault, and Judith Butler weigh in significantly in postmodern and poststructuralist understandings of language and discourse

5. According to Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005), *places of learning* can be the museum, a performance, a multi-media project, architecture, a cityscape, or a world event. The characteristic and qualities that makes these “anomalous” *places of learning*—by

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anomalous Ellsworth means: “peculiar, irregular, abnormal, or difficult to classify pedagogical phenomena” (p. 5)—is the pedagogical volition of the work. The place of learning is where “the *learning self* of the *experience of the learning self* is invented in and through its engagement with pedagogy’s force” (p.7). Also see Ellsworth’s concept of “pedagogical *pivot place*,” i.e., “a fluid, moving pivot place that puts inside and outside, self and other, personal and social into relation” (p. 38). Consequently, for Ellsworth, as for Bakhtin, *places of learning* and pedagogy are relational, fluid, and dynamic.

6. Freire has been criticized for his disregard of gender politics, and for his use of sexist language, especially evident in his early work, according to some of Freire’s critics. These critics argue that the exclusion of gender and underlying assumptions in sexist language in his work, lingered well after feminist critics first called attention to the problem (Moyer, 2003; Watkins, 1993; Weiler, 2001). In *Paulo Freire A Critical Encounter* (1993), bell hooks argues that Freire’s disregard for gender politics and sexist language, represents a blind spot in his work—a vision that is supported by “a phallogocentric paradigm of liberation” (p. 148). Although there are some feminists who make this a reason to separate their research from Freire’s theories, hooks contends feminist thought as well as critical pedagogy, facilitates a processes of “constructive” interrogation of his concepts, and “critical interrogation” is “not the same as dismissal” (p. 149). Hooks does not wish to dismiss Freire’s work, or for her critique of his “flaws” to eclipse anyone’s, especially feminist ability to benefit from Freire’s insights (hooks, 1993). For a counter claim that Freire’s concern for gender issues and language did not change after criticism was directed at his concepts, see the work of educator, linguist, and social activist, Rosa María Torrez (1997). Torrez writes that Freire’s thought was unfortunately “suspended” by critics and admirers alike, in particular his early books: *Education as a Practice of Liberty* (1967) and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1969). As a result, these practices deny Freire “the right to err and to rectify, to advance and to perfect, to continue developing his thoughts, as must be allowed to any person, as is required by any serious and honest intellectual” (p. 27). For an extended critique of the usefulness and limitations of Freire’s work in relationship to dialogic pedagogy, see Eugene Matusov, 2009.

## CHAPTER 2

### BAKHTIN'S THEORY OF DIALOGISM

The present study considers the nexus between two texts, Mikhail M. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and Pablo Helguera's contemporary public art project *The School of Panamerican Unrest* (2006). Before I examine the *dialogic* discourses that participants performed when they engaged with the SPU, it is essential to understand Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. Chapter 2 is a critical review of the existing literature on Bakhtin's philosophy of language or *dialogism*. Incorporated into this chapter is a detailed exposition, although not exhaustive, of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism according to its main topics of investigation: *polyphony*, *heteroglossia*, *monoglossia*, *polyglossia*, and *utterance*. Bakhtin developed his theory of dialogism as a socio-historical and theoretical alternative to Ferdinand de Saussure's philosophy of language. Following my analysis of polyphony, heteroglossia, monoglossia, and polyglossia, I introduce a comparative analysis of Bakhtin's philosophy of language in relationship to Saussure's linguistic concepts.<sup>1</sup> The comparative analysis is useful in unfolding how Bakhtin constructs his theory of dialogism based on the positions that (a) language is social and relational, and (b) people engage in multifaceted dialogic struggles over the meaning of signs. Throughout this chapter, I analyze Bakhtin's theories in relationship to voice, embodiment, and social situatedness. Last, Bakhtin's exploration of the triple-pronged construction of the *utterance* (the speaking subject, the addressee's *responsive understanding*, and the relationship and territory shared between the two in the

utterance's contextual specificity) is elaborated upon in terms of his concepts of heteroglossia, *addressivity*, and *answerability* or *responsive understanding*.

### **Introduction to Bakhtin's Theory of Dialogism**

Michael Holquist (2002), one of the most influential English-speaking Bakhtin scholars in the West, argues that dialogue is Bakhtin's key concept. Regardless of Bakhtin's theoretical explorations (ethics and aesthetics, philosophy of language, discursive/literary forms, and meta-philosophical theories), in spite of the influences, collaborators, or the name(s) he published under, dialogue is what animated and directed Bakhtin's work.<sup>2</sup> As a result, Holquist suggests dialogism is the principal theory through which to understand Bakhtin's project. Graham Allen (2000), Leslie A. Baxter (2007, 2011), Terry Eagleton (2007), Ken Hirschkop (1992, 2003), Pam Morris (2001), Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson (1990), Tzvetan Todorov (1984), and others, concur with Holquist that dialogue is what guided Bakhtin's theories throughout his career. It is important to note, however, that Bakhtin scholars theorize dialogism differently (Hirschkop, 1999; Holquist 1984; Morson & Emerson 1990; Todorov, 1984). Consequently, they give various emphases to the meaning and importance of dialogism. For Todorov (1984), Bakhtin's dialogism is sociological, for Hirschkop (1999), a critical practice, and for Holquist (1984, 2002), an epistemological mediation on language or dialogue.

For the purpose of this study, I focus on Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and its attendant concepts: polyphony, heteroglossia, monoglossia, polyglossia, and the utterance as an interpretative frame for analyzing the dialogic exchanges of SPU interlocutors. At

this point, however, a clarification is in order: Morson and Emerson (1990) remind us that Bakhtin uses the concept of *dialogue* in complex ways, namely, dialogue as a theory of language, self–other relationships, and literature. Consequently, verbal interaction (dialogue) is not synonymous with dialogism (Morson & Emerson, 1990). For Bakhtin, dialogism is a system of language: verbal (grammatical rules, syntax) and non-verbal (tone, intonation, and non-verbal signs). Dialogism is the constituent factor of dynamic inter-relationships between self and other; it proposes that the individuality of the self springs from the relationship with the other, i.e., identity arises through dialogue with others. According to Bakhtin’s theory, all utterances assume a listening audience. In applying Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism to the SPU in Chapter 4, I present my examination of the SPU dialogues in terms of speakers’ perceptions (observations) of the addressee. Given that the perceptions of discussants involve social conditioning, a socio-political understanding of the speaker’s context is needed. Last, dialogism is a very specific way of authoring works of art, whether literature or performance art, and I analyze this concept through the lens of polyphony.

Before using the interpretive frame of Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism to examine the kinds of dialogues and dialogic exchanges performed by participants engaged with the SPU, I want to note that I analyze Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism from a poststructural and critical feminist perspective. My goal is to reveal the dominant discourses that people use in speaking. As language is learned through social interaction, the SPU dialogic discourses are situated within distinctly different contexts, with different speakers of different ideologies. The speakers, including the artist, address these ideologies based on their perceptions of their audiences’ (addressees’) situated knowledge(s) and contexts.

The present chapter is significant for this study, as the chapter affords an opportunity to reflect on Bakhtin's philosophy of language or dialogism and the utterance before an analysis of the SPU is undertaken.

### **Polyphony: A Theory of Multi-Voicedness, Creativity, and Authorship**

Polyphony and heteroglossia are core principles of Bakhtin's philosophy of language or dialogism (Clark & Holquist, 1984; Emerson, 1984; Holquist, 2002; Morson & Emerson, 1990). Bakhtin's theories of polyphony, that is, a theory of multi-voicedness and creativity or authorship are centered primarily on literary texts, specifically the novel.<sup>3</sup> Given that according to Bakhtin's conceptualization, voices articulated in artistic text parallel human experience and ideologies, I consider artistic text in the broadest sense of the term (i.e., verbal art and visual art as systems of communication).

Bakhtin borrowed the term polyphony (multiple voices) from music as a "graphic analogy" (PDP, 1984, p. 22)<sup>4</sup> to illuminate the work of one of Russia's foremost writers, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821–1881). According to Bakhtin, Dostoevsky created the polyphonic novel (PDP, 1984).<sup>5</sup> Lynne Pearce, the author of *Reading Dialogics* (1994), however, asserts that if anyone "invented" the polyphonic novel, meaning, a polyphonic genre or way of *authoring* and *reading*, it was clearly not Dostoevsky, but Bakhtin. Bakhtin uses polyphony to describe a specific type of interaction between the author and the characters in literary texts. Moreover, he proposed that the relationship between the author's voice and the character's voice takes on two distinct forms: monologic (single-voiced) and polyphonic (multi-voiced).

Bakhtin writes that an artwork created from a monologic point of view gives full meaning to its characters through the absolute language of the author. Contiguous with homophonic music, a monologic artwork—for instance, epic, lyric poetry, rhetoric, tragedy, drama, and performance art—privileges a single voice, that of the author (PDP, 1984, DiN, 1981). The author, like an orchestra conductor is at the center directing the characters, but only insofar as, the characters (participants) perform predetermined roles. The author or narrator of a monologic work has comprehensive knowledge of the characters, and possesses all-knowing power to describe, divine, interpret, and resolve each character's voice and consciousness (PDP, 1984). Yet, Bakhtin asserts that there is simply no circumstance about a participant or a character, compositionally or otherwise, that the character cannot narrate (PDP, 1984). Accordingly, Bakhtin insists that an omniscient voice can only construct a closed (*finalized*) image of the *other* or the *hero*.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the characters in a monologic artwork do not have semantic authority. They do not have voices of their own. The reader (participant) does not sense the world from the perspective of the character but from the ideological position (implicit or explicit) of the author. Like accents in homophonic music, the characters in a single-voiced artwork are written simply so that certain kinds of voices, as imagined by the author, can enter the artwork.

In the visual arts, Hal Foster (1996), Grant Kester (1995, 2004), Miwon Kwon (2002) and others have written about public art, community-based, and site-specific art practices that limit the voices of participants. This is done in order to allow for certain types of discourses to enter the work, namely, that of the artist and art institution (Baca, 1995; Crimp, 1993; Deutsche, 1996; Doss, 1995; Finkelpearl, 2000; Lacy, 1995; Lippard,

1997).<sup>7</sup> In *The Artist as Ethnographer*, Foster (1996) expresses apprehension about artists and art practices that reproduce anthropologic methodologies, between the researcher and respondent, whereas the former has insight into the object of study (the *other*). This insight ultimately privileges the researcher/artist as the *expert authority*. As a result, much like Bakhtin's argument, Foster's position is that the communicative process between the researcher and respondent is not *dialogic* because the artist/ethnographer takes on a normative role whereby s/he interprets—translates, evaluates, critiques, saves, transforms, speaks for, or “gives meaning” to—the community in which s/he is working. Anthony Downey (2009) makes a similar argument and analyzes the ethics of what he calls the return of ethnography in collaborative art practices.

Characters in a monophonic artwork, consequently, become objects and not subjects of the text (PDP, 1984). This is significant because from a Bakhtinian perspective, the characters of the novel [artwork] are not simply there to fulfill the purpose of the plot but to function as an idea-system or *ideologeme* (DiN, 1981; PDP 1984). An *ideologeme* refers to a construct that reflects and refracts an ideological sphere (i.e., political, religious, epistemological, ethical) or values that individuals adopt and value-laden utterances (M: FM, 1985; PDP, 1984). For instance, Foster (1996) and Downey (2009) unravel hegemonic practices in art and expose paternalistic discourses in public art. The ideological position of the artist (author) and the participants in the SPU are considered in the analysis of the SPU in Chapter 4.

Clearly, the author creates the characters' discourse and his or her ideology informs the work, but what Bakhtin looks to in polyphony is the way in which voices can fully accomplish their “inner logic and independence as *someone else's discourse*,” i.e.,

“the word of the *character himself* [herself],” and not the author’s voice (PDP, 1984, p. 65). In other words, the voices of the characters and by implication their interlocutors are closed off (finalized) in artworks that are authored from a “monologic authorial field of vision” (PDP, 1984, p. 65). As a result, there is no (or only a very limited) entry point for the reader (participant-interlocutor) to actively engage in a dialogic relationship with the discourses of the artwork, to enter the process of negotiation or to co-author the work.<sup>8</sup> A critical question, then, is this: How can an artwork, such as the SPU, move participants from monologic to polyphonic understandings of authorship of a work of art?

Conversely, to a monologic author the polyphonic author of whom Bakhtin insists Dostoevsky’s work is paradigmatic must interact in certain ways (dialogically) with a multiplicity of voices (polyphony), and a diversity of social speech types (age, gender, economic position). In a polyphonic artwork, the author (for instance, Helguera) or critic, or funding institution (*Creative Capital*, the organization that funded Helguera’s project) does not hold definitive authorial power. In a polyphonic artwork, “not a single element of the work is structured from the point of view of a nonparticipatory third person” (PDP, 1984, p. 18). The author and the characters (participants, interlocutors) speak on equal terms. This is important to the analysis of the SPU presented in Chapter 4. Considered for the moment, however, the following questions can be entertained: In creating and participating in the SPU encounters, did those with power to influence the meaning of a sign support a polyphony of voices and encourage diverse interpretations? Were dominant discourses rejected for multifaceted dialogic struggle over the meanings of signs?

In contrast to an artwork with a limited entry point, polyphonic works present characters who have autonomous voices, and who enjoy the freedom to agree or disagree, to intersect, to carry on a dialogue with the author, with the narrator, and with each other (PDP, 1984). What unfolds in a polyphonic artwork:

is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, *with equal rights and each with its own world*, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event (*sobytie*).<sup>9</sup> (PDP, 1984, p. 6)

From this perspective, a dialogic artwork exceeds the limits of a single voice and a single will. It involves processes inhering in self–other relations in which individuals interact in dialogic tension. Although there is a level of interdependence, and this is significant for Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism, it is imperative that voices (consciousness) do not come together into a single (totalizing and authoritative) system of thought or overarching purpose for which Bakhtin rejected Formalism, Marxism, and Hegelian dialectics. It is important to note, however, that Bakhtin’s refutation of and relationship to these theories and theorists (Formalism, Marxism, and especially Immanuel Kant) is complex—a mixture of participation and opposition. Accordingly, in *The Dialogical Principle* (1984), Tzvetan Todorov observes that in regard to Formalism, Bakhtin proceeds from a movement of “going beyond” but also from “absorbing” preceding “schools” of thought (p. 40).

In contrast to the single-voiced discourses that Bakhtin refuted, dialogic *truth* requires at minimum two utterances, two semantic belief systems that intersect and contradict one another (DiN, 1981; PDP, 1984). Thus, the term is *double-voiced* (double-

coded), and it expresses at once two different intentions: “the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author” (DiN, 1981, p. 324). These semantic contradictions in polyphonic voices are not entirely for the sake of heterogeneity, as such. Rather, the definitive goal of multi-voicedness is to generate *new meaning*. The creation of new meaning from a Bakhtinian perspective does not entail simple repetition or reproducing “a normatively identical form but of continuous renovation and individualization of that form” (V: MPL, 1973, p. 56).

A clarification of terminology is important, as for Bakhtin the dialogic nature of the utterance ensures its *unfinalizability (irrepeatability)*. Bakhtin argued that our utterances could be *repeated* or inserted into new contexts, which may in turn produce new meaning. The *repeatability* of the utterance, therefore, does not necessarily produce straightforward repetition (duplication). Rather, *repeatability* entails (re)contextualization, (re)accentuation, and (re)signification or the *unfinalizability* (unfinished nature) of the utterance. Throughout the study, when I use the words *repeat* or *repeatability* in the Bakhtinian sense of the term, I italicize the term, and where possible, I point out that I am referring to *unfinalizability* and not straightforward repetition, recapitulation, replication, or reproduction.

An important implication of the generation and redistribution of new meaning through the *unfinalizability* of the utterance is the potential for active understanding and responses and not passive or uncritical consumption of language and meaning. Bakhtin’s concept of the *utterance* and the polyphonic artwork builds on the principle that words serve the intention of two speakers at once (*double-voiced* discourse), the notion that all utterances are directed at someone, and the conception that words (text) are not singular

in meaning. There is no *original author*. Words are never our own because all utterances are socially and historically charged—Bakhtin uses the phrase “shot through”— with the voices of others (DiN, 1981; PDP, 1984).

Thus, meaning emerges in part through interactions with the voices of another. Bakhtin refers to this phenomenon as the battles and interruptions (including interior monologue) of *microdialogue* (PDP, 1984, p. 74). For instance, the SPU interlocutors layered their own intentionality over the words, of the very title that Helguera chose for his road trip across the Americas (*The School of Panamerican Unrest*). The word *school* carries with it certain presuppositions. Words can establish a particular position for the author and for the participants. Does the word *school* purport a pedagogical endeavor? If so, what kind? A participant at the SPU–Buenos Aires event asked:

*¿Y por qué es una escuela, y no un foro, o un club, o un laboratorio? ¿Por qué asumes conceptualmente una posición de letrado, de una escuela, de llegada*

[And why is it a school, and not a forum, or a club, or a laboratory? Why do you assume conceptually a position of a man of letters, of a school, of arrival?]

Is Helguera the “man of letters,” or the wise specialist, teacher, or pedagogue? If so, who are the students? If we ask these questions, we can also ask this: How does Helguera define school? What is Helguera’s authorial position in relationship to the SPU?

The notion of polyphony is important for another reason: it interrogates the idea of *original author* and the “individuality” and “uniqueness” of the author—a modernist ideology that conceptual artists have interrogated and disrupted. Conceptualists (Helguera’s work is situated within the discourses of post-conceptual art) hold that art exists in a field of social relations, especially language (language-based theories), as such

art cannot be self-referential or self-determining. It cannot presuppose meaning, let alone universal meaning. Neither can there be an ideal or neutral spectator, specifically, because the interaction between the viewer's experience and art in its site-specific context constitute interrelationships that are far from stable or fixed. These ideas resonate strongly with Bakhtin's theories of dialogism and are important to the contestation of artistic intent, *autonomy*, and authorial speech in a work of art, which I examine in Chapter 4.

I now return to the discussion of Bakhtin's concept of *double-voiced* discourse and dialogism. Graham Allen (2000) proposes that Bakhtin's concept of double-voiced discourse brings us close to what we understand today as the theory of *intertextuality*. Julia Kristeva was one of the first authors to analyze, translate, and introduce Bakhtin's work to the West. Kristeva's (1967) theory of intertextuality stems from the appropriation of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism (she transposed dialogism into intertextuality)<sup>10</sup> (Allen, 2000; Makaryk, 1993; Zbinden, 2006). Broadly conceived, Kristeva's work on intertextuality focuses on linguistic and semiotic relationships between texts, i.e., how texts are connected to other texts. There are multiple schools of thought as to what constitutes intertextuality and intertextual processes. In consideration of Bakhtin's concepts of polyphony and polyphonic artwork, the study considers intertextuality in the following way: texts, like utterances, do not develop in isolation, but in relation to other texts. Texts are palimpsests, layered through with the voices of other texts (e.g., ideas from previous works and citations). Much like the writing of one of my favorite authors, Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1989), no text has a single meaning; thus, textual meanings are many and unstable. Text is double-voiced: our reading and writing are in dialogue with

each other. We read and write in direct and indirect response to what has already been written and in anticipation of responses to our own text. In the analysis of this study, I consider how the SPU participants directly and indirectly respond to what has already been written, i.e., previous and existing discourses regarding public art. Moreover, I examine how SPU interlocutors mediate their dialogue in relationship to each other and in anticipation of a response to their own text.

Last, the presence of polyphony is not reducible to dialogism (PDP, 1984). Succinctly, polyphony (many voices) is dialogic in structure and Dostoevsky's work is dialogic, as noted by Bakhtin, in part due to the presence of polyphony (Vice, 1997). However, an artwork is not polyphonic because of the multiplicity of voices. The SPU is not polyphonic because of the hundreds of SPU interlocutors who participated in the project, but because the voices (consciousness) intersect dialogically, that is, contrapuntally (PDP, 1984). It is in this intersection of differentiated and counter-point discourses that voices become dialogized. Language becomes dialogized when languages "critically interanimate" one another (DiN, 1981, p. 296).

Bakhtin's well-known example of the "illiterate peasant" sheds light on this idea. The hypothetical illiterate peasant lives "miles away from any urban center," but nonetheless is immersed in "several language systems" and speaks different languages for different occasions and for different listeners (e.g., he prays in one language, sings in another, and speaks to the scribe who will write his petition, in yet another language). Nonetheless, the "peasant" fails to recognize (internalize) that the multiple languages he speaks are not separate but competing ideological systems and languages that are inescapably connected. His failure to actively internalize this knowledge suggests that his

language and consciousness are *undialogized* (DiN, 1981, pp. 295–296). Bakhtin asserts that language becomes *dialogized* (dialogized heteroglossia) when the different languages we use in everyday life. For myself, as the author of this text, as a case in point, my language as a graduate student, educator, and artist, “regards the language (and the verbal world corresponding to it) through the eyes of another language (that is, the language of everyday life and the everyday world with the language)” (DiN, 1981, p. 296).

Stated differently, following Bakhtin, Ken Hirschkop (2003) posits that in order to *dialogize* language, we must “take sides, oppose it, and recontextualize it in ways that its social impetus becomes visible. The social and historical nature of language, its materiality can be perceived only when it is forced into contradiction with language which opposes it” (p. 10). In Chapter 4, I look to how participants, for instance Stephen Wright in New York, and Alicia Herrero in Buenos Aires, respectively, dialogized (i.e., *critically interanimate*) the language of the SPU. In my analysis, I consider whether SPU participants re-contextualize the discourses and dialogues of the SPU in ways render the “social impetus” of the work and their own discussion of it visible. Did the interlocutors rearticulate rather than *recapitulate* discourses embedded in the utterances of the SPU dialogues?

In sum, in contrast to monologic language, dialogic discourse emphasizes the *intersubjective* or relational nature of language and self–other relations in art and life (or the need of the “other” to complete the self). Dialogism assumes that self–other relations and knowledge are not isolated but simultaneously interdependent and individual (*autonomous communion*). In the sense that diversity and difference (alterity or otherness) are necessary for defining each other, however, only insofar as people preserve

their independence and do not merge into a single world view or authoritative discourse (PDP, 1984). There are many instances in which Bakhtin, seems to work within rigid binary oppositions (e.g., dependence and alterity, autonomous and communion), rather than proposing a dialectical either/or insists on a dialogic also/and (Holquist, 1984, 2002), that is, self and other, author and hero, relational and individual voices and consciousness. Ultimately, Bakhtin's notion of polyphony (and heteroglossia) highlights the significance of difference and otherness for dialogic relations.

In the analysis of the SPU, presented in Chapter 4, I use the Bakhtinian theory of dialogism to underscore that separateness and difference (*autonomous-communion*) are essential to the dialogues of the SPU. Methodologically, Bakhtin's insistence on difference anticipates the serious attention that difference receives in critical feminist philosophy (and in the present study). An analysis of difference, voice, and specificity of social situatedness (positionality) is central to feminist ways of knowing and being in the world. It is also an imperative to *counter* relationships based on *correspondence* (sameness or assimilation) and *unitary* (centralized) power relations, which I develop throughout the study and in detail in the section *Feminist Counter-Point Reclamations of the Utterance*, in this chapter. In connection to art and pedagogy, assimilation disallows open-endedness, i.e., difference of opinions and disagreement, the possibility for participants (e.g., learners) to develop their own ideas, change and not simply extort the discourses of the other (e.g., the teacher, mandated standards, or curricula). In the analysis and concluding chapter of this study, I question the notion of unitary language and dialogue based on correspondence (consensus) in relationship to the meaning and function of dialogue and dialogism in connection to pedagogy.

### **An “Unsympathetic” Reading of Polyphony**

Before moving to the exposition and analysis of heteroglossia, it is important to discuss some of the criticism leveled at Bakhtin’s concept of polyphony. In light of the distinctions that Bakhtin draws between monologic (single-voiced) and polyphonic (multi-voiced) discourses, is it possible for undialogized or single-voiced (monologic) language/consciousness to exist? Or, does such language/consciousness exist only in the perception that it does? As noted, Bakhtin’s concept of polyphony describes a specific type of relationship between the author’s voice and the character’s voice in artistic text. For Bakhtin, mono and dialogic language do not exist in isolation. Rather, single-voiced and multi-voiced discourses coexist in a relational and dynamic process of signification. Thus, the existence or the possibility of monologic discourse, as for polyphonic discourse, must be considered in relationship to each other—a point discussed here in connection with Bakhtin’s notions of authorship.

In *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin*, Caryl Emerson (2000) presents a highly critical review of Bakhtin’s writings on Dostoevsky in general and his concept of polyphony in particular. Emerson’s primer is based on the arguments of some of Bakhtin’s most scathing critics. With an equally critical eye, Emerson writes a “defense” of Bakhtin’s theories, asserting, though, that he, “remains, after all has been rethought and resaid, one of the most powerful thinkers of our century” (p. 149). Most of the critiques in Emerson’s in-depth analysis are beyond the scope of the present study.<sup>11</sup> There are, however, several interrelated arguments concerning polyphony (and by extension monologic language and text) that are especially important to Bakhtin’s

theories of dialogism and to the present study, namely, questions of authorship, to which I now turn.

As discussed, Bakhtin asserts that in a polyphonic artwork there is a multiplicity of distinct voices and a diversity of speech types (heteroglossia). Each voice expresses different verbal-ideological belief systems, with a specific point of view on the world, with specific value judgments and intonations (DiN, 1981). These voices know each other; they compete with each other's discursive positions, and they are independent from authorial speech. This has led some critics to argue that the notion of "equal rights" and "autonomy" for characters in literary works (and in the real world) is in reality, simply "polyphonic idealism" (Petrilli & Ponzio, 2005, p. 407). Given that it is the author who creates the characters, tells the story, and writes the book, a number of critics (see Emerson, 2000, pp. 127–149) call Bakhtin's theories of authorship and polyphony must into question. Is Bakhtin promoting the absence of authorial voice or the death of the author?<sup>12</sup> Emerson (2000) and Morson and Emerson (1997) remind us that in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984), Bakhtin repeatedly makes clear that the author of a polyphonic artwork is neither absent from the text nor lacking a point of view. In fact, for Bakhtin, a novel that lacks these elements "is in general impossible" (PDP, 1984, p. 67). He argues that the issue is not "an absence of, but *a radical change* in, the *author's position*" (PDP, 1984, p. 67, my emphasis). Furthermore, this position "is considerably more difficult than the ordinary position and presupposes an enormous 'power of poetic creativity'" (PDP, 1984, p. 67). Thus, the authorial position in the polyphonic novel, as previously demonstrated, unfolds very differently from the author's voice in a monologic artwork. However, Bakhtin in no way silences the author or occasions his/her demise.

Graham Allen (2000) understands the relationship between polyphony and the author's voice in Bakhtin's work: "Bakhtin does not seek to announce the death of the author. The author, for Bakhtin, we might say, still stands behind his or her novel, but s/he does not enter into it as a guiding authoritative voice" (p. 24). Gary Saul Morson (1995) arrives at a similar conclusion. He asserts that, "Bakhtin did not believe in 'the death of the author'" (p. 34). This concept, Morson goes on to say, found expression in Formalism and Russian Marxism. Proponents of each of these movements, it appears, took pleasure in provoking the bourgeoisie by emphasizing (through methods and actions) the impersonal forces in artworks as a way to attack individualism. In contrast, "Bakhtin's work moves in exactly the opposite direction" (p. 34). Bakhtin insists on concrete utterances and on both the author and the character voices (Morson, 1995).

Indeed, as indicated by Bakhtin, dialogism as represented in Dostoevsky's polyphonic novels consists of concrete utterances; that is, speech acts are directed at an addressee in anticipation of a response. This means that the word is always oriented toward the other and mediated in relation to the other. The implication of Bakhtin's concept of dialogism and philosophy of dialogism is significant in the sense that language and the self (in life as in the novel) are achieved through the capacity to know and to construct the self through the other. This notion, although with a different emphasis, is supported by the work of Julia Kristeva (See *subject in process in Revolution in Poetic Language*, 1984). Accordingly, Bakhtin's polyphony and dialogism are epistemological theories or theories about how we make meaning.

There are multifarious ways in which making meaning comes into *play* and guides my analysis presented in Chapter 4. For example, how did SPU participants

construct knowledge? What ideas, beliefs, propositions, and assumptions and in what contexts and historical circumstances are these ideas used to create knowledge. How do embodied subjects perform knowledge? How did the SPU interlocutors perform knowledge? From a critical feminist perspective, questions about knowledge are encapsulated in one of my favorite parables:

Chuangtse and Hueitse had strolled on to the bridge over the Hao, when the former observed, “See how the small fish are darting about! That is the happiness of the fish.” “You are not a fish yourself,” said Hueitse. “How can you know the happiness of the fish?” “And you not being I,” retorted Chuangtse, “how can you know that I don’t know.” (Chuangtse 300 BCE)

In conclusion, following Bakhtin, I argued that as a concept, polyphony is relevant to self–other relations when multiple voices become dialogized. I noted that polyphony could be used to think about how knowledge is created, and to understand whether meaning is passively replicated or actively re-created. The most important impetus behind Bakhtin’s concepts of polyphony in this study is questions of authorship. Is the artwork created (authored) polyphonically? If so, does it create the conditions for dialogic interaction among the participants? In an analysis of whether a work is *authored* polyphonically, questions about power and authoritative discourse can be raised: Did the SPU attempt to hold definitive authorial power? Were the SPU participants simply there to fulfill the vision of the artist? Did the SPU participants enjoy the freedom to agree or disagree, to intersect, and to carry on a dialogue with the author and with each other? Did the SPU dialogues exceed the limits of a single voice and a single will? Did the SPU participants enter the process of negotiation to co-author the work? I want to make clear,

though, and this is of great importance, that I am not theorizing that dialogism resides within the work per se but in the interpretation and exchanges of the SPU's utterances, which involve speakers and listeners in the specific socio-cultural contexts of a time and place.

### **Heteroglossia: The Diversity of Social Speech Types and Dialogism**

Polyphony is often conflated with heteroglossia (Clark & Holquist, 1984; Emerson, 2000; Morson & Emerson, 1990; Vice, 1997). However, *polyphony* is not equivalent to *heteroglossia*. The former, as discussed, relates to a theory of multi-voicedness, and how a work of art is authored, or the position of the author (monologic or dialogic) in literary text (Morson & Emerson, 1990). As theorized by Bakhtin, heteroglossia has multiple meanings.<sup>13</sup> Bakhtin introduces the concept of *heteroglossia* (*raznorechie, raznoyazychie, and raznorechivost*)<sup>14</sup> in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1935/1981). In this monograph, Bakhtin proposes that language is heterogeneous. Language is unitary only if it is regarded as an abstract system (e.g., structural linguistics). When we examine real language, that is, language as it *lives* in specific communicative exchanges, it is evident that language is made up of different socio-ideological positions (e.g., age, gender, economic position, and register, the voice, for example, of the teacher or attorney).

Accordingly, socio-ideological or differentiated speech is plural and stratified.

There are no “neutral” words:

All words have the “taste” of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day

and hour. Each word tastes the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones (generic, tendentious, individualistic) are inevitable in the word. (DiN, 1981, p. 293)

Bakhtin holds that language is heterogeneous and foremost ideological, in that it articulates a particular set of circumstances and positions within society (economic, political, aesthetic). It also anticipates that the structure of language, as I suggested earlier in the context of polyphony and artistic texts, refract socio-ideological views and the complexity of social life. Participants' socio-ideological voices were refracted throughout the SPU performances, and nowhere more contentiously, than in Buenos Aires and New York, and a discussion of these aspects is presented in the analysis of the SPU in Chapter 4.

### **Heteroglossia: Where Centripetal and Centrifugal Forces Collide**

The complexity of stratified socio-ideological languages, that is, the languages of profession, economic position, gender, and age (or heteroglossia) are laden with specific world views that collide in *tension-filled* environments (DiN, 1981; Holquist, 1981a, 2002). These tension-filled environments are central to (constitutive of) heteroglossia. Hence, in addition to socio-ideological languages, heteroglossia refers to the conflict between *centripetal* and *centrifugal* forces. Centripetal forces struggle to center authoritative language in language and culture, whereas centrifugal forces fight to decenter “official” discourse in the same context. For example, in Buenos Aires, the SPU interlocutors attempted to legitimize one discourse of public art over another, to

respectively support and to counter the polemics surrounding the relationship between the role of the artist and the public in public art, specifically in connection to Helguera and the SPU.

Bakhtin uses the terms *monoglossia* and *polyglossia*<sup>15</sup> to draw attention to the centralizing (centripetal) and decentralizing (centrifugal) forces of language and culture. In his study of the development of the novel in ancient literary history, Bakhtin contends that monoglossia (“official” discourse) is sustained by two myths: “the myth of a language that presumes to be the only language, and the myth of a language that presumes to be completely unified” (PND, 1981, p. 68). To imagine itself as the only language is a gesture that signals the desire for purity and superiority, in the sense that it aspires to be the only “valid” language. A language that believes itself completely unified or self-enclosed (autonomous) is blind to difference and ignores the struggles and play that take place between and within languages and culture (DiN, 1981). Clark and Holquist (1984) observe that “the first assumption is deaf to polyglossia, or interlanguage differences; the second refuses to hear heteroglossia, or intralanguage differences” (p. 289). In regard to art, I argue that artist that see their practice as apart from the everyday issues that affect society, or they see art as self-enclosed, have the potential to reassert art’s autonomy. In Chapter 4, I examine the relationship between autonomy and heteronomy in contemporary artistic practices, specifically the SPU, and in connection to addressivity and answerability.

Bakhtin writes that monoglossia is replaced by polyglossia when languages *interanimate* each other. When they become conscious of each other and interact with “that side of one’s own (and of the other’s) language *that pertains to its world view*”

(PND, 1981, p. 62). For instance, he notes that from the beginning, Latin language and culture was conscious of its otherness—of its Greek antecedents. Latin language did not see itself as self-enclosed or self-sufficient but “through the eyes of the Greek word” (PND, 1981, p. 61). On the other hand, Hellenistic (Greek) culture viewed all outside language and culture as “barbarian” (PND, 1981, p. 66). This does not mean, however, that dominant cultures omit the language of the “other.” Certainly, they often try to do so. However, more accurately, language outside the dominant position (“un-official” language) is often stratified (repudiated, un-represented, or denied), as are the people who represent those languages. As a case in point, authoritative discourses seek unity in diversity by establishing “standards” (e.g., No Child Left Behind) or by ensuring that a given language is granted “official” status (e.g., English Only). Conversely, subaltern voices such as Spanglish (Spanish English), Chinglish (Mandarin Chinese English), and Ebonics (a Black dialect of the English language) represent the fusion (hybridity) of language,<sup>16</sup> as well as the pull and push of languages and cultures that threaten *official* discourses. Art educator Christine Ballengee Morris (2003) explains that dominant cultures often construct stereotypes to ridicule and repudiate languages, such as Appalachian English, as a way to exercise control. *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *The Dukes of Hazard* are examples of how the media constructs degrading stereotypes of Appalachian language and culture for corporate profits.

Homi Bhabha’s influential concepts of the stereotype as fetish, ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry, are pertinent here. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha states that colonial discourses construct the stereotype as a *fixed* ideological Otherness—a strategic discursive strategy to create cultural, historical, and racial signs of

representation in order to articulate the *difference*.<sup>17</sup> Difference is central to the construction and maintenance of colonial hierarchies and power. Likewise, dialogue and difference have been key epistemological constructs in restructuring tenets of feminist thought. At the SPU event in New York, Stephen Wright critiqued how difference is codified in contemporary art practices and observed that Helguera's language, perhaps inadvertently, was complicit with the discourse of a Western expansionist project (see Chapter 4 in this dissertation). Repetition and fixed representation are prevalent in mass media visual culture. In my teaching experiences, I have found two documentary films by Marlon Riggs (*Color Adjustment*, 2004, and *Tongues Untied*, 2007) especially important in analyzing the violence of racist, sexist, and homophobic representations in media culture. Bhabha explains that the fixity of stereotypes or representations of "difference" is paradoxical: on the one hand, stereotypes are rigid and unyielding; on the other hand, they are ambivalent and unpredictable because stereotypes do not produce "at any one time, a secure point of identification and may be read in contradictory ways or, indeed, be misread" (p. 70).<sup>18</sup> Bhabha explains that "the stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality ... [but because] it is an arrested, fixated form or representation" (1994, p. 75). This fixation, Bhabha explains, requires compulsive repetition of what is colonially *knowable* and *true*.

Additionally, because the stereotype is ambivalent it must be repeated incessantly, in different ways, to *fix* it, to naturalize it, to make it *real*. This chain of signification becomes a "regime of truth, that is structurally similar to realism" (p. 71). In Bhabha's view, the scholar who studies colonized stereotypes is in collusion with the colonizer, at least in the simplification of the stereotype as a fixed symbol. He maintains that the

colonial “stereotype is a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as it is assertive, and demands not only that we extend our critical and political objectives but that we change the object of analysis” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 70).

On the other hand, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, the authors of *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism in Media* (1994), suggest that one approach to this methodological conundrum is to deemphasize the image (in this case the stereotype) and emphasize the “voices” or “discourses” that surround the study of the image. The intention is not to privilege or create hierarchies of for example the oral versus the ocular, but to consider “voice (and sound) and image ... together, dialectically and diacritically” (p. 214). In doing so, more nuanced and complex discussions can inaugurate multiple voices to reclaim, restore, and interplay voices that have been silenced, marginalized, edited, and isolated. Using Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia (many-languagedness), Shohat and Stam call for theories that draw on polyphonic (multivocal) voices to investigate subjectivity.

Another example of the struggle to unify single-voiced discourses includes attempts (social and legal) to define gender, marriage, and family through a single lens, for example heteronormativity (Butler, 2005; Weir, 2008). Those who refuse to conform to hegemonic “definitions” and practices, represent centrifugal voices and their efforts to disrupt dominant paradigms. These ruptures in language and culture from a dialogic perspective create the possibility (push and pull) not only for the disruption of authoritative discourses but also for the creation of new/different voices to break down socially determined and enforced boundaries that seek to centralize language and culture.

