

Diffraction Transcultural Entanglements and Teacher Education

Abstract. In this intra-view three women of color scholars attempt to diffract transcultural entanglements and teacher education through the framework of transculturality. We have attempted to model our discussion after the work of Michalinos Zembylas and his colleagues who explore education, posthumanism, and colonialism through a reflective discussion. Our intra-view is enacted through silent discussions in which we all independently write about specific events and respond to each other's comments and by engaging in live Zoom discussions. We share our transcripts in this paper. As educators we recognize the need to learn "how to live with cultural difference in a world in which mobilities are both valued and also characterized by their uneven and unequal consequences" (Rizvi, Beech 2017, p. 126). We explore transcultural events that have been discussed through online news outlets and social media and discuss the significance of those events and how to use transculturality in meaningful ways. We do not make any 'conclusions'. Because we find the concept of transculturality so generative, we offer readers a snapshot of our diffractive conversations. There is significantly more to our discussion than we are sharing, however the materiality of the print world that we take up space enforces us to share only a portion of our ponderings.

Keywords. Diffraction, transculturality, teacher education, community health, affect theory

Transkulturelle Verflechtungen und Lehrer:innenbildung neu in den Blick nehmen

Zusammenfassung. In diesem Intra-View versuchen drei farbige Wissenschaftlerinnen, transkulturelle Verstrickungen und Lehrer:innenbildung aus transkultureller Perspektive neu in den Blick zu nehmen. Wir haben versucht, unsere

Diskussion nach dem Vorbild der Arbeit von Michalinos Zembylas und seinen Kollegen zu gestalten, die Bildung, Posthumanismus und Kolonialismus durch eine reflektierende Diskussion untersuchen. Unsere interne Sichtweise wird durch stille Diskussionen umgesetzt, in denen wir alle unabhängig voneinander über bestimmte Ereignisse schreiben und auf die Kommentare der anderen reagieren, sowie durch die Teilnahme an Live-Zoom-Diskussionen. Die daraus hervorgegangenen Transkripte sind Grundlage dieses Beitrags. Als Pädagoginnen ist uns bewusst, dass wir lernen müssen, „to live with cultural difference in a world in which mobilities are both valued and also characterized by their uneven and unequal consequences” (Rizvi, Beech 2017, p. 126). Wir untersuchen transkulturelle Ereignisse, die in Online-Nachrichten und sozialen Medien diskutiert wurden und erörtern die Bedeutung dieser Ereignisse und wie man Transkulturalität sinnvoll nutzbar machen kann. Wir ziehen keinerlei ‚Schlussfolgerungen‘. Da wir das Konzept der Transkulturalität für ungemein generativ halten, bieten wir den Leser:innen eine Momentaufnahme unserer diffraktiven Unterhaltungen. Es gibt wesentlich mehr zu diskutieren, als wir hier mitteilen, aber die Materialität der Druckwelt, in der wir uns bewegen, macht es erforderlich, dass wir uns darauf beschränken, nur einen Teil unserer Überlegungen zu teilen.

Schlüsselwörter. Diffraktion, Transkulturalität, Lehrer:innenbildung, Gesundheitswesen, Affekttheorie

1 Introduction

Juneja and Kravagna (2013) remind us that transculturality is a multidirectional process. It is a process of transformation that occurs when cultures come into contact with each other for extended periods. It can be used to understand concrete objects and as an analytical tool (cf. Juneja, Kravagna 2013, p. 24). Transcultural spaces are contact zones; they are spaces where cultures interact, clash, and grapple with each other. There is often an imbalance of power which results in colonization and enslavement (cf. Pratt 1991). Contact zones are also defined by Stewart (2007) as space “where the over determinations of circulations, events, conditions, technologies, and flows of power literally take place” (p. 3). For this intra-view the three of us have come together to discuss specific transcultural events that have occurred in contact zones located in the United States, recognizing this space as an extension of European colonization. We employ the concept of transculturality as an analytical tool to understand social, racial, and political events that relate to teacher education, education, and community across local

and global spaces. We come together to explore the circulations and imbalances of power that are carried, dragged, and welded together within contact zones.

Our grappling with these issues has occurred through the form of an intra-view. We have attempted to model our discussion after the work of Michalinos Zembylas and his colleagues who explore education, posthumanism, and colonialism through a diffractive discussion. We engaged in recorded conversations and silent discussions over the course of eight weeks. During these eight weeks we met multiple times; each time we met for approximately two to three hours on Zoom where we discussed events that centered on teachers, children, and the communities. These conversations made up our recorded discussions. We also took time to engage in silent discussions where we were able to write independently and respond to each other about the transcultural nature of the specific events discussed in our paper. We found ourselves questioning what was happening transculturally and the implications of each event, and we shared a pondering of Juneja and Kravagna (2013) by considering this challenge:

Moreover the challenge now is to find a language to theorize the complex morphology of flows, to supplement macro-perspectives by descending into the thicket of localities – urban and rural, past and present, central and at the margins – in which the dynamics of actual encounters involving a host of actors become more clearly evident and meaningful. (Juneja, Kravagna 2013, p. 26)

The events we discussed appeared in multiple media spaces such as Facebook, Instagram, and online news platforms. These events also carried with them the affects of contact zones. Perhaps the flows of power that carry them can be found in technology, thus responding to Juneja's challenge.