To review, Bakhtin's concepts are fluid and woven through a variety of interpretive lenses and dialogues. As a result, it is possible to hold multiple and accumulated meaning for concepts such as heteroglossia. Every utterance (language) conveys extra personal forces, or what Bakhtin identifies as the socio-ideological language in culture (heteroglossia). Also underlying heteroglossia is the site of conflicting discourses, the tension-filled centralizing and decentralizing forces brought to bear on monoglossia and heteroglossia. Heteroglossia also involves the construction of the self through the language of the other, and through the dialogization of one's own internal discourses.

Last, heteroglossia is also the property of the utterance at the micro-linguistic level. This concept will be considered at length in relation to Bakhtin's philosophy of the *utterance*, but considered for the moment, this refers to the ability of the utterance (speech acts, words, and meaning) to be simultaneously a part of what has already been said or already-spoken and what is yet-to-be-said or yet to-be-spoken about any given utterance (e.g., "freedom" or "democracy"). In short, heteroglossia—the core of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and the utterance—is "the base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterances" (DI, 1981, p. 428). Bakhtin uses his philosophy of language as a critical method to investigate the two epistemological tendencies in language and culture, the centralizing (monologic) and decentralizing (dialogic)<sup>19</sup> forces of language and culture, and those forces' struggle for meaning and power. Similarly, I use Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia to analyze the centralizing and decentralizing forces inhering in the discourses of public art and pedagogy as theorized in the dialogues of the SPU.

### **Centralizing and Decentralizing Discourses: Heteroglossia and Monoglossia**

Bakhtin held that the centralizing tendencies in language and culture find their most cogent and theoretically defined expression in modern philosophical thought and art (i.e., literary text) (PD, 1984). Pre-novelistic genres prior to Dostoevsky's work, genres such as rhetoric, epic, tragedy, and lyric, as historicized and re-envisioned by Bakhtin in "From the Pre-history of Novelistic Discourse" (1940a) and "Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel" (1941), in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), represent the development of a single voice or monoglossia. The defining character of these canonical genres (e.g., epic, tragedy) was tied to rigid structures, which according to Bakhtin, above all privileged a referential object (plot, character, theme, persuasion, ordeal, the absolute past [art object]). As such, Bakhtin argued that the readability of the text comes to us already predetermined, closed, and congealed (EaN, 1981). Under these circumstances, the gaps and paradoxes of the text, that is, the unreadability of the text is limited and suppressed. Consequently, the lack of multiple voices, discourses, fissures, tensions, and competing interests (dialogism) separate the reader from the "zone of direct contact" (EaN, 1981, p. 39). Meaning is created from the reality in which the author and the audience live and from the threshold from which the reader can trouble or change the text to create new meaning (EaN, 1981).

Following Bakhtin's critique of single-voiced discourse in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Art* (1929), and in the revised and extended edition of the former monograph, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1963/1984), Bakhtin argues that literary studies created a hierarchy that privileged certain genres (poetry over prose, high versus low), and refused to recognize work outside those genres (e.g., fiction or the novel) as a

legitimate poetics, or “official” artistic genre (PDP, 1984: V: MPL, 1973). In the arts, as in other disciplines, the examination and critique of centralizing discourses, similar to the analysis Bakhtin initiated early in his career (1920s and 1930s) became an important strategy for feminist ways of knowing. In the same way that Alcoff (2006), Butler (2005, 1997a, 1997b), Weedon (1999), and other feminists contested monologic discourses and andocentric canonical paradigms that overtly or covertly wrought negative effects on women’s lives, Bakhtin refuted some of the most significant theories of his time (Marxism, Russian Formalism, and Structuralism, and the work of both Kant and Hegel) (Holquist, 2002; Morson & Emerson, 1990). There were especially concerted polemic exchanges amongst Bakhtin and Bakhtin Circle members in regard to Saussure’s philosophy of language. In Bakhtin’s view, some of these philosophical ideas had become intolerant trends (in his early writing, Bakhtin refers to this way of thinking as *theoretism*), or single-voiced discourse that sought to establish and articulate a single worldview:

The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused to it. [The authoritative word] ... is, so to speak, the word of the fathers. Its authority was already *acknowledged* in the past. It is a *priori* discourse. It is therefore not a question of choosing it from among other possible discourses that are its equal. It is given (it sounds) in lofty spheres, not those of familiar contact. Its language is a special (as it were, hieratic) language. It cannot be profaned. (DiN, 1981, p. 342)

In this passage, Bakhtin underscores the point that authoritative discourses foreclose the ability of individuals to consider and evaluate the theory at hand from multiple angles. It emphasizes that monologic speech acts prevent an engagement with the polysemy and indeterminacy of language and communication. Clearly, Bakhtin's philosophy of language or dialogism must be understood as a counter-theory to monologism (Crowley, 1989; Holquist, 2002; Linell, 1998, 2005) or as Bakhtin often refers to it, *authoritative discourses*. The dialogic exchanges between the SPU interlocutors afford an opportunity to explore and analyze how *authoritative discourse* is already fused to art in general and the SPU in particular, which I examine specifically in regard to the authorial position of the artist (Helguera) in Chapter 4.

Bakhtin and Valentin N. Volosinov (also spelled Vološinov and Voloshinov) observed that in Russia, authoritative discourse, in particular Saussure's theories were not only "popular" (V: MPL, 1973, pp. 58–59) but also, they argued, "it can be claimed that the majority of Russian thinkers in linguistics ... [were] under the determinative influence of Saussure and his disciples" (V: MPL, 1973, pp. 58–59). It is against this background that Bakhtin writes his theories of dialogism as a counter-theory to and in dialogic tension with Saussure's linguistic philosophy. Hence, Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and heteroglossia presumes an understanding of Saussure's key linguistic theories.

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism is a philosophy of language that posits dialogue as specific to a time, place, and people (*law of placement* in dialogism). When dialogue is revisited outside the initial context, it takes on new meanings and infinite transformations, which refract a simultaneous past, present, and future. Discussed

throughout this chapter and later in the analysis of the study, I examine these temporalities and traces, accumulations, and repetitions of the utterance. These infinite transformations of language and culture are analyzed in relationship to Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, and the *unfinalizability* or irrepeatability (*iterability*) of language, and in connection to the dialogue-in-interactions of the SPU participants. For now, before analyzing Bakhtin's philosophy of language in relation to Saussure's linguistic theories, I briefly return to Bakhtin's concepts of monologism and some of the critical commentary it has elicited.

### **Is Dialogism Politically Regressive and Monologism Politically Progressive?**

Earlier I proposed that Bakhtin's philosophy of language or dialogism must be understood as a counter-theory to monologism (Crowley, 1989; Holquist, 2002; Linell, 1998, 2005). Tony Crowley (1989) asserts that the binary opposition embedded in Bakhtin's theories of monologism and dialogism (heteroglossia and polyglossia, monologic and dialogic, centripetal and centrifugal forces) must be called into question. He argues that it is an "oversimplification" on Bakhtin's part, "to suggest that a form of discourse is simply either monologic or dialogic" (p. 75). Furthermore, Bakhtin's privileging of dialogism over monologism forecloses the possibility that dialogism under certain historical conditions and contexts can be counter-productive and monologism potentially productive (Crowley, 1989).

Crowley (1989) is clearly reading Bakhtin's theories against the grain. He states, "If the forms of discourse and language, and the roles they play, are dependent upon their historical and political contexts [as Bakhtin proposes], then it is possible that in certain

contexts a preference for heteroglossia and dialogism would be politically regressive” (p. 83). Crowley argues that in some circumstances, for instance, the need to become liberated from oppression, monologic interpretations of a text or discourse are necessary. He cites the work of Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937)<sup>20</sup> as being written in a political and historical situation context that called for “monoglossia or unitary language” versus the “diversity and pluralism” that Bakhtin privileges (p. 83). Crowley asserts that though such diversity and pluralism may have been necessary and progressive in Bakhtin’s particular circumstance, it would prove *regressive* in Gramsci’s case. For Crowley, any possibility to reverse the respective positions of monoglossia and heteroglossia is foreclosed in Bakhtin’s work (Crowley, 1989).

There exists a disconnection between Crowley’s argument and the way in which Bakhtin conceives monologic discourses. Bakhtin reminds us throughout his work that monoglossia (and hegemony by extension) is a relative term. He argues that not even *authoritative* discourse is completely unitary. Monologic and dialogic discourses are not mutually exclusive. At no time does monoglossia fully overshadow or replace heteroglossia. There are always traces of the discursive past and the possibility of “other-languagedness” (PND, 1981, p. 66). There is always the prospect of complex layers of conflicts and contradictions that exist simultaneously between the competing (centering and decentering) forces of language and culture (DiN, 1981; PDP; 1984; SG, 1986; V: MPL, 1973).

In other words, in the Bakhtinian sphere the struggle for meaning operates within asymmetrical power relations (domination and oppositional practices). Ken Hirschkop’s (2003) work helps elucidate this point. Hirschkop writes that for Bakhtin, “meaning lies

neither in text or context but in the relation between them” (p. 7). Seen from this perspective, “meaning can be said to be, as Julia Kristeva describes it, *intertextual*.” Thus, “dialogism and monologism are not different texts but different kinds of intertextual configurations” (Hirschkop, 2003, p. 7). Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism posits that meaning is created and lived in the interstices of different texts, in authoring and co-authoring, in the threshold of the dialogic relationship between the speaker and the listener, the writer and the reader, the artist and the art interlocutor. This is relevant to my analysis of the SPU presented in Chapter 4.

Although Bakhtin favors dialogic discourses, he does not do so at the expense of socio-historical specificity or by abstracting his theories to the degree that all arguments and conflicts are simply relegated to “discursive tendencies” (Crowley, 1989, p. 89). In fact, as discussed in the analysis of polyphony and heteroglossia, and contiguous with critical feminist theory, Bakhtin insists on the materiality, social construction, and *situatedness* of every speech act (PDP, 1984; DiN, 1981; SG, 1986; V: MPL, 1973). On the other hand, Crowley makes a valid point in calling attention to the idea that centralizing tendencies under certain historical conditions and contexts need to be considered. On this point, I concur with Gayatri C. Spivak’s (1988) concept of *strategic essentialism* (strategic resistance)<sup>21</sup> and Per Linell’s (1998) support for certain *monologic activities*<sup>22</sup> in the study of language. Linguist and dialogic theorist, Per Linell (1998) pushes the boundaries of the argument of monologism versus dialogism a step further by insisting that it is possible and in some occasions necessary, to move back and forth between monologic and dialogic perspectives, seeing them as alternative lenses to be used for different reasons under different conditions. Yet, Linell remarks that he “regards

dialogism as the most basic and comprehensive theory of cognition, communication and language” (p. 278). In my analysis in Chapter 4, I critically interrogate the dialogue-interactions of the SPU in light of the fact that dialogism *includes* rather than *excludes* monologism. Dialogism sees the implicit and explicit antagonism of monologic discourses as a condition of dialogic encounters (this supposition is related to the argument I make in Chapter 4 concerning the discourses of *autonomy* and *heteronomy* in artistic practices).

Bakhtin calls into question systems of language that seek to unify, exclude, decontextualize, or confine the complexity and the inter-relational nature of language. Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism and the utterance is a counter-response to Saussure’s (1875–1913) philosophy of language. What follows is a comparative analysis and exposition of Bakhtin’s and Saussure’s linguistic concepts, in particular. Principally, I examine Saussure’s distinction between diachrony and synchrony, *langue* and *parole*, sign system (sign, signifier, signified), and his ideas regarding the arbitrariness of the sign to elucidate Bakhtin’s philosophy of dialogism and his theory of the utterance.

### **Counter-Approaches to Monologism: Bakhtin’s Theories of Dialogism and Critical Interrogations of Saussure’s Linguistics**

The importance of Saussure’s theories cannot be overstated. His ideas inaugurated French structuralism and had a profound impact on semiotics, linguistics, and literary and cultural theory (Harris, 2001; Ives, 2004a; Petrilli & Ponzio, 2005). Saussure broke radically with conventional linguistics by proposing a new system for the study of language. Beginning in the nineteenth century, the field of linguistics repeatedly

borrowed principles and methods from the natural sciences (physics, mathematics, chemistry) to distinguish its field from related disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology. This effort was aimed at validating the field and their methods of inquiry as “real” science rather than soft science, as “rigorous” even “indisputable” (Anderson, Baxter, & Cissna, 2004; Ives, 2004a; Linell, 1998; Lodge, 1990; Petrilli & Ponzio, 2005). To construct a “scientific” linguistics, Saussure (like the Russian Formalists in literary criticism) created a conceptual framework that emphasized the structural or the formal, analytic, and quantifiable aspects of language.

### **Diachrony and Synchrony: Historical and Structural Perspectives in Linguistics**

The study of the structure and development of language (or linguistics), traditionally, focused on the creation, patterns, variables, and other transformation in words (language). It concentrated on how changes in words correlate to one another and to other languages over time, that is, from a historical perspective (Chandler, 1994; Harris, 2001; Ives, 2004a). Saussure introduced the concepts of *diachrony* and *synchrony* to draw distinctions between historical and structural perspectives in linguistics. He advocated a shift from a diachronic (historical) perspective of language to a synchronic (structural) analysis. The Saussurean synchronic system is based on the premise that language is independent of external factors. In this system, past developments and changes are irrelevant to understanding how language structures operate in the present (Harris, 2001). Hence, language could be understood as structured according to linguistic units (*langue* and *parole*, signifier and signified) and studied according to how these parts relate to each other (Harris, 2001; Martin & Ringham, 2006; Petrilli & Ponzio, 2005).

Bakhtin, like Saussure, is interested in the social aspects of language, in exploring language from the point of view of the speaker, from the space and time of the present. However, Bakhtin argues that the Saussurean synchronic-diachronic model is static because it excludes from its inquiry how language and meaning is created and develops over time. In fact, Bakhtin does not think of synchrony and diachrony as either in strict opposition or in discrete categories. Furthermore, Bakhtin argues that language is internally dialogic. It is constructed through and within social relations. Consequently, he contends that language is history- and context-dependent. This too, is how I interpret the language of *The School of Panamerican Unrest*.

### **Language Systems (*Langue*) and Speech Acts (*Noise of Parole*)**

Saussure's other important argument for linguistics is the distinction he made between *langue* (abstract language systems, rules, words, sentences, grammar) and *parole* (individual speech acts, utterances). In Saussure's definition, *parole* is above all idiosyncratic. It has too many unclear boundaries. It is infinite and messy and, therefore, nearly impossible to study systematically. Hence, his focus is *langue*. He sees language as a model based on the rules and underlying structures of language that determine how language (words, actual speech acts) is used. According to Saussure, the focus on *langue* offers the best way to study language as a system and to delimit the borders of the object of study (Holquist, 2002; Ives, 2004a; Martin & Ringham; 2006; Morson, 1995; V: MPL, 1973).

For Bakhtin, Saussure's separation of *langue* and *parole* is overly simple and, therefore, inadequate for the study of language. In Bakhtin's estimation, the division of

language into two mutually exclusive systems creates a closed system, in the sense that it reduces language to abstract, self-sufficient, and completely unconnected parts. Bakhtin's position is that the rules governing language (*langue*) should not be separated from living language or language in use (*parole*). He insists that the structure of language alone is not enough to understand how people use language, i.e., how language is constituted by and through social practices. Additionally, Bakhtin argues that closed systems presume "nothing beyond themselves, no other utterances" (DiN, 1981, p. 273). Authoritative discourses, as Bakhtin put it,

demands our unconditional allegiance. Therefore, authoritative discourse permits no play with the context framing it, no play with its borders, no gradual and flexible transitions ... one must either totally affirm it, or totally reject it. It is indissolubly fused with its authority—with political power, and institution, a person—and it stands and falls together with that authority. One cannot divide it up—agree with one part, accept but not completely another part, reject utterly a third part. (DiN, 1981, p. 343)

To summarize, Bakhtin calls into question systems of language that de-historicize and de-contextualize language and culture. By de-contextualization, Bakhtin is referring to the way in which abstract language systems ignore the complexity and the inter-relational nature of the utterances in the actual use of language within its specific contexts. Most importantly, closed systems of language create paradigms that confine the dynamic play of discourse and meaning-making by imposing a single possible way to understand and respond (*unconditional allegiance*). In so doing, closed systems of

communication limit and distort the significant function and task of language in self–other relations.

### **Sign, Signifier, and Signified (Cat, Sat, and Hat)**

Saussure built on his linguistic theories by creating a system of signs to investigate meaning,<sup>23</sup> by defining the sign as a two-part model composed of a *signifier* and *signified*. The *signifier* represents the sensorial or material aspects of the sign. The *signified* stands in for a mental construct, that is, the concept or idea expressed by the sign (Chandler, 1994; Ives, 2004a; Martin & Ringman, 2006).<sup>24</sup>

One of Saussure’s most radical and contested ideas is the notion that language is a system whose elements function arbitrarily and only through differential relations. For Saussure, as for Derrida (1976, 1988), “there can be no meaning without difference” (Saussure, 1966, p. 120). As a case in point, the signifier “cat” is not the same as “sat” or “hat” because “c” is different from “s” or “h.” Thus, “cat” is defined by its structural relation to and degree of *difference* from other signifiers (Ives, 2004a).<sup>25</sup> In other words, Saussure argues that there is no essential correlation between the signifier and the signified. For instance, the signifier “dog” is only related to the mental construct or concept of what we associate with the expression (e.g., domesticated animal with muzzle, fur coat, and pointed ears). The same signifier can stand in for a different signifier, and thus a different sign. If *dog* stands as a signifier for a person, it may denote a contemptible person (a different sign than canine) or in the case of *dawg*, a close friend or *homie*, but only, if this is a convention that has been agreed on collectively (society). Thus, for Saussure meaning is relational (consensual in contexts).

Similar to Saussure, Bakhtin stresses the relational aspects and variable characteristics of language. However, for Bakhtin, rather than being arbitrary, systems of signs (sign, signifier, and signified) are continuously interrelated and impacted by the external and value-laden forces of language and culture (V: MPL, 1973). Therefore, the sign acquires profoundly different meaning depending on the context. The thrust of Fred Wilson's and Alice Walker's art is based on the notion that the sign (socially shared signs and symbols) develops significantly different meaning depending on the context, production, and reception of the work. For example, in addition to social-heteroglossia (age, gender, professional language), extra-verbal forces such as expressive intonation (sarcasm, parody), non-linguistic gestures (body language, gaze), "social relations between the speakers" (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 291), pauses in an utterance, and even silence make tremendous differences in regard to how the sign creates meaning in a particular situation (see SG, 1986; V: MPL, 1973).

To reiterate, Saussure's focus is the relationship of signs to each other, i.e., signifier-to-signifier and signified-to-signified (Chandler, 1994; Ives, 2004a). Conversely, Bakhtin argues that signs do not exist in equal correspondence to each other, nor do they function independently from reality. In fact, he insists that social relations regulate the sign (utterances) (DiN, 1981; PDP, 1984; V: MPL, 1973). Following Bakhtin's exploration of signs, Susan Petrilli and Augusto Ponzio (2005) write:

a sign is a sign insofar as it is other—that is to say, insofar as it leads outside and beyond itself. Through this relation with something else, the interpretant, signs generate signifying paths and develop their potential for

plurivocality. Insofar as it is other, the sign is always an excess; in Mikhail Bakhtin's terminology, it is always "extralocalized." (p. 46)

Hence, Bakhtin forcefully observes that Saussure's linguistic theories and those of "his followers—the Structuralist," fail to recognize these characteristics (indeterminacy, external, extra-verbal forces, and extralocalized signs) of language and the utterance (SG, 1986, p. 61). Michael Holquist (2002) pursues a related line of thought when he states that Saussure fails to recognize and discover the dialogic relation between synchrony and diachrony, *langue* and *parole*, signifier and signified, and self and other because as a thinker, Saussure works within a dialect (*binary*) rather than a dialogic paradigm (Holquist, 2002). Thus, unlike Bakhtin, Saussure does not contemplate both possibilities at the same time, that is, the simultaneous and complex relationships that coexist between the aforementioned binary pairs (*langue* and *parole*, *synchrony* and *diachrony*), which Saussure developed to ground his theories (Holquist, 2002).

In short, Bakhtin calls for a nuanced investigation and understanding of language and communication. He does this by insisting on (a) a philosophy of language in use (*parole*), that is, the idea that language is continuously created and re-created in speech, and (b) communication as history- and context-dependent in the broadest sense of the term. Further, he maintains that communication entails counter-point, inter-relational, extra-verbal, and non-verbal speech acts. The comparative analysis of Bakhtin's and Saussure's linguistic theories began with the premise that for Saussure, as for Bakhtin, words and meaning are part of complex systems of language. Though they did agree on this point, they produced entirely different paths and opposite conclusions in their respective philosophies of language. In the end, Saussure is interested in studying the

system of language itself, whereas Bakhtin is concerned with how the system is used in social and cultural practices (i.e., art, history, architecture, cinema) in real time and across time. The basic unit of analysis in language for Saussure is the sign; for Bakhtin, it is the utterance.

### **The Microlinguistic Level of Heteroglossia: Bakhtin's Philosophy of the Utterance**

Bakhtin made the utterance the “basic building block” (Clark & Holquist, 1984, p. 10), “pivotal point” (Hirschkop, 1999, p. 210), and “cell” (Petrilli & Ponzio, 2005, p. 147) of his philosophy of language or dialogism. Holquist (1981) and Simon Dentith (1995) suggest that “Discourse in the Novel” in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1935/1981) and *Marxism and The Philosophy of Language* (1929/1973) contain the richest and most sustained statement of Bakhtin's philosophy of language. In *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1973), Bakhtin and Volosinov, contend that the field of linguistics in general and Saussurean theories of language in particular, following the tenets of Western philosophy and science,<sup>26</sup> reduce ideas to verifiable objects (*abstract objectivism*) or pure system (phonetic and grammatical rules). Saussure's linguistic theories also reduce individuals to independent and rational subjects (*individual subjectivism*) or the notion that language's meaning depends on the intent of the individual speaker (V: MPL, 1973). It is against this philosophical orientation and two major trends in linguistic thought (*abstract objectivism* and *individual subjectivism*)<sup>27</sup> that Bakhtin shaped his own philosophy of the utterance (Emerson & Holquist, 1986).

Bakhtin's term for his philosophy of language is *metalinguistics*—language not as an object of linguistics but language as it is lived.<sup>28</sup> In this dissertation, language is

considered in-situ, as it is lived out in the exchanges and between the artist and the interlocutors of the SPU. Following Kristeva's analysis of Bakhtin's theories in the 1960s, *metalinguistics* was translated into *translinguistics*. An apt transfiguration according to Graham Pechey (1989), in the sense that Bakhtin's philosophy of language "contains the notion of a boundary transgressed: translinguistics" (p. 41). To elaborate, Bakhtin transgresses or pushes beyond the traditional boundaries of linguistics to set up a new theory by bringing "Saussurean linguistics and Formalist poetics into mutual critique" (p. 42). Bakhtin and Volosinov explain that their theories seek to move beyond *abstract objectivism* and *individual subjectivism* to bridge "the borders between poetics and linguistics" (V: MPL, 1973, p. 122; also see PDP, 1984).

In regard to *abstract objectivism*, Bakhtin and Volosinov argue that what is of interest in the Saussurean linguistic system:

is not the relationship of the sign to the actual reality it reflects, nor to the individual who is its originator, but the *relationship of sign to sign within a closed system* already accepted and authorized. In other words, they are interested only in the *inner logic of the system of signs itself*, taken, as in algebra, completely independently of the ideological meanings that give the signs their content. (V: MPL, 1973, p. 58)

In opposition, Bakhtin and Volosinov posit that a philosophy of language cannot be reduced to a relationship of *sign to signs*, to a stable and quantifiable (*closed*), or abstract and historical system. For to do so, is to displace the referent from the sign system, and thus ignore that "real" speakers' use of language to communicate particular intentions, in specific contexts to achieve particular means in a real world.

Additionally, Bakhtin contends that language (and dialogue) is always changing, “forever dying, living, being born” or in the process of “becoming” (DiN, 1981, p. 365). Consequently, language is impossible to delimit, measure, and systematize. The immutability of *langue* as theorized by Bakhtin destroys the possibility that the study of language is quantifiable or a good prospect for *scientific* or empirical (verifiable) methods of inquiry (also see This argument is also aligned with the critique of positivism that Bakhtin and Volosinov have in common (for a similar argument see Patti Lather and Laurel Richardson in Chapter 3 of this study).

Bakhtin insists that for language to mean, for the sign or the sentence to be transformed into a living utterance, language must be *embodied*. Body and embodiment matters to feminist thought because they constitute a system of significance that to a large extent determines women’s lives in terms of identity, reproductive rights, pleasures, subversions, oppression, social and economic roles, and speech acts. For Bakhtin, for language to signify, i.e., to become dialogic, it must enter the sphere of lived expression (PDP, 1984). In point of fact, “there can be no dialogue between sentences” (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 131). Dialogue is a living text. It is only possible between people and not amid abstract linguistic units or elements of that system (Morson & Emerson, 1990; Petrilli & Ponzio, 2005). Sentences, grammatical rules, and dictionary entries can never exhaust the possible ways in which words accrue meaning in living language, in their socio-historical contexts, and in the act of voicing, in the play of spoken language and meaning-making from one interlocutor to another. In addition, the utterance is not an individual or isolated phenomenon (*individual subjectivism*) but a reciprocal action involving two or more people (DiN, 1981; SG, 1986). Words and language do not have a

singular meaning, and speech acts are not solely determined by the speaker's intention (DiN, 1981). In other words, though language is dialogic, it is not necessarily *referential* or transparent. Consequently, Bakhtin and Volosinov contest models of language that posit the direct *transmission* of meaning from sender to receiver (e.g., Saussure's concept of coding and decoding). The utterance requires the *active* and not *passive* participation of a speaker (*subject*, author) and a listener (co-author).

This contestation, furthermore, comes at the insistence on the contextual (social situatedness) nature of meaning:

At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions—social, historical, meteorological, physiological—that will ensure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have meaning different than it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve. (Holquist, 1981b, p. 428)

That is to say, the utterance can be inserted onto new contexts, which in turn produce new meaning. The resulting new meaning is both similar (already-spoken) and dissimilar (not-yet-spoken) to previous understandings of the same utterance.

As noted, heteroglossia is “the base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance” (Holquist, 1981b, p. 428). Heteroglossia refers to socio-ideological languages (gender, class, register), and the centralizing and decentralizing forces of language and culture in its struggle for meaning. Heteroglossia at the micro-linguistic level refers to the ability of the utterance to be simultaneously a part of previous (already-spoken speech act) utterances and subsequent utterances (not-yet-spoken). What Bakhtin

means by this, is that each individual utterance is the expression of a particular person, a particular point of view of the world, at a particular place and time, such that no two utterances, even if the words are the same and the syntax is the same, are the same. Additionally, each utterance anticipates a response from incipient utterances—utterances that are yet-to-be spoken (not-yet spoken) (DiN, 1981; Morson & Emerson, 1990; SG, 1986; V: MPL, 1973).

To elaborate, language is saturated with layers of meaning and with the words of others. On a simple level, the direct and indirect meanings of words such as “freedom” and “democracy” (or the concept of public art) cannot be properly considered without taking into account previous linguistically shaped discourses (already-spoken), and the contexts that have surrounded the meaning of these words (and of course, the stand individuals take in relation to these constructs). Bakhtin further discusses the temporality and indeterminacy of meaning by drawing attention to the extra-linguistic<sup>29</sup> (cadence, emphasis, enunciation) and non-linguistic (gestures, facial expressions, vocal or visual signs, body language) characteristics of communication.

The intonation with which words are uttered in a specific context determine their meaning. Consequently, so do the speaker’s and listener’s evaluation and judgment of the speech act. Contrary to what one might expect, the utterance “He died,” could be a positive and joyful expression, and “What joy!” a sarcastic one (SG, 1986, p. 85). “So!” Ex-Vice President Dick Cheney’s response to poll results that two-thirds of Americans thought the Iraq war was not worth fighting, could be a way of making the not so obvious or obvious known.<sup>30</sup> In the Bakhtinian sphere, *living utterances*, a simple sentence, even a single word (“Wow!”) or non-verbal speech act (“Hmm!”) have the potential to signify

in different ways because words belong simultaneously (not *either/or* but *also/and*) to multiple contexts, languages, and belief systems, *conceptual horizons*. Bakhtin contends that Saussure's theories leave this significant realm (polysemy, heterogeneity) of communication out of its purview (SG, 1986). Bakhtin argues, "the word wants to be heard, understood, *responded* to, and again to respond to the response, and so forth *ad infinitum*" (V: MPL, 1973, p. 127; also see DiN, 1981, p. 280).

### **Feminist Counter-Point Reclamations of the Utterance**

Feminist reclamations of words such as *bitch*, *handmaiden*, and *queer*<sup>31</sup> stand out as recent examples of responding to the response, or *talking-back-to* androcentric language and power (Anzaldúa, 1987; Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Butler, 1997a; hooks, 1998, 1989; Keifer-Boyd, 2010a, 2011; Keifer-Boyd & Smith-Shank, 2006). Bakhtin's glaring omission of gender issues has occasioned great polemics amongst feminist scholars, and within those discourses calls to dismiss or at least rigorously question Bakhtin's theories have been made (Booth, 1982; Glazener, 1989; Herndl, 1991; Wills, 1989). Notwithstanding, I concur with Dale M. Bauer and Susan Jaret McKinstry (1991) and others (Halasek, 1992; Hohne & Wussow, 1994; Pearce, 1994; Stam, 1989; Vice, 1997; Wolosky, 2010) that Bakhtin's theories are particularly salient to exploring critical feminist voices and politics. My proposition is based on the premise that—although Bakhtin's concerns are ethics and aesthetics, the philosophy of language, and literary concerns—the core of his philosophy of language or dialogism is committed to dialogue (voice, language, discourse) and otherness, meaning, difference (Bauer & McKinstry, 1991; Clark & Holquist, 1984; Morson & Emerson, 1990; Zbinden, 2006).

By this, I mean how the self is created in and by difference through communication with the other, in a specific social context, and time and place (positionality). I have argued throughout this study that difference (the stereotype, hybridity, the dialectics or language of the other, and gender) is used to codify and confer authority or privilege on a particular group of people or ideology. Difference continues to be used as a means to rationalize elitism, abuse of power, structural and systemic oppression (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1968; Said, 1979; Spivak, 1988).

Feminist scholars argue that the notion of voice, difference, and social situatedness are the underlying and strategic force of critical feminist analysis and politics (Alcoff, 2006; Bauer & McKinstry, 1991; Baumgardner & Richards, 2000; Butler, 1993, 1997a, 1997b; Jagger & Young, 2000; Lugones, 2000; Narayan, 2000; Weeden, 1999). In Bakhtin's view, the instability (heterogeneity, *unfinalizability*, ambiguity), and dialogic (counter-point) nature of language and meaning, are valuable as a critical method to expose (reclaim) and counter (resignify) monologic power and thought. From an analogous perspective, feminists have seized the force of language and dialogized it, creating new languages for feminist discourses and practices (Anzaldúa, 1987; Baumgardner & Richards 2000; Butler, 1993, 1997a, 1997b; Narayan & Harding; 2000; Spivak & Harasym, 1990; Weeden, 1999). As Judith Butler observes, "since language plays a significant role in making our world, to defamiliarize assumptions commonsense is, at times, to distort and deform language itself as a means of challenging the thought that lies behind linguistic expression" (cited in Morrison, 2005, p. 38). Most important to a feminist politics is to challenge to *reterritorialize* (Butler, 1997b) speech acts that carry with them actions that "act on' women in injurious ways" (p. 21). Butler argues that

*excitable speech* becomes *hate speech* when it becomes an illocutionary speech act, a speech act that carries with it an *action* (Butler, 1997, p. 96). Expressions such as *hate crime* or *domestic abuse* are not just words but illocutionary speech acts stemming from racism and sexism (Butler, 1997a). Contiguous with Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, and some feminist theory, "the assertion that some speech not only communicates hate, but constitutes an injurious act, presumes not only that language acts, but that it acts upon its addressee in an injurious way" (Butler, 1997a, p. 16). Language, especially voice, matters to feminist theory and practice.

The other central area for feminist epistemology is the body. How the body constructs social reality for individuals and how a woman's body is lived out. The extensive literature review of feminist scholarship in relationship to the body and the philosophy of embodiment are beyond the scope of the present study. The work of Michel Foucault (1977), Judith Butler (1999), Susan Bordo (1993, 2003), Katherine Hayles (1999), and Elizabeth Grosz (2003) stand out as important theories that address body and embodiment as sites of struggle and agency.<sup>32</sup> Although Bakhtin does not address how the gendered body is lived differently, his theories, similar to the work of the feminist scholars referenced, foreground the materiality of language, and corporality of the body, as the spaces within which discourse and power as well as resistance operate (especially see his theories of laughter and Carnival). Morson and Emerson (1990) observe that as evidenced by his early writing, Bakhtin sees the body "as a carrier or 'marker' for the self" (p. 186). Bakhtin emphasizes that in order to become dialogic, speech acts "must be embodied, that is, they must enter another sphere of existence: they

must become *discourse*, that is, an utterance, and receive an *author*, that is, a creator of a given utterance whose position it expresses” (PDP, 1984, p. 184).

Additionally, Bakhtin places great weight on context, social situatedness (*positionality*), as those terms are now understood, in the elaboration of his theory of dialogism. Positionality is significant to understand the usefulness of Bakhtin’s theories for a feminist vision. The concept of *situated knowledge (positionality)*, that is, the idea that all knowledge is partial and situated (Haraway, 2003; Narayan & Harding, 2000), in my view, is crucial to feminist investigations of power relations. This concept has been specifically important to disrupting efforts to essentialize and silence women’s voices (see Linda Alcoff, Judith Butler, Uma Narayan, Gayatri C. Spivak, Monique Wittig). For these reasons, Bakhtin’s theories are viable, and important to feminist ways of knowing, and relevant to this study of dialogue. Dialogue, as theorized in this study is the constitutive medium of voice, knowing, and Being (subjectivity).

### **The Unfinalizability and Dialogicity of SPU Encounters**

In bringing *unfinalizability* to bear on the SPU, as my analysis in Chapter 4 will show, the participants dialogized the discourses of the project; that is, they recontextualized, reaccented, and reintoned the discourses differently each time the SPU entered into a new context (*unfinalizability*). The debates surrounding the concept of Pan-America were dialogized differently in New York, Buenos Aires, and in Caracas, Venezuela. To give a brief example, in the introduction of the SPU in Buenos Aires, Helguera noted that in Caracas the project had been received rather negatively. The project was thought to resonate with the rhetoric of socialism (“participatory

democracy”) and inter-American (Pan-American) relations promoted by president Hugo Chávez. As a result, Helguera explained, that the interrogation of the project’s intent in Venezuela, bordered on violent attacks (“*Entonces me ponían ataques pero violentísimos, no*”) (P. Helguera, personal communication, September 9, 2006). Just barely able to hold his delight, which was evident in the *extra-linguistic* intonation off his utterance, Patricio Larrambebere, a visual artist and participant in the SPU event in Buenos Aires, asked: “You are competition for Chávez [*¿Vos sos competencia para Chávez?*]” The entire room burst into laughter, including Pablo. When I digitized and transcribed the video, I could clearly hear the laughter of my own voice. It seemed far-fetched in the Buenos Aires context that Helguera or the SPU could be remotely comparable to the rhetoric of Venezuela’s left-wing president, Hugo Chávez. On the other hand, clearly, Venezuelan interlocutors were dialogizing the language of the SPU. They were taking sides, opposing, and recontextualizing the discourse of the SPU in ways that rendered visible the historical, social, political, and aesthetic possibilities of the work. This was especially true, in the online travel forum of the project. Indeed, the reception and unfolding of the SPU depended greatly on the dialogized voices of the public.

In short, the dialogic nature of the utterance ensures its *unfinalizability* (*repeatability*), which points to the decentralization and instability of language and meaning. Thus, the meaning of an utterance must be considered against the dialogic (dialogized) background and context (social situatedness) against which language is lived, words previously spoken, not-yet spoken, re-accented, re-contextualized, and intoned differently. On the other hand, although meaning is context-dependent (bound), context can never be absolutely determinable. Put differently, “context is boundless”

(Clark & Holquist, 1984, p. 219). Clark and Holquist (1984) explain that, “the name of this boundlessness is heteroglossia” (p. 219). This does not mean that context (or the utterance) has *no boundaries*, but that the boundaries can be interpreted in countless ways as they enter into new circumstances or events and as they encounter new interpretations and judgments.

### **The Addressivity and Answerability of the *Utterance***

Ultimately, what makes the *utterance* central and unique to Bakhtin’s philosophy of language is his contention that all utterances are dialogic. Bakhtin’s construction of the utterance includes three components: the *subject* (S), the *object* (O) and the *addressee* (A) (Shepherd, 1998); i.e., the utterance is constituted by the speaking subject, the addressee’s *responsive understanding*, and the relationship and territory shared between the two based on the utterance’s contextual specificity. In art education, Karen Keifer-Boyd and Jane Maitland-Gholson (2007) theorize an interpretative frame of overlapping and disparate contexts to expose the relationship between the *subject* (author/artist), *object* (text), and *addressee* (participant/audience).

Bakhtin writes that dialogic language is made of concrete utterances. He notes that the constitutive sign of the utterance “is its quality of being directed to someone, its *addressivity*”<sup>33</sup> (SG, 1986, p. 95). The utterance, unlike signifying units such as language, words, and sentences have both an *addresser* (the subject or “S,” author, or the “I”) and an *addressee* (“A,” the listener, the “to” and “you”). The addressee can be a prior speaker or an individual who is present, a group of people, an enemy, a subordinate, a discourse, or the speaker herself. The addressee can also be an “indefinite” or “unconcretized *other*”

(SG, 1986, p. 95) or the “ideal image of an imaginary audience” (Todorov, 1984, p. 43). The utterance is deliberately directed toward a particular addressee in anticipation of a future “answer-word” (DiN, 1981, p. 280). Both the form (compositional means) and above all, the semantic consideration of the utterance vary according to whom the utterance is addressed. For instance, when the speaker (subject, author) constructs an utterance, he or she attempts to presuppose the addressee’s response. Thus, the utterances directed at the addressee represent the speaker’s perception of the Other’s (“A,” the listeners) “conceptual horizon” (DiN, 1981, p. 282). By defining the SPU as a public art project, Helguera orients his utterances toward a particular listener (*addressee*), and specific conceptual horizon, the art field. In other words, Helguera is speaking to the art world’s sympathies, antipathies, experience, and knowledge in relationship to public art (see Chapter 4). To an even greater extent, the speaker (subject) anticipates the force the addressee will exert upon the speaker’s utterance and in turn how s/he will respond (SG, 1986, p. 95). In this respect, the “word is a *two-sided act*. It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and from *whom* it is meant” (V: MPL, 1973, p. 86). Expressed differently, in spite of the fact that the word is imbued with my expression to be answerable as a speaker within Bakhtin’s ideas of *addressivity* is to be cognizant of my own position, of the dissimilarity between my insight, my responses, and my discernment of accountability, and that of other individuals (Rothschild Ewald, 1993). In this sense, *addressivity* is linked to becoming self-conscious (self-reflexivity). The very anticipation of the addressee’s response reveals the reliance on the other’s utterances and consciousness for the construction of the self (ontological subjectivity).

Bakhtin writes that *answerability* (or *responsive understanding*) is an act that recognizes the complexity of the *addressivity* at hand and takes responsive action. This involves, placing the utterance in context; taking into account previous (and subsequent) understanding and ideas that relate to it, and *actively responding* to it (V: MPL, 1973; DiN, 1981; SG, 1986). What Bakhtin means by *active response* also relates to the listener's ability to internalize, and carefully formulate, and express a new aspect of the utterance—one that is relevant and evaluative (DiN, 1981). The utterance is always an evaluation and a performative action. Bakhtin observes that the *dialogic* speaker “does not expect passive understanding that, so to speak only duplicates his own idea in someone else's mind” (SG, 1986, p. 69; also see DiN, 1981, p. 281). Rather, the speaker (*subject*):

presuppose[s] not only the existence of the language system he is using, but also the existence of preceding utterances—his own and others'—with which his given utterance enters into one kind of relation or another (builds on them, polemicizes with them, or simply presumes that they are already known to the listener). Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances. (SG, 1986, p. 69)

Bakhtin's insight suggests that any understanding of a live utterance is essentially dialogic and responsive (SG, 1986; V: MPL, 1973), and granted the degree of responsiveness activity or dialogic interaction differs greatly. In light of the fact that *addressivity* and *answerability* are mutually constituted, this relationship entails a complex and oscillating process of negotiation between speaker and listener, and between what has previously been said (already-spoken) and what is subsequently said (just-

spoken, or not-yet spoken). To conclude, “like an electric spark that occurs only when two different terminals are hooked together” (V: MPL, 1973, p. 103), meaning, including the meaning of an aesthetic event, does not belong to words or to language but to its place between speakers. It is this threshold and *contact zone* of dialogic relations that I turn to in the analysis of Pablo Helguera’s *School of Panamerican Unrest*. However, next, in Chapter 3, I elaborate on the methodology, research design, and research procedures used in this dissertation.

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1. Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism is a counter-theory to Saussure’s (a) view of language as a synchronic system, (b) Saussure’s emphasis on language as a pure system, (c) Saussure’s practice of separating *langue* and *parole*, and (d) Saussure’s position regarding the relationship of signs to each other.

2. Bakhtin scholars, Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson consider these intellectual explorations, as representing the four periods and three important turning points of Bakhtin’s theoretical explorations. See Morson’ and Emerson’s (1990) *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*, pp. 64–100.

3. What is meant by “creativity” is how the author creates, i.e., structures his or her work, thus authorship.

4. In music, *polyphony* refers to many voices in which multiple sounds, voices, or instruments (or instrument parts) are combined *simultaneously* and *contrapuntally*. In contrast, monophonic music describes an arrangement composed of a single melody. Homophonic music refers to one melodic line in unison with other parts used as accents. See Michael Kennedy and Joyce Bourne, *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* (1996).

5. Bakhtin refers to Dostoevsky as the “inventor” of the polyphonic novel in *Dostoevsky’s Creative Art* (1929). In *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (1984), Bakhtin explains that this does not make “Dostoevsky “an isolated instance in the history of the novel, nor does it mean, that the polyphonic novel which he created was without predecessors” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 44, n. 4).

6. “Bakhtin draws an analogy between the ‘author–hero’ and the ‘self–other’ relationship. ‘Author’ and ‘Hero’ are, ultimately, relative terms; we are all authors and heroes, we are all both selves and others” (Morris, 2001, p. 246). In *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*, Morson and Emerson (1990) make a similar argument: “the problem of the

author and the hero is also the problem of each self's relations to the other" (p. 189). Also see Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (1989), *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*.

7. Kester (1995) submits that community-based art practices that use paternalistic methodologies shift the role of the artists to that of "social service provider" or "aesthetic evangelist" as opposed to collaborator—a tenet that is implicit and explicit in community-based art. The artist as "aesthetic evangelist," Kester is adamant, mirrors the role of social reformers and is complicit with reformist ideologies (akin to the Victorian era). In the quest to speak for the *disenfranchised*, the artist seeks to ameliorate (reform) social imbalances (i.e., poverty, crime) through aesthetic encounters.

Correspondingly, Miwon Kwon's case study of *Culture in Action: New Public Art in Chicago*—a series of public art projects curated by Mary Jane Jacob from 1992 to 1995 is an example of a study that interrogates authoritative discourses in the visual arts. Kwon writes that in almost every *Culture in Action* case, the artist and/or art institution (i.e., curators, organizers, funding agencies) had the power to identify and define (construct) the community they wanted to work with and set the parameters for the art projects. In some instances, those mediating *Culture in Action* projects simply matched the "right" community with the artist's agenda. Kwon concludes that artistic practices that predetermine the conceptual framework for the project prior to conversations with prospective collaborators and community partners pre-conceive the community as already sited (pre-existing, static). These practices are "contrary to the promotional rhetoric that describes community collaborations as the result of an organic and dialogical relationship between the artist and the community" (Kwon, 2002, p. 123). In other words, as theorized by Kwon, *Culture in Action* projects were for the most part, monologic encounters.

8. Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* (1981) is the quintessential example of a public art project that did not reflect or refract (or only did so in a limited way) the ideological sphere (*ideologeme*) of the public. The large-scale sculpture provoked great controversy and dissatisfaction among the community in which it was installed. Some of the most influential figures in art have written about the *Tilted Arc* debacle (Crimp, 1986; Deutsche, 1996; Finkelparl, 2000; Foster, 1996; Krauss, 1979; Kwon, 2002; Kester 2004; Lacy, 1995; Senie, 2003; Senie & Webster, 1998). Their interest was captured precisely because the questions raised were not simply about the public's desire to remove the artwork or Serra's legal action over the sculpture's removal in 1989. Rather, the controversy was about the larger discourses and struggles between the public and public art; for instance, the spatial politics of art, that is, the aesthetic, social, and political function of art in public spaces and the rights of the public's voice and *dialogic* (not single-voiced) engagement in matters of public space and art in public spaces. (Also see public contestations surrounding Maya Lin's *Vietnam' Veterans Memorial*, 1982; John Ahearn's *South Bronx Sculpture Park* (at the 44th Precinct Police Station), 1991; Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* 1989; and Chris Ofili's *Virgin Mary*, 1996). Powerful decision makers, who controlled funding and public dialogue from a limited entry point,

interpreted each of these works. However, the controversies arose because there were, indeed multiple meanings, including the artist's, which differed from the power brokers.'

9. "At their root [of *sobytiye*] lies the Russian word for 'existence' or 'being' (*bytie*), and—although the etymology here can be disputed—*so-bytie* can be read both in its ordinary meaning of 'event,' and in a more literal rendering as 'co-existing, co-being, shared existence or being with another ... [however] '[a]n event can occur only among interacting consciousness; there can be no isolated or solipsistic events'" (Emerson, 1984, p. 6).

10. Julia Kristeva coined the word *intertextuality* in an article meant to introduce the work of Mikhail Bakhtin in France, *Bakhtin, le mot, le dialogue et le roman*" (Original work published 1967). For the English publication, see Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1980). Kristeva transposes Bakhtin's dialogism into *intertextuality*. Since Kristeva's initial foray into intertextuality, there has been enormous interest in the destabilization of text and author. One of the most important contributions (extensions and revisions) stemming from Kristeva's work based on Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, is the work of Roland Barthes, in particular his proclamation of "the death of the Author" (1977). Other important works influenced by intertextuality are the theories of Gérard Genette (1997) on "intertextuality," "metatextuality," "hypertextuality," and "transtextuality."

Kristeva's appropriation of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism has been the cause for great debate in academic circles, especially amongst Bakhtinian scholars. The arguments are complex. Briefly sketched and abridged here; they center around two interrelated arguments. According to Graham Allen (2000), Simon Dentith (1995), and Karine Zbinden (2006), Kristeva removes the socio-ideological aspect of dialogism and incorporates the ideas constituent of dialogism into an abstract system, namely, semiotics. In *Bakhtin between East and West: Cross-cultural Transmissions*, Zbinden (2006) argues that Kristeva "strips" Bakhtin's dialogism "down" to intertextuality by transposing his theories into French semiotics (Zbinden, 2006, p. 85). Clare Cavanagh (1993) states, more candidly that the Bakhtin who emerges in Kristeva's work "is frenchified and post-structuralized almost beyond recognition" (p. 290).

The problem with Kristeva's re-visioning of Bakhtin's dialogism, as seen by her critics, is the displacement of Bakhtin's *addressee* and his or her socio-historical and ideological location (Herrman, 1989, p. 17). Simon Dentith (1995) argues that Kristeva successfully removes the signifying process from the dialogic encounter. Thus, without the addressee, without the process of negotiation between the writer and reader, speaker and listener, and without the context (socio-ideological location) of dialogue, the heterogeneity (diversity) and polysemy (multiple meanings) become the domain of the text itself. Consequently, Dentith (1997) posits that the "multiplicity of possible meaning in a text spring from that text and not from the multiplicity of possible occasions in which the text can be read" (p. 97).

In direct contrast to Dentith's argument, in *Intercultural Collaborations: Palimpsest Traces & Spaces In-between Times & Places*, Martina Paatela Nieminen and

Karen Keifer-Boyd (2008) propose aspects of Genette's and Kristeva's theories of intertextuality reinvented in a social-political theoretical perspective of art education. They provide a method by which to theorize and, therefore, analyze intersubjectivity. In this study, Paatela Nieminen and Keifer-Boyd explore (not displace) "intersubjective dialogue" through cultural and intercultural relationships (p. 1). They analyze the signifying process among speaking subjects in dialogue with each other and in conversation with a plurality of texts (visual, verbal, extra-verbal, social) in their changing cultural context. The three projects presented in this study involve collaborative learning experiences and visual art strategies to promote intercultural exchanges and the valuing of difference, and to "develop pedagogical approaches for art educators to act as bridges for deepening understandings amongst people to contribute to world peace" (p. 1). The complexity of the different readings, approaches, and critiques regarding Kristeva's intertextuality are beyond the scope of this study. On the other hand, given that I consider Kristeva's intertextuality a continuation of Bakhtin's dialogism, this study considers her theories and the theories of scholars using intertextuality in relation to Bakhtin's theory of dialogism.

11. Some of the major critiques directed at Bakhtin's concept of *polyphony* as analyzed by Caryl Emerson (1997), pertain to the structural aspects of *polyphony* in the novel. By that I mean, the different elements that are ordinarily thought of as making a novel, a novel (e.g., plot, characters, protagonist, antagonist, moral dilemma and so on). The structural elements of the novel are not considered in the analysis of SPU. In addition, in Emerson's text there are allegations that Bakhtin either misread or misinterpreted Dostoevsky's work for his own aims, to make Dostoevsky's work fit his own theoretical and research interests. Moreover, it has been argued that Dostoevsky's work is not polyphonic and furthermore that Bakhtin theories are not true to Dostoevsky's intent—although whether or not the artist's intention is the point is its own question. For a detailed discussion of these and other arguments, see Caryl Emerson, *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin* (1997), especially pp. 127–149.

12. See Roland Barthes, in *Image-Music-Text* (1968/1977a)

13. At the macro-linguistic level, *heteroglossia* stands for the variety of socio-ideological languages according to age, gender, economic position (social speech types). At the same time *heteroglossia* represents the language of the lawyer, teacher, priest, artist, politician (register), as well as regional and social dialectics (i.e., regional accents, working-class dialects). Similarly, *heteroglossia* in literary texts refers to literary genres (epic, poetry) and stylization (*skaz*, parody, characters) in novelistic discourse (DiN, 1981).

14. Karine Zbinden (2006) makes a distinction between the Russian *raznorechie* (*heteroglossia*), *raznoyazychie* (heterology), and *raznorechivost* (heterologicality). Zbinden examines the impact of mistranslation or "poorly rendered" translation of these terms and the "disappearance" of some of these concepts, namely, *raznorechie* (heterology) from French and English translations of Bakhtin studies. For a detailed

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explanation of the nuances of each of these terms and the problematics of mistranslating them, and privileging *heteroglossia* over heterology, see Karine Zbinden (2006) *Bakhtin Between East and West: Cross-Cultural Transmissions*.

15. Bakhtin discusses his concept of polyglossia most fully in his essay, “From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse” (1940). Additionally, in the glossary of *The Dialogic Imagination*, written by Michael Holquist (1981), Holquist defines polyglossia as “the simultaneous presence of two or more national languages [English, Spanish, French] interacting within a single cultural system” (p. 431). He illuminates the stages of social and historical linguistic change (polyglossia and monoglossia) in two historical models, “ancient Rome and the Renaissance” (p. 431).

16. Bakhtin’s notion of hybridity (also polyglossia) resonates with Gloria Anzaldúa’s (1987) theories of *mestizaje* and code-switching. Code-switching refers to the mixture of disparate languages and cultures, for instance, the mixture of English and Spanish or Spanglish (Chicano Spanish), or the mixture of cultures, Caucasian and Indigenous or Mestizos. Anzaldúa argues that the fusion (hybridity) of language is often seen as contaminated (*bastardized*) and is, therefore, rebuked by those who seek *purity* in language and culture. Code-switching is also a part of living multiple identities for instance living between two cultures, Mexican and American or straight and gay. Anzaldúa describes *mestizaje* in an interview as the “nos/otras, the nos is us/we/me/the subject; the otras is them/they/the object, and in nos/otras we are them and they are us and we’re contaminated by each other” (Reuman, 2002, p. 5). Anzaldúa (1987) argues that hybridity or “cultural collisions” (p. 78) or in Bakhtinian terms, “counterpoint discourse,” can be put to use to combat ideologies that perpetuate racist, sexist, and imperialist agendas. See Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). For examples of how artists use code-switching to negotiate postcolonial identities, see the work of Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Jaune Quick to Sée Smith, and Havhivi Edgar Heap of Birds.

17. Bhabha’s (1994) *difference* is similar to Derrida’s (1976) *différance* and Saussure’s (1960) concept of signs acquiring meaning through their difference from other signs.

18. “Stereotype signification is curiously mixed and split, polymorphous and perverse, and articulation of multiple beliefs. The black is both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified servants (the bearer of the food) ... he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 82).

19. In *Approaching Dialogue: Talk, Interaction and Contexts in Dialogical Perspectives*, Per Linell (1998) proposes that “monologism and dialogism, taken as general epistemologies or analytical frameworks ... involve certain characteristic perspectives ... [M]onologism is largely a decontextualizing paradigm. Dialogism, by contrast, is built

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upon the intrinsic and inalienable relations between discursive practices and their contexts” (p. 277).

20. See Tony Crowley (1989), “Bakhtin and the History of Language.” Crowley grounds his argument by considering the respective historical and political conditions of Bakhtin and Antonio Gramsci, and the different forms of discourses their respective circumstances would require. Crowley states that for Gramsci: “rather than arguing for heteroglossia, what was required was precisely the organizing force of a monoglossia. If Bakhtin, faced with the increasing centralisation and brutal forms of unity engendered by Stalinism, he argued for the importance of diversity and pluralism. Gramsci, faced with a divided and multi-factional national-popular mass, stressed the need for unity. His argument in favor of a unitary language was based on the difficulties of organizing an illiterate mass in a society in which literacy was largely the prerogative of the governing class” (p. 84).

21. Strategic essentialism refers to a strategic alliance based on a shared understanding or idea, which in turn is used temporarily as an oppositional practice to obtain specific social and political outcomes.

22. In *Approaching Dialogue: Talk, Interaction and Contexts in Dialogical Perspectives*, Per Linell (1998) refers to “monologic practices” in the study of language as practices that:

are useful, sometimes necessary, for specific purposes. For example, in order to explore some aspects, say properties pertaining to language structure, it may be desirable to control, keep constant or temporarily disregard contextual parameters. But this is basically a methodological trick; it is not that the world out there is static, but in order to explore it, we may need to ‘fixate’ it.” (p. 286)

23. Although there is no definitive theory or characterization for the sign, the sign frequently refers to a word(s) but it can also be a sound, image, scent, taste, or it can be an object or act (Chandler, 1994). The Saussurean linguistic sign is the outcome (combination) of the interaction of the signifier with the signified. The connection between the signifier and the signified is “signification,” that is, the meaning produced (Chandler, 1994; Harris, 2001; Ives, 2004a; Marin and Ringham, 2006; Saussure, 1966). Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) suggested that signs stand in for something else, i.e., symbol, index, icon (Martin & Ringman, 2006; Petrilli & Ponzio, 2005).

24. Saussure’s signifier is the material or sensorial aspects of the sign, and the signified is the conceptual notion of the sign. For instance, a cross (the signifier) on top of a building or as a piece of jewelry around someone’s neck denotes Christian religiosity (the signified). The color red (signifier) on a traffic signal means stop (signified) (Chandler, 1994; Ives, 2004a; Martin & Ringman, 2006). Other examples are expressions such as “nappy-headed” hair (signifier), which denotes “non-White” hair and marked and unmarked racial categories (signified).

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25. I draw this example from a similar argument in Peter Ives's (2004a) *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*.

26. Bakhtin and Volosinov locate the ideas of “abstract objectivism” and “individual subjectivism” in Enlightenment philosophies of the eighteenth century and subsequent philosophical thought and linguistics theories that build on these perspectives (e.g., German Romanticism, N. Ja. Marr, Benedetto Croce, and Wilhem von Humboldt to name a few). However, according to Bakhtin and Volosinov the most “striking” expression of these two “trends” is found in the work of Saussure (V: MPL, 1973, p. 58). In essence, for Saussure, subjectivism and objectivism are competing philosophical positions that advocate different perspectives in regard to the ethical nature of value and evaluation or value-judgments (what is moral, right, good, true). Subjectivism is based on the notion that value-judgments are “not dependent on individual taste but on the natural desires of [hu]mankind taken as a whole. Consequently, X is good when “all, or most, people (or all, or most people in my social group) desire X” (Flew, 1984, p. 343). Objectivism, on the other hand, refers to “the belief that there are certain moral truths that would remain true whatever anyone or everyone thought or desired” (Flew, 1984, p. 343). Accordingly, subjectivism emphasizes the individual (what the individual desires, agrees with, disagrees with, her/his experiences) and the mental aspects of value and evaluation. Whereas, objectivism stresses the intersubjective (relational) and material experiences of value-judgments.

27. In *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1973), Bakhtin and Volosinov outline the key characteristics of “abstract objectivism” (AO) and “individual subjectivism” (IS). Additionally, they present their concluding arguments obtained in relation to their juxtaposition of AO and IS.

28. Bakhtin considers his study of language as moving beyond the boundaries of traditional linguistics. For Bakhtin his theories of language are about:

Discourse, that is, language in its concrete living totality, and not language as the specific object of linguistics, something arrived at, through a completely legitimated and necessary abstraction from various aspects of the concrete life of the word. But precisely those aspects in the life of the word that linguistics makes abstract are, for our purposes of primary importance. Therefore the analyses that follow are not linguistic in the strict sense of the term. They belong rather to metalinguistics, if we understand by that term the study of those aspects in the life of the word, not yet shaped into separate and specific disciplines, that exceed—and completely legitimately—the boundaries of linguistics. Of course, metalinguistic research cannot ignore linguistics and must make use of its results. Linguistics and metalinguistic study one and the same concrete, highly complex, and multi-faceted phenomenon, namely, the word—but they study it from various sides and various points of view and must complement another, but they must not

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be confused. In practice, the boundaries between them are very often violated. (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 181)

29. According to Tzvetan Todorov in *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle* (1984), “the extra verbal context of the utterance is composed of three aspects” (p. 42). He lists the following, citing Bakhtin’s work: “the *space* and *time* of the enunciation (“where” and “when”), the object or *theme* of the utterance (that “of which” it is spoken); and the *relation* of the interlocutors to what is happening (“evaluation”) (cited in Todorov, 1984, p. 42).

30. In 2008 Martha Raddatz interviewed ex-Vice President Dick Cheney. According to Raddatz, after being told that two-thirds of Americans now think the Iraq war was not worth fighting for, Cheney replied “So?” What are we to make of Cheney’s speech act? What belief systems signify this single word? *The Frank Factor* (political talk radio) put out a video of “Top Ten Responses to Dick Cheney’s ‘So.’” These include: “What do you use to get the blood of our soldiers off of your hands?” “Your have been right about everything else concerning the war so you must be right to treat us like idiots.” “I have to ask Rush Limbaugh what to think.” “I pray you find yourself being not tortured by water boarding in the near future.” See *Dick Cheney’s “So.”* Retrieved September 05, 2009, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BeFCOUqsWA&feature=related>

31. In regard to the term “queer,” although the point similarly applies to the expression “bitch,” in *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex,”* Judith Butler (1993) explains that “within the very signification that is ‘queer,’ we read a resignifying practice in which the desanctioning power of the name ‘queer,’ is reversed to sanction a contestation of the terms of sexual legitimacy” (p. 232).

32. Foucault’s conceptualization of the body as implicated in the social relations of self-correction and self-surveillance or *docile bodies*, and his theories of the body as imprinted historically by *biopower*, offer important insights concerning how the body is experienced in relation to systems of power. Similarly, Judith Butler’s (1999) parody and performative approaches to gender, which place the body as discursively situated text, offer complex ideas to theorize about subjectivity. However, there are a number of critiques about theories that overdetermine the body as a passive site of inscription or erase the body by fixing it in textual indeterminacy (Anzaldúa, 1999; Bordo, 2003; Grosz, 1994, 1999; Hayles 1999). Susan Bordo (2003) finds Foucault’s and Butler’s contributions groundbreaking and significant for theorizing about identity and the body. On the other hand, she contends that there is a necessity to re-conceptualize dominant and subordinate relationships of power in Foucault’s work. Furthermore, she calls into question Butler’s discursive approaches to the body, concluding that they are embedded in “linguistic foundationalism” (p. 291), which she describes as a “theoretical pasta machine through which the categories of competing frameworks are pressed and reprocessed as “tropes” (p. 291). To trouble the disjuncture between the material and the discursive, the inscribed and the textual body, Katherine Hayles’s (1999) dialectical

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operation of body/embodiment and inscription/incorporation is an important counterpoint. In *Bodies-Cities* (2003), Elizabeth Grosz affirms that the socio-cultural environment (rural, urban, suburban) inscribes the body. In her work, Bordo often uses the Möbius strip as a metaphor to tease out the fluidity of seeming dualities about the body and mind, interiority and exteriority, the physical and the psychological. Similarly, in *Masquerading the Immateriality of Materiality* (2010b) Keifer-Boyd, as Bakhtin, does not see the material and the discursive as a disjuncture or dichotomy, rather Keifer-Boyd contends that subjectivity is a process “created from social, technological, and embodied actors, human and non-human, that entangle in a multitude of networks” (p. 2). In short, these authors provide a foundation to explore and problematize the contentious debates about the discursive and material body in feminist research and draw attention to the significance of the body as a site of struggle and agency.

33. Bakhtin’s concepts of addresser and addressee, *addressivity* and *answerability* (ethical responsibility) or “responsive understanding” are multifaceted ideas and part of Bakhtin’s earlier work on ethics and aesthetics. In *The Context of Bakhtin: Philosophy, Authorship, Aesthetics*, David Shepherd (1998) observes that in essence this body of work “is not a work about aesthetics. It is about how to create a *prima philosophia*, a doctrine of being, being defined as an *act (postupok)*” (p. 86). For Bakhtin, the act of being (“*postupok*”) has two characteristics: “an internal, existential aspect, which Bakhtin here calls *answerability* ... and an external aspect—the goal of the act, its evaluative or axiological, meaning-governed (*smyslovoi*) aspect” (Shepherd, 1998, p. 86). The present study considers the notion of *answerability* and *addressivity* solely in relation to Bakhtin’s theories of the *utterance* and dialogism, using SPU dialogues as an example to investigate the value and relevance of Bakhtin’s theory for interpreting the nexus between dialogism and art in a contemporary public art project.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODS

In this chapter, I elaborate on the methodology and research processes used in the study. I describe the qualitative case study research design, and the rationale for using an *intrinsic* case study design in the study of Pablo Helguera's *The School of Panamerican Unrest* and the dialogue-interactions of the SPU participants. The chapter delineates the process I used to select participants and the methods employed for data collection and management. I discuss issues relating to trustworthiness and reliability in qualitative research. Last, I summarize the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 and how it was used for analyzing and interpreting the data in this study.

#### **Qualitative Research Methods and Case Study Research Design**

The purpose of the study is to analyze, from the interpretative frame of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, the discourses that developed in-situ at the different *School of Panamerican Unrest* (2006) performances that I participated in as an observer. In this exploratory and critical investigation of art, I specifically ask: What kinds of dialogues and dialogic exchanges did the SPU perform? What dialogic discourses did participants perform when they engaged with the SPU? To better understand the purpose of the study, which it is to envision the nexus between dialogism and art, and to address the research questions, I use qualitative methods of investigation and a case study research design.

The case study represents a particular type of research design and practice within qualitative research.<sup>1</sup> The case study, therefore, is a specific way of doing qualitative

research (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; McMillan, 2004; Stake, 2005; Yin, 1994). Qualitative case research strategies have a long history in education and the social sciences. Robert E. Stake (1995, 2005) and Robert K. Yin (1994, 2009) have written extensively about case study research design. According to Yin (2009), the definition of a case study is two-fold: “A case study is an empirical inquiry that (a) investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 18). Stake (2005) describes the case study as an intensive examination of a single case within a “bounded system” (p. 444), and an “empirical study of human existence” (p. 454). In *Educational Research: Fundamentals for the Consumer*, James. H. McMillan (2004) refers to the case study as an in-depth analysis of “one entity, which is carefully defined and characterized by time and place” (p. 271).

In their influential study, *What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*, Charles C. Ragin and Howard Saul Becker (1992), conclude that social scientists answer the question—“what is a case?”—in extraordinarily different ways. As indicated by their findings—a qualitative research case study can be “theoretical or empirical or both; it may be a relatively bounded object or a process; and it may be generic and universal or specific in some ways” (p. 3). Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (2005), Stake (1995, 2005), and Yin (2005) concur with Ragin and Becker (1992), noting there are numerous ways to design and evaluate case study research and processes. For example, Yin (1994, 2005) classifies case studies into three categories:

exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. Robert E. Stake (2005) identifies three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and multiple case or collective case study.

Although a researcher may choose to follow the case study structure of a particular researcher, for example, Stake's (2005) intrinsic case study research organization, there can be slippages between the different types of case studies. Thus, it is not uncommon to have cross over, or hybrid case study designs and processes within a given piece of research (Gerring, 2007; Jensen & Rodgers, 2001; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2005). What is most important, however, and here I concur with Stake (2005), is not to create a rigid or "hard-and-fast line," to distinguish the different types of case studies (p. 443). What is significant is how the researchers respond to the question what is a case study? The researcher's response to this question has a direct impact on how research is conducted and on research results, as well as the methodological orientation of the case (Denzin, 2005; McMillan, 2004; Ragin & Howard, 1992; Stake, 2005; Yin 1994).

To address the question, what is a case study, the present research is guided by Robert Stake's intrinsic case study research design. According to Stake (2005), the researcher's focus in an intrinsic case study is to understand what is significant about the case within its own-world and context. My focus is to understand what is significant about the SPU, within the participants' interactions, in the contexts of the time and place in which the dialogues took place, and within its own world, i.e., the discourses of contemporary art, specifically public art. Stake (2005) underscores that the aim of an intrinsic case study design, is "to develop what is perceived to be the case's own issues, contexts, and interpretations, its 'thick description'" (p. 450). Thick description, as posited by Clifford Geertz (1973), is a process of writing and interpretation that provides

rich, multi-layered, multivalent detail in the context in which the utterances, expression, and experiences took place. In the analysis chapter, I explore through thick description, the joint speech acts, interactions, and interpretations of the SPU participants in their spatiotemporal context.

Yin (2009), and professor of methodology and comparative politics at Boston University, John Gerring (2007), propose that a case study is a valuable research design, when the emphasis of the research question(s) is an exploratory question—when “what” (descriptive), or “how” and “why” (explanatory) questions are being proposed. According to Yin (2005), the case study is particularly valuable when the researcher’s emphasis is on a contemporary experience within a real-life context. I selected a qualitative case study research design, firstly, because the emphasis of the study is on a single case, *The School of Panamerican Unrest* dialogue-interactions (2006). Stated differently, the dialogue-interactions of the SPU participants provide the case study in this dissertation. Secondly, the research and the research questions for the present case study are exploratory in nature (“what” questions as outlined at the beginning of this chapter). Last, working with the SPU gave me an opportunity to analyze a present-day experience in art, in a real-life context, and an art event that was in the making.

### **Selection of Research Respondents**

Robert Stake (2005) observes that an intrinsic case study is unusual, in that at times, the casework “begins with cases already identified” (p. 450). This was certainly the situation for the selection of the SPU participants prior to traveling to SPU events in six different locations: New York City; San Francisco, California; Tempe, Arizona;

Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Santiago de Chile, Chile. Helguera spent over a year speaking with interested parties, planning with prospective participants, and writing grants and negotiating with organizations and institutions to secure funding for *The School of Panamerican Unrest* project (P. Helguera, personal communication, March 27, 2006). The selection of research respondents was; therefore, already identified and selected (although partially because no one could anticipate who would participate in the SPU performances). As a result, I used internal sampling. In a case study, internal sampling refers to the selection of “participants, times, and documents” by the researcher “at the site” (McMillan, 2004, p. 273). From the overall group of individuals (curators, artists, discussants, audience members, institutions) that participated, I was able to make subsequent choices, for instance, selecting the people that I would interview, and the respondent’s data that I would include in the research.

The central concern in selecting participants for the dissertation was to choose individuals, places, archives, and events that provided the most in-depth, multivocal, and multivalent information. This is precisely the reason why the study and analysis of the data is focused on the SPU event in New York and Buenos Aires, Argentina. I was not concerned in sampling respondents. Sampling refers to the selection of participants from a given population that are representative of others, or whose ideas and experiences could be made general to a larger population (typical or random case sampling). In fact, in *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985), Lincoln and Guba state that in emergent research and emergent sampling design, “there can be no a priori specification of the sample; it cannot be ‘drawn’ in advance, note how the very term ‘drawn’ reflects a bias toward generalization-oriented random sampling” (p. 201).

Following Stake (2005), another objective in choosing participants (or a case) was to select those from whom I felt I could learn the most. Stake (2005) writes that, the “potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness. Sometimes it is better to learn a lot from an atypical case than a little from a seemingly typical case” (p. 450). In addition to the aforementioned, the criterion for selecting research participants for the study was that respondents participate in some aspect of the performance (audience member, roundtable participant, involved in collaborative actions). I did not focus on participants that were involved with the project, for instance, strictly through the SPU virtual forum. The selection of participants also depended on the willingness of respondents to have an open-ended conversation (interview) with me. I was interested in an exchange that was conducive to dialogue and allowed me access to ideas, perceptions, and reflections about the SPU that the participants wished to share (see Appendices B and C)

### **Researcher’s Role**

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) write that there are common and interconnected activities that characterize the qualitative research process: “theory, analysis, ontology, epistemology, and methodology” (p. 21). Behind and within these concepts, stand the researcher’s personal biography, which communicates from a specific position, for instance, gender, class, race, and ethnicity. Thus, the “situated researcher approaches the world, with a set of ideas a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis)” (p. 20).

The voices of these multiple researcher selves (e.g., researcher as teacher, chronicler, artist, interpreter, critic, advocate) are implicitly and explicitly refracted in the dissertation through the voices of “those that speak in the text” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 209). These include the researcher’s voice, the voices of the participants at the SPU events in their joint discourses, Bakhtin’s concepts of dialogism, and the voices of critical feminist scholars and other theorists that the study draws upon. My role as a researcher in this study, thus, is multifarious: an observer and observer participant (discussed in the sub-section *Data Collection from Observation*), and researcher, analyst, and interpreter.

### **Research Data Gathering and Management**

The principal means of gathering data for a case study is comparable to other methods used to collect data in qualitative research (e.g., ethnography or action research). They include observation, interview, and document analysis (McMillan, 2004; Stake, 2005; Yin, 1994). Subsequent to receiving approval to conduct this research from the Review Board for Protection of Human Subject at Penn State University, I sent Helguera a letter of introduction to the project to recruit him as a potential research participant (see Appendix D), and Implied Informed Consent Form (see Appendix E). The SPU was performed at numerous cities throughout the Americas, in different venues such as traditional art spaces, schools, feminist organizations, and city squares. I made digital video recordings of the interactions amongst the artist and the SPU participants, at each of the six locations that I was present (New York City; San Francisco, California; Tempe, Arizona; Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Santiago de Chile, Chile) (See Appendix F for the SPU itinerary & schedule of discussions). In addition, I audio

and video recorded multiple activities, for instance, workshops, round-table discussion, and collective actions surrounding and leading up to the performance. I audio and video recorded Helguera's presentation and workshop at *The Phoenix Day School* in Tempe, Arizona. As the researcher of this study, I determined the foci and boundaries of the inquiry and research questions, and analyzed and determined the appropriateness of the research paradigm to the research focus and questions. I selected the case, prepared, collected, evaluated, analyzed data, and prepared the final report to disseminate the research findings.

### **Data Collection from Observation**

James McMillan (2004) explains that a distinctive "characteristic of most qualitative research is that behavior is studied as it occurs naturally. There is no manipulation or control of behavior or setting, nor are there any externally imposed constraints" (p. 257). I observed the different SPU events in their natural setting and did not, or at least did not intentionally attempt to influence or constrain the processes and practices of the events under observation. Michael V. Angrosino (2005) asks, however, if it is feasible in postmodern times to speak of *naturalistic observation* or fieldwork. Is it possible to not interfere with the people or phenomenon under observation? According to Angrosino (2005), researchers have long recognized that observation involves participation and that observers affect what they observe. Observation is never truly naturalistic, in an objective sense of the term. This is especially true, given that researchers increasingly conduct observation-based studies in an environment of "collaborative research" and "dialogic relationships" (Angrosino, 2005, p. 734).

I observed the different SPU events in their natural setting, that is, I sought to understand and interpret the events in ways that recognize the meanings that people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), a practice consistent with qualitative research and feminist philosophy (and emic approaches of data collection). The nature of my observation at different SPU events varied. I engaged in complete observation participation, i.e., “observing without becoming part of the process” (McMillan, 2004, p. 263). The large numbers of participants at some SPU events, made it easier for me to remain comparatively unidentified, not out of a desire to be covert, as this would violate feminist ethical principles, specifically in regard to researcher and respondent relationships and conduct (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, 2007; Reinharz, 1992; Weedon, 1999), or out of some misguided notion that I could present a value-free, or detached (unseen and unfelt) observation, but more out of my desire to be unobtrusive to the artist’s process.

However, my being there or my observation was not necessarily inconspicuous. The materiality of the video camera, although I attempted to limit the presence of the recording equipment by not allowing the camera to dominate the scene, was still felt. Helguera usually prefaced the performance by letting audiences members know that the event was being video recorded for a forthcoming documentary about the project. In fact, I often operated not only my video camera but also Helguera’s recording and photographic equipment, as well. Many participants thought I was Helguera’s videographer. Some individuals did not seem to pay much attention to the camera, and often, it appeared that respondents just simply forgot about the camera as the events progressed and the discussions intensified. There were times, however, that participants

performed for the camera. For example, a discussant in the SPU–Buenos Aires event, noted that given that the encounter was being video recorded, it seemed important that information about the artistic production in Buenos Aires be considered. The participant proceeded to give a brief summary, and emphasized that this information was important to determine how Helguera’s project operated in relation to the artistic history of Buenos Aires.

Most often, though, my level of participation vacillated between moderate observation participation and reactive observation. The former are circumstances in which I was identified as a researcher but did not participate in the events. Reactive observation, according to Angrosino (2005) is observation based on the assumption that respondents “are aware of being observed and are amenable to interacting with the researcher in response to elements in the research design” (Angrosino, 2005, p. 732). The interview with Bayardo Blandino, an internationally recognized visual artist, curator, and artistic director at *Centro de Artes Visuales Contemporáneo de Mujeres en Las Artes* in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, is an example of one such occasion, of “reactive observation,” as well as some of the preliminary meetings and talks that I attended with Helguera prior to *The School of Panamerican Unrest* performance.

Last, there were occasions (glimpses) in which I was an active participant observer. In qualitative research this is defined as someone who “participates as a member of the group but is known as a researcher” (McMillan, 2004, p. 263). Often, following SPU performances, a group of interested interlocutors, i.e., “enthusiastic and hungry participants” (P. Helguera, 2006, personal communication, September 7, 2006) would decide to continue the dialogue at various coffee houses and restaurants. It is at

such social occasions, that I experienced a different type of rapport with the host community and participated more as a member of the group, although I lacked the oft-required characteristic of participant observation, which is a long-term immersion of the researcher in the everyday life of the community (Angrosino, 2005). To give a brief example, after much polemics and hours of dialogic communication, a group of enthusiastic interlocutors, including Helguera, Jennifer Flores Sternard (organizer of the Buenos Aires event), myself, some of the panel discussants, and an artist collective called *Grupo Madi*, met for a very late dinner at Pizzeria de la Americana. There, participants drafted a performance speech (i.e., *The Buenos Aires-Panamerican Address*) based on the dialogue-in-interaction of the night. As Helguera explains, the text “was written in the form of an exquisite corpse” (P. Helguera, personal communication, September 7, 2006). Everyone present participated in drafting the text, including me, the researcher of this study, as evidenced in the signatures of those that took part in the address, which is posted in the SPU travel blog. My role as a researcher and interpreter, thus, is imbricated in the selection of the study, research design, methodology, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism and *The School of Panamerican Unrest*.