Massumi reminds us that “affect comes flush with the event, in the immediacy of its occurring. But the registering wouldn't be of a transformation if there were not, wrapped in the affect, a sense of the state just left, as well as a sense of the shift in potential left for subsequent events to come” (Massumi 2019, p. 3). We experienced a flood of affects that occurred after each discussed event. We felt hope at times, but also disgust and anger. We were often left still wondering about the complex happenings of each event. Our work grappling with the transculturality of the events discussed in this paper was and continues to be messy. Because the concept of transculturality was so generative, we offer readers a snapshot of our conversation. There is significantly more to our discussion than we are sharing, however, the materiality of the print world that we take up space in forces us to share only a portion of our ponderings. We hope to share the remainder of our

ponderings in another publication. In the next several paragraphs we diffract on how transculturality is entangled in different situations involving schools, teachers, and communities in the US with implications for larger Europe.

2 Intra-view

2.1 Diffraction

Chinyere Harris (CH): Hi everyone. I am really glad that we were all able to spend the past several weeks diffracting on the topic of transculturality, teacher education, and the global community. The concept of diffraction was introduced by Karen Barad. Barad (2014) describes diffraction as

re-turning as in turning it over and over again – iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities (spacetime-matterings), new diffraction patterns. We might imagine re-turning as a multiplicity of processes, such as the kinds earthworms revel in while helping to make compost or otherwise being busy at work and at play: turning the soil over and over – ingesting and excreting it, tunneling through it, burrowing, all means of aerating the soil, allowing oxygen in, opening it up and breathing new life into it. (p. 2)

I am thankful to Rozena for introducing this concept to our space. I feel as if we have been diffracting over the past several weeks about the topic of transculturality and what it means for education both here in the United States and larger Europe.

Rozena Raja (RR): Hi, glad to be here! Yes, I especially appreciate how diffraction offers a tool for engaging in Juneja’s call for transdisciplinary approaches. It is in the *dynamics* of transdisciplinarity that brings about the potency of transculturality’s analytic power (cf. Juneja, Kravagna 2013, p. 27). Also, Juneja’s call for disciplinary expertise across specializations – really knowing the language and ‘culture’ across fields (cf. Juneja, Kravagna 2013, p. 26) seems to point to the need for deep, prolonged and engaged transdisciplinary collaborations for attending to teaching and learning experiences as the complex and entangled phenomenon that they are.

Minerva Francis (MF): I am equally thrilled to share this space with you. As a public health educator diffraction is not a theory known to public health promotion practice, however the concept reminds me about the biopsychosocial model.

Engel (1977) posited the biopsychosocial model offers a more holistic approach to examining health compared to the biomedical model, which he suggests is too reductive to explain “the social, psychological and behavioral dimensions of illness” (p. 379). The biopsychosocial framework, like diffraction, is conceived to account for a variety of perspectives. Some researchers have also suggested that the biopsychosocial model be expanded to include spiritual considerations to truly be comprehensive and all-encompassing of the multiplicity of factors that contribute to health outcomes (cf. Sulmasy 2002). The biopsychosocial approach incorporates a transdisciplinary method to diffract personhood.

CH: Transculturality as a heuristic tool suggests to me that we should be examining how teacher education prepares teachers to engage children in an increasingly diverse world where individual citizens are more vocal about their beliefs, cultural values, and expectations for interaction. This is exactly what is happening in our current world. It feels as if we have more protests, more movements, and people are demanding to be heard.

RR: Chinyere, perhaps what is prompting the rise in movement building is the parallel rise in nationalism, militarism and repression – globally. Appadurai (2006) as paraphrased in Rizvi and Beech (2017) argues that “the capacity of people, images and objects to move rapidly across local and global geographical space has given rise to high levels of anxiety, creating a space in which xenophobic and nativist politics potentially thrive” (p. 126).

CH: Rozena, I agree movement can be a cause, but I think it is one cause of many complex causes. There are so many flows of action occurring in our contact zones. It is important that we consider the cultural, social, and political experiences we create for students and what type of student and *global* citizenry we want to cultivate in classrooms. We can begin this examination by asking pre-service, beginning, and more experienced teachers as well as teacher education programs, communities and families to consider the cultural experiences they will cultivate in their classrooms. James Baldwin (1963) reminds us that

The purpose of education, finally, is to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions, to say to himself this is black or this is white, to decide for himself whether there is a God in heaven or not. To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way he achieves his own identity. (p. 1)

We need teachers who engage students in transcultural thinking across disciplines and spaces. We need teachers who can facilitate the development of cul-

tural competencies in students to be able to interact with individuals with contrasting views. We need students who can contemplate about the state of our transcultural spaces and make informed decisions with the collective in mind. This is not an easy task to accomplish with teachers nor is it something that can be achieved in one conversation or professional development session. I think our response to the question of how to implement transculturality as a heuristic tool will require a “re-turning as a multiplicity of processes” (Barad 2014, p. 2). In other words, diffraction.

I can say that Minerva’s consideration of the biopsychosocial is important too. The application of diffraction and the consideration of the transcultural spaces should also include the biopsychosocial. There is an entanglement of the biological and psychological with the social and pedagogical factors of the classroom. I think that these factors combine to make up the whole student. I think teachers and teacher educators should openly consider the biopsychosocial in the transcultural space.

3 Recorded Discussion

3.1 Video Conversations

- YouTube: Utah Lehi High School Teacher Leah Kinyon 8 17 21 – “Chemistry” teacher

RR: I like how this recording allows us to diffract the question “Is this good teaching?” while illustrating