### **Data Collection from Interviews**

The interviews that I conducted were in person (face-to-face), open-ended, and informal in structure. The interviews that I audio or video recorded, I transcribed verbatim. Interviews that were not recorded, I took field notes, and at a later date added observations, questions, and notes that I wanted to return to in the data. The interviewing processes that I engaged in involved a great deal of listening. Additionally, interviewee’s

often asked about me (about my nationality, education, field of study), and about the research. In part, thus, the interviews that I participated in entailed responding to questions, sharing, and disclosing ideas about the possible direction of the research. This style of interviews, I believe, generated open-ended participation and respondent' narratives that I later analyzed for emerging themes and multiple meanings. I conducted several interviews with Pablo Helguera prior and subsequent to the launch of *The School of Panamerican Unrest* project. I also interviewed Jennifer Flores Sternad, the organizer of the SPU event in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Bayardo Blandino, the organizer of the SPU in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. I had free flowing conversations (interviews) with Gonazalo Rabanal and Santiago Ibarra, both participants at SPU–Santiago de Chile and performance artists.

The observations, dialogues, interviews, and all other data from Honduras, Chile, and Argentina were conducted in Spanish, I transcribed and translated them from Spanish to English. Given that each country has their own accents, metaphors, analogies, and conceptual operations made interpretation and translation of these verbal intricacies at times challenging and in some instances problematic. I present excerpts of the interview data in the analysis chapter and throughout the study in general.

### **Data Collection from Archival Records**

The archival records I analyzed include: the exchanges or conversations, questions, and dialogues that were posted by Helguera and his interlocutors in *The School of Panamerican Unrest* Internet Travel Blog. Additionally, I analyzed email correspondence between Stephen Wright and Pablo Helguera, dialogues that were

available at the aforementioned SPU travel forum. I also reviewed my personal email correspondence with Helguera. As with the data collection from interviews, I used an inductive approach to analyze the documents, a method that was geared toward identifying patterns, themes, and overall ideas. The material was used in the data analysis and interpretative research of the study.

### **Trustworthiness and Credibility**

John W. Creswell and Dana L. Miller underscore that the concept of validity in qualitative inquiry is challenging to elucidate on numerous levels. There are a multitude of perspectives in books, articles, and chapters on the subject of validity. Creswell and Miller observe that these sources often inundate readers with confusing terms that stand in for validity, such as authenticity, goodness, validation, plausibility, trustworthiness, and credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Moreover, Guba and Lincoln (2005) indicate various researchers have been involved in the contestation and radical reconfiguration of what counts as validity. For example, Patti Lather (2007), Laurel Richardson (1994, 1997), and Thomas A. Schwandt (2003, 2009) have problematized the concept of validity in productive ways. On the other hand, the contestation of validity has also contributed to some of the confusion surrounding validity in qualitative research.

Regardless of the various ways validity is constructed, assessed, and problematized, according to Creswell and Miller (2000), there is a general agreement that qualitative researchers need to establish that his or her study is credible. Stake (2005) posits, that “even if meaning does not transfer intact but instead squeeze into the conceptual space of the reader” (p. 453), he has “yet to meet case researchers [that are]

unconcerned about the clarity of their own perception and validity” (p. 453). Validity, as a construct, therefore, is “neither easily dismissed nor readily configured by new-paradigm practitioners” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 205). To this end, various researchers have recognized common procedures for securing validity in qualitative research<sup>2</sup> (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Triangulation is one of the most used procedures for establishing validity in qualitative research (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2005; McMillan, 2004; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; Stake, 2005). McMillan (2004) describes triangulation as a means of “collecting data with different samples, at different times, or in different places—to compare different approaches to the same thing” (p. 278). In this study, I use triangulation as a multiple-method of data collection. I gathered data from different samples such as observations, interviews, and document analysis (personal notes, transcripts, SPU Web travel blog). These data were collected at different times within a period of four months, which was the time it took the SPU to complete its journey. Data were collected in different places, specifically, six different cities throughout the Americas, where I traveled to participate in the project. Data was also gathered in various venues where the SPU was performed (a public plaza, museums, galleries, feminist organizations, and one school). In addition, the audio and video recording of SPU events provided another way to triangulate the data. Stake (2005) observes, “triangulation serves to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the case is being seen” (p. 454). Visual data was used as a lens to bring to light the various ways in which the case study could be seen and interpreted. In regards to theoretical

triangulation, I juxtapose Bakhtin's theory of dialogism with critical feminist and critical educational theory, postcolonial theory, and poststructural sensibilities.

A second construct that is used in qualitative research to establish validity is reliability. McMillan (2004) writes that reliability is different than credibility or trustworthiness. Reliability "is the extent to which what is recorded as data is what actually occurred in the setting that was studied" (p. 278). Reliability, he notes, depends on the accuracy of researcher's observation, and detailed data to support the observations. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) parallel McMillan's (2004) description of reliability through the precepts of thick description. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) observe that the purpose of thick description (and triangulation) is to add "rigor, breath, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry" (p. 5). In sum, reliability is improved by thick description.

In this study, I bring into play thick description as posited by Clifford Geertz (1973), in relationship to the dialogue-in-interaction at the various SPU events. As I understand, thick description is a process of writing that provides rich details of field experiences, by which the researcher makes explicit the significance of the sign. The sign is the phenomenon under consideration (in this case dialogism and art), in relationship to social and cultural patterns in their contextual specificity.

There is one other concept this study considers in regards to validity. Guba and Lincoln (2005), Denzin and Lincoln (2005), and Creswell and Miller (2000), stress that the researcher's theoretical interpretative paradigm shapes the selection and the procedures the researcher will use to support validity. Guba and Lincoln (2005) identified five possible paradigms that guide the researchers worldviews: positivist, postpositivist, constructivist, participatory, and critical.<sup>3</sup> According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), "the

positivist and postpositivist traditions linger like long shadows over the qualitative research project” (p. 11). They put forward the notion that postpositive paradigms are paradoxical. On the one hand, postpositivism contend that reality can never be entirely seized, only approximated, as argued by Guba and Lincoln (2005). On the other hand, postpositivist paradigms, not only attempt to capture reality, but also attempt to discover and verify it, through structured procedures (e.g., internal and external validity or methods that can be used to quantify research) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Along the same lines, Creswell and Miller (2000) summarize that a postpositivist perspective, is a position that uses systematic protocols to distinguish, confirm, and support validity through quantifiable or quantitative methods.

In contrast, the constructivist paradigm operates within a pluralistic interpretive position that is open-ended and responsive to contextual specificity. Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth A. St. Pierre (2005) propose that, “we are fortunate ... to be working in a post-modernist climate, a time when a multitude of approaches to knowing and telling exist side by side” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 960). Furthermore, the nucleus “of postmodernism is the doubt that any method or theory, and discourse or genre, or any tradition or novelty has a universal and general claim as the ‘right’ or privileged form of authoritative knowledge” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 960). Thus, validity in constructivists and for participatory paradigms is intertwined with action, i.e., participant political action (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). In regards to critical paradigms and validity, Creswell and Miller (2000) maintain, that a critical interpretative lens holds that “researchers should uncover the hidden assumptions about how narrative accounts are constructed” (p. 126). The hidden assumptions that the researcher reveals, to reiterate, are

shaped by the researchers worldviews, by their socio-political, cultural, ethnic, and gendered positionality. Creswell and Miller assert that the consequences stemming from critical perspectives, is that validity is problematized. The work of feminist scholars has been at the forefront of critical and emergent research methods in qualitative research that deconstruct validity.

Patti Lather (ironic, paralogical, rhizomatic, and voluptuous validity), and Laura Richardson (crystalline validity) are among the feminist that have (re)written what validity means. Angrosino's (2005) work is equally significant in this area. Their work has helped me become aware of my own thinking, struggles, and interpretation of validity, in particular the work of Patti Lather. Lather's paralogical and rhizomatic validity resonate strongly with Bakhtin's theory of dialogism as it is taken up in this study. I include a few examples of paralogical validity to briefly elucidate the connection. According to Lather (2007) paralogical validity:

- Fosters differences and heterogeneity via the search for interruptions.
- [Is] anticipatory of a politics that desires both justice and the unknown but refuses any grand transformations.
- Searches for the oppositional in our daily practices, the territory we already occupy.
- Generates new locally-determined norms of understanding, proliferates open-ended and context-sensitive criteria, works against reinscription of some new regime, some new systematicity. (Lather, 2007, p. 129).

Contiguous with Lather, Bakhtin's theory of dialogism promotes heterogeneity, difference, alterity, and ambiguity. Bakhtin refuted any type of grand narrative that

sought to articulate a single-world view, or *theoretism*. He was interested in centripetal and centrifugal forces of language, and oppositional practices of everyday life.

Unfinalizability, the iterability of the utterance at the micro linguistic level, proliferate open-endedness and worked against reinscription. In conclusion, in order to continue to question and challenge the assumptions of validity, the researcher must exercise self-reflexivity and disclose the paradigm(s) that she or he brings to the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In this chapter, I consider feminist critical theory, in particular, the work Lather (2007), Richardson (1997), and Angrosino (2005), as an interpretative lens to wrestle with what counts as validity, and to think about the paradigms that I bring to the study and as a way to destabilizing my own truth claims.

McMillan (2004) asserts that qualitative researchers do not devise theories and collect data to validate or invalidate them (deduction). More accurately, the data are compiled, organized, coded, summarized, and synthesized inductively, from the particular and situational (contextual) to broad conclusions (generalizations).<sup>4</sup> In other words, in qualitative research, theory is built from the ground up. McMillan (2004) explains this is an important approach of qualitative analysis because researchers need to be receptive to different ways of understanding, and predetermined premises limit what data will be gathered and possibly cause bias (McMillan, 2004). The aim of the present study was not to predetermine or test theory. My objective was not to test the SPU against Bakhtin's theories. Rather, the data is a step toward theory building. As such, the generation of theory is grounded in the data, again from the bottom up. In the analysis in Chapter 4, prose is supported with selected quotes from respondents to help ground the analysis in the data. I describe the language, expressions, and actions communicated by

the participants, in their own words (emic) and consider how these dialogue-in-interaction influences one another.

Stake (1994) explores four major types of data analysis used in a case study: categorical aggregation, which is two-fold: repetition of codes compiled together (aggregation) and direct interpretation, drawing patterns, and naturalistic generalizations. In order to gain insight into the intentions and contentions of the SPU dialogues, I compiled a list of re-occurring patterns (codes) that emerged from the data (observations, interviews, visual material, and transcriptions). These patterns are discussed in-depth in Chapter 4. Succinctly, some of the major strands that emerged from the data are: revolution, transformation, institution, institutionalization, dialogue, pedagogy, and public art. Stake (2004) proposes that drawing patterns is necessary to examine the correspondence, i.e., “consistencies, repetitions, contingencies, and covariations,” between two or more groups or codes (Stake, 2004, p. 162).

The study also relied on direct interpretation from observation. While important meanings most often emerges from multiple recurrence and repetition in the data; there are instance in which meaning does not emerge through aggregation of codes or patterns, because there are “single episodes,” i.e., single instance phenomena that the researcher must interpret (Stake, 1995). In dealing with interpretative data, I constantly asked myself “What did that mean?” For example, what does it mean for the SPU to “fail,” as one participant argued at one of the events. In addressing these questions, I attempted to probe, tease out relationships, and find episodes to understand behavior, context, and concerns that gave insights into the key issues of the research (Stake, 2004). My entry point to these reflections began with the participant’s experiences (emic data). In the

analysis chapter (Chapter 4), I present my interpretations of that data (etic) in the form of themes, threads, and the findings of the study.

Last, naturalistic generalizations, as illuminated by Stake (1995), and as I understand the concept, involve experiential learning. The researcher tries to organize the monograph so that naturalistic generalization is made possible. This is accomplished by using thick description, and giving information that is easily incorporated with the reader's existing knowledge. For example, the researcher can "use ordinary language," or "include accounts of matters that the readers are already familiar with," include information about the researcher, or "provide adequate raw data so that the readers can consider their own alternative interpretations" (Stake, 1995, p. 87). Stated differently, the author helps the hero, to use Bakhtin's language, co-author or (re)write the meanings of the case (Stake, 1995). What knowledge will be culled (generalized and/or otherwise) from this study? What will respondents take from the research? This will be up to the reader; for the purpose of the study, the important concern is that experiential openings are created to stimulate further reflection.

### **Framework for Analyzing the Data**

The theoretical frame consisting of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and the concepts that constitute dialogism (*polyphony, heteroglossia, monoglossia, polyglossia,* and the *utterance*), guides the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of relationships and/or disparities that exist between the artists' work and the discursive spheres that emerged from the data analysis embodied in the SPU encounters: public art as pedagogy.

The critical task in qualitative research is not to accumulate all the data you can, but “can” (i.e., get rid of) most of the data you accumulate. This requires constant winnowing. The trick is to discover essences and then to reveal those essences with sufficient context, yet not become mired trying to include everything that might possibly be described. (Wolcott, 1990, p. 35)

Given the scope and complexity of *The School of Panamerican Unrest* project, it would be imprudent to attempt to “include everything,” the potentially infinite number of perspectives, voices, anecdotes, and vicissitudes of the project without excessive superficiality. Instead, following Wolcott, my goal is to capture the “essences” of the SPU dialogues as focused by the theoretical lens outlined in Chapter 2. In Chapter 4, I describe, cite, and paraphrase exchanges between the SPU discussants, in the expectation that their voices will not only tell a story, but also provide enough detail (and raw data) to facilitate in the readers a vicarious experience of the events (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; McMillan, 2004; Stake, 2005; Yin, 1994).

Bakhtin proposes that the act of retelling is double-voiced discourse. Retelling, revoicing, or paraphrasing is not exact replication or unproblematic representation. For Bakhtin, the act of retelling the words (or text) of another person in one’s own voice, demands that the individual enter into a dialogic relationship, i.e., a struggle between the authoritative discourse of another and her or his internally persuasive discourse (DiN, 1981). In turn, the process of selectively internalizing the discourse of another, as it was discussed in Chapter 2, is the process by which individuals negotiate how a text is understood and interpreted, recreated, and retold. It is how stories are *remixed* to use Lev Manovich’s (2005) term.<sup>5</sup> In Chapter 4, I remix the *School of Panamerican Unrest*

narratives to tell a multifaceted, multivoiced, and multisited story. It is my hope that from these narratives readers interpret further, i.e., dialogize the dialogues that are performed in this text. Language becomes dialogized when languages critically interanimate one another, when meaning is accomplished with respect to one another's (self and other's) speech acts.

The narratives I re-voice in Chapter 4, are therefore, necessarily interpretative. These dialogue-interactions are at times interwoven with interpretation, and at other times followed by interpretation throughout Chapter 4. Moreover, the instances of the case study that I describe are not sequential. Yet, I make every effort to provide the contexts framing the utterances in the situations in which they took place. The excerpts used to confer ideas and issues are not meant to be comprehensive examinations of the individual excerpts (in and of themselves). Overall, I am more concerned with the meaning(s) that these dialogues develop in relationship to each other, and the project as a whole, in their spatiotemporal context, and in connection to the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study is to envision through a Bakhtinian lens, the nexus between dialogism and art in a contemporary public art practice, namely, *The School of Panamerican Unrest*. I consider these encounters and intersections for their implications, that is, their limitations and possibilities for art and pedagogy.

### **Presentation of the Final Case Report**

The purpose of the case report, as noted by Stake (2005), “is not to represent the world, but to represent the case” (Stake, 2005, p. 460). Yet, there are myriad ways and distinct styles of composing a case report. In writing the case report, Stake recommends

that researchers take a personal approach. Specifically, he argues, because case reports that are based on “executive summaries” and “recommendations,” often fail to “deal with issues in depth” (2004, p. 211). In the final chapter of this dissertation, I begin with a synopsis of the research questions. Following, I offer an analysis of the meaning of dialogue and the function of dialogue in relationship to pedagogy. This exposition, which includes personal reflections, adds depth and a different layer to the study, and in essence, synthesizes the findings, limitations, and implications of the study. I conclude the last chapter of this dissertation with a discussion of questions that remain and possible future directions for the study.

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1. Case studies are not exclusive to qualitative research. Case studies are also used in quantitative research. See Robert E. Stake (2005), James H. McMillan (2004), and Denzin and Lincoln (2005).

2. Craswell and Miller (2000) identify nine procedures for establishing credibility, Denzin (2005) acknowledges four basic types of triangulation, which include: data, method, investigator, and theoretical triangulation, and under the heading of *Transgressive Validity*, Patti Lather (2007) proposes ironic, paralogical, rhizomatic, voluptuous validity. Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) seek “a postmodern deconstruction of triangulation.” In order to “recognize that there are far more than ‘three sides’ by which to approach the world. We do not triangulate; we crystallize” (p. 963).

3. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) put forth the notion that positivist, post-positivist, constructivist, participatory, and critical interpretative paradigms, “become more complicated at the level of concrete specific interpretive communities. At this level it is possible to identify not only the constructivist, but also multiple versions of feminism (Afrocentric and poststructural), as well as specific ethnic, Marxist, and cultural studies paradigms” (p. 22).

4. In regard to generalization, Stake (1995) writes that “case studies are undertaken to make the case understandable. Often, this case will be as important to its readers as any other case—they care about it; their interest in generalizing from this case to other is small. In other circumstances, the case will be studied primarily for generalization to other cases” (p. 85).

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5. Lev Manovich's (2005) defines "remix" as the "paths [that] stimulate people to draw information from all kinds of sources into their own space, remix and make it available to others" (p. 1).

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF THE NEXUS BETWEEN BAKHTIN'S THEORY OF DIALOGISM AND HELGUERA'S *SCHOOL OF PANAMERICAN UNREST*

In the first section of this chapter, I highlight Helguera's presentation at the inauguration of the SPU in New York. This is followed by a discussion of the art theorist and critic Stephen F. Wright's response to Helguera's views. One of the most outspoken and insightful critics of the project, Wright was Helguera's most important interlocutor in New York. From these dialogue-interactions, surfaced the themes delimited by dialogism and its attendant concepts that became the focus of my data analysis.

The relationship between art and politics—most particularly revolution—in connection to contemporary public art practices, as highlighted by the SPU was one of the major themes to emerge from the SPU dialogues. In terms of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, I argue that revolution represents one of the most radical expressions involved in the processes of transformation, the battle to centralize or decentralize power. This is the case whether the revolution conceived is macro or micro in nature, i.e., transformation through a complete rupture with dominant power, or through gradual and everyday change, respectively.

One concern often expressed in connection with revolution (i.e., transformation) is whether artists operate inside or outside of the art institution. In the context of dialogism, creating institutions—or performing (embodying) institutionalization—pertains to the struggle between conflicting voices. In other words, through monologic and/or dialogic speech acts, artists and critics, including the general public, attempt to

create new or different authoritative discourses to secure, i.e., canonize one ideology over another. These concerns are knotted together with discourses regarding art's use-value, autonomy, and power-over in art practices, all of which I analyze in relationship to heteronomy and answerability, and ultimately authorial speech. All these issues are at play in this study, and are especially vivid in the dialogue-interactions at the SPU events in New York and Buenos, Aires, Argentina.

**The Centralizing and Decentralizing Forces of Heteroglossia Relating to the Discourses of Public Art, Helguera's Dialogue-Interactions at the Inauguration of the SPU in New York**

To briefly review, heteroglossia is the nucleus of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. Heteroglossia originates from the Greek words "hetero" (other) and "glot" (tongue or voice, or other languages) (Allen, 2000). Every utterance inheres in aspects that both constitute the self and are outside the self, or what Bakhtin identified as the socio-ideological language in culture, for instance, age, gender, and social class. Underlying heteroglossia is the site of conflicting discourses, the tension-filled centralizing and decentralizing forces brought to bear on the two epistemological tendencies in language and culture: monologic (single) voice and dialogic (heterogeneous) voices in the struggle for meaning and power over the sign. Heteroglossia is the property of the utterance at the micro-linguistic level. This refers to the ability of any utterance (speech acts, words, meanings) to be simultaneously a part of previous utterances, what has already been said, and of incipient utterances, what is yet to be said (e.g., democracy, feminism, Pan-America, or public art). Stated differently, heteroglossia or the utterance at the micro-

linguistic level refers to the unfinished quality (unfinalizability) and irrepeatability (iterability) of language in the context of specific communicative exchanges. The unfinalizability of the utterance is the contact zone between addressivity and answerability. Polyphony or multiple voices refers to authorial speech or how a work of art is organized. Polyphony is imbricated in the specific type of interactions possible between the author and other participants in a work of art. Together, these chiasmic concepts constitute Bakhtin's philosophy of language or dialogism and the utterance.

Next, I analyze the centralizing and decentralizing discourses engendered and mediated by the SPU through the dialogue-interactions of its participants beginning with Helguera's views expressed at the SPU's inauguration. The inauguration, which took place at the Americas Society in New York on May 5, 2006, was structured around a panel discussion about the discursive and material practices associated with public art. Helguera began the evening by thanking the panelists<sup>1</sup> and the audience for attending the event, and thanking Creative Capital, El Muse del Barrio, and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council for their support of the project. Noting that audiences had always played a central role in his own art-making, Helguera referred to his own background as a museum educator. And, he stated further that this background meant his work was often categorized as institutional critique—a method of inquiry that artists use to interrogate the ideologies of institutions in which art is encountered.<sup>2</sup> However, Helguera observed that his work had “expanded beyond” the museum experience (by which I took him to mean beyond institutional critique also).

In discussing his growth as an artist, Helguera stated that he had “been influenced by the PRI as much as by contemporary art” (P. Helguera, personal communication, May

5, 2006). The PRI or the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional), whose emblem Helguera projected onto the screen at the front of the darkened room, had dominated Mexico's political institutions from its 1929 inception until the 2000 presidential elections (Edmonds & Shirk, 2009; Shirk, 2005; Tulchin & Selee, 2003). Helguera noted that growing up under the paradoxical framework of the PRI, which claims to be both revolutionary and institutional, made him constantly reflect on the relationship between politics and art.<sup>3</sup> Such reflections, ultimately, Helguera observed:

Has led me to a model that I recently put forth, that is, we will be revolutionary when we learn how to be institutional, which is kind of an ironic remark, but it does try to bring attention to the fact that sometimes we think revolutions come by destroying institutions, not by creating them. (P. Helguera, personal communication, May 5, 2006)

If creating institutions is part and parcel of successful revolution, many questions follow: How are we to understand revolution? What is an institution? What kinds of institutions participate in or even effect revolution? Helguera's insights (and those of Wright) directly and indirectly seek answers to these questions. For the purpose of the present study, though, the theoretical lens of dialogism limits these inquiries. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, particularly the concept of heteroglossia is used here to analyze the centralizing and decentralizing forces surrounding discourses of public art, articulated in the dialogue-interactions of the SPU participants. Helguera observes that art institutions act as mediators between the artist and the public. However, he wants the "artist and curator [to] use the museum as a platform to actually facilitate that interaction." On the

other hand, although he acknowledges the important role that institutions play in artistic practices, his position is that artists are also limited by the very structure that institutions provide:

Institutions cannot move. Institutions depend on the place where they are, and when they fundraise, they need to get funds from the local region, and it's hard to get it from elsewhere. That is why, I think, what an artist who is free and penniless can actually do, just move around. (P. Helguera, personal communication, May 5, 2006)

In Helguera's account, the SPU was born from the spirit of adventure expressed and lived by missionaries and visionaries of the past. However, not all institutions are place-based or immobile. Briefly, contemporary art institutions, the artists, curators, and theorists who serve and define them, have been extremely resourceful in finding ways to expand beyond the traditional art field (museums and galleries) into alternative art spaces in the private and public sphere. This expansion includes a wide variety of cultural institutions, for instance, art fairs, biennials, and international art markets. In other words, the institutional framework has become highly mobile. How Helguera locates his own reflections and explorations is a matter of some interest; therefore, I quote him extensively in order to obtain a glimpse into his praxis, and to move the reader through the consenting and dissenting voices (heteroglossia) that are juxtaposed throughout this chapter. To reiterate, in addition to the push and pull of centralizing (consenting) and decentralizing (dissenting) voices, heteroglossia refers to language made up of different socio-ideological positions, e.g., the languages of the artist, the art critic, the academic,

and the spectator, as well as language as it lives in the context of specific communicative exchanges. In Helguera's account:

The notion of nomadic travel serves two goals in my mind: Number one, the ability of having an institutional framework that will move wherever it wants. It is also a thematic reason, which is Panamericanism, and how to connect the different cultural communities that exist in the Americas. It comes from a very deep curiosity, or interest that I've always had, finding artists in places like Guatemala, southern El Salvador, or in northern Chile. There, everyone produces art. Perhaps their understanding of what art is, is very different to what you will see in Chelsea [art district in New York], or what you will see in L.A. [Los Angeles, California], but it is art nonetheless! And I think it's interesting that there are a lot of people that see a place for art in their lives and they still don't know exactly how to connect with a larger whole. Sometimes they simply give up and believe that because there's no gallery scene in that particular city or because the museum's badly run, that there's no way that they can actually connect with others. (P. Helguera, personal communication, May 5, 2006)

Stephen F. Wright, a Paris-based philosopher, art theorist, and panelist at the inauguration of the SPU in New York, contested the distinction drawn by Helguera between artists in northern Chile and artists in Chelsea's art district. Wright's critique is analyzed in detail later in the study. Wright's critical appraisal of the SPU is important for what it reveals about how the SPU was authored (polyphony). His appraisal speaks to the types of relationships and interactions possible between the artist's (author's) voice and the participants' (co-authors') voices at the SPU events. Most importantly, Wright

and Helguera's dialogue-interactions, and those of other participants in the project, are a springboard to understanding how SPU participants critically interanimated, i.e., dialogized each other's language. Bakhtin writes that words (speech acts) undergo "dialogization when they become relativized, de-privileged, and aware of competing definitions for the same thing" (DiN, 1981, p. 427). Bakhtin does not consider the meaning of a given word merely as part of language. Instead, his theory of dialogism presupposes that words are embodied; that is, they belong to a particular and actual reality of speech communication between people (SG, 1986). Accordingly, when I refer to *word(s)*, I am referring to the speech acts of individuals.

Another clarification of terminology is important at this point. From the beginning of my engagement with Helguera's project, I was interested in knowing why Helguera had chosen *Panamerica* and not *Pan-America* (*Pan-América* in Spanish), for the title of the project. The word "Pan-America" is traditionally hyphenated and the letters "P" and "A" written in capital letters. Helguera, however, uses the terms "Panamerican" and "panamericanism" in the title of his project and in his writing, respectively. Consequently, when I refer to Helguera's dialogues, I follow the spelling he uses. For general discussion of the term (Pan-America), and when I reference the words of SPU participants (other than Helguera), I use the standard form of the word.

Before turning over the conversation to the panelists, Helguera proposed a series of responses regarding assumptions about public art. In his estimation, these counter-responses, spoke directly to the mission of the SPU, and the main topic of the night—public art and its publics. Helguera concluded his presentation by returning to his analogy about Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). He argued that the assumption in

the art world is that, “we become revolutionary when we attack an institution.” His own proposition, though, is quite to the contrary: “we become revolutionary when we learn how to be institutional” (P. Helguera, personal communication, May 5, 2006).

What sort of responses might Helguera’s thesis engender? What sort of verbal processes are made possible in answering? In both transformation (revolution) and institution, as described by Helguera, the centripetal and centrifugal forces of heteroglossia are at play. These tensions are analyzed in relationship to Helguera’s and Wright’s respective ideological positions as the narratives they construct unfold in the following pages. In fact, as we shall see, their views regarding the role and function of art in contemporary art practices, in particular public art, and in relationship to the SPU, intersect dialogically, that is, contrapuntally. Counter-point, as analyzed in Chapter 2, does not imply mere contradiction. This is not appropriate, as “agreement is as dialogic as disagreement.” In fact, “Agreement has countless varieties, infinite shadings and gradations, and enormously complex interactions” (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 132).

### **Hidden Polemics: Intentions, and Contentions of the SPU, and Wright’s Heteroglossic Dialogue-Interactions in New York**

Following Helguera’s presentations, art theorist and critic Stephen F. Wright opened his reflections on the SPU by thanking Helguera for inviting him to participate in the panel discussion. In particular, as Wright stated, given that “what he had to say was completely in contradiction with the basic premises of the project’s mission statement” (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). Wright stated that as an art critic he was familiar with Helguera’s position that art can operate as a catalyst for social change.

Wright proposed that this notion of art is necessarily bound up with the use-value of art. Wright asserted that in spite of the excessive claims regarding the efficacy of art by the art world, artists have systematically failed to achieve the values they claim to embody and disseminate through their artwork (Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). In fact, echoing Helguera's remarks about the PRI, Wright exclaimed that the art world often flies the flag of "revolution," yet, if art were "truly revolutionary, we would surely know this by now" (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). Wright's statement occasioned laughter among the audience members and the panelists. This moment in the event recalled for me Bakhtin's concept of hidden polemics and Slavoj Zizek's critique of cynical reason.

Zizek (1989) posits that, "the cynical subject is quite aware of the distance between the ideological mask and the social reality, but he [or she] nonetheless still insists upon the mask" (p. 29). Wright's critique of the aims of the SPU, resonate strongly with Bakhtin's concept of hidden polemics. Bakhtin generated this term to refer to a particular approach through which a person articulates an indirect critique of another individual. Unlike open polemics, which is directed specifically at a person, the use of hidden polemics is an indirect strategy. It is double-voiced. Referencing another's (the interlocutor's) words, the user of hidden polemics emphasizes the object of discourse that he or she wishes to evaluate. Hidden polemics does not replicate the words of another with a new and opposite semantic intention, as is the case with parody. Instead, the focus is on an utterance's own referential object, such that hidden polemics engages in "Naming it, portraying, expressing, and only indirectly striking a blow at the other's

discourse, clashing with it, as it were, within the object itself” (PDP, 1984, p. 196).

Wright asserted that:

The art world is an institution, which brackets itself off with invisible parentheses. It’s a performative institution, which allows art to become art, because the art world declares it to be such. In other words, the transformation of everyday objects becomes art, simply because the signature of the authorized individual is put on that work, and that individual is authorized by the art world to do that. (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006)

In contrast to Helguera’s position, Wright stated that he found the idea that art has the capacity to carry out a process of transformation [revolution or reform] while remaining within the performative framework of the art world to be highly suspect (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). In his view, despite of its good intentions, “the art world functions on the basis of a colonization expansion project ... moving out into interaction with people ... who are not artists, then bringing them back into the folds of the art world.” Artist and art critic Andrea Fraser (2006) makes a similar argument. For Wright, this expansion constitutes a practice in which artists engage “to promote their own standing within the reputational economy” of the art world (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). Furthermore, implicitly recalling Helguera’s comments during his presentation of the SPU, Wright remarked:

When I hear that in remote places, generally speaking, “Chile,” or the “southern region of El Salvador,” let’s say, everyone produces art, although it is not the kind of art that one sees in “Chelsea,” but of course that is precisely the problem.

Wright emphasized (again, referring back to Helguera's own words, i.e., hidden polemics) that this kind of distinction establishes a "dichotomy" between creativity and diffuse creativity. Diffuse forms of creativity refers to the fact that certain types of creativity are sanctioned by the art world and are, therefore, considered legitimate, whereas other types of creativity (diffuse forms of creativity) are de-legitimized or set up in direct opposition to practices sanctioned as art (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006).

### **Dialogue Across Difference**

Conferring legitimacy on a particular ideology or group of people and withholding it from others exactly aligns with how difference is codified in everyday life to rationalize elitism, abuse of power, and structural and systemic oppression (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1968; Said, 1979; Spivak, 1988). In the context of pedagogy, an education with a low degree of dialogicity (e.g., the No Child Left Behind Act) is a missed opportunity for multi-speech diversity and heterogeneous voices, which are necessary for relational knowing across difference. Bakhtin's notion of monoglossia as official, stable, and unitary language works well to illuminate how certain discourses codify and delegitimize difference. Centralizing discourses (monoglossia) are inclined toward "unity in diversity" (DiN, p. 274). Alexander Sidorkin (2002) explains that Bakhtin's neologism, *sobytiyna*, which is usually interpreted as unity, "is better translated as one" (p. 92). Singularity (oneness or "unity in diversity") is a strategy that most often results in single-voiced or normative language, an alleyway that prevents *dia logic*, i.e., dialogue across difference. Hence, normative discourses are violent not only by eliminating or

excluding the language of the “other,” but by stratifying, repudiating, and misrepresenting the people who live those languages. This is often accomplished by granting particular discourses “official,” i.e., authoritative status or canonization. This operation has implications for human relations, for how the self and the other are constructed as subjects of difference.

Bhabha (1994) and Said (1979) have written extensively regarding the ambivalent relationship between the self and other, colonizer and colonized, as a relationship based on difference. Both argue that unitary (monologic) language constructs difference as inferior and as a perversion of the status quo, i.e., “*almost the same, but not quite*” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86, original emphasis) and “*almost the same but not white*” (p. 89, original emphasis). Said’s analysis of imperial encounters between the West and its Oriental Other, famously encapsulated in his phrase “the West and the Rest,” similarly exposes the outcome of unquestionable dominance and the production of *Orientalist* knowledge (Said, 1979, my emphasis).

Echoing Bhabha’s and Said’s postcolonial analyses, Wright’s rejection of Helguera’s differentiation between artists from New York and artists from other parts of the Americas (at the SPU event in New York) is a critique of how difference is codified and used by the ever-increasing “expeditionary aesthetics” of contemporary art and the art market (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). In *Spy Art: Infiltrating the Real* (2006), Wright observes that Helguera is earnest about his stated objective of engaging diverse audiences and connecting with them at various levels. In Wright’s view, Helguera would abhor inadvertently “colonizing” these encounters, something that art practices based on “expeditionary aesthetics” tend to do, in particular through the archive.

Wright characterizes the archive as consisting of “remnants and artifacts” accumulated for exhibition purposes, and he notes that the SPU has a clear kinship with expeditionary aesthetics. Yet, he is most focused on Helguera’s explanation of the project, which suggests that the project be seen and apprehended as art (Wright, 2006). In light of the asymmetrical distribution of symbolic power, “and artistic capital in society,” Wright insists that the SPU “cannot have invisible parentheses placed around its generous attempts at inclusion,” because “art is a system of exclusion” (Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). The danger of bracketing or framing art around the idea of artwork proper, that is, ignoring what exists beyond the art field, is that art is often dismissed as “just art.” As such, art stays at the level of “symbolic transgression,” and functions mostly to benefit the reputational economy of the artists. Such practices are far from the “corrosive” types of engagement needed (i.e., *spy art*) to bring about progressive social change (Wright, 2008).

Art practices that are mediated by colonizing and paternalistic methodologies have a long history (Downey, 2009; Foster, 1997, 1995; Kester, 2004, 1995; Kwon, 2002). A key characteristic of monologic discourses, for instance, travel narratives, is that the primary focus is the author. The surrounding world and the people in it are external; they lack independence and dialogic intersection with the author. For Bakhtin, such a situation gives way to “geographical exoticism [that] prevails over the social” (SG, 1986, p. 15). Contrary to artworks that are polyphonically conceived, participants become objects of the text, an *It* and not a *Thou* (see Clark & Holquist, 1984). Could it be that the SPU was monologically conceived and the life of the dialogue-interactions within it undialogized? In contrast to authoritative discourse, dialogism and a polyphonic artwork

embrace difference and heterogeneous voices where meaning has the potential to grow (DiN, 1981; SG, 1986). Was the SPU polyphonically conceived? Did the dialogue-interactions (travelogues) through which the project was presented cultivate the play that is the condition for dialogized-interactions? Or, put another way, did a refraction of authoritative discourse and meaning potential, which is constituted in interaction with others take place? I will come back to these questions later in this chapter through my analysis of the dialogue-interactions of the SPU participants, who implicitly and explicitly take up these interrogations. For Helguera:

The idea of a road trip not only made literal the notion of Panamericanism, but also created the ability for [Helguera] to go to those places that are not necessarily the hot spots of the art scene or international tourism, that usually dominate the early schedule of biennials, art fairs, and other important art events that most people attend. (P. Helguera, personal communication, May 5, 2006)

By directing his focus to the periphery of the art field, Helguera is disrupting dominant paradigms (heteroglossia). He is performing an “alternative cartography for directing the flow of cultural exchange” (Papastergiadis, 2003, p. 5). And, though he traveled across continents for his work, he is by no means a “European draftsman, who will help classify a new order of species of plants and animals found for the sake of knowledge, and, therefore, to achieve power, or even a photographer looking for an encounter with the real” (G. Rangel, personal communication, May 5, 2006). Instead, he is a visual artist who seeks to build bridges and solidarity among diverse communities across geographies and cultures, across difference (dialogism). Meaning, therefore, is not located solely or even principally in the author’s (artist’s) intention: “a word is a bridge

thrown between myself and another. If one end of the bridge depends on me, then the other depends on my addressee” (V: MPL, 1973, p. 86).

### **Polyphonic and Polyvalent Ideological Positions and Authorial Speech that Open Up to the Other**

I want to bring my focus back to Wright’s argument regarding diffuse forms of creativity in relationship to Helguera’s observation regarding the performativity of the archive.<sup>4</sup> These dialogue-interactions are analyzed in relationship to polyphony, and to the differentiated socio-ideological positions (heteroglossia) refracted at the SPU encounters in New York and Buenos Aires. Next, I sketch out Wright’s thesis as articulated at the SPU event in New York. Wright’s observations offer a counter-narrative to Helguera’s proposal—a dialogic provocation that both invites and resists various arguments and competing discourses.

In *A Dis-operative Turn in Contemporary Art* (2001), Wright expands on the concept of diffuse forms of creativity, an idea that he had touched on at the SPU event in New York. Wright proposes that in diffuse forms of creativity, artistic production is no longer the exclusive domain of artists. He argues that:

The axis of artistic activity has shifted from a conclusive logic (aimed at producing works) toward more open-ended processes. This poses a genuine problem for both museum managers and art dealers who, respectively, have to show and sell something: for what indeed are we to exhibit in our museums and galleries once we acknowledge that the sometimes cumbersome, sometimes

trifling material components of art projects are mere by-products of an activation which took place somewhere else? (11)

Conceptual artists and other avant-garde artists of the late 1960s and 1970s asked similar questions. These artists interrogated the commodity and exchange value of art in a capitalist art system, which they sought to disrupt through the dematerialization of the art object (Krauss, 1979; Lippard 1997). The avant-garde anticipated that the thought of art-as-idea, and art as documentation and information or “by-products” to use Wright’s expression were unlikely to attract collectors, dealers, or museums.<sup>5</sup>

Helguera addresses the notion of art as documentation (a legacy of avant-garde artists) in terms of the archive.<sup>6</sup> He notes that the performativity of the archive has become the means by which individuals learn about art projects, and the means by which an artwork is evaluated. Yet, according to Helguera, a “fictional gap” exists between the event and the documentation of the event in contemporary art: “an artist goes and makes an artwork, and then comes back and makes a very nice story about it” (2006). In on the basis of this position, Helguera called on SPU participants to consider where the value of the artwork is located: “Is it in the narration of what happened or didn’t happen at the place, or is it in the actual objective events?” (2006). In Helguera’s view, to think through these questions, a work like the SPU “needed to be accompanied by critical discourse of its own site-specificity” (P. Helguera, personal communication, May 5, 2006). In the context of dialogism, Helguera’s argument is related to polyphony, the authorship of a work of art. Early in his discussion of the SPU, Wright comments that Helguera had invited him to engage in a dialogue about the project, precisely “to think about what might be the pitfalls and the potential strengths of this type of community in public art”

(S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). In other words, Helguera does not attempt to claim definitive authorial power. In his article “Searching for Panamerica” (2008), Helguera is adamant, and I concur, that he “never tried to force a particular direction” at SPU events, and “accepted the outcome of every encounter” (P. Helguera, 2008, p. 71). It is this open-endedness that created opportunities for a multiplicity of voices (polyphony) and other languages (heteroglossia) to enter into dialogic relationships. Dialogic relationships include critical dialogue, interpretation, and experiential and intersubjective co-voicing (Emerson, 2000).

On the other hand, institutions, and by extension artists working within the framework of the institution, thrive on including critique as a way to contain dissent, and even as a way to assert art’s autonomy. Does Helguera’s SPU genuinely provide an opening for a multiplicity of oppositional voices and refracted socio-ideological positions that open up to the other? Alicia Herrero’s analysis of SPU dialogues is valuable in thinking about this question. Herrero, a visual artist, co-curator/co-editor of *Magazine in Situ*,<sup>7</sup> and panelist at the Buenos Aires SPU, asked Helguera: “¿Entonces, para vos es importante que se debata, que haya [exista] un diálogo en lo que es tu trabajo en sí mismo? Herrero’s argument, opening with a single question directed at Helguera, can be summed up as follows: If what is important to Helguera is that the dialogues and debates of the SPU center on the work itself—a work Herrero noted had been in Buenos Aires for only a very brief time—in that case, the work would not be operating within a dialogic dimension. If Helguera instead had used the SPU dialogues performatively, as Herrero called on him to do (“*usa tu tiempo performativamente*”), if he had become more familiar about Buenos Aires’s local issues, and engaged with the people in that space and time,

“in that case, a project with some dialogical dimension would be in operation” [*En ese caso, estaría funcionando un proyecto que tiene en su dimensión, dialógica*] (A. Herrero, personal communication, September 10, 2006). In other words, the SPU would have created the conditions for a dialogical encounter.

If, indeed, the aims of the SPU are self-referential, then we are dealing with a self-contained, self-creating, self-maintaining, and re-creating system, or *autotelic* text (DiN, 1981) akin to *autopoiesis* (see Maturana & Varela, 1980). In relationship to dialogism, this is a kind of production or “deed severed from the ontological root of personal participation” (TWRPA, 1993, p. 52). Bakhtin maintains that dialogism is mediated in relation to other utterances. Therefore, dialogue is social, relational, and relevant to self–other relationships. The implication is that from a Bakhtinian perspective, dialogue is not only epistemological—a way to understand and know—but also ontological. Thus, Helguera’s personal participation, his answerability in the dialogues of the project shapes (influences) and is shaped (influenced) by mutual encounters. Otherwise, we are in the realm of “sealed-off utterances” (DiN, 1981, p. 296), of dogmatic and/or paternalistic art practices pre-packaged and pre-determined.

Alternatively, an artwork is answerable if it structures self–other relationships dialogically. Bakhtin offers Goethe’s Prometheus as an example.<sup>8</sup> According to Bakhtin, Prometheus “creates no voiceless slaves (as does Zeus), but free people, capable of standing alongside their creator, capable of not agreeing with him [or her] and even of rebelling against him [or her]” (PDP, 1984, p. 6). What this means in terms of the study, is that participants at SPU events spoke on equal terms with the author (polyphony). Their voices were independent, unmerged, fully valid, in consensus and dissensus, as the

preceding and subsequent dialogues demonstrate. However, a question remains: Does Helguera answer? Different layers of this conversation are continued later in this chapter.

### **Transformation Signals a Moment of Crisis:**

#### **The Fracture Lines of Monologic and Dialogic Speech Acts**

In keeping with the multiplicity of voices and centrifugal tendencies toward criticality of the dialogue-interactions associated with the SPU, Wright's radical thesis stands in profound contrast to Helguera's proposal (heteroglossia). At the SPU event in New York, Wright concluded that if art wanted to go further than "the art educational model, the empowerment model," if art wanted to, "have use-value, art must renounce art, or at least sacrifice its visibility as art" (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). Wright argued further that:

The type of art I am imagining is an art, which would fly underneath or beneath the radar screens of the art world. An art which would exist in the absence of art works, in the absence of authorship, and particularly, and above all in the absence of spectatorship. In other words, I'm talking about art which exists and which is particularly visible, which can enhance the visibility of social processes, which can confer legibility to these processes, but which itself is not visible as art per se. (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006)

What would this look like? What would such a withdrawal from the entire field of contemporary art mean? What would such refusal mean in terms of Wright's own position within art and the discourses that support art? In regard to the first question, Wright affirmed, that an examples of emblematic art with a "low coefficient of artistic

visibility,” could be found in the productions of the *Grupo de Arte Callejero* or the *Street Art Group*, a collective of artists and non-artists, based in Buenos Aires.<sup>9</sup> Bakhtin’s concept of answerability will be used to explore the last two questions, which center on the interplay of power. For now, it is sufficient to understand Wright’s argument that “art must sunder itself from itself” (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006) as having the potential to reassert art’s autonomy.

As understood through the dialogue-interactions at the SPU’s New York inauguration, and as refracted through Bakhtin’s dialogism, Helguera’s and Wright’s respective ideological positions, construct two very different narratives of the function and the value of art in contemporary public art practices. Though operating from different positions (heteroglossia), Helguera as artist and Wright as art critic, both are interested in socially progressive transformation. Where they differ completely is the value-laden ideology that each brings to the meaning of revolution and institution, or what it means to carry out a process of transformation, which I explore in detail in the next section. In relationship to the theoretical lens, the notion of transformation or change signals a moment of crisis—a time of profound negotiation, renegotiation, rupture, and reconfiguration between competing (centralizing and decentralizing) discourses (e.g., Helguera and Wright’s competing discourses) to secure one authoritative language over another (heteroglossia). For instance, as shown, Helguera maintains that art can affect social change (transformation) though remaining within the institution. In fact, he argues that institutions are not wholly negative. Embodying and internalizing the institution, for Helguera, can create transgressive openings that in turn can be used to create positive, gradual, and everyday social change (i.e., micro-revolution). Far from convinced by

Helguera's proposal, Wright sees it as tied to the hegemony of the art world. He argues that if artists are serious about the process of transformation, current practices must undergo a radical change. Wright calls for a total rupture with the institution (i.e., macro-revolution).

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in relationship to revolution and institution is significant in the light of the heteroglossic discourse created by the positions of Helguera and Wright, regarding the politics of transformation in contemporary art, specifically, as related to the SPU. Underlying Wright and Helguera's dialogic exchange are questions regarding the use-value of art. Their struggle to center and decenter one ideology over another refracts different ways in which power relations are produced and reproduced. The production of power that leads to transformation is a complex phenomenon that cannot easily be explained or readily measured. The idea of revolution usually operates within two distinct theories. A macro perspective of revolution advocates transformation through complete rupture with dominant power, whereas a micro view supports gradual transitions and everyday change.

Next, I examine the concepts of macro and micro revolution through Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in relationship to the micro-linguistic level of the utterance or unfinalizability (analyzed in detail in Chapter 2). Succinctly, heteroglossia at the micro-linguistic level refers to the ability of the utterance to simultaneously be a part of previous (already-spoken) and subsequent (not-yet-spoken) speech acts. Unfinalizability refers to the *iterability* or ability of the utterance to accumulate new meaning through recontextualization, resignification, and decentralization of speech actions brought to bear on a specific discourse. Next, I analyze the discourses of transformation that

Helguera, Wright, and other SPU participants circulate as they relate to the possibility or impossibility of the artist as a “revolutionary” subject, or what it means for artists to become agents of social change. Last, in consideration of Wright’s and Helguera’s differing views on revolution, I contemplate how their positions are connected to micro and macro perspectives on transformation in education.

**Unfinalizability: The Centralizing and Decentralizing Forces of Heteroglossia in  
Micro and Macro Perspectives of Transformation, and the Unfinalizability of the  
Utterance (Heteroglossia) as Theorized in the Dialogue-Interactions of SPU  
Participants**

In a Bakhtinian worldview, insurrection and transformation are not limited to the grand moments of revolution. Although Bakhtin lived through cataclysmic political upheavals in Russia (the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917–1918 and the Stalinist purges of the late 1930s), he was captivated by the prosaic, the particulars of everyday life (Morson & Emerson, 1990). He was interested in the micro-politics of the utterance in everyday events and the ability of such expressions to reveal how meaning is continuously created and re-created overtime. Bakhtin emphasized that the re-articulation (not recapitulation) of meaning potential is made possible through the gaps and fissures framing the social worlds in which competing ideological utterances occur (heteroglossia).

From a Bakhtinian perspective, the study of the everyday, as Michael Gardiner (commenting on the work of Bakhtin and Walter Benjamin) reminds us, cannot exclude an understanding of existing social and economic forces or material culture as it is lived and embodied in everyday social spaces, because the latter to a great extent influences the

former (Gardiner, 2009). It is for this reason then that in a Bakhtinian worldview, insurrection and transformation are not limited to the grand moments of revolution.

Contrary to a macro-perspective of revolution, one grounded in “traditional” or Leninist ideology (i.e., a revolution based on mass action, radical rupture, centralized forms of revolution, and power-over),<sup>10</sup> Viennese philosopher and art theorist Gerald Raunig (2007) proposes a different type of revolution: a *molecular* revolution (micro perspective of transformation). In Raunig’s definition, a molecular revolution constitutes an “uncompleted” process (p. 26). Much like Bakhtin’s concept of unfinalizability, a molecular revolution occludes the possibility of arriving at a terminal outcome, of duplicating previous utterances (i.e., radical breaks of the past). Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism elaborates that every utterance has an individual (autonomous and independent) and mutually shared (related and heteronomous or dependent) dimension. Utterances are actualized in a concrete and social context. As a consequence of the situatedness and double nature of the utterance, utterances are *unrepeatable* (unfinalizable). This does not mean that the utterance is devoid of memory or that history is not remembered (forgotten). The relationships that exist among utterances cannot be characterized as either isolated or simply as the first or last word. Each utterance responds to what precedes it and presupposes what follow it (SG, 1986). For Bakhtin, “the past comes into the present, not as a cause, and not as an earlier stage of the present, but as a still existing” (Sidorkin, 1996, p. 14). In this regard, history in a Bakhtinian sense is anti-teleological: it refuses an evolutionary narrative and a final word. Accordingly, utterances not-yet spoken hold open the prospect of intervention and reinvention.

## **The Unfinalizability of the Utterance in the Dialogue-Interactions of SPU**

### **Participants: Echoes, Crisis, Renovation, and the Rebirth of Pan-America**

The SPU was marked by intervention and reinvention, i.e., *repetition*. As articulated by SPU participants, the differentiated iterations of revolution, institution, and Pan-America are examples of *repetitions*, i.e., intervention and reinvention according to Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. In the Bakhtinian sense, "repetition does not repeat the original but constitutes a new action and a new version of that which is done or talked about" (Linell, 2003, n. p.) Hence, when I use the term *repetition* as theorized by Bakhtin, I italicize the word, or specify that I am referring to the *iterability* or *unfinalizability* of the utterance (analyzed in detail in Chapter 2 of this dissertation). For example, the semantic charge of concepts such as institution, revolution, public art, use-value, and Pan-America carries with it echoes of the philosophical and political heteroglossia of already spoken (diachronic time), and yet-to-be speech actions (synchronic time). The notion of Pan-America holds within it, the interilluminating utterances of Simón Bolívar, José Martí, José de Vasconcelos, and Francisco Morazán. Additionally, in the long history of inter-American integration exist the already-spoken utterances of the Monroe Doctrine,<sup>11</sup> and more recently, the discourses of "unity" as expressed by various trade agreements including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and Mercosur (an intergovernmental association among Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay). In review, *repetitions* (unfinalizability) of the utterance through unity, merger, and/or a multiplicity of voices do not render the utterance dialogic in and of itself. For example, NAFTA's discourses of integration, is a repetition, a new iteration of unity. The

rhetoric of unity for the purpose of “free” trade, for the most part, however, has not been transformed into practices that establish dialogic relationships with the working poor (free trade agreements are un-answerable). It is undeniable that colonial discourses are never *repeated* in the same way. Thus, the utterance does not become dialogic through repetition. It does not become dialogic because it constitutes a different perspective or action from its previous and future meanings (e.g., NAFTA). Instead, it becomes dialogic because it is answerable, which it does by structuring self–other relations dialogically.

For Bakhtin, the past and the present are not isolated, discrete, or polar opposites but temporal discontinuities. Thus, regardless of the uniqueness and unfinalizability of the utterance, its constitution is part of the diachronic order and synchronic order of accumulated meaning and self-experience (Petrilli & Ponzio, 2005). Bakhtin shakes the edifice of how history is traditionally understood, the two most important perspectives being diachronic and synchronic viewpoints<sup>12</sup> (see Chapter 2, specifically in relationship to Saussure). In the context of education, schools traditionally draw on diachronic constructs, specifically in matters of history and content. The outcome is a ruinous disconnect between educational content-knowledge and students’ lives.

As a result of the *repeatability* (unfinalizability) of the utterance or its becoming, i.e., its echoes, crisis, renovation, and rebirth (DiN, 1981), the past (e.g., Pan-America) is established by both previous events and contexts and those yet to occur. Based on this argument, Helguera performs Pan-America in direct and indirect response to what has already been spoken and what is yet to be spoken, in anticipation of responses to his own text and to his own dialogue (answerability) about it. The implication is that Pan-America

and for that matter the SPU dialogue-interactions as a whole are performative acts in the process of becoming:

[Becoming] is a dialogue of social forces perceived not only in their static co-existence, but also as a dialogue of different times, epochs and days, a dialogue that is forever dying living, being born: co-existing and *becoming* are here fused into an indissoluble concrete unity that is contradictory, multi-speeched and heterogeneous. (DiN, 1981, p. 365, my emphasis)

Inserted into new and differentiated contexts, Pan-America becomes a symbiosis between fiction and reality. At the SPU event in New York, Harvard professor and SPU panelist Doris Sommer, observed:

Pablo's [Helguera's] Pan-American tour will not so much as describe Pan-America as construct it. It is art that constructs that which did not exist before. America is such a construction. Language is such a construction. Identity is such a construction. And to make the connections between one small space and another bigger one, through the continent, across the continent, is precisely to make that which we want to intervene in. (D. Sommer, personal communication, May 5, 2006)

In Buenos Aires, Alicia Herrero, like Sommer, was interested in the inter-American connections that Helguera sought to forge. Yet, she was much more skeptical about the construction of Pan-America: "*Lo que a mí me interesó más es la idea de cruce de fronteras que planteaba el proyecto* [It is the idea of crossing borders that the project purported that most interested me"]. However,

I do not think in terms of the notion of pan-american-ism. That proves to be an idea completely opposed to the idea of crossing borders. It seems to me that crossing borders raises a type of hybridity that makes the idea of unity, of integration, or of understanding or perceiving twenty-some countries with very dissimilar cultures and very different economies as a totality very difficult. Let's say that to me, this seems like an important ideological problem to think about in relation to Pan-Americanism. But I am interested in the experience, because ...in the [SPU] travels a different type of experience is being gathered. And well, let's say, that what is enriching is precisely this shift that it does (undergoes). (A. Herrero, personal communication, September 7, 2010)

What is significant about Herrero's observation, from a Bakhtinian perspective, is that it locates the possibility of play in language in the movement of dialogic accumulation of meaning, and the irrepeatability of the utterance. This is the sphere where meaning can be restructured in terms of the self and the other, not to construct a unity (e.g., Pan-America), but to realize a hybridity, or the unmerged horizons of the many voices of SPU encounters, unfinalizability (DiN, 1981). To briefly review, hybridity or the mixture of disparate cultures, races, and languages (*mestizaje*, *métissage*, transculturation, syncretism) is double-voiced. It enables "coalescence and antagonism," reinforcement and contradiction, fusion and separation (unfinalizability). Bakhtin theorizes hybridity as "the moment where, within a single discourse, one voice is able to unmask the other. This is the point where authoritative discourse is undone" (Young, 1995, p. 21). Authoritative discourse is undone when the social impetus of the work and the power relations within it are dialogized. I believe Herrero dialogizes, i.e., reveals

power relationships embedded in the discourses of the SPU (as the above example demonstrates).

**Unfinalizability: The Pathos of the Artist as Revolutionary Subject (the Micro-Linguistic Repeatability of the Utterance)**

In the context of micro–macro revolutions, unfinalizability is important for another reason: it points to the impossibility of merger. Raunig observes that when art and politics do intersect, it is only for a “limited time,” and it is “without synthesis and identification” (Raunig, 2007, pp. 17–18). A *molecular* revolution, thus, opens up the possibility for new words for different types of revolutionary actions. Rather than overload art with the pathos of a radical revolution, Raunig is most interested in “the more modest overlaps of art and revolution” (p. 203). This is especially notable because the idea of a molecular revolution, or the micro-politics of transformation intervene in how the relationship between art and politics (revolution and institution) is traditionally understood. For instance, the history of the avant-garde is often narrated in relationship to failure, to the inability of the avant-garde to secure “its transformation from an art machine to a revolutionary machine” (Raunig, 2007, p. 179).

Artists’ ability and inability to become agents of social change is the contested space that preoccupied SPU participants. This concern is manifest in the SPU’s dialogue-interactions and the corresponding idea of artists as “revolutionary” subjects, or agents of change in its many iterations: collaborator (Helguera, 2006), poacher or secret agent (Wright, 2006), and interventionist (as Bayardo Blandino proposed the term at the SPU events in Tegucigalpa, Honduras). These temporalities, traces, accumulations, and

repetitions of the utterance belong to heteroglossia at the micro-linguistic level. At stake here, is the continuous (re)signification and (re)contextualization of language. But is a transformation (or re-signification) from artist to revolutionary, or from counter- or anti-revolutionary subject, really possible? What if the art machine and the revolution machine operate along separate paths that do not necessarily intersect? (Raunig, 2007).

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism allows us to rephrase the question from one of merging and synthesis (e.g., artist transformed into revolutionary, art into life, or art for art's sake) to one of intersection and reciprocity (answerability/responsibility).

According to Emerson (2000), Morson and Emerson (1990), and Hirschkop (1999), Bakhtin's work is more philosophical than political.<sup>13</sup> Russian Bakhtinian scholar, Vitaly Makhlin (1990) disagrees, however, noting that Bakhtin's work was "more radical than any sort of superficial revolutionism" (Makhlin, cited in Emerson, 2000, p. 69). Robert F. Barsky, goes further, and claims a correlation between Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, specifically his concepts of responsibility (answerability) and anarchist politics (1998b). What really matters, though, is not whether Bakhtinian thought is properly thought of as political or apolitical (Emerson, 2000, p. 22), or whether his theories "fit" within a particular interpretative scheme or politics. Rather, and here I concur with Barsky (1998a), what is important is that Bakhtin's theories provide ground to interrogate relations or power. From this standpoint, I enlist the concept of antirevolutionary as a way to think about the refusal to consider relationship of power in artistic activities, which once again brings me to Helguera and Wright's dialogue-interactions in New York.

## **Unfinalizability: Micro and Macro Perspectives of Revolution/Transformation in Education**

Is Wright advocating a Leninist revolution, and Helguera a molecular revolution? For Slavoj Zizek (2002) anything short of a radical break with hegemonic power and the taking over of the state apparatus is insufficient to effect progressive social change. Analogous to Zizek, Wright wants to completely separate art from its institutional framework. In Wright's view, as long as it remains within the structure of the art world, art has no use-value potential and art-making no potential as a revolutionary practice (W. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006).

Helguera, on the other hand, is most aligned with Oliver Marchart's and Mary Cain Fehr's similar notions of social transformation. Speaking on the subject of education at the SUMMIT of Non-Aligned Initiatives in Education Culture," a forum addressing education, culture, and the production of knowledge, political theorist and philosopher Oliver Marchart (2007), defends the redemptive force of a "revolution of gradualism" (n. p.). Marchart affirms that transforming educational philosophy as seen in the work of Maria Montessori, the work of Rudolf Steiner, and the Summerhill method of education is "not about doing something that is completely different in education, but about doing the same education, differently" (n. p.). It is a means through which to change the ideological state apparatuses step-by-step, gradually (Marchart, 2007).

Correspondingly, in her essay, "The Power of Water," Mary Cain Fehr (2010) concludes that in choosing between the metaphors of rock or water, water is the most effective agent of transformation. Change, whether in public schools or higher education, is often met with resistance and administrative bureaucracy. For Cain Fehr, "teaching

boldly” is about searching for strategies to overcome these obstacles, and through these actions create spaces to enact socially responsive transformation. “Rather than rock-ing the boat,” Cain Fehr’s approach is about quietly, “like water trickling through a pebbly stream, exploring possible routes and adapting as conditions change” (p. 91). Cain Fehr proposes that these micro interventions gradually build on each other and like a stream of water “seep into tiny crevices and wear away resistance, subtly, gently, and steadily” (p. 85). In other words, rather than a frontal attack (the “rock” approach), Cain Fehr argues for the artful execution of multiple, disparate, coercive socio-political maneuvers. In the same way, the SPU dialogue-interactions, as proposed in this study, built on each other, on the micro-words (utterances) of everyday life.

Helguera, similar to Bakhtin, Marchart (2007), and Cain Fehr (2010), is most inclined to seek social language and ideology through gradual change, through micro-revolution or transformation. In thinking about the kinds of approaches needed to effect transformation, we must take consciousness into account, as Herrero (2006) reminded SPU interlocutors in Buenos Aires: “Artists are not working from the Revolution but from the space of contemporary art” (A. Herrero, personal communication, September 7, 2006). This is not a summons to engage in the meditative meaning of art or an attempt to redirect artist’s efforts to intercede in their environments. According to artist and activist Gregory Sholette (2007), attempts to recapture the contemplative meaning of art are not more productive than are summons to return to the ideology of revolutionary avant-gardism. The former looks to recover an “already lost aesthetic autonomy.” The latter is unable to break away from the “logic of an all-pervasive capitalism” (Sholette, 2007, p. 116).

In the context of the SPU, is it possible that Wright's counter-arguments, similar to vulgar Marxism (economic determinism), cannot see past the notion that commodity exchange is unassailable in a capitalist art market? Based on Helguera's related assertions that revolutions come by creating institutions and not by destroying them, and that individuals become "revolutionary" when they "learn how to be institutional" (P. Helguera, personal communication, May 5, 2006), is it feasible to speculate that Helguera came close to approximating the contemplative side of revolution through an artistic practice? Imagining being a revolutionary in conditions that are clearly not revolutionary and without a revolutionary subject is problematic in that it treads dangerously on political rhetoric (Marchart, 2007). An ideology of "revolutionary" avant-gardism in the art field could raise consciousness about a given social problem. Yet, Wright argues, self-reflexive or "consciousness raising" (p. 55) artworks of the type usually on display at museums, fail to "do much damage to the dominant order" (Wright, 2006, p. 54). For Bakhtin, contemplative and avant-garde (autonomous, relativistic, or dogmatic) positions are equally monologic. The complex relationship between art and institution(s) played a determining role in the divergent approach (micro and macro perspectives, contemplative and radical ideologies) that Helguera and Wright use to theorize moments of resistance and rupture in artistic practices—a correlation that is profoundly intertwined with tensions between artists and art institutions and profoundly implicated in the institutionalization of art. These issues are discussed in the next section.

## **The Relationship of Power:**

### **Living and Acting Answerability Inside and Outside the Art Institution**

In consideration of the possibility of a total rupture with the institution, Fraser (2006) observes that it has never been possible to hold a critical position outside the institution. In contrast, for Wright, the work of radical art groups, such as the *Grupo de Arte Callejero*, is proof “of art’s ability to function [critically] outside the world of art” (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). Fraser (2006) argues that the art institution is not only institutionalized in the gallery or the museum but also in people, in “us” (p. 132). Individuals, i.e., artists, curators, spectators, and collectors internalize and embody the institution through their activities, for example, through their production, research, participation, critiques, and acquisitions. It is these activities and the criteria of value that individuals place on these activities that orient their actions. From this perspective, the question does not inhere in accepting or rejecting the authoritative discourse of the institution, or in whether an artist operates inside or outside the institution, as Wright argued. Instead, the question is whether the institution(s) with which one is allied is or is not progressive. Helguera articulated a similar perspective at the SPU events in New York. The question of particular relevance is whether an institution is inclined toward self-critique or toward reaffirming its own legitimacy and perpetuating itself as it is (Fraser, 2006).

In connection to the SPU dialogue-interactions discussed thus far, I argue that Helguera’s work is most focused on its own critique rather than its own legitimacy and self-perpetuation. In relationship to institution and institutionalization, Helguera is not looking to enclose art from the outside or to completely merge it into “real” life or social

situations. He is most interested in operating between the gaps and through critiques of the project. Wright's proposal for art in the absence of artworks, authorship, and spectatorship (Wright, 2004, 2006), in my estimation, moves in a different direction. Wright's attempts to redefine art by imagining a synthesis between art and life. What does a refusal to attempt such a synthesis, or rupture seen from a different perspective, mean in terms of Wright's own position within art, and the discourses that support art? Is such a synthesis possible and/or desirable?

On the one hand, Wright's refusal of the commodity exchange, of the neo-liberal and reputational economy of the art world, and his repudiation of art practices that help the dominant art system perpetuate itself (e.g., the corporate turn in art<sup>14</sup>), is an interventionist critique of art. With affinities to the historical avant-garde,<sup>15</sup> Wright's proposal is a counter-position to that of dominant power. In this respect, Wright's work is ultimately anti-capitalist and counter-revolutionary. In this study, counter-revolutionary is understood as a practice that sets up alternative ideologies and actions to the status quo or the dominant order. For example, Nina Möntman (2008) observes that, "art institutions are by definition instruments or platforms for a prevailing order of social values" (p. 17). Ultimately, the goal of counter movements is to at some point, compete on an equal footing with the hegemonic order. Wright's proposal vacillates between a counter-revolutionary and anti-revolutionary position. His thesis is antirevolutionary in several ways: Fundamentally, he finds the very idea of revolution untenable. He rejects dominant power and advocates *flight* from power-over. Most importantly, Wright's formulation of radical modes of address through his theory of *spy art*, attempt a thorough dismantling of what is traditionally understand as art, or art without art, authorship, spectatorship, and

the art institution (Wright, 2006). Similarly, an anti-revolutionary position aspires to complete rupture, starting over, refusing to engage at any level with monologic power.

Paradoxically, Wright comes up against several limits: the possibility or desirability of a critical position outside the art institution and the negation of power, specifically his own. Certainly, Wright can point to artists or artist-activists who support his ideas, such as “art with a low coefficient of artistic visibility” for instance, the Argentinian artist-activist group the *Grupo de Arte Callejero* (GAC); however, he inevitably brings their practices back into the folds of the art world. In so doing, he expands the framework of art and brings more of everyday life into it, but he “never escapes” the institution of art, as Andrea Fraser (2006) would argue. Wright is aware of this paradox. In his article “The Delicate Essence of Artistic Collaboration” (2004), Wright discusses the risks that artist-activist face, specifically those that work outside of mainstream art institutions, when they are exposed to the hegemonic art system:

The GAC provides a particularly interesting case study because it challenges art’s ability to function outside the world of art .... The group’s situation is precarious inasmuch as its practice cannot fail to tantalize the institution (which is in itself not a bad thing, and affords the GAC and its partners visibility). But this very fact forces it to exercise great vigilance if the intentions of its partners are not to be betrayed. (p. 540)

I respond to Wright’s proposal in two parts. Firstly, I agree with Wright that increased recognition is not necessarily a negative consequence. Especially, if one considers that with the exception of a few celebrity artists who sell their work for large sums of money, most visual artists struggle to make a living from selling their work

(Sholette & Ray, 2008). In reality, as Sholette observes, artists make a significant share of their income through non-art employment (Sholette & Ray, 2008).

Given that Wright's work is addressed principally to artists, art educators, and curators, his practice not only contributes to the increased visibility and reputational economy of *Group de Arte Callejero*, but also to the renewal and stabilization of social, cultural, and symbolic capital. The membership, prestige, recognition, and resources that academics (and artists) use to gain legitimacy in the institution is the very system that Wright opposes. Once again, I enlist Fraser's words to think through this contradiction in Wright's statement. Fraser writes:

Every time we speak of the "institution" as other than "us," we disavow our role in the creation and perpetuation of its conditions. We avoid responsibility for, or action against, the everyday complicities, compromises, and censorship—above all, self-censorship—which are driven by our own interests in the field and the benefits we derive from it. (Fraser, 2006, p. 133)

The academic institution does not operate in isolation. Much like the art field, power-relations (social, cultural, and symbolic capital) are used to stake out reputations and bolster careers. For now, the point is pertinent and problematic, because in his call for a radical break with the institution, Wright asks artists to do something that he does not apply to his own practice: he asks them to make a significant, perhaps even an impossible, "sacrifice" (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). This inconsistency or lack of self-reflexivity in Wright's thought did not go unnoticed by audience participants. At the SPU New York event, an audience member engaged Wright as follows:

Julia: Steve, when you write reviews and articles, do you sign your name?

Wright: Sometimes I sign my name, and sometimes I use pseudonyms.

Julia: Why do you use pseudonyms?

Wright: This is not about me, so ... [The audience laughed]

Julia: The comment was about all of us who practice art in some way or another, and should not ...

Wright: Art criticism is more than a practicing art. But I do believe that it's important to do everything possible as a kind of a hacker, and a critic is a hacker as much as an artist can be ...

Clearly this exchange and the subtext is a rejoinder to Wright's vehement proposal that the "last marketable commodity that artists have in the institutional art world today, and in the market, is their signature" (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). Is the signature, then, not equally a commodity for academics? Based on Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, I offer an alternative framework, to the argument that someone's signature conforms strictly to the conditions of commodity. For the time being, let me propose that signing, or personally acknowledging an act, is a significant characteristic of authoring, a means of answering for one's acts (values, theories, ethics), and a way of relating to another (subjectivity). In regard to Wright's theories, it is important to note that philosophy is not always grounded. By this, I mean that theorists such as Wright work with concepts that stay at the level of theory, though this may or may not be the intention. From the perspective of Bakhtin's concept of answerability, artistic or scholarly practices (i.e., speech acts) that remain in the abstract realm, refuse to answer. Refusal to answer is intertwined with issues of power.

Wright's theories, much like Helguera's work, are interwoven with issues of power. Despite their critical tensions and major disagreements, Wright and Helguera both undersign the type of art that is based on oppositional practices, those that re-politicize the social function of art, and those that can give mobility to emancipatory politics that may lead to progressive social change. Wright endorses such work through his scholarship as seen through his example of *Grupo de Arte Callejero*; Helguera makes a similar endorsement through his SPU performance. By my reference to re-politicizing, I am thinking along the lines of inquiry opened by Lucy Lippard (1984) in her article "Trojan Horse: Activist Art and Power," in which she proposes that "political art tends to be socially concerned and 'activist' art tends to be socially involved" (p. 349). Perhaps, this is the distinction that separates Helguera's and Wright's own practices and their conceptions of socially engaged artistic practices. Sholette (2006, 1999) proposes that in order to generate activist art, and here I would add activist research, individuals must put to the test their political commitment (Sholette, 2006, 1999). Thought of in Bakhtinian terms, it would be a matter of "living and acting one's answerability" (A & H, 1990, p. 13). *Answerability* is of great significance to the present study, a key component of dialogism, and is ultimately, intertwined with the question that SPU participants in New York asked Wright and with the question SPU interlocutors in Buenos Aires asked Helguera, here refracted through my voice.

Second, art historian Ana Longoni confirms Wright's cautionary statement regarding the institution's "eagerness" to "instrumentalise" projects such as those put forth by the artist-activists *Grupo de Arte Callejero* (GAC) (Wright, 2006, p. 540). In "Is Tucumán Still Burning?" (2006), Longoni writes that the extraordinary interest paid to

GAC by the art field and beyond created serious tensions within the group.<sup>16</sup> As a result, according to Longoni, members of the GAC declined to participate in traditional exhibition spaces (Longoni, 2006). Following Longoni, Gene Ray and Gregory Sholette (2008) maintain that the art world's attention to art-activist groups can have a damaging and de-politicizing effect. They observe that the GAC refused to participate in "the biennial circuit," specifically because they conceived of it as "cutting them off from social movements and struggles" (p. 523).

The point here is that it is undeniable that art institutions have the capacity not only to absorb and re-colonize critiques, counter-practices, and radical gestures, but also to prosper by doing so (Fraser, 2006; Graw, 2006; Raunig, 2009; Wright, 2004). Curator and critic, Simon Sheikh (2009) likens the co-optation of the institution in general and institutional critique in particular to "bacteria that may have temporarily weakened the patient—the institution—but only in order to strengthen the immune system of the patient in the long run" (p. 31). But is it feasible or desirable to propose that the art market will absorb everything, including the most radical of propositions? Is nothing "exempt from aesthetic display within contemporary art venues, neither vats of chemicals or dead animals, nor copulating couples, nor even political statements?" (Sholette, 2007, p. 116). This is the inquiry that Wright (2006), Isabelle Graw (2006), Fraser (2006), and others (Raunig, 2009; Ray, 2006) entertain.

Wright is adamant that capitalism is all-encompassing and will eventually co-opt almost everything operating inside the art institution. And, he notes that during the presentation of the SPU, Helguera referred to his work in relationship to the "spirit of the art world." This is a value that Wright insists constitutes in effect "the values of

contemporary cultural capitalism” (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). Following the work of French sociologist Eve Chiapello (2004), Wright maintains that the business world has proven to be highly adaptable at co-opting values artists have traditionally advocated for, such as “autonomy, inventiveness, creativity, and non-monetary remuneration” (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006). Wright (2004, 2006) and Chiapello (2004) are not alone in pointing out that contemporary art institutions, such as the museums, foundations, art markets, and art publications, have turned to (been absorbed by) business models based on capitalistic practices. The spectacle of mega-exhibitions (meant critically, see Enwezor, 2003; Bishop, 2004), especially those aimed at the global market, as seen by the continual production of International Documentas, biennials, and art festivals is evidence of this trend.

Graw (2006) observes that working outside of the institution is not only necessary, but also unavoidable. Some propositions for deliberate and structural reasons will always remain in the fringe. In other words, “every center produces its periphery” (p. 143). In spite of this, Graw proposes that what is outside of the art field cannot have an effect on art. Fraser (2006) holds a similar point of view. Against the backdrop that “art cannot exist outside of the field of art” (p. 130), or that “what we do outside the field, to the extent that it remains outside, can have no effect within it” (p. 131), I must believe with others, that art encompasses a breadth that exceeds the art field. Art has significance and impact beyond itself and vice versa (Helguera, 2006; Holmes, 2004, 2008; Kastner, 2009; Raunig, 2009; Ray, 2009; Sheikh, 2009). Specifically, from a perspective of dialogism, art cannot be securely circumscribed exclusively to the field of art. To do so, would be to endow art with autonomy from social, political, and economic constraints,

from the prosaics of everyday life. This is not to say that art is strictly determinable by these constraints but that it is inextricably bound up with them. As Foucault (2003) writes:

Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are “free.” By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behavior are available. (p. 139)

Likewise, Bakhtin theorized monologic discourses or regimes of power as restricting the realm of potential action. However, monologism does not define the types of responses that individuals have to discourses of power, e.g., how the SPU participants answer. In considering Bakhtin’s construct of answerability, I analyze the implications of art practices that knowingly or unknowingly attempt to delimit art as autonomous, i.e., self-contained, self-ruled, and self-forming. In these circumstances, what are the ethical and power relationships as they obtain between artist, subject, and patron or institution?

In the next section, I first examine the centralizing and decentralizing perspectives brought to bear on the dialogic exchanges surrounding the SPU in Buenos Aires. I cite at length in order to reveal the push and pull of contested and contradictory meaning.

### **The Centralizing and Decentralizing Forces of Heteroglossia: The Fluidity of Fiction/Reality and Representations in Public Art**

At the SPU event in Buenos Aires, Helguera recounted that the *First Congress of Urban Culture Purification of Mexico City (Primer Congreso de Purificación Cultural Urbana de la Ciudad de México)* (2003) was a public artwork that he had identified and

promoted as a conference and not as an artwork. He had put out a call for papers, and the papers selected had comprised the project, which was then presented at a non-art venue. Helguera observed that he had received submissions from all over North America. He selected six proposals, to which he wrote six response papers. At the conference, unbeknownst to the audience, different actors presented the scripted papers that Helguera had written. The title of the project and the topics (which are not necessary to delineate, here) were highly controversial. It was not until the press had discovered this ploy, and reported that the project was “just art,” that the “media glitz” that the artwork elicited, stopped (P. Helguera, personal communication, September 7, 2006). The position taken by critics and reporters in Mexico City expresses the position that art is innocuous. That art does not have the power to impact society or to enact social change. Helguera and Wright agree that the very term *art* delimits what art can do and/or what people think art can do. Wright is willing to go further by proposing that art “disarms itself” as mere symbolic transgression, or “just art,” and “not the corrosive, censorship-deserving real thing.” Wright argues that this is precisely one of the reasons why “art must renounce art, or at least sacrifice its visibility as art” (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006).

Similar to the reaction that the fictive symposium received in Mexico City, in Buenos Aires, there was apprehension among participants as to what was real and what was fictional about the SPU. These inquiries ignited passionate value-laden contestation regarding the nature of contemporary art practices. In particular, there were many questions as to what Helguera hoped to gain by choosing to work with concepts as fictitious as Pan-America, and with art projects that posed as something they were not. In

reference to the conference in Mexico City, one audience participant asked, “Was this a provocation?” [*¿Era esto una provocación?*]. Helguera underscored, “It was more than a provocation. The desire was to stimulate themes that had not been discussed up to this moment; at least they had not been discussed in a public forum of this nature” [*Era más que una provocación. El deseo era incentivar temas que no habían sido discutidos hasta este momento; al menos no se habían discutido en un foro público de esta naturaleza*].

Helguera indicated that a critic in Mexico City insisted that he was obligated to reveal which of the ideas and proposals presented at the conference were fictional, and which were real:

My response was that if one really needs to know what is fiction and what is reality, we are in a difficult position (dire straits), because in actuality it was a question of debating ideas. If one is not capable of deciding what one believes, it really does not matter if the person who said it was a person with a doctorate from the Sorbonne or it was an actor [*Mi respuesta fue que si uno realmente necesita saber qué es ficción y qué es realidad, estamos en serios aprietos, porque en realidad se trataba de debatir ideas. Si uno no es capaz de decidir qué es lo cree, realmente no importa si la persona que lo dijo era una persona con doctorado de la Sorbona o era un actor*]. (P. Helguera, personal Communications, September 7, 2006)

These passages are important for several reasons. As argued, personally signing is the “constituent moment” of “the answerable deed” (TWRPA, 1993, pp. 38–39).

Helguera is performing his answerability, i.e., he is actively and personally testing his aesthetic and political commitments. Additionally, Helguera’s words clearly demonstrate

that he is not paralyzed by content or theories, i.e., whether the SPU is self-referential, real, or fictional. Rather, he is most interested in the capacity of artistic practices to influence thought and effect change in the real or social world. Holding that art is capable of influencing change is by no means necessarily associated with a progressive outlook. There are plenty of individuals and organizations willing to close down museums and withdraw funding, precisely because they believe the art has the power to seduce and corrupt.

In relationship to answerability and the SPU's dialogue-interactions, I argue, furthermore, that Helguera and his interlocutors took on the role of the Socratic midwife, that is, they aided in the birthing and articulation of new ideology-shaping texts. At the SPU events, participants constructed a collaborative text, which they performed at the closing event of the project, the Pan-American Ceremony. Helguera variously described the event as "performances" and "civic-type ceremonies" (P. Helguera, personal communication, September 7, 2006). The objective of the collaborative text, according to Helguera was as follows:

[It] was the attempt to land the ideas that were discussed in the debates, writing a collective text that in a certain way sounded like a manifesto, that in a certain way it sounded as conclusions, as summary of the discussions, and these were called speeches, the speech of Vancouver, the speech of Mexico, of Guatemala, etc. [*En cada sede se trataba de aterrizar las ideas que se discutían en los debates, escribiendo un texto colectivo que en cierta manera suena como un manifesto, que en cierta manera suena como conclusiones, como resumen de las discusiones, y estos se fueron llamando discursos, el discurso de Vancouver, el discurso de*

*Méjico, de Guatemala, etc.*]. (P. Helguera, personal communication, September 7, 2006)

During his presentation in Buenos Aires, Helguera observed that the manifestos, at times adopted a highly official-looking character. For instance, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Helguera and a group of artists and students—delivered the Panamerican Address from the *balcony* at the National Gallery—located at La Plaza de la Merced, adjacent to Congress (Figures 1 & 2). When Helguera showed the slide of the Panamerican Address of Tegucigalpa in Buenos Aires, there was an immediate response: disbelief was evident in the voices of some of the participants. The interchanges that follow were interspersed with interruptions, multiple dialogues, and incomplete sentences:

Audience Member 1 (AM 1): *¿Disculpa, la imagen detrás, podéis poner la anterior? ¿Podéis contar un poco de qué se trata esto? Porque es un discurso así ...* [Excuse me, the image behind, can you show the previous one? Can you tell us a bit what that is about? Because it is a speech like ...].



*Figure 1.* Group of students about to perform *The Panamerican Address of Tegucigalpa*, National Gallery of Art, Tegucigalpa, Honduras.



*Figure 2.* Pablo Helguera singing *The Panamerican Anthem*, Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Pablo Helguera (PH): In every place I do a ceremony, a Panamerican ceremony, it is like a performance, it is like a fiction, I read a speech ... let's say that in the project I have adopted a series of prominent figures that in a certain way is like the politician, is like ...  
*[En cada lugar hago una ceremonia, una ceremonia Panamericana, es como un performance, es como una ficción, leo un discurso... digamos que en el proyecto he adoptado una serie de personajes que en cierta manera es como el político, es como ...].*

AM 1: ¿Es Monroe, Bolívar, el Ché Guevara?

PH: Well, it is to adopt a position, if we are going to speak of Panamerica, and the interesting thing was ... *[Bueno, es adoptar una postura, si vamos hablar de Panamérica y lo interesante fue...].*

AM 1: From the balcony? [He asked with an incredulous voice]. *[Desde el balcón? [Preguntó con una voz incrédula].*

PH: Yes, from the balcony. The projections of the public towards me were of all types. Suddenly they see me as politician. Suddenly they see me as an evangelist, as a religious leader. One turns somehow into this projection of several things *[Sí, desde el balcón. Las proyecciones del público hacia mí eran de toda índole. De repente me ven como político. De repente me ven como un evangelista, como un líder religioso. Uno se convierte de alguna manera en esa proyección de varias cosas].*

A different audience member interjected (AM 2): *¿Pero cuando vos decís que das los discursos desde el balcón, si eran ficcionales, sobre qué hablas? No termino de ver. Si es ficción entonces no hay diálogo. ¿Puede existir el diálogo en la ficción?* [But when you say that you give the speeches from the balcony, if they were fictional, what do you speak

of? I don't quite see it. If it is fiction then there is no dialogue. Can dialogue exist in fiction?].

PH: Fiction is independent from dialogue. I believe that ... [*La ficción es independiente del diálogo. Yo creo que ...*].

AM 2: *¿Qué se discute? ¿Porque también dijiste que era medio irónico (los diálogos de la EPD), entonces, no entiendo si es en serio o no* [What is discussed? Because you also said that it was somewhat ironic (the SPU dialogues), then, I don't understand if it is serious or not?].

PH: The proposal is very serious. That is to say, the components of the project consisted of a debate [*La propuesta es muy seria. Es decir, los componentes del proyecto consistían en un debate*].

AM 2: *¿Un debate sobre qué?* [A debate about what?]

PH: A debate was made of the topic that had been chosen locally. Subsequently, a workshop was created based on the topics of the debate, and a text was produced. A text that is read in the public forum, in the ceremony, in the shape of a speech, a Panamerican speech, and let's say that the ceremony does have a format that you might call a theatrical format or a fictitious format. But what is said is very serious. When you read the speeches of each of the sites, they deal with topics that are highly conflictive for them. In Vancouver, they spoke of how the city was crumbling. In El Salvador, they spoke of how they felt bound by not being able to speak of the armed conflict [revolution] of the last twenty years, and how this is affecting society. In Caracas they spoke about Chavista politics and how this is dividing society [*Se hacía un debate de un tema que se había escogido*

*localmente. Posteriormente, se hacía un taller basado en los temas del debate y se producía un texto. Un texto que se lee en el foro público, en la ceremonia, en forma de un discurso, un discurso Panamericano, y digamos que la ceremonia si tiene un formato que podrías llamarlo formato teatral o formato ficticio. Pero lo que se dice es realmente muy serio. Cuando lees los discursos de cada una de la sedes, tratan temas bastante conflictivos para ellos. En Vancouver, hablaron de cómo la ciudad se está desmoronando. En El Salvador, hablaron de cómo se sienten atados por no poder hablar del conflicto armado de hace veinte años y como está afectando a la sociedad. En Caracas, se habló de la política Chavista y como es que está dividiendo a la sociedad.]*

Helguera added further:

Let's say that what I am doing, or what I am trying to do, is through the back door of art. That you can call it fiction, that you can call it irony, that you can call it idealism, or utopia. The point is to arrive at these topics that in general do not tend to be treated or confronted in a direct way. Suddenly it seems that we are playing but actually we are not playing. Then it is to use this [forum] as a strategy, let's say, to provoke dialogue [*Digamos que lo que estoy haciendo, o lo que estoy tratando de hacer, es a través de la puerta trasera del arte. Que lo puedes llamar ficción, que lo puedes llamar ironía, que lo puedes llamar idealismo, o utopía. El punto es el llegar a esos temas que en lo general no tienden ser tratados o enfrentados de manera directa. De repente parece que estamos jugando pero en realidad no estamos jugando. Entonces es utilizar esto [este foro] como una estrategia, digamos, para provocar el diálogo.*]

Alicia Herrero noted that appropriating the language of the nation-state, of governors and civil servants served to uphold conservative traditions, and to encourage “utopian cartographies.” As such, she stated that Helguera needed to “find more concrete terms, more related to his own practice,” to address the SPU event in Buenos Aires, in particular, and contemporary art in general. Herrero argued that given that art operates within “post-territory,” art could not be viewed in terms of Pan-American regionalism, but should be understood in terms of how the structures and networks of contemporary art construct themselves at the transnational or “trans-local-local” level (A. Herrero, personal communication, September 7, 2006). Upon hearing her argument, I speculated if appropriating the language of the nation-state, of governors and civil servants, i.e., Bolívar, Martí, Vasconcelos by implication meant appropriating “official” protocols such as giving speeches from the balcony.<sup>17</sup>

After some debate about the notion of Pan-America, Helguera reflected: *¿Me pregunto si en Argentina realmente el concepto de Panamérica sale sobrando tanto* [I ask myself if the concept of Panamerica exceeds itself or is so irrelevant in Argentina?].

Audience Member 3: *Para mí es interesante. Lo que pasa es que para mí, esto es más un problema de tiempo y no de espacio* [For me it is interesting. What happens is that for me, it is more a problem of time and not of space].

Audience Member 4: The notion of Pan-America much like the project itself [the SPU] is as interesting as showing someone personal photographs. Images that are taken with a specific person in mind are interesting only to those who took the photos and to those for whom the pictures are meant.

The SPU and the notion of Pan-America elicited disparate and passionate responses. According to Terry Barrett (2004), artistic intent cannot determine or “over-determine” the meaning of a work of art. In addition, although personal meaning and “communal meaning” is of great significance, works of art “have rights. All work, both historical and contemporary, set limits on how they can reasonably be interpreted” (p. 90). In consideration of Barrett’s argument, the latter response (aforementioned) adopts a hegemonic stance that dispenses with dialogic relationships, precisely, because her interpretation of the SPU renders the artists intent ineffective.

In relationship to Herrero’s interpretation of Pan-America and the SPU, I agree with her ideas regarding inter-American relations. Indeed, if there is going to be dialogic exchange, macro and micro interchange between people across territories needs to exist beyond local concerns. Moreover, what I find very insightful about Herrero’s observations is that just as she asks Helguera to respond, she asks artists in general and SPU participants in particular, to answer. Inherent within answerability is an emphasis on difference, on being cognizant of one’s own position (subjectivity) and those of other individuals (DiN, 1981). Answerability for SPU participants would entail critical engagement with the content of the SPU, i.e., not allowing SPU discourses to become self-referential, or to “ignore” oneself. As one SPU participant in Buenos Aires, put it: “It seems to me that in some way we are discussing the project and taking Pablo [Helguera] as if he is the traveler who comes to expose questions, to comment on what we say and are ignoring ourselves [*A mí me parece que de algún modo estamos discutiendo el proyecto y tomando a Pablo como si fuera el viajero que viene a exponer preguntas, a comentar sobre lo que decimos y estamos ignorándonos a nosotros mismos*”].

Answerability involves not echoing oneself by generating an authoritative voice or truth claims that leave no room to answer (*truth-istina*). I am referring to the contemplation of one's own idiom, the type that leaves aside multiple, heterogeneous, and alternative discourses (*truth-pravada*), by which to live and test one's own signature, actions, and Being in relation to the Other. An example of *truth-istina* (monologic discourses) would be the SPU dialogue-interactions that did not engage dialogically with Helguera, with the project, or with the wider discourses of art across borders. This was the case, as I interpret Helguera's words, at the SPU event in Santiago de Chile. In his article "Searching for Panamerica" (2008), Helguera writes that the SPU event in Chile was "self-indulgent" and revolved around "regionalist nondebates" (P. Helguera, 2008, p. 71). Yet, Helguera observes that he found the choice by Chilean artists to conclude the SPU visit to their city with a performance versus writing a Panamerican Address as "somehow fitting for the occasion" (P. Helguera, 2008, p. 71). What is important to emphasize here is that *autotelic* text, a work of art, or a response to an artwork that is "intentionally directed towards its object" or attempts to mean "only in relation to itself or object," dispenses with dialogical relationships (DiN, 1981, p. 277). Conversely, dialogism involves aesthetic answerability:

I have to answer with my own life for what I have experienced and understood in art, so that everything I have experienced and understood would not remain ineffectual in my life.... It is not only mutual answerability that art and life must assume, but also mutual blame.... Inspiration that ignores life and is itself ignored by life is not inspiration but a state of possession.... All the old arguments about the interrelationship of art and life ... that is, the real aspiration behind all such

arguments—is nothing more than the mutual striving of both art and life to make their own task easier, to relieve themselves of their own answerability. For it is certainly easier to create without answering for life, and easier to live without any consideration for art. Art and life are not one, but they must become united in myself—in the unity of my answerability. (A&A, 1990, pp. 1–2)

In contrast to Herrero’s position (regarding the notion of Pan-America and “utopian cartographies”), another SPU participant proposed a distinction between fiction, i.e., the *unreal* and the *imaginary*. For Celeste Noriega,<sup>18</sup> “Helguera chooses to place his project ... in an uncomfortable place ... [in] the passage from unreality (fiction) to reality” (C. Noriega, personal communication, May 5, 2006). She observes that the SPU was a project that had at its root the imaginary, defined as a site where a multitude of desires and anxieties for changing a given situation, reside and are activated. In fact, she argues that the collaborative text realized at the SPU workshops and the speeches given at Pan-American ceremonies were the performative gestures that establish “the fiction of its [SPU’s] own utopia,” but “no longer as a possibility but as a reality” (C. Noriega, personal communication, May 5, 2006). The mythology of “Pan-America, this utopia, this impossibility,” as Helguera describes it, in Noriega’s imaginary is actualized. What she finds problematic, nevertheless, was the expectation of coming to some type of general agreement and conclusions in the collaborative texts created at different SPU events.

In response to Herrero’s critique that the SPU cultivated “utopian cartographies,” I argue that Helguera does not attempt to recuperate or appropriate the past (i.e., Pan-America). Helguera’s SPU and Bakhtin’s work are “eminently ectopian; not utopian

because [the potential for dialogism] is ‘everywhere’ not ‘nowhere’” (Jung, 1990, p. 95). In dialogism, the past is un-repeatable, Pan-America “comes into the present, not as a cause, and not as an earlier stage of the present,” but as Helguera and SPU participants perform it, “as a still existing” (Sidorkin, 1996, p. 14). Thus, Pan-America emerges in all its ambivalences, temporalities, ruptures, and contestations.

I return here to my ideas about why Helguera chose *Panamerica* and not *Pan-America* for the title of the project. Influenced by Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism, I conclude that it is the irrepeatability and unfinalizability of the utterance, i.e., the utterance at the micro-linguistic level, how Pan-America loses its hyphen. This is how I believe Pan-America’s in-betweenness is decentered and destabilized as Panamerica. Stated differently, the macro-narrative of past voices, failed dreams, and fictional worlds are repeated anew and operate in tension and negotiation at the level of the macro- and micro-dialogues at SPU events. These dialogue-interactions manifest, re-create, and reorganize conflict (heteroglossia) in the actual-fictional and future or yet-to-be word.

After hours of dialogue and debate at the Buenos Aires SPU, there was a cacophony of loud voices and multiple clusters of conversation throughout the room. Looking back on that evening, I cannot help but think about the Ancient Greek symposium. Bakhtin characterizes the symposium, “as ... a dialogic banquet discourse possessed [of] special privileges ... the right to a certain license, ease and familiarity, to a certain frankness, to eccentricity, ambivalence; that is, the combination in one discourse of praise and abuse, of the serious and the comic (PDP, 1993, p. 120). The Buenos Aires SPU event, at least Helguera’s formal presentation of it, which took place in the first fifty minutes of a three-hour *symposium*, ended just as it began. Helguera observed:

I am going to end up by showing a few comments, because more than I could say, the project has also tried to incorporate comments, or rather, it has attempted to concentrate on the positive or negative comments of the project, comments that describe it and in a certain way form a part of the project [*Bien, entonces voy a terminar mostrando unos comentarios, porque bueno, más de lo que yo pueda decir, el proyecto ha intentado incorporar y concentrarse en los comentarios del proyecto que son positivos o son negativos, pero que de cierto modo describen y forman parte del proyecto*].

Helguera projected these words onto the screen: “*Yo veo este proyecto como algo fracasado, Buenos Aires, Argentina*” [I see this project as a failure, Buenos Aires, Argentina] (P. Helguera, personal communication, September 7, 2006). This text was followed by citations of different people in various places where the SPU had been encountered. Following, Helguera, a group of local artists, some SPU participants, and myself, continued the dialogue over a long late dinner, where the *Panamerican Address of The People of Buenos Aires* was crafted. In sum, an artwork that is both independent (*autonomous*) and dependent or related (*heteronomy*), as I consider the SPU dialogue-interactions demonstrate, points toward not only the nature of the artwork itself, but also toward a series of concerns that deal with art’s social commitment to answer the Other. I analyze these concerns next in regard to autonomy and heteronomy, and in relationship to the research findings of the study.

**Answerability, the Indifference of Art's Autonomy and in its Refusal to Answer, and the Signature as Ethical Performative Inquiry and Way of Being and Being Unindifferently**

To sever art from its sociability (dialogicity) is to grant art its own territory, its own norms and its own laws (Francis, 2007; Helliwell, 2007; Holmes, 2004, 2008; Ray, 2007). In this study, autonomy is taken to mean independence or separateness, whereas heteronomy is taken as meaning dependence or relatedness. If one accepts that art, or the institution, functions freely or independently from real life, then one concedes that art does not have the potential to impact reality. In this context, art would be strictly speaking self-referential, commenting solely on itself. Although it is difficult to take seriously the proposition of art's autonomy, the fact remains that no matter how weak autonomy has become, privilege and independence continue to be asserted in the field of art (Kester, 2004; Ray, 2007; Sholette, 2006, 2008). Autonomous art asserts itself through self-referential processes, i.e., the myth of self-sufficiency and self-rule. Enclosing art as a realm apart or distinct from everyday life, to the degree that this is possible, allows art to carve out its agenda in its own terms, with the sole purpose of sustaining and reproducing itself. At the SPU event in Buenos Aires, Herrero (2006) raised questions regarding the pre-disposition of SPU processes as potentially self-reproducing and self-referential.

In contrast, if one holds that art has the potential to influence thought (through research, contestation, and action), and to effect social change beyond discipline-specific fields and without abandoning or "sacrificing" itself as art (S. Wright, personal communication, May 5, 2006), then, one must think about art's answerability. Did

Helguera's work, as embodied through the dialogue-interaction of the project, act as an answerable author, one who responded to the other? Or, was the SPU an artwork that had at its core self-production? Using art as a paradigm of self-production is clearly problematic, especially because art consistently connects knowledge to power. Thus, mere reflection, self-reflection, or representation is a way to reassert art's autonomy, which is a refusal to answer. Responsive understanding (answerability) takes into consideration that the utterance is not an individual (self-referential) or isolated phenomenon (autonomous), but a reciprocal action that requires active and not passive participation. Autonomy is indifferent to the voices of others, in that it forecloses dialogic self-other relations. Answerability, on the other hand, is a performative form of inquiry, a way to orient one's acts "personally, and every object or person with which I have to do in my once-occurrent life participates personally, unindifferently" (TWRPA, 1993, p. 52). To analyze the relationship between autonomy and heteronomy, I turn my attention to Herrero's reflections at the Buenos Aires SPU event. I highlight Helguera's response to Herrero's ideological position. These dialogues are considered in relationship to Bakhtin's concept of answerability.

The SPU dialogues were context- and situation-specific and varied considerably across social, cultural, and historical space and time. At each location, various topics and titles were chosen in collaboration with SPU organizers and interested participants. The title of the encounter at the SPU event in Buenos Aires, *Un debate sobre el debate*, was an occasion for Herrero to reflect upon earlier observations. To briefly review, Herrero proposed that the SPU's processes were potentially self-referential and as I understood her argument, non-dialogic. She critiqued the ideological problems associated with the

concept of Pan-America, objected to the brevity of the project in Buenos Aires, and called on Helguera to undertake an active rather than a passive type of inquiry. Building on the aforementioned arguments, Herrero conjectured that Helguera “thought about Buenos Aires and since he had perceived the great delight taken in the spoken word, and oral modalities, that is, in spoken language, he titled the SPU event in Buenos Aires: A Debate About the Debate [*Helguera pensó en Buenos Aires y como percibió que existe un gran deleite por la palabra, por la oralidad, es decir, por el lenguaje hablado, tituló el evento de la EPD en Buenos Aires: Un debate sobre el debate*].” Moreover, Herrero remarked, “It seems to me that it is interesting to ask ourselves, what do we debate? What is under debate? Are we debating the project (the SPU) or is it the encounter that is being debated? [*¿Me parece que es interesante preguntarnos, qué debatimos? ¿Qué se debate? ¿Se debate el proyecto (la EPD) o se debate el encuentro?*]” (A. Herrero, personal communication, September 7, 2006). In response to Herrero, Helguera noted:

Alicia asks what is it that we are debating? What is debated in these circumstances, if it is the debate about the debate? This project proposes a paradox, to be a work that consists of this self-referentiality, of debating the work itself. I believe that it is a very important part of this project, that within this choir of voices that are constantly fighting, the aim is to a small degree that this self-criticism and the very critique of the work, ends up constituting the center of the work. [At the same time], I believe that there are many things to debate. The aim is not to debate the school but the ideas that are connected by the project as Azul [Blaseotto] and Eduardo [Molinari] are doing. I believe that we can also speak on this, for example, the topic of public art seems to me to be important, I believe ...

I see this project as public art [*¿Alicia pregunta qué es lo que debatimos? ¿Qué se debate en estas circunstancias, si esto es el debate sobre el debate? Este proyecto plantea una paradoja, al ser una obra que realmente consiste en esta auto-referencialidad, de debatir la obra misma. Creo que es una parte muy importante de este proyecto, que dentro de este coro de voces que están constantemente peleándose, el objetivo es un poco que esta autocrítica y la crítica misma de la obra termina por constituir el centro de la obra. [Al mismo tiempo], creo que hay muchas cosas para debatir. El objetivo no es debatir la escuela, pero las ideas que están conectadas por el proyecto, como lo están haciendo Azul [Blaseotto] y Eduardo [Molinari]. Creo que también podemos hablar sobre esto, por ejemplo, el tema del arte público me parece ser importante, creo yo... Veo este proyecto como arte público*]. (P. Helguera, personal communication, September 7, 2006)

Was the SPU designed, organized, and realized in such a way that it activated the internal logic (system) of the artwork itself? So that, in turn, it could create the apparatus to reproduce its processes, and, thus, itself? Was Helguera like Don Quixote, the protagonist of an artwork that had at its core the re-constituting of itself through its own narrative (as Herrero suggests and Helguera to some extent confirms)? I return to Herrero and Helguera's exchange shortly.

In the context of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, an artwork that is self-referential, simply put, is monologic, un-answerable, not responding to anything beyond itself. Bakhtin rejected monologic or closed systems such as Saussure's linguistic theories, Russian Formalism, and Hegel's dialectics. For Bakhtin, those interested solely in the "inner logic of the system itself" and those who reduce language to abstract relationships

of sign to signs (V: MPL, 1973, p. 58), or text to other “texts and its sources” (Ponzio & Petrilli, 2005, p. 378), refuse to be answerable. Such a focus is that of a person who refuses to be responsible for his or her own identity. Such a person attempts to constitute his or her identity in isolation, in “no particular place,” i.e., from a closed-system or place of abstraction, and advocates ethics (or art) strictly theoretically, or with reference to universal rules deduced from reason and logic (metaphysics) (TWRPA, 1993, p. 53; also see Morson & Emerson, 1990). Or for that matter, those who “in the capacity of a representative,” for instance, a politician or an artist, perform a deed that shifts or obscures responsibility for their personal actions (TWRPA, 1993, p. 52). Yet, as Bakhtin writes:

Being a representative does not abolish but merely specializes my personal answerability.... Insofar as the act is left out and I remain only the bearer of special answerability, I become possessed, and my deed, severed from the ontological roots of personal participation, becomes fortuitous in relation to that ultimate once-occurrent unity in which it is not rooted, just as the domain which specializes my deed is not rooted for me. (TWRPA, 1993, p. 52)

It is this ontological detachment or loss of ontological ground by artists that underpins Herrero’s inquiry. I am referring to the artist’s refusal to answer, to participate personally, and to artistic practices that create circumstances in which others are unable to participate, personally, un-indifferently. For Bakhtin, specialized answerability must be brought into close relationship with moral answerability (TWRPA, 1993). In relationship to aesthetic activity, when answerabilities do not intersect, art becomes “too self-confident, audaciously self-confident [and fails] to answer for life.”<sup>19</sup> And, of course,

life has no hope of ever catching up with art of this kind” (A & A, 1990, p. 1). In Bakhtinian terms, to answer would necessitate that Helguera recognize the complexity of the addressivity in the Buenos Aires context—and take responsive action. Responsive action involves incorporating the conflicting utterances (e.g., Herrero’s critique) into different contexts, taking into account new ideas that relate to it, and leaving enough room to re-create different and multiple understandings of the utterance at hand.

Seen from a different angle, in a very Bakhtinian move, Herrero throws the dialogic impetus or lack thereof of the SPU into crisis. Herrero essentially insists that the discourses of the SPU acquire new meaning through the difference of other signs, explicitly the dialogue-interactions at the SPU in Buenos Aires, and in relation to the larger discourses of contemporary art. This would require that the SPU’s dialogue-interactions become constitutive of the event, that they move beyond self-reference, self-critique, and self-production (beyond debating the project and beyond *the debate on the debate*). What Herrero is asking Helguera to do is to answer, to participate personally, i.e., “use your time performatively” (Herrero, personal communication, September 7, 2006). To answer, would require that Helguera relate to the event in Buenos Aires, in all its content, not “in its isolation, but in its correlation with me within the once-occurrent event of Being encompassing us” (TWRPA, 1993, p. 35).

In other words, to answer is the constitutive moment of Being, the capacity to produce (not recapitulate) oneself in relation to another. Consequently, difference is essential to dialogism and to the dialogues of the SPU. This does not mean that Helguera disavows his own unique and “once-occurrent” (unrepeatable) self from the narrative (TWRPA, 1993, p. 52), or that he renounces his authorial activity or merge with another

(PDP, 1984). Bakhtin makes a critical distinction between dialectics and dialogism (see Chapter 2). Hegelian dialects (thesis, antithesis, synthesis) eliminate difference through unity and consensus. Dialectics is rooted in binary oppositions. It is an either/or proposition. You either affirm or repudiate a given position or ideology until synthesis (consensus) is reached (PDP, 1984). An example is the insistence that in order to be socially progressive, artists must operate outside the institution. Quite the opposite, dialogism is a process of simultaneity or also/and, of repeatedly generating difference (Holquist, 2002), for instance being paradoxically revolutionary and institutional, self-referential and relational.

In fact, Helguera's statement regarding the paradoxical nature of the SPU does not mean that he produces it. Instead, it means that he acknowledges the self-referential but also relational potential of the project and agrees to participate in it (Emerson, 1995). This is not an indifferent or relativistic position, or a *non-alibi in Being*, which is a refusal to answer.<sup>20</sup> Acknowledging is an act equivalent to putting one's "signature on an act" (Emerson, 1995, p. 111). By acknowledging the paradoxical nature of the SPU, Helguera is actively and personally testing his own aesthetic and political commitments—commitments examined and evaluated by Helguera's interlocutors. In contrast, "unsigned documents ... do not obligate anyone to do anything" (TRWPA, 1993, p. 44).

The act of signing, or for that matter "de-signing," a work of art as Wright proposed at the SPU in New York, does not guarantee meaning or truth. What it does is put answerability in play. Contrary to what Humpty Dumpty would like to adduce, an utterance is not "what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less" (Carroll, 2005, p. 219). Meaning does not reside within Helguera's (the artist's) intent, nor does it reside in the

reception of art. Meaning lives within the context of specific social situations and between the participant's relationships, or in the threshold between the two. This is a key point. In relationship to pedagogy, the notion of answerability stresses the opportunity for reciprocity, i.e., co-experiencing relational knowing in spaces of learning, co-participation that is formative of the learning produced, and ways to establish dynamic teacher-to-student and student-to-student relationships.

As argued in Chapter 2, Bakhtin cautioned that relativism (subjectivism) and absolutism (objectivism or dogmatism) are two sides of the same coin (Lähtenmäki, 1998; Morson & Emerson, 1990). Subjectivism and objectivism are competing monologic philosophical positions that advocate different perspectives in regard to the ethical nature of values and value judgments, i.e., what is moral, right, good, and true. Bakhtin writes that “Both relativism and dogmatism equally exclude all argumentation, all authentic dialogue, by making it either unnecessary (relativism) or impossible (dogmatism). Polyphony as an artistic method lies in an entirely different plane” (PDP, 1984, p. 69).

An artwork that opens up to dialogism seeks to cross (transverse) the borders of relativism and dogmatism (V: MPL, 1973). Bakhtin insists that it is not the content that obligates a person, for instance, whether the SPU was self-referential or relational, or “theoretical ascertainment” of some type of value or value system, but the person's signature obligates a person. For Bakhtin, the personal signature, which he also refers to as “undersigning-acknowledging,” is especially important because values and value systems are not separate or independent from lived life and personal responsibility (see TWRPA, 1993, pp. 38–48; A&A, 1990, p. 13). The concrete expression of undersigning

is the embodiment of the performed act. This is the very act that makes a person answerable in the flesh, in the materiality of his or her personal existence and in relation to the world in which he or she lives (TRWPA, 1993). In short, by putting his signature on the act, by acknowledging the paradoxical nature of the SPU, Helguera is acting out his own answerability, testing his own political commitments. These are commitments for which he is clearly taken to task. His own reality or truth-claims, and by extension, the truth-claims of art and politics, are evaluated and called into account (i.e., are called to answer) by SPU participants.

Given what has just been proposed regarding answerability, was the title of the SPU project, *A Debate About the Debate*, and the dialogue-interactions in Buenos Aires meant as “the provocation of the word by the word” (PDP, 1984, p. 111)? Was Helguera less a self-referential Don Quixote and more a Socratic figure? Were the SPU dialogue-interactions analogous to Socratic dialogue? The two main strategies of Socratic dialogue are syncrisis, “the juxtaposition of various points of view on a specific object,” and anacrisis, “the provocation of the word by the word” (PDP, 1984, p. 110). Provocation at the SPU events arose less from Helguera’s interrogation and refutation of the participants’ arguments, and more because heteroglossia had entered into the discourses of the artwork. When heteroglossia enters the text, speech acts (art) “become subject to an artistic reworking” (DiN, 1981, p. 300).

**Answerability, Autonomy's Monologic Twin (Heteronomy), and  
More than the Sum of its Parts or the Ground Where Agency Emerges**

The etymology of the word “autonomous” stems from the Greek words “auto,” which means “self” and “nomos” (laws, statutes, and norms) or self-rule (Francis, 2007; Helliwell, 2007; Holmes, 2004, 2008; Ray, 2007). Taken as one of the ciphers of autonomy or self-rule, are the rejection of institutional control and the desire for sovereignty over the demands of exchange value in a capitalist art market. Autonomy in this context postulates a field of freedom and of choice. This is an illusory space that places value on individual independence. This would be the realm where artists can be self-contained and self-governed. On the other side of autonomy (independence and separateness) is heteronomy (dependence and relatedness). At first glance, autonomy and heteronomy might seem diametrically opposed. However, there is more fluidity within these terms than one might anticipate. Autonomy can assert itself not only through independence but also through dependence.

Central to contemporary socially engaged art practices is a tendency toward unity and group collectivity. By virtue of these perspectives, certain art practices subsume art's reason for being, its purpose, to group consensus and to art's use-value. To give just one example, when the work of the *Grupo de Arte Callejero*, Wright's paradigmatic example of spy art, becomes a means to an end, even if this happens outside of the art field, art is instrumentalized. Perhaps, not by the exchange-value of a capitalist art market, or by the reputational economy of the art world, but art becomes teleological and utilitarian nonetheless. Art's purpose, i.e., its effective or ineffectiveness, is valued solely by its commitment to social and political activity. Art practices that dispense with art or

subsume art's competencies strictly to the social, become autonomous of itself as art-as-such, but dependent on collective actions and desires. I contend that the latter is consistent with Wright's proposal as articulated in New York. But as Bakhtin writes, "what is answerable does not dissolve in what is specialized (politics), otherwise what we have is not an answerable deed but a technical or instrumental action" (TWRPA, 1993, p. 56). What's more, when art claims to be intrinsically transgressive (i.e., interventionist, revolutionary), art is affirming its independence. In this situation, art becomes autonomous by claiming to be extra-political or extra-ethical. This is a different way to operate independently, a way to function in the fictional space of above or beyond both art and life.

It is, therefore, not useful to pit autonomy (independence and separateness) and heteronomy (dependence and relatedness) against each other as monologic opposites. If one is inclined to the position that art has the capacity to critically address, influence, and affect social and political thought and vice versa, then one must acknowledge the heterogeneity of art, and the possibility that art is simultaneously autonomous and heteronomous. Theorist and critic Gene Ray posits the realm of contemporary art as a sphere in which artists can "explore questions that cannot be asked without certain reprisal in the context of everyday life" (Ray, 2008, p. 4). In this respect, I would agree that art is autonomous because it has the privilege of reflecting on itself (Ray, 2007, 2008), and on controversial and even forbidden subject matter. On the other hand, as I have argued, if art and artists are answerable, they are politically and culturally implicated. Thus, art is not wholly independent and does not exist in some enclosed territory.

Influenced by Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, I propose that autonomy and heteronomy constitute the ground where agency, individual and social, is played out. Agency is emergent: it is shaped by the social relations of art, as art is repeated in the Bakhtinian sense, persistently created and re-created over time and space in the threshold of heteroglossia. Consequently, artistic collaboration is "more than the sum of the parts" (Green, 2004, p. 596). This is the very meaning of emergent, as artist, writer, and curator Charles Green (2004) purports. Resonant with Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and Paulo Freire's (1970) resistance to models of education based on straightforward transmission and reception, Green, delineates two possible scenarios for artistic collaboration. Using the analogy of bookkeeping to examine collaboration in artistic practices, Green contends that the most accepted and popular model of collaboration, like a balance sheet, is based on profit and loss. In this relationship of exchange, there are deposits and withdrawals. The artists, participants, and/or art cooperatives can add or take away from the transaction (Green, 2004). In the second type of artistic collaboration, the individual components fuse to create something completely different. In this process, the whole is more than the sum of the parts. The individual components cannot be taken away or replaced because they do not merge, as much as transform (Green, 2004). In keeping with Green's analogy, in bookkeeping, the sum of debits must always correspond; otherwise there is an error or failure ( $\text{Equity} = \text{Assets} - \text{Liabilities}$ ). The collaborative efforts of Helguera and his interlocutors, as I believe this study demonstrates, though, inhere in relationships that are considerably more complex than checks and balances. In my estimation, dialogic collaboration goes beyond eating pad-thai cooked by a famous artist at the local gallery, or taking candy from the candy pours at the major museum, and

certainly, beyond spraying Iraqi immigrant workers with polyurethane at the international art fair (Rirkrit Tiravanija, Félix González-Torrez, and Santiago Sierra, respectively).

Through my analysis, I have found that if a work of art or artistic practice is self-coincident and reproduces self-identical content, there is no room for meaning to be realized in the process of active and responsive understanding (answerability). Bakhtin writes that there is a distinction between different modes of reality and of Being. What is given (*dan*) and what is posited (*zadan*) (DiN, p. 270). For instance, what is given are the discourses already fused to the SPU, to the content of art, and to any ready-made articulation by the artist, or others that has informed the discourses of the SPU and/or its dialogue-interactions. What is posited is that what is yet-to-be-spoken or determined. I am referring to processes and actions that open up self-seclusion, self-sufficiency, and the unconsummated-self (or self as given), into potentiality for the continuation of dialogue for the future (TWRPA, 1993, p. 36). In the words of Bayardo Blandino, an artist, curator, and the SPU coordinator in Tegucigalpa, “the public intervention of the SPU created a space of opening, rupture, and critical reflection. Precisely because of this, the project does not remain here, and has in its development other lines [*La intervención pública de La Escuela Panamericana del Desasosiego creó un espacio de apertura, de ruptura, y de reflexión crítica. Precisamente por esto, el proyecto no se queda aquí, y tiene en su desarrollo otras líneas*]” (B. Blandino, personal communication, July 23, 2006).

The SPU utterances will go on after the encounter, as they reverberate toward the yet unspoken and as yet undetermined word (PDP, 1984). My research findings and analysis demonstrate that contrary to self-referential and autonomous art, Helguera is an

artist who thinks dialogically. He did not expect passive understanding or uncritical reception from participants; he did not expect them to repeat his ideas. Helguera did not attempt to detach or protect his work from the discursive force that the SPU participants exerted upon the work. He is most interested in responsive understanding (agreement, disagreement, and the potential for dialogic, i.e., agonistic reworking of his intended meaning). Helguera knows how to communicate and connect through his art both at the individual (singular) and collective (social) level, that is, through autonomous communion. He sought to situate his work in the socially specific context in which the performance took place.

Moreover, the synchronicity of the SPU's dialogue-interactions were an opportunity to highlight the dissimilarities and concurrences of different thoughts (thinkers and ideologies), circumstances, times, and purposes (past and present). These comparisons and juxtapositions of diverse and differentiated points of view (heteroglossia), heard most loudly through Helguera's, Wright's, and Herrero's polyphonic voices, were aimed at unsettling embedded assumptions and discourses (i.e., authoritative ideologies, "official" versions of truth, or claims to knowledge). Anacrisis, that is, "the provocation of the word by the word," by Helguera and his interlocutors offered a platform to counter monologic thought and actions, and generated and extended new ideas that resulted from the dialogic process (PDP, 1984, pp. 109–111). Last, my analysis suggests that dialogism (in particular as analyzed through heteroglossia and answerability) hinders both the complete dissolution and the entrenchment of autonomy. The former assertion refers to the notion that art is unanswerable in that it can be separated, closed-off from everyday life through independence and self-rule (autonomy or self-referential art). The latter idea, takes art as

a production that can be completely enfolded through dependence and relatedness (heteronomy) into lived life. In actuality, it is both/and. It is at least doubled. Dialogic artistic collaborations, such as the dialogic encounters of *The School of Panamerican Unrest* are double-voiced. Helguera's SPU not only point toward the nature of the artwork itself, but also toward a series of concerns dealing with art's social commitment to answer another. The SPU dialogue-interactions supported a dialogic approach to communication and created spaces for open-endedness, difference of opinions, ambiguity, critical reflection, and the possibility for participants to develop their own voice in relationship to social others across difference. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and Helguera's artistic praxis facilitate insights that can be used to envision dialogue or dialogism in pedagogical spaces that embody relational, participatory, and responsible acts. I analyze these connections in relationship to the purpose of the study and the research question in Chapter 5.

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1. The New York-SPU panelists were Stephen F. Wright, a philosopher, lecturer, and former programme director at the Collège International de Philosophie (2000–2007) in Paris and corresponding editor of *Parachute* magazine (1999–2005). He is currently on the editorial advisory committee of the journal *Third Text*. Doris Sommer, professor of Romance languages and literatures, and director of graduate studies in Spanish at Harvard University; George Yúdice, professor of Spanish and Portuguese and American Studies, and director of the Center of Latin American Caribbean Studies at New York University; Gabriela Rangel, director of visual arts at the America's Society, and co-moderator of the SPU event in New York; and Deborah Collin, chief curator at El Museo del Barrio in New York, and co-moderator of the SPU event in New York.

2. In "From the Critique of Institutions to Institutional Critique," in J. C. Welchman (Ed.), *Institutional Critique and After* (2006), Andrea Fraser suggests that she coined the term "institutional critique." Benjamin Buchloh is one of the earliest and most insightful figures on institutional critique. Artists often identified with the first generation (1960s and 1970s) of institutional critique include Hans Haacke, Michael Asher, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Adrian Piper, Louise Lawler, and Vito Acconci (US) as well as Daniel Buren and Marcel Broodthaers (Europe). Andrea Fraser, Fred Wilson, and Rene Green

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are at the forefront of a second generation (1980s–1990s) of institutional critique. In the second wave of institutional critique, self-critique has played an increasingly important role in artists' inquiries into their own practice (Molesworth, 1999; Sheikh, 2006; Wood, 2002).

3. The contradictory nature of Mexico's political system has occasioned much scholarly reflection. According to David A. Shirk (2005), the paradoxical nature of Mexico's political system is "resistant to neat classification, Mexico appears neither fully authoritarian [institutional] nor fully democratic" [revolutionary] (p. 15). Mexico's political system, in particular, Mexico's former hegemonic political party, the PRI, which Helguera uses to bring attention to the contradictory nature of art and politics or art and institution, not only tolerated but also openly supported political contestation (much like institutional critique in the field of art). At the same time, Mexican politics often incorporated into their practice co-optation of opponents through concessions and promises, nepotism, and bribes, as well as fraud and intimidation (Edmonds & Shirk, 2009; Shirk, 2005; Tulchin & Selee, 2003). Notwithstanding, Shirk (2005) explain that unlike other Latin American countries, where nondemocratic governance usually entailed harsh militarism and unconcealed oppression, "Mexico stood out as the 'mild' and even questionable case of authoritarianism" (p. 15). Consequently, depending on a person's particular vantage point, Mexico's political system is variously qualified as a "restricted democracy" or an "emerging democracy" (Shirk, p. 15). In relationship to the theoretical lens, these concerns are intertwined with issues of centralizing and decentralizing power, differentiated ideological positions, and attempts to maintain one type of hegemony over the other.

4. The archive (i.e., various types of archival systems and the performativity of the archive) has become an increasingly important topic in contemporary art. These iterations have been most recently examined in the work of Diana Taylor (2004), Simone Osthoff (2009), and others (see Derrida 1995; Enwezor, 2008).

5. The conceptualists' break with the art institution was temporary and the work produced was quickly re-absorbed into the art system. Lucy Lippard puts it best, when she says that conceptual artists were sent back to the "white cell," and soon began to exhibit their archives in prestigious galleries and to sell their art (art-ideas) for large sums of money (Lippard, 1997).

6. Institutional spaces played an important role in the documentation and exhibition of conceptual artworks or the notion of art-as-idea. Exhibition catalogues (today augmented by biennials, art fairs, and Documentas) rather than museum and gallery spaces became the exhibition. This shift is well captured in the title *Catalog as Exhibition*, a show curated by Seth Siegelaub in New York, 1968–1969. Print media made room for a large and more diverse audience. Spectators were not seeing the artwork proper but the documentation of the art-idea (i.e., the archive). Indeed, this was a redefinition of aesthetic experience (Buchloh, 1990).

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7. *Magazine in Situ* is a Web magazine of contemporary artistic practice in Buenos Aires, Argentina, <http://www.magazineinsitu.com>.

8. Bakhtin is referring to a poem written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe about the figure of Prometheus in Greek mythology.

9. *Grupo de Arte Callejero* is a radical art-activist group whose origins are closely tied to HIJOS. Longoni (2006), describes HIJOS as a “human rights organization that gathers the children of the disappeared, exiles, and militants of the 60s and 70s, many of whom were then entering adulthood” (p. 4). In addition, Longoni offers this account of the relationship between the two groups and the conditions in which they operated: “Both groups actively collaborated in staging exposure protests [*escraches*], the mode adopted by the struggle for human rights on the face of the impunity granted to the perpetrators of the genocide. Exposure protests arise from the need to stimulate ‘social condemnation’ of repressors who had either been exempted from prison or simply not brought to trial thanks to the Due Obedience and Full Stop Laws, and the Pardon Decree signed by Menem. The exposure protest discloses the repressor’s identity, his face, his address and, above all, his past as a repressor to his neighbours and work mates (as a rule, repressors have been ‘recycled’ in companies offering private security), who know nothing about his criminal record” (p. 4).

10. Drawing on the work of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (constituent power and multitudes) and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (revolutionary machine), in *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, Raunig (2007) analyzes the symbiosis between art and revolution. Raunig (2007) explains that a traditional concept of revolution is a project dependent on the outbreak of mass action or insurrection. It is located in the desire to take over the state apparatus through a linear, chronological, and concrete process that unfolds in phases, and its primary goal is to create new or alternative societies through its newly acquired power (Raunig, 2007). Raunig proposes that this traditional or “Leninist” vision of revolution—a model endorsed by intellectuals such as Slavoj Žižek (and possibly Stephen F. Wright)—is not probable at present. In the same way, Oliver Marchart (2007) Gregory Sholette (2007), and Peter McLaren (2001) have expressed skepticism about the likelihood of revolution on a grand scale, the possibility of a centralized form of revolution, and especially the prospect of radical rupture from hegemonic power. Raunig argues that a “traditional” or Leninist notion of revolution is one-dimensional, in that it sidesteps the micropolitics of revolution; for example, the moments when the aesthetic and the political intersect, not through mass insurrection, revolution, and rupture, but through everyday practices and recurring instances (Raunig, 2007). Sholette supports a similar position, when he writes that in the history of socially engaged art practices, one “would find no grand history of revolutionary accomplishments, but rather transitory moments of resistance, [and] local insurrections” (Sholette, 2007, p. 11).

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11. The Monroe Doctrine refers to U.S. foreign policy of the 1820s. The Monroe Doctrine was used (and has been invoked many times since it was drafted in 1823) to justify Manifest Destiny; i.e., to validate the disavowal of Latin America's sovereign power, undertake military interventions across Latin America for U.S. expansionist projects, for instance, declare war on Mexico; and aid the United Kingdom in taking over the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands in Argentina. Additionally, the Monroe Doctrine was used to appropriate the notion of Pan-America, conceived by Simón Bolívar in 1826, for U.S. imperialist power (see Rodolfo Acuña, 1988, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*).

12. Diachronic conceptions of history are linear, successive (with beginning, middle, and end), based on cause and effect, judged as “real” or factual and not fictitious, considered “finite,” and grounded in past developments. Synchronic conceptions of history refer to nonlinear, non-teleological, non-chronological, and constructivist approaches to reality from the space and time of the present. As I proposed in Chapter 2, Bakhtin, like Saussure, is interested in analyzing speech acts from the space and time of the present. However, Bakhtin refuses to ignore that language is history- and context-dependent. He argues that the convergence between diachronic and synchronic perspectives is necessary to apprehend how the utterance accumulates meaning within social relations over time.

13. Some Bakhtin scholars maintain that Bakhtin's political views are not clearly stated in or determinable from his work (Barsky & Holquist, 1991). Bakhtin did not write about the oppressive political practices of his time (Stalinism, the Bolshevik Revolution, or World War II) or political theory or philosophy (Barsky & Holquist, 1991; Emerson, 1997; Holquist, 2002). Emerson writes that the closest Bakhtin's writings on carnival are the closest he came to expressing a radical politics in his work (Emerson, 1997, p. 70). In a much stronger statement, Hirschkop (1999) posits that despite the “virtue” of Bakhtin's oeuvre, his lack of interest in the political rendered him “virtually worthless as a political thinker in the strict sense” (p. 274).

14. Wright's ideas are interesting and valuable, especially given the “corporate turn in art.” The dependence on corporate art commissions, art awards, sponsorship, and collections, as well as corporate positioning and branding within art institutions, has increased the instrumentalization of art for market profits. The corporate turn in art, to give just a few examples, refers to the increased privatization of art institutions, their dependence on corporate art collections (Citi Bank, JP/Morgan Chase), art commissions (Pfizer, *Forbes Magazine*), art awards (Hugo Boss and Turner Prize), as well as sponsorship and corporate positioning and branding within art institutions (e.g., British Petroleum in connection with the Tate). For a critical analysis of the privatization of art, see Derrick Chong (2005), “Stakeholder Relationships in the Market for Contemporary Art,” in *Understanding International Art Markets And Management*; Nina Möntmann (2006), *Art and its Institutions, Conflicts, Critique and Collaborations*; Peter Timms (2004), *What's Wrong with Contemporary Art?* and Chin-Tao Wu (2001), *Privatizing*

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*Culture: Corporate Art Intervention Since the 1980s*. Also, see the Tate's website, which solicits corporate sponsorship by enumerating a long list of benefits in return.

15. Believing that art could no longer have an effect on the moral, social, and political matters of everyday life, the historical avant-garde (1960s) set out to dismantle and restructure the institution. One strategy to counter the hegemonic art world was to merge art and life. In the same way and for similar reasons, as I understand him, Wright calls for the synthesis of art and life. However, his interest is not in destroying the institution. He wants artists to flee from it.

16. The extraordinary attention that the GAC has received is evidenced by the numerous papers, theses, and case studies produced about the group, as well as the international and local interest in their work. In addition, the GAC has continued participating in art events such as the Venice 2003 Biennial (Longoni, 2006).

17. I found out through correspondence with Herrero that this is not the argument she was making. She states that her observation was in relationship to the nation-state and not past Pan-American thinkers or "official" protocols. Nonetheless, her words regarding the appropriation of "the language of the nation-state," elicited for me, this conjecture in that time and place.

18. I use I use a pseudonym here to facilitate the writing process to limit the over use of the term "SPU participant," and to protect identity of participant.

19. Re-tattooing Holocaust survivors (Artur Mijewski), co-opting impoverished children in Ghana with money (Olaf Breuning), spraying Iraqi immigrant workers with polyurethane, or paying drug-addicted individuals in narcotics, in return for their participation (Santiago Sierra), which artists use for the purpose of creating art, all constitute refusals to answer (see Downey, 2009; Montmann 2006, 2008; Sholette, 2008). Someone who refuses to be answerable is someone who refuses to be responsible for his or her own identity. Bakhtin calls these individuals "pretenders," people who seek an "alibi in Being" (Bakhtin, 1993; also see Morson & Emerson, 1993, p. 180). The practices through which artists and art institutions reinscribe power, in new and insidious ways (aforementioned) are documented (video and photography), and the archive presented and made available for sale at the gallery and museum.

20. In "Toward a Philosophy of the Act," one of his earliest works on ethics and aesthetics, Bakhtin argues that, "there is no alibi in Being." What he means is that people are ethically responsible through and through, in every instant and in every situation of their lives (Bakhtin, 1993; also see Morson & Emerson, 1993, p. 180). "Toward a Philosophy of the Act" was written between 1919 and 1921 and was first published in Russia in 1986, and in the US in 1993.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **REFLECTIONS ON THE SPU AND DIALOGIC ART PEDAGOGY**

“The real business of case study,” according to Robert Stake, “is particularization, not generalization” (2005, p. 9), and in accord with this generally accepted view, I have made every effort to particularize the SPU, the case study that is central to the present research. Specifically, I have drawn on Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism in order to understand the possible significance of *The School of Panamerican Unrest’s* (SPU) (2006) dialogue-interactions both in terms of their contexts and the interpretations they generated. In this chapter, I first present and discuss the research questions that are central to interpreting the data collected. And, next I briefly revisit and further particularize the data analysis and findings offered in Chapters 3 and 4, explicitly considering the purpose of the study in this regard. In the light of this further particularization, I return to my central questions. What is dialogue? What is the function of dialogue in relationship to pedagogy? Through this exposition, I explore two major paradigms: dialogue as instruction and dialogue as an ontological event. Throughout this chapter, I synthesize the findings, limitations, implications, and conclusions of the study as they relate to the purposes of art as pedagogy.

#### **Research Questions**

Yin (2009), Gerring (2007), and Stake (2005) stated that a case study is a valuable research design, when the emphasis of the research questions is exploratory in nature—i.e., when the questions are descriptive (when, what) and/or or explanatory (how and

why). In keeping with this position, therefore, I proposed three exploratory questions in regard to the case study:

1. What kinds of dialogues did the SPU engage in? What dialogic encounters did it participate in?
2. What *dialogic* discourses did participants perform when they engaged (had an encounter) with the SPU?
3. What is the pedagogical function of dialogue and dialogism?

My understanding of the terms dialogue, dialogic, and dialogism derives from Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. Consequently, in order to address the research questions it was first necessary to gain an in-depth theoretical understanding of the construct of dialogism. As I hope I have demonstrated throughout this study, Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and its attendant concept of the utterance, provide a complex lens through which to approach the research questions. In Chapter 2, I offered a detailed exposition and analysis of the related literature on Bakhtin's philosophy of language, or dialogism, and its main topics of investigation: *polyphony*, *heteroglossia*, *monoglossia* and *polyglossia*, and the *utterance*. In Chapter 4, I theorized the intersections between Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and the dialogue-interactions of the SPU. Next, I discuss the research questions by re-visiting the purpose of the study.

### **The Nexus of Bakhtin's Theory of Dialogism and the Dialogue-Interactions of Helguera's SPU**

In the dissertation, I proposed that art educators consider in their research and teaching practices, Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and Pablo Helguera's *School of Panamerican Unrest* (SPU), a public artwork grounded on dialogic encounters. Bakhtin's and Helguera's theories are important because they offer significant ways, through counter-discourses and dialogic praxis, in (re)envisioning dialogue as a communicative action arising from relational, dynamic, participatory, probing/critical, and responsible viewpoints. A relational dialogue "always includes a question, an address, and the anticipation of a response, it always includes two (as a dialogic minimum)" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 170). From a Bakhtinian perspective, an answer must generate a new question. Otherwise, communication fails to be a true dialogic exchange (Bakhtin, 1986). Anticipating the basic tenets of cultural studies and reader-response theories, Bakhtin rejects the idea that language and culture can be passively received or passively consumed. Based on Bakhtin's position, therefore, and as for the present study, an instructional practice that excludes reciprocity and likewise an educational encounter that privileges the authoritative voice of the teacher, cannot be other than antialogical.

Contiguous with Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, Helguera advances the argument that voice is achieved only when participants in dialogue can produce rather than recapitulate discourses. For Bakhtin, our utterances can be *repeated* or inserted onto new contexts, which may in turn produce new meaning(s). Thus, encounters with the SPU in new contexts can generate new meaning(s). The unfinalizability of the utterance,

therefore, does not necessarily produce straightforward repetition or duplication. Rather, *repeatability* entails (re)contextualization, (re)accentuation, and (re)signification.

Helguera's SPU created opportunities for interlocutors to participate in, answer, and talk back to the artwork, and thus (re)signify its discourses.

Helguera's SPU harnesses the unfinalizability (irrepeatability) of language—an unfinalizability on which the possibility of dialogic encounters rests. His work is dialogic, not because of the multiplicity of voices, as expressed by those who collaborated on the project, but because the voices of the participants intersect dialogically, i.e., contrapuntally. Helguera did not place the author's voice—i.e., his own power and knowledge—at the center of the artwork, and the participants were not the objects of the author's "expert" knowledge or intent. Rather than repeat (duplicate or recuperate) the artist's intent, SPU interlocutors expressed their own voices by talking back.

SPU participants had the semantic authority to re-map, re-contextualize, and change the meaning of the utterance or the sign. For instance, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, a panelist, who identified herself as a visual artist, asserted that although the SPU presented itself as a public art project, it was clearly not public art. Public art in the Buenos Aires context, the participant argued, was characteristically top-down, bureaucratic, and state supported and promoted. In contrast, she observed that the SPU involved audience members in ways that were non-hierarchical. In other words, this was a different kind of public art. The SPU did not express and promulgate knowledge given from above, nor did it offer itself as an authority. Instead, the knowledge constructed by the SPU arose from interdependent processes—between the initiating artist, the co-creators, and the public. At the same event, an independent curator, who was an audience

member, stressed that in Buenos Aires, Helguera's project had not been presented in the public sphere. She declared, therefore, that *The School of Panamerican Unrest* had "failed," precisely, because the project had not established or generated venues for the non-art public—a necessary characteristic of a "new current" of public art. Through such conversation, the participants considered the purpose of the SPU within their own conceptual frames of reference and contextualized in regard to past and present discourses about public art. Each re-maps the SPU, evaluates it, and disrupts it, to re-signify or generate different or new meanings about public art and the discourses associated with it.

Central to the concerns of the SPU was the construction of dialogic encounters, whereby the meaning of the artwork would unfold through a participatory and reciprocal relationship between the artwork and the viewer/participant, as the data analysis, research findings, and examples demonstrate. Thus, an encounter with Helguera's project called for a dialogic relationship of exchange. Yet, however necessary the relationships between a work and a viewer is to the project of constructing meaning, dialogism does not posit a conciliatory or equal, democratic, or utopian, model of exchange that ignores the uneven structure of power in language. Instead, it refers to provocations that simultaneously invite and resist, that is, participate in, talk back to, and re-signify various points of view, arguments, and counter-arguments. These are the processes and products significant to a dialogic approach to pedagogy—an approach I analyze later in this chapter. Considered in relationship to dialogism, ultimately, it is not so much what *The School of Panamerican Unrest* (2006) gives, as in checks and balances, but what it becomes. In other words, at stake is what the SPU becomes in the internally persuasive dialogues of

its interlocutors and the transformation that these dialogues effect both within and beyond themselves. In other words, the SPU is more than the sum of its parts or of the dialogue-interactions arising from it. The SPU's significance also lies in what these utterances become in my own internally persuasive consciousness. In the struggle to "make the words of other's one's own, words become part of one's own thoughts" (Allen, 2000, p. 28); but as I hope has been shown in Chapter 4 and will further here, this does not happen without first going through a selective and agonistic critical process. I would add that the idea of "clearing a working space" (Green, 2004, p. 596) for the self in collaborative art practices is imperative to answerability. Answerability entails becoming conscious of the self in relation to another or ontological intersubjectivity, and decentering one's own language through the language of the other, a tenet of dialogism and feminist thought (DiN, 1981).

I return to dialogism in relationship to pedagogy. The research regarding the impact of educational "reform" on teaching and learning, which I presented in Chapter 1, makes clear that power is mediated through language (Alexander, 2005a; Giroux, 2009; McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2006). Similarly, Bakhtin's constructs of dialogism are bound up with issues of power and voice, as are the dialogic encounters of the SPU. Where dialogism concerned pedagogy, I propose that an education based on prepackaged curriculum or authoritative discourses and instruction is answerable only to itself; that is, such a curriculum does not entail becoming conscious of the self in relation to another, nor does it require ontological intersubjectivity, the decentering of one's own language through the language of the other—all of which are tenets of dialogism and feminist thought (DiN, 1981). Specifically one-way conversation does not respond to a

multiplicity of voices and subjectivities, which are vital to dialogic relationships. Further, I argue that the intersection of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and the dialogic encounters of the SPU could be used as a lens through which to problematize practices and methods that regulate and restrict dialogue in art classrooms. And, through such a lens, questions such as the following immediately arise: Who gets heard or silenced in the discourses of teaching and learning and the making and viewing art? How do teachers and students respond, and how are they ethically answerable to one another? How do people jointly construct meaning? In turn, possible answers to these questions can be used to create dialogue within pedagogical spaces such that education can become the more thoroughly relational, participatory, and responsible communicative endeavor held to be of central importance to democratic society. Consequently, I elaborate on these concerns in greater detail.

### **The Meanings and Functions of Dialogue in Relationship to Pedagogy**

The work of David Bohm (2004), Dmitri Nikulin (2006), Nicholas C. Burbules (1993, 2004), and Eugene Matusov (2009) offer important contemporary perspectives on dialogue theory (theories of communication). Their ideas open new avenues for elaborating on the concept of dialogue and dialogism in relationship to pedagogy. In addition, their work allows me to bring more specificity to my own research findings as they relate to issues of pedagogy. Guided by their work, and Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, I return in this section to the questions that I asked in the introduction of the present study: What is dialogue (or what is not dialogue)? What is the function of dialogue in relationship to pedagogy? I begin with a brief overview of Bohm's (2004)

conception of dialogue. Following, I analyze Nikulin's (2006) arguments regarding the function of dialogue. Next, I examine the work of educational theorists Nicholas C. Burbules (1993). I discuss Eugene Matusov's (2009) theories throughout the text. Burbules's and Matusov's work characterize two different ways of thinking about educational dialogue: dialogue as instruction and dialogue as an ontological event, respectively. I then reflect on the limits of dialogue and dialogism in tension within my own teaching, specifically, in relationship to the "usefulness" of dialogue for the creation of meaning ("truths"), the value of dialogue as a rhetorical device or tool to persuade students, and the efficacy of dialogue as a way to reach consensus.

Bakhtin (1986), Bohm (2004), Nikulin (2006), Burbules (1993, 2004), and Matusov (2009) all conceptualize dialogue primarily as a social and collective activity. However, these authors argue that not all communication is dialogue or dialogic in nature. Bohm (2004) contends that dialogue should not be mistaken for discussion, debate, or negotiation, which are forms of communication oriented toward a specific outcome. For instance, there may be different points of view in a discussion or debate, but the emphasis of these types of communication is to analyze or break up the different perspectives at play (Bohm, 2004). Bohm explains that in a discussion, like in a ping-pong game, people exchange and analyze ideas back and forth. He notes, however, that though this is valuable, it is limited, because the final goal of such interactions is generally to earn points for yourself, to have your point of view prevail, and in so doing win the game (Bohm, 2004). Admittedly, this is a limited account of why people engage in discussion, one that does not recognize feminist efforts to change the rules and play the game differently. Yet, the shortcomings of Burbules's position does not diminish the fact

that “playing to win” continues to be prevalent in U.S. society at least and certainly in U.S. educational contexts, the arena with which the present study is most concerned. In fact, Burbules (1993) remarks that academic culture often rewards anti-dialogical communicative practices, such as those exemplified by the “adversary method,” which assumes that the best way to judge another’s point of view or argument is to assail that person’s position (p. 153).

In contrast, dialogue is not about making your particular position dominant or about winning. Bohm argues that, in dialogue, “whenever a mistake is discovered on the part of anybody, everybody gains, it is a situation called win–win, whereas the other game is win–lose” (Bohm, 2004, p. 7). Correspondingly, throughout his work, Bakhtin repeatedly emphasized, that, “in dialogue the destruction of the opponent also destroys that very dialogic sphere where the word lives” (SG, 1986, p. 150). Destroying the interlocutor’s words (for instance silencing students’ voices) also destroys the possibilities for relational, participatory, and continued dialogue. Thought of differently, for Bakhtin, as for James P. Carse, theologian and author of *Finite and Infinite Games: A Vision of Life as Play and Possibility* (1986), the emphasis of the game (infinite games) should not be on winning or losing, but the emphasis should be on the benefits of on continued play.

Bohm observes that much of what is presently considered dialogue, for instance, United Nations talks, focuses on negotiation. And, negotiation, he remarks, is not dialogue. Negotiation is more about trade-offs, about establishing a fixed dialogue to work out some type of compromise (Bohm, 2004). Because negotiation in its many forms (competitive, cooperative, analytical, truth seeking) often operates on the principle of

trade-offs, it necessarily functions within asymmetries of power (Bohm, 2004). In this respect, negotiation tends to serve the interests of the few, those who have the most political, economic, cultural, or symbolic leverage and power (e.g., the stakeholders of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act or those who use the voices or ideologies of dominant culture to leverage what is common or legitimated in the curriculum). This type of communicative exchange is single-voiced (monologic), in the sense that it regulates, restricts, and closes off dialogue. Bakhtin (1986) therefore, maintains that any attempt to finalize dialogue is antidialogical.

On the other hand, it is important to understand that negotiation, as posited by Bakhtin, whether focused on the meaning of language, text, art, or identity position, comprises an ongoing process in which people affirm, renounce, participate in, and resist dominant discourses. In Peter M. Senge's (2004) account, "as members of modern society, we all participate in creating the forces that give rise to what exists, both what we value and what we abhor" (p. xiii). Indeed, if people are constantly implicated, knowingly or unknowingly, in centering and de-centering hegemonic discourses, Bakhtin's theories allow us to see ourselves as moving beyond notions of "negotiation" that posit entirely coercive, or entirely free, acts of communication (excessive monologism and excessive dialogism, discussed shortly). In fact, there are no such clear distinctions. Similarly, critical feminist and postcolonial theorists have argued convincingly that relationships between the oppressors and the oppressed are neither straightforward nor demarcated; instead, they are complicated and blurred by issues of gender, religion, age, ability, class, and nationality (Bhabha, 1994; Butler, 1997b; Said, 1979; Shohat & Stam, 1994; Spivak & Harasym, 1990).

Dmitri Nikulin's book *On Dialogue* (2006) explores dialogue as the condition of Being. Although problematizing Bakhtin's theories, Nikulin comments that his own book evinces Bakhtin's "unique touch and presence" throughout (p. viii). For Nikulin, the main function of dialogue is not to create meaning. Though meaning can be created in the process of dialogue, he reminds us that, as Plato's work often shows, conclusions ("truths") are rarely shared by or accepted by all interlocutors (Nikulin, 2006). Similarly, Bakhtin's theories advance the argument that "truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (PDP, 1984, p. 110). Implicit in this statement, is the supposition that "truth" is relational and socially constructed. In other words, no individual (e.g., teacher or student) can be the sole source of knowledge, and likewise no theoretical paradigm (e.g., Marxism, Formalism, postmodernism), nor can she or he be the single holder of truth. As I have argued throughout this study, Bakhtin insists that truths are meant to be questioned, responded to, improved upon, and not simply extorted, charted, or declared unconditionally or universally true (Emerson, 1999). Matusov (2009) observes that we cannot simply teach that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Only a linear, stable, and passive encounter with knowledge produces universal truths. Put another way, "two hungry cats plus two fat mice, would produce only two satisfied animals at the end, thus  $2+2 = 2$ " (Matusov, 2009, p. 107).

Additionally, Nikulin contends that dialogue's principal role is not the rhetorical one of persuading others or of winning an argument for the purpose of validating one's assertions, personal self, or ego (Nikulin, 2006). Is it misguided, then, to use dialogue as a device to persuade students to adopt assertions ("truths") that are necessary for socially

responsible teaching and learning? Correlatively, in his discussion of Socratic dialogue, Bakhtin writes that in its early period, Socratic dialogue was not rhetorical but dialogic (PDP, 1984). Socrates did not claim to possess “irrefutable truths,” nor did he expound “ready-made ideas (for pedagogical purposes)” (PDP, 1984, p. 110). Socratic dialogue, Bakhtin states, “had not yet ‘degenerated’ into a question-and-answer format” (PDP, 1984, p. 100). I argued at the outset of this study that classroom discussion in public schools is rarely dialogic. And, though in some cases highly prescriptive educational practices have been modified by the introduction of other approaches, teacher–student communicative patterns typically remain based on meeting predetermined curricula objectives. This is especially evident with curricula designed to train students to perform well on tests defined by question-and-answer schemas. For example, Initiation Response-Evaluation (IRE) and Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) both result in dialogue that is predictable, narrow, and designed to recall or revoice information. This type of dialogue, in turn, is used to evaluate students’ knowledge (Alexander, 2005b; Cazden, 2001, 2003; Lefstein, 2006).

Furthermore, Nikulin is clear that it is not necessary for dialogue to result in a compromise between opposing positions (negotiation). Dialogical communication (e.g., the SPU encounters) does not take consensus as a goal; rather, it elucidates and even embraces *dissensus*, or difference of opinions and disagreement. In this way, “every interlocutor retains his position and attempts to clarify (and possibly modify) it for himself, and, at the same time, for the other, thus also clarifying the other’s position for himself and for the other” (Nikulin, 2006, p. 143). Dialogism assumes that self–other relations and knowledge are not isolated but are simultaneously interdependent and

individual (autonomous communion). Diversity and difference are necessary for defining each other but only insofar as people preserve their independence and do not come to hold a single worldview or to promote the same discourse as authoritative (PDP, 1984). Diversity and difference are especially significant for socially responsible teaching and learning. In sum, if dialogue is not the same as discussion, debate, or negotiation (Bohm, 2004), if it does not create meaning in the form of universal “truths,” and if it is not a rhetorical device to persuade others or to reach consensus (Bakhtin, 1986; Bohm, 2004; Nikulin, 2006; Matusov, 2009), what is its function? What is the function of dialogue in relationship to pedagogy?

### **Dialogue as an Instructional Method: An Instrumental Approach to Dialogue**

Burbules explicitly addresses dialogue in relationship to education and teaching; therefore, his work is helpful in elaborating on the question of how dialogue functions in relationship to pedagogy. Unlike Bohm (2004) and Nikulin (2006), Burbules (1993) does not dismiss the dialogic potential of certain types of dialogue for teaching (discussion, debate, negotiation, and rhetorical persuasion). Throughout the present study, following the work of Bakhtin, I have argued for a dialogic (ontological) understanding of language and Being. Burbules theories on dialogue provide an opportunity to examine a non-ontological conception of dialogue, a paradigm that is prevalent in public schools. The work of educational theorist Eugene Matusov (2009) represents a challenge and an alternative to dialogue as an instructional method. Burbules is aware and cautious of the risks involved in using dialogue for instructional purposes (i.e., of using an instrumental

approach to dialogue, to developing certain skills, or to achieving given goals). I extend this critique by juxtaposing Burbules' and Bakhtin's works.

In *Dialogue in Teaching: Theory and Practice* (1993), and *Theory and Research on Teaching as Dialogue* (2001), Burbules introduces four types of communicative actions (conversation, inquiry, debate, and instruction) based on two distinct types of dialogue or dialogic situations: convergent and divergent. Dialogue considered convergent is referential or teleological, in that those engaged in it assume a specific epistemic end point, and it is resolvable into a consensus around a correct response (Burbules, 1993). Divergent dialogue, according to Burbules, the kind expressed by Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, is a practice in which "each statement ... is *irresolvable plural*" (1993, p. 111, my emphasis). Burbules's ideas concerning convergent and divergent ways of knowing resonate with Bakhtin's conception of meaning-making as an ongoing process, meant to center and decenter authoritative discourses (heteroglossia). Burbules analyzes these concepts in relationship to how dialogue-as-conversation, (inclusive of inquiry, debate, and instruction) could be used in the classroom.

### **Dialogue as Conversation (Inclusive-Divergent)**

According to Burbules, the primary goal of dialogue-as-conversation is to achieve understanding, that is, to develop a common language with the partner in dialogue. In conversation, as in dialogue, an understanding the other person is achieved through a process of interpretation and translation (Burbules, 1993). These communication processes are necessarily incomplete and imperfect. Thus, common ground does not refer to a merging of the interlocutors' experiences, or as Burbules puts it, a transformation

from “A to B” (Burbules, 1993, p. 114). For Burbules, conversation is divergent in the sense that self and other do not merge. Discussants do not try to eliminate the differences among each other. They do not seek correct or specific answers and outcomes; instead, the overarching goal is one of shared understanding and connected knowing. Bakhtin makes a related point, when he asks:

In what way would it enrich the event if I merged with the other, and instead of two there would be now only one? And what would I myself gain by the other’s merging with me? ... When there are two of us, then, what is important is ... not the fact that, beside myself, there is one more person of essentially the same kind (two persons) but the fact that the other is for me a different person. (A & H, 1990, pp. 87–88)

What Bakhtin emphasizes in this quote is that subjectivity is relational (dialogic). However, he also suggests that this interdependence does not do away with difference. Bakhtin’s architectonics of Being (I-for-myself, I-for-others, the other-for-me) posits the notion that separateness (not merging with the other or otherness), and relationships based on difference (and otherness), are critical for internalizing the self, for defining each other, and for advancing dialogic or counter-point relations and interactions (ontological). Additionally, Bakhtin observes that, though selfhood and otherness are interdependent—that is, we become ourselves in relation to the other—the self is not reducible to the other (PDP, 1984; SG, 1986). In a dialogic exchange, therefore, there is no synthesis or merging of the self and the other into a single being or language, or merger from “A to B,” in Burbules’ formulation.

**Dialogue as Inquiry (Inclusive-Convergent)**

Burbules (1993) discusses five closely related possibilities for dialogue-as-inquiry: analysis of an issue or question with the expectation of finding a solution to it, problem solving, working collaboratively to reach political consensus, coordinating actions to arrive at a common purpose, and adjudicating moral differences or disputes [e.g., reproductive rights or gun control] to achieve reconciliation (Burbules, 1993). Dialogue as inquiry may initially be divergent, if an individual is open to embracing alternative views and various articulations of these views. However, the eventual objective of dialogue-as-inquiry is convergent. In fact, according to Burbules what characterizes these five types of dialogue is the desire to arrive at a single interpretation or answer to a particular problem agreed upon by all (Burbules, 1993). Burbules is aware that dialogue-as-inquiry in its embrace of a unitary answer threatens the very condition of dialogue. Nonetheless, he posits that dialogue-as-inquiry is necessary in the pursuit of knowledge, a position he argues is particularly important in education (Burbules, 1993). Bakhtin, though, decried any practice or action that threatened the dialogic conditions of language and culture. He exalted difference, open-endedness, and incompleteness. From the perspective of dialogism, dialogue, is neither unified nor replicable (simply repeated).

**Dialogue as Debate (Critical-Divergent)**

Burbules (1993) writes that what dialogue characterized as evincing a probing and challenging spirit is properly understood to be debate. Debate is not about understanding a person or position, finding a common language, answering a question, arriving at a final answer, or reaching a consensus. Debate is an oppositional communicative exchange;

however, under the right circumstances it can operate within a structure of cooperation (i.e., playing by the rules) and respect (Burbules, 1993). What Burbules finds educationally beneficial about debate is twofold. First, participants are pressed to articulate and support their arguments clearly and thoroughly. Second, in putting their best arguments forward, participants can achieve “a clearer understanding, of the issues at stake” (p. 119). In so doing, Burbules contends, that discussants have the opportunity to build advocacy skills, which can be used for individual or social empowerment.

On the other hand, in accordance with Bakhtin (1984), Bohm (2004), Nikulin (2006), and Matusov (2009), Burbules cautions that dialogue-as-debate has the potential to be antidialogical when debate turns argumentative, intolerant, or personal, and when manipulation and selective use of information is used for the sake of winning a point or gaining control. In such a case, dialogue-as-debate impedes the creation of new insights and discourages and silences participants. For the same reasons, and here Bohm (2004) and Bakhtin (1984) would agree with Nikulin (2006), dialogic exchange is opposite to “eristic disputations” or argumentative rhetoric, insofar as these verbal interactions are usually a means to an end, and as such usually serve a specific power interest (Nikulin, 2006). Matusov (2009) supports a process of argumentation that is dialogic, an approach (*dialogic pedagogical argumentation*) that pushes past oppositional communicative exchanges, the traditional models of debate.

### **Dialogue as Instruction (Critical-Convergent)**

Burbules discusses two dialogical methods intended for instruction or for achieving particular learning goals: the Socratic Method and the Reciprocal Teaching

Model (RT).<sup>1</sup> Concluding that dialogue and dialogic relations are at the core of both of these pedagogical practices, he adds that when guided within a dialogical structure, meaning—a consensual, non-manipulative, non-obfuscating, non-demoralizing, and unrestrictive atmosphere—the Socratic method, and other “directive types of teaching” (lecturing and showing) are valuable teaching tools (p. 120). The give-and-take interaction (question-and-answer format) between teacher and student of Socratic dialogue, he argues, gives educators insights into students’ learning processes. For the student, this interaction is an opportunity to make conceptual connections and generate new meaning (Burbules, 1993). On the other hand, Burbules suggests, that compared with non-dialogic teaching, dialogic teaching approaches such as the Reciprocal Teaching (RT) method and Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky was highly influenced by Bakhtin’s theories), “involve a much more complex process of modeling, scaffolding, questioning, and providing feedback through a close, ongoing interaction between teacher and student” (Burbules, 1993, p. 124)—a practice that the present study views as aligned with the creation of dialogic encounters. Because, as Patti Lather (1991) points out, the task of the teacher, is not to impose meaning on the student’s educational experiences but is instead to help students make sense of “contradictory information, radical contingency, and indeterminacies” (p. 119).

In sum, Burbules (1993) argues that dialogue—whether it is through conversation, inquiry, debate, or instruction, and regardless of whether it is convergent or divergent, inclusive or critical—must be considered within the context of pedagogy. Burbules (1993) contends, “it leads to an impoverished conception of dialogue, and pedagogy, to assume that there are no contexts in which dialogue as instruction might be appropriate”

(p.126). Indeed, though certain genres can be dialogic or monologic, to decide in advance what types of dialogues will be validated or invalidated is an antidialogical move in itself. In *Journey into Dialogic Pedagogy*, Eugene Matusov (2009) makes a distinction between what he identifies as an instrumental approach to educational dialogue and a dialogic or ontological approach to dialogue. Influenced by Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, Matusov argues that "an ontological approach to dialogue calls for practices, and especially education, to make dialogicity its primary guiding principle" (p. 5). An instrumental approach, on the other hand, privileges dialogue for instructional purposes or dialogue-as-instruction, a position that according to Matusov is supported by Burbules (1993, 2004). In following section, I reflect on the limits and possibilities of dialogue in my own teaching in relationship to dialogism.

### **The Meanings and Functions of Dialogue in Relationship to Pedagogy:**

#### **Findings, Implications, Limits, and Possibilities**

Echoing Judith Butler's theories of counter-speech, educational theorist Megan Boler (2004) contends that, within the university classroom, students' articulations of damaging views can, if dealt with ethically, create opportunities for individuals who have been harmed and silenced by dominant ideologies to talk back and by doing so develop critical agency (Boler, 2004). I hold the same position, and concur with Boler's argument that "educators must commit to being allies to marginalized voices within their classrooms" (Boler, 2004, p. 4). As an educator who is committed to social justice, I bring certain values and political commitments to the classroom. The counter-hegemonic voices that I bring into the classroom (in the form of constructs, readings, assignments,

discussions, and visual culture, as described in my syllabus) might, in fact, challenge more often than confirm students' world-views and/or assumptions.

Burbules (2004) observes that the commitments of socially engaged teachers often abbreviate what is discussed, and which views are granted a “respectful hearing” (p. xxvi). Working from the theories of Paulo Freire, Ronald David Glass (2004) has written extensively on the potential of education as a practice of freedom. He concludes that educators consistently silence certain voices and amplify others through the selections they make for the curriculum, the structure of assignments and assessments, and the overall classroom environment (Glass, 2004). The question arises as to whether I am silencing students' voices through my teaching practices. Does the support of heteroglossic articulations and interests constitute privileging one “truth” or discourse over another? If so, am I using dialogue as rhetorical device to persuade or to indoctrinate my students according to beliefs that I personally find emancipating. These are certain beliefs that, frankly, some students in my courses have met with various acts of resistance, ranging from disapproving silence to outright rejection. For me, interrogation and contestation of controversial issues are processes that are needed for dialogic teaching and learning. Accordingly, I encourage students to raise questions, voice reservations, and discuss disagreements in relationship to course content through written journals and during class discussion. There have been occasions when students' dissenting voices have openly and categorically condemned difference and diversity in a highly negative way—a position that in my teaching experience is most often used to support what students identify as conservative political and religious worldviews.

As part of my commitment to socially responsible teaching, I select course content that both focuses on issues inhering in diversity and difference and offers ways to critically analyze the power structures that create social inequality. For me, interrogation and contestation of controversial issues are processes that cannot be dispensed with if dialogic teaching and learning is to take place. Yet, as I work to fulfill this idea of socially responsible teaching, a central question arises: As part of my commitment to democratic dialogue, do I have the responsibility to passively listen to voices in the classroom that manifest dominant ideology? Glass (2004) asks the same question, and answers with a resolute, no. Specifically, in Glass's view, students who express hegemonic ideology "in effect silence subaltern or counter hegemonic voices that have already been silenced by ideological structures imposed on the poor and the working class, people of color, and women, for example" (p. 18). In light of this, Glass (2004) suggests that it is sometimes necessary to "mute" or "selectively silence" particular dominant discourses (p. 20). A similar conclusion can be found in Boler's (2004) proposal that "an affirmative action pedagogy seeks to ensure that we bear witness to marginalized voices in our classrooms, even at the minor cost of limiting, dominant voices" (p. 4). With Boler (2004), Burbules (2004), Glass (2004), and Matusov (2009), I hold the opinion that any expression of racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, or ableism in the classroom, must undergo critical analysis within that classroom.

Though I hold that one must not respond passively to a climate of hate, affronting students from an authoritative position creates an environment that closes down communication and reduces, rather than enhances, the students' willingness to participate. I remain highly skeptical of any pedagogical practice, as Burbules (2004)

argues, that would deliberately “silence” (p. xxxviii) or “mute” (p. xvii) the voices of students. In fact, giving priority to social justice over dialogue, whether to “give” voice to or “silence” certain opinions can create serious pedagogical, ethical, and political problems (Burbules, 2004; deCastell, 2004; Jones, 2004; Matusov, 2009).

A dialogic or intra- and inter-personal approach to education is not possible without reciprocity, which I briefly discuss through Bakhtin’s concept of addressivity and answerability. Addressivity and answerability are mutually constituted. A pedagogical relationship based on addressivity and answerability entails a complex process of negotiation between the teacher and student. For example, when the teacher (author) constructs an utterance (curriculum), he or she presupposes the student’s (addressee’s, co-author’s) response. Thus, the utterance is created in response to the teacher’s perception of the student’s conceptual horizon, i.e., the student’s needs, likes and dislikes, experience, and knowledge. Additionally, addressivity entails anticipating the force that the student’s responses will exert on the text. Consequently, addressivity and answerability can be used as a method to structure content; however, more importantly, it is a specific way to respond and relate to students ontologically. Stated differently, the instantiation of addressivity involves locating the anticipated expectations and responses of students and guiding the curriculum with that presumed audience in mind. This requires a willingness to modify, rectify, or completely change for oneself, as much as for students, what is being taught and how it is being taught. Answerability entails ethical responses to students that ultimately have an impact whose voice gets heard in the discourses of school.

I return to the notion of dialogue to trouble the disjuncture between “silencing” student’s voices and “enabling” the voices of those who are marginalized by social inequalities. A dialogic view of language emphasizes that silence is a form of communication. Non-verbal communication has the potential to be dialogic or monologic, depending on the contextual particularity, intonation, body language, and other factors that enable each utterance. From a Bakhtinian perspective, silence is not the opposite of speech. This is a view consistent with Western cultural bias evidenced in the privilege given to speaking over listening, to written over oral communication, and to sound over silence. It is also important to point out that dialogue is not value-free (Boler, 2004; deCastell, 2004). Dialogue makes very dissimilar demands on different individuals, e.g., men and women, dominant and marginalized students, parents, and teachers (Boler, 2004; Glass, 2004; Jones, 2004; Li Li, 2004). Furthermore, words “are not a neutral media that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker’s intentions; [this media] is populated—overpopulated—with the intentions of others” (DiN, 1981, p. 293). Words should belong to no one. Thus, making space for discourses in the curriculum that emphasize counter-hegemonic perspectives and critical analysis of dominant ideology, though important, in and of itself does not necessarily either silence or empower students (Boler, 2004; deCastell 2004; Glass, 2004; Jones, 2004).

In consideration of monologic (i.e., authoritative) and dialogic (e.g., internally persuasive and interilluminating) discourses, Bakhtin demonstrated that there are two potential drawbacks to creating internally persuasive discourse: excessive monologism and excessive dialogism (DiN, 1981; Matusov, 2009). Excessive monologism presumes that through the epistemological and institutional authority of my position as the teacher

that I have the power to silence students' voices. Excessive dialogism suggests that this same position accords me the power to give voice to and empower those who are marginalized and disempowered. Excessive monologism and excessive dialogism are uncritical and dichotomous; one posits the authority figure to be wholly powerful, the other, sees this figure as wholly powerless (DiN, 1981; Matusov, 2009).

The ideas of Berlak (2004), Jones (2004), and deCastell (2004) are significant to a consideration of uncritical reflections on dialogue and relationships of power. For example, Berlak (2004) argues that it is quite possible for students to read stories of oppression and tyranny, and remain at a comfortable distance because they read these events, "as exaggerations and exceptions, and narratives of justice as the rule" (Berlak, 2004, p. 142). In my teaching experience, in addition to detachment, students react with anger and disbelief, and at times shame when they read stories of oppression. Jones's essay (2004) "The Talking Cure: The Desire for Dialogue" is especially illustrative of the tensions and risks associated with incitement to dialogue between dominant and marginalized students (also see Desai, 2000, 2003; Ballengee Morris, 2003; Ballengee Morris & Stuhr, 2000). Jones describes the discomfort and anxiety that majority students expressed in her courses, when Maori students, most likely strategically, chose to maintain silence in the classroom (Jones, 2004). Jones observes that dialogue among individuals situated within asymmetrical power relations:

Raises the troubling possibility that dialogue may be understood as sort  
colonization where the powerful require the subordinate to open their territory for  
exploration (so the powerful can hear the marginalized voices). Armed with this  
new knowledge, the white knowers will, we are meant to believe, run a more just

world. Many indigenous and colonized people would attest to the failure of this strategy. (Jones, 2004, p. 66)

In keeping with Jones's position, deCastell contends that in reality, no matter what arguments educators assemble, teachers, and in particular female and minority teachers, are seldom able to quiet speech that is both aggressive and ignorant, when uttered by dominant voices (2004). Art educator Dipti Desai takes this argument one step further. Reflecting on her personal teaching experiences, Desai (1997) observes that the "voices of white students often silence [her] as person of color" (Check, Deniston, & Desai, 1997, p. 50). In an article published in *The National Education Association (NEA) of Higher Education Journal, Thought & Action*, a group of scholars make a related argument. These authors write that ethnicity and race play an important role in how faculty of color, in predominantly White classrooms, experiences the classroom environment<sup>2</sup> (Tuitt, Hanna, Martinez, Salazar, & Griffin, 2009). Jones (2004) and deCastell (2004) conclude that it is unlikely that producing more speech or the "talking cure," can "fix" anything, especially not power imbalances and social injustice (deCastell, 2004; Jones, 2004).

From the perspective of dialogism, voice is not given but posited. This means that voice is realized in the process of active and responsive understanding. In relationship to my own voice, I must register a paradoxical position. In advocating for those who are marginalized in some way, I am attempting to shift relations of power, which necessarily makes what I am doing a personal and political endeavor. However, such an agenda does not furnish an excuse for creating a classroom that engages teacher and students in anything other than respectful, ethical, and dialogic or counter-point relationships

(Burbules, 2004; Glass, 2004; Matusov, 2009). At the same time, though being self-reflexive requires constantly monitoring oneself in order to decenter one's authority, it does not mean that one should become paralyzed by the process. In the words of Glass (2004), "education as a practice of freedom recognizes that perfection is impossible. It requires neither tragic suffering nor heroism" (p. 24). For me, decentering authority does not mean shying away from asking hard questions, analyzing controversial topics, or challenging social practices complicit with oppressive norms. In fact, doing so, is necessary to stimulate learning environments that forge connections and relationships across difference in which multiple worldviews and differing perspectives are understood and valued. From a dialogic perspective, it is equally important to draw attention to convergences and similarities explicit in self-other relations or the simultaneity of interdependence and individuality (autonomous communion). Mindful of the theoretical and material limits of dialogue, I remain optimistic about the potentiality of dialogue for pedagogical endeavors. Rather than thinking about the effectiveness of dialogue, I argue that dialogue can be understood in terms of a process that needs to be critically interrogated or realized in the practice of active and responsive understanding.

### **The Antialogicity of Consensus and Awakening the Student's Internally Persuasive Discourses**

These considerations bring me to another issue: consensus. One of the first things I ask students to consider is the fact that I do not expect them to agree with me or to replicate my views. My experience has been that such expectations are not only unlikely to be fulfilled, but they are also undesirable. They impose desired learning outcomes that

are necessarily predetermined and monologic, and thus undermine the student's agency. Yet, "becoming educated means joining the consensus. Thus, the goal of education to reduce gaps among consciousness is antialogic" (Matusov, 2009, p. 4). One way to work with this potential tension is for educators to help students develop their own unique professional voices. The goal is for students to take response-ability, i.e., to confront and dialogize (test) their emerging positions in relationship to other voices. Matusov (2009) refers to this practice as *dialogic pedagogical argumentation*, a very different method from the argumentative schemas, skills, and practices of debate, critiqued by Bohm (2004) and Nikulin (2006). From the perspective of dialogic pedagogy, addressivity entails responding to professional discourses, e.g., the separation of church and state, and analyzing the role of the teacher in education. A pedagogy that is grounded in dialogism entails answering personally and un-indifferently, not through abstract ideas, not through intransigent or resolute opposing views, for example, a zero sum paradigm, but through an agonistic process of dialogization.

One way to answer personally is for students to be ontologically engaged or provoked (Matusov, 2009). In other words, issues, dialogues, discussions, and assignments need to be relevant to the students' worldviews and lives. Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005) affirms, that "teaching and learning are always in the making ... this unpredictability ... creates the opportunity for a pedagogy in which we come to know the world by acting in it, making something of it ... and responding to what our actions make occur" (p. 56). When educational content is designed to privilege one voice and one outcome, educational content is finalized, and ontological involvement is unattainable.

Maintaining that the context of dialogue is “boundless” (SG, 1986, p. 150), Bakhtin contends that the most valuable characteristic of dialogue is its open-endedness (DI, 1981; PDP, 1984; SG, 1986). Thus, any attempt to finalize dialogue is antidialogical. This is not to say that in dialogue, there can be no results. Actually, in dialogue there are multiple outcomes. It does not mean that in dialogue respectful efforts to communicate with and understand the other are or should be abandoned. Bakhtin argues that dialogue has no teleology, meaning: it does not have a clear beginning, nor should it have a clear or final ending. Therefore, dialogism stakes its position on attempts to let go both of the need for consensus and of many educators’ tendency to pursue predetermined outcomes in their teaching practice.

### **Reflections**

In reflecting on the research findings in relationship to pedagogy, I have argued that it is not the role of the teacher to impose ideologies or knowledge on students, and neither is it their place to convince students of the rightness of any given position certain through the institutional, epistemological, personal, and professional authority inhering in the role of the teacher. What is important from a dialogic point of view of communication is not to privilege dialogue as an instructional method to improve, create, or transfer knowledge, but to awaken the student’s internally persuasive discourse (Matusov, 2009). I have proposed that excessive monologism and excessive dialogism obscures relationships of power. Authoritative discourses cease the dialogic function of dialogue and impede internally persuasive discourse or dialogic communication and ways of being.

Bakhtin makes a distinction between monologic (i.e., authoritative) and dialogic (e.g., internally persuasive and interilluminating) discourses. In sum, authoritative discourse produces inflexible boundaries between the discourse of the speaker and the discourses of others. Authoritative discourse demands that individuals either categorically accept a certain discourse or categorically reject it (e.g., the “you are either with us or against us” thesis). Though its purpose is to control all other discourses, authoritative discourse, try, as it might, cannot shape them. But, essentially inert and unequivocal, authoritative discourse cannot be shaped by other discourses or by the context in which it exists. Presented as the definitive and irreversible truth, it cannot be shaped by other discourses—at least not without becoming something else.

In contrast, dialogism, considered in the last section of the present study through the concept of internally persuasive discourse, enters into dialogue with the discourses of the other—dialogues that are engaged in a struggle with other internally persuasive discourses—to center and de-center the prevailing hegemony (DiN, 1981). Internally persuasive discourse or dialogism is dynamic, in that it continuously responds to its changing context and grows in meaning. “Its creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words, that it organizes masses of our words from within, and does not remain in an isolated and static condition” (DiN, 1981, p. 345). Dialogism acknowledges the unfinalizability of the self and of the other, and the relational concept of the self, in which subjectivity is achieved by forming relationships with others. Moreover, it understands that the words of others are closely interconnected with one’s own words (DiN, 1981). Dialogism is based on answerability, which “responds first and foremost to the social other, rather than

responding to or through an abstract system of ethical rules to be followed” (Nealon, 2003, p. 141). In this study, I have proposed that a critical understanding of the complexities and ambiguities inherent in dialogue be undertaken. Instead of sustaining the dichotomy between instrumental, epistemological, and ontological stances on dialogue, a dialogic position of communication and Being indicates the necessity to attend to the oscillating, active, and interconnected relationships between them. I conclude this study with the recommendation that pedagogical encounters should attend to the dialogicity of the triple-pronged construction of the utterance in its contextual specificity: to the speaking subject, the addressee’s responsive understanding, and the relationship and territory shared between the two.

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1. The Socratic Method is an inductive model of teaching based on questions and answers. Probing questions are asked to draw the contradictions, fallacies, and assumptions that may inhere in the argument or position of a partner in dialogue. The objective is to assist and guide the discussant, so that s/he can work out her/his own understanding of the problem at hand and deduce the “truth” or “correct” answer (Bakhtin, 1981; Zappen, 2004).

The Reciprocal Teaching Model (*RT*) designed by Anne Marie Palincsar and Anne Brown at Michigan State University and the University of Illinois, respectively, is structured around four strategies (prediction, question generation, summarization, clarification) and two central strategies: modeling and scaffolding. *RT* is designed to promote teacher and student dialogue, peer learning and cooperation, shared social context, and active learning (Palincsar & Herrenkohl, 2002).

2. Frank Tuitt, Michelle Hanna, Lisa M. Martinez, María del Carmen Salazar, and Rachel Griffin (2009) argue that students’ perceptions of the professor’s social identities (i.e., race, ethnicity, and gender) have a direct impact in terms of how majority students accept or reject class topics, accept the professor’s authority, question the professor’s expertise and effectiveness, and how and the extent to which they show respect to the professor. These authors propose that “faculty of color indicate that some White students were more ready to: critique their classroom effectiveness; challenge their authority; have lower level of respect and report their concerns and critiques to department chairs” (Tuitt, Hanna, Martinez, Salazar, & Griffin, 2009, p. 12). Also see, Katherine Grace Hendrix (Ed.), *Neither White Nor Male: Female Faculty of Color* (2007) and Lucila Vargas, *Women Faculty of Color in the White Classroom* (2002).

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## Appendix A

### Abbreviations of Works by Bakhtin

Sources are listed in order of appearance in the body of this text

- PDP Bakhtin, M. M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* (Ed. and trans. C. Emerson). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- SG "The Problems of Speech Genres." In SG& (1986), pp. 60–102.
- SG& *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*.  
Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). *Speech genres and other essays* (V. McGee, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- DiN "Discourse in the Novel" (1981), in *DI*, pp. 259–422.  
Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (M. Holquist, Ed., C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- DI* *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*.  
Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (M. Holquist Ed., C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- M: FM *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*.  
Bakhtin, M. M. & P. N. Medvedev. (1991). *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (A. J. Wehrle, Trans.). Baltimore & London. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

- V: MPL *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language.*
- Bakhtin, M. M., & Voloshinov, V.N. (1973). *Marxism and the philosophy of language* (L. Matejka & I. R. Titunik, Trans.). New York: Seminar Press.
- EaN “Epic and Novel: Toward a Methodology for the Study of the Novel” (1981), in DI, pp. 3–40.
- A & A *Art and answerability: Early philosophical essays.*
- Bakhtin, M. M (1990). *Art and answerability: Early philosophical essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (V. Lipaunov, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- A & H “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,” in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, pp. 1–3.
- TWRPA: *Toward a philosophy of the act*
- M. M. Bakhtin, (1993). *Toward a philosophy of the act* (V. Liapunov. Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- FTC “Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel: An Essay on Historical Poetics” (1981), in DI, pp. 84–258.
- PND “From the Pre-history of Novelistic Discourse” (1981), in DI, pp. 41–83.
- RAHW *Rebelais and His World* (1968).
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1968). *Rabelais and his world*. Cambridge, Mass: M. I. T. Press.
- BSHR “The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel)” (1986). In SG&, pp. 10–59.

- TRDB           “Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book” (1984). Appendix 2 in  
PDP, pp. 283–302.
- N70–71.       “From Notes Made in 1970–71.” In SG&, pp. 132–58.

## Appendix B

### Implied Consent Interview(s)

#### (No Signature-Letter Format)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear [Title] [Name]: \_\_\_\_\_

I am currently doing research as a doctoral student in art education and women's studies at The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA. My doctoral study explores how particular works of art open us spaces that lead to critical thinking and dialogue or dialogic encounters.

The focus of my study is *The School of Pan American Unrest* (2006). In this project, Pablo Helguera, a performance artist born in Mexico and based in New York, revisits Simón Bolívar's (1783–1830, Venezuela) dream of independence, unity, integration, and solidarity in the Americas (Pan America).

Your opinion about this project is important to me. I am interested in an open-ended interview/conversation that is conducive to dialogue and offers me possible access to your ideas, thoughts, and reflections about *The School of Pan American Unrest*.

You must be at least 18 years old to be interviewed. I will use an audiotape recorder to conduct the interview. Completing the interview will take 20 minutes to 1 hour, depending on your time. If you prefer, we can schedule a phone interview, meet at a location and time that is convenient for you, or schedule an e-mail interview. Your confidentiality will be safe to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. Results will be used in the writing and analysis of my dissertation.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may skip any question you do not want to answer. Your participation in this research is confidential, all your answers will be kept confidential, and your name will not be disclosed. By completing and returning this form, you have indicated your consent to participate.

For more information about the research, you may contact Adetty Pérez de Miles at (814) 441-1174 or by e-mail at [Adetty@psu.edu](mailto:Adetty@psu.edu). To learn more about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the Penn State Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775 (IRB # 22775). You may also call this number if you cannot reach the researcher or wish to talk to someone else.

Thank you in advance for your help.

## Appendix C

### Implied Consent Interview(s)

#### (Signature-Letter Format)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear [Title] [Name]: \_\_\_\_\_

I am currently doing research as a doctoral student in art education and women's studies at The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA. My doctoral study explores how particular works of art open us spaces that lead to critical thinking and dialogue or dialogic encounters.

The focus of my study is *The School of Pan American Unrest* (2006). In this project, Pablo Helguera, a performance artist born in Mexico and based in New York, revisits Simón Bolívar's (1783–1830, Venezuela) dream of independence, unity, integration, and solidarity in the Americas (Pan America).

Your opinion about this project is important to me. I am interested in an open-ended interview/conversation that is conducive to dialogue and offers me possible access to your ideas, thoughts, and reflections about *The School of Pan American Unrest*. You must be at least 18 years old to be interviewed. I will use an audiotape recorder to conduct the interview. Completing the interview will take 20 minutes to 1 hour, depending on your time. If you prefer, we can schedule a phone interview, meet at a location and time that is convenient for you, or schedule an e-mail interview. Your confidentiality will be safe to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. Results will be used in the writing and analysis of my dissertation.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may skip any question you do not want to answer. Your participation in this research is confidential; however, in the event of publication or presentation resulting from the research, you will be personally identified with insights you gave in reference to the artwork under study. However, information that you request remain confidential during the interview will not be disclosed. Every attempt will be made to maintain sensitivity to the data and the analysis of the material. By completing, signing, and returning this form, you have indicated your consent to participate.

For more information about the research, you may contact Adetty Pérez de Miles at (814) 441-1174 or by e-mail at [Adetty@psu.edu](mailto:Adetty@psu.edu). To learn more about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the Penn State Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-

1775 (IRB # 22775). You may also call this number if you cannot reach the researcher or wish to talk to someone else. Thank you in advance for your help.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### Research Recruitment Letter

Pablo Helguera  
New York, NY

March 7, 2006

Dear Pablo Helguera,

I am currently doing research as a doctoral student in art education and women's studies at The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA. My doctoral research explores how particular works of art open up spaces that lead to critical thinking and dialogic encounters. My research is guided by Mikhail M. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, critical pedagogy, feminist and postcolonial theory, and visual culture perspectives.

Simone Osthoff, who is a member of my dissertation committee, and an acquaintance of yours, has encouraged me to pursue my interest in your artwork. I am specifically interested in your upcoming piece, *The School of Panamerican Unrest* or *Escuela Panamericana del Desasosiego*. I would like to ask several questions via email in relation to the artwork. In addition, I would like to ask you for an in-person interview.

If you are willing to participate, I have included as an email attachment a copy of the informed consent form for you to review. If you agree to the interview, I will contact you to schedule the interview, which will last approximately 1–3 hours. I will ask you to sign the informed consent form when we meet for the interview. During the interview, I will ask questions to gather general information about the artwork that is not available in print. I am also interested in having an open-ended conversation with you about your ideas, thoughts, and reflections in relation to the artwork aforementioned.

Last, since you are visiting the Penn State campus on March 27–28 as a presenter for the Anderson Endowment Lecture Series, Spring 2006, I was wondering if it would be possible to schedule the interview sometime during your visit.

I will call you next week to ask if you received the letter, if you had an opportunity to consider the request, and if you have questions or concerns. Thank you for your time and I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Adetty R. Pérez de Miles, Adetty@psu.edu  
PhD Candidate of Art Education & Women's Studies

The Pennsylvania State University  
Art Education, School of Visual Arts  
207 Arts Cottage, University Park, 16802  
Encl: Informed Consent Form

## Appendix E

### Implied Informed Consent Form

The Pennsylvania State University

#### **Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research, IRB #22775**

**Title of Project:** *Spaces of Dialogic Encounters*

**Principal Investigator:** Adetty R. Pérez de Miles  
207 Arts Cottage  
School of Visual Arts  
University Park, PA 16802  
(814) 441-1174; Adetty@psu.edu

**Advisor:** Dr. Karen, Keifer-Boyd  
210 Arts Cottage  
School of Visual Arts  
University Park, PA 16802  
(814) 863-7312; kk-b@psu.edu

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of the study is to explore how particular works of art open up spaces that lead to critical thinking and dialogue or dialogic encounters. The focus of my study is Pablo Helguera's art project, *The School of Pan American Unrest* (2006).

1. **Procedures to be followed:** I am asking that you consider participating in a series of one to three interviews. If you agree to be interviewed, I will schedule the date, time, and place accommodating your schedule and needs. Follow-up interviews will be at the discretion of the researcher and interviewee, and will most likely take place via email and/or telephone. Notwithstanding, your confidentiality will be safe to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. I will use an audiotape recorder to conduct the interviews. A series of questions to gather general information about the artwork that is not available in print (i.e., where, when, how, with whom, what next) will be employed. Additionally, I am interested in open-ended interaction between the researcher and interviewee. Open-ended interviews are conducive to dialogue and offer me possible access to your ideas, thoughts, and reflections that relate to the two artworks aforementioned.
2. **Benefits:** Benefits to individuals may result in the reflective process and sharing dialogue with others. Benefits to society include that this research might provide a better understanding of how art can be a catalyst for civic dialogue and might help

educators plan conversations (ways of knowing, theory, coalitions, activism) that encompass and promote complex dialogues about visual culture within and across geographies and cultures. Additionally, this research might provide a better understanding of how art can open-up spaces to learn and create meaning about the intersections of gender, class, race, privilege, and responsibility in society.

3. **Duration:** The initial interview will take 1–3 hours. The duration of follow-up interviews are at the discretion of the researcher and interviewee.
4. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is confidential. However, in the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, you will be personally identified with the artwork under study. You may request specific information remain confidential during the interview and therefore, not published or presented in the public domain. Every attempt will be made to maintain sensitivity to the data and the analysis of the material.

The Principal Investigator will be the only person that will have access to the recordings. On the tape, the date and time, and names of the artist will be included. During the interviews, you may ask that something is not included in publication, or hit the tape recorder pause button to convey something you would like to describe, but you do not want recorded. The tapes will be stored and secured in my home office. When I have completed the transcriptions, the tapes will be erased 5 years after the completion of my dissertation.

If the occasion arises and with your permission, I will photograph with a digital camera you and your artwork for presentation and publication. In addition, you have the option in the consent form to grant my request to reproduce “select” images for presentation and publication. By “select” images, I mean images of the two art works under study, whose copyrights you own, and in turn, give me permission to reproduce for publication.

***Please indicate your preferences by placing your initials by each section:***

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission to be audio taped.

\_\_\_\_\_ I ***do not*** give permission to be audio taped.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission to be photographed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I ***do not*** give permission to be photographed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for my artwork to be photographed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I ***do not*** give permission for my artwork to be photographed.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for select images of my artwork, whose copyright I own, to be reproduced for presentation and publication.

\_\_\_\_\_ I ***do not*** give permission for select images of my artwork, whose copyright I own, to be reproduced for presentation and publication.

5. **Right to Ask Questions:** To ask questions about this research, contact Adetty R. Pérez de Miles. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or you have concerns or general questions about the research, contact Penn State University's Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.
6. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at anytime. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent for your records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Person Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix F

### Itinerary of the SPU's Scheduled Discussions

The following itinerary is published in Pablo Helguera's, *The School of Panamerican Unrest Project* Website, available at <http://www.panamericanismo.org/itinerary.php>.

<p><b>New York</b></p> <p><b>Americas Society, May 5th, 6pm</b></p> <p><i>Trans-specific Americas: Site-Specificity and Art outside of Art</i></p> <p><b>New York</b></p> <p><b>Ellis Island, May 6th, 1pm</b></p> <p><i>Inauguration Speech</i></p>	<p><b>Anchorage</b></p> <p><b>University of Anchorage, Alaska, May 21st</b></p> <p><i>Culture, Place, and Memory</i></p> <p>Host/Moderator: Dr. Charles E. Licka</p>	<p><b>Vancouver</b></p> <p><b>Helen Pitt Gallery, May 26th</b></p> <p><i>Canadian Questions</i></p> <p>Hosts: Carey Ann Schaefer and Lance Blomgren</p>	<p><b>Portland</b></p> <p><b>Portland Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA)/Pacific Northwest College of Art, May 30th</b></p> <p><i>The Portland Liberty Bell: Questions on Civil Disobedience</i></p> <p>Host: Kristan Kennedy</p>
<p><b>Calgary/Banff, Alberta</b></p> <p><b>Mountain Standard Time Festival, June 3rd</b></p> <p><i>Political Art: Persuasion of Alienation?</i></p> <p>Host: Gale Allen</p>	<p><b>Chicago, Illinois</b></p> <p><b>Museum of Contemporary Art, June 10, 2pm; Hyde Park Art Ctr, June 11, 4pm</b></p> <p><i>The Chicago Eccentrics</i></p>	<p><b>Austin, Texas</b></p> <p>This SPU stop has been canceled. The project will go directly from Chicago to Tempe.</p>	<p><b>Tempe, Arizona</b></p> <p><b>Arizona State University Art Museum, June 20th</b></p> <p><i>The Borders of Empathy</i></p> <p>Host: Marilyn Zeitlin</p>
<p><b>San Francisco</b></p> <p><b>Museum of the African Diaspora, June 24th</b></p> <p><b>In collaboration with the Mexican Museum, San Francisco</b></p> <p><i>Black Americas</i></p> <p>Hosts: Lizetta LaFalle-</p>	<p><b>Los Angeles</b></p> <p><b>Institute of Cultural Inquiry/ LaXart, June 27th</b></p> <p><i>Lost Causes</i></p> <p>LOST CAUSES FOR LA</p>	<p><b>Mexicali</b></p> <p><b>Centro Estatal de las Artes, June 28th</b></p> <p><i>Histories from two cities: Mexicali/Tijuana</i></p>	<p><b>Lagos de Moreno, Jalisco</b></p> <p><b>Casa de la Cultura/House of Culture, July 1st</b></p> <p><i>Microhistorias</i></p> <p>Host: Carlos Helguera</p>

Collins and Tere Romo			
<p><b>Toluca</b></p> <p><b>Universidad del Estado de Mexico, July 3rd</b></p> <p><i>Suave Patria: instituciones y símbolos nacionales</i></p> <p>Host: Luisa Barrios Honey Ruiz</p>	<p><b>Mexico DF</b></p> <p><b>Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, July 7th / Casa del Lago, July 8th</b></p> <p><i>Here is where we happened to live</i></p> <p>Host: Laboratorio Curatorial 060</p>	<p><b>Puebla</b></p> <p><b>Zócalo de Puebla / Puebla's Main Square July 11th (TBC)</b></p> <p><i>Food and Art</i></p> <p>Host: Xavier Recio</p>	<p><b>Mérida, Yucatán</b></p> <p><b>Centro de Artes Visuales, Mérida, July 14<sup>th</sup></b></p>
<p><b>Ciudad Guatemala</b></p> <p><b>Centro Cultural de España, July 17th</b></p> <p><i>Unrest</i></p> <p>Host: Rosina Cazali</p>	<p><b>San Salvador</b></p> <p><b>Escuela de Artes Aplicadas, July 20th</b></p> <p><i>The Uses and Misuses of Art</i></p> <p>Hosts: Hugo Martínez Acuña (School of Applied Arts), Jose Rodríguez (artist)</p>	<p><b>Tegucigalpa</b></p> <p><b>Mujeres para las Artes, July 23</b></p> <p><i>Topic TBA</i></p> <p>Host: Bayardo Blandino</p>	<p><b>San José</b></p> <p><b>TeoRética/ Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo, July 27</b></p> <p><i>Paradise Practices</i></p> <p>Hosts: Ernesto Calvo/ Tamara Díaz/ Virgina Pérez-Rattón</p>
<p><b>Maracaibo</b></p> <p><b>Sede por anunciar/Site TBA</b></p> <p><i>Topic TBA</i></p>	<p><b>Panamá</b></p> <p><b>Sede por anunciar/Site TBA</b></p> <p><i>Transition Stories</i></p>	<p><b>Caracas</b></p> <p><b>Periférico Caracas / Galpón, August 8<sup>th</sup></b></p> <p><i>Populism as an cultural revolution.</i></p> <p>Hosts: Jesús Fuenmayor; Luis Romero</p>	<p><b>Bogotá</b></p> <p><b>Universidad de los Andes, August 12 Museo Quinta de Bolívar</b></p> <p><i>Beautiful Tragedies: Art and the rhetoric of the image</i></p> <p>Hosts: Maria Clara Bernal, Carolina Franco-García</p>

<p><b>Quito</b></p> <p><b>FLACSO, August 19</b></p> <p><i>Immigration</i></p> <p>Host: Maria Rosa Jijón</p>	<p><b>Lima</b></p> <p><b>Centro Cultural de San Marcos, August 24 (TBC)</b></p> <p><i>Topic TBA</i></p> <p>Hosts: Luis Hernandez Zapatero; Gustavo Buntix</p>	<p><b>Asunción</b></p> <p><b>Sede por anunciar/ Site</b></p> <p><b>TBA</b></p> <p><i>Tema por anunciar</i></p> <p>Host: Adriana González Brun</p>	<p><b>Montevideo</b></p> <p><b>Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo-Centro Municipal de Exposiciones (Subte), Aug 30 (TBC)</b></p> <p><i>Art, Literality, and Literature</i></p> <p>Host: Alicia Haber</p>
<p><b>Buenos Aires</b></p> <p><b>7 Sept, 7pm, Fundacion Start, Bartolomeo Mitre 1970, 5to piso, 1B</b></p> <p>Director/Moderator: Jennifer Flores Sternad</p>	<p><b>Santiago</b></p> <p><b>Sept. 10 (TBC)</b></p> <p><i>Academic Variations</i></p> <p>Host: TBA</p>	<p><b>Sao Paulo</b></p> <p><b>Sao Paulo Sept 15 (TBC)</b></p> <p><i>Conclusions</i></p>	<p>Return</p> <p><b>New York</b></p> <p><b>Museo del Barrio (Date TBD)</b></p> <p><b>Fecha TBC</b></p> <p><i>Epilogue</i></p>
<p style="background-color: black; color: black;">[REDACTED]</p>	<p style="background-color: gray; color: gray;">[REDACTED]</p>	<p style="background-color: gray; color: gray;">[REDACTED]</p>	<p style="background-color: gray; color: gray;">[REDACTED]</p>

## VITAE: ADETTY PÉREZ MILES

[adetty@psu.edu](mailto:adetty@psu.edu)

### EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Art Education and Women's Studies, Dual Title Degree, The Pennsylvania State University (2011)  
MAE, Master of Art Education, Texas Tech University (1996)  
BFA, Bachelor of Fine Arts & All-Level (PK–12) Teacher Certification, Texas Tech University (1994)

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Lecturer, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX (2010)  
Instructor, Women's Studies, Pennsylvania State University (2007–2005)  
Instructor, Art Education, Pennsylvania State University (2005–2002)  
Art & Art History Instructor, Lubbock High School, Lubbock, TX (2001–1996)

### GRANTS/AWARDS

Alumni Association Dissertation Award, Pennsylvania State University, Graduate School, Competitive University-wide Award (2006)  
Recommended *National Fulbright* grant to study in Mexico City, Institute of International Education (2004)

### PUBLICATIONS

Pérez Miles, A. (2010). Dialogic Encounters as Art Education. *Studies in Art Education*, 51(4) 375–379.  
Pérez Miles, A. (2008, February). Everything Modern Artists Needed to Know They Learned in Kindergarten. *School Arts* (Digital Edition). Retrieved from, <http://www.davisart.com/Portal/SchoolArts/SADefault.aspx>  
Pérez Miles, A. (2006). Lourdes Portillo's Señorita Extraviada, Hegemonic Power, Gender, and Murder (Feminicidio) in the Mexico–U.S. Frontera. *International Journal of Education through Art*, 2(1), 5–15.

### PROCEEDINGS

Pérez Miles, A. (2006). Interdisciplinary Dialogues in Art Education: Gender & Feminist Studies. *Proceedings at the International Society of Education through the Arts*. Polytechnic Institute of Viseu in Viaseu, Portugal.  
Pérez Miles, A. (2004). Mining and Bridging Post-Structural Theory in the Analysis of the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands. *Proceedings at the International Society of Education through the Arts*. Gazi University in Istanbul, Turkey.

### PRESENTATIONS

Pérez Miles, A. (2007). *Negotiating Meaning Through Video-Making: Pedagogical Strategies to Explore Women's Experiences*. National Art Education Association, NYC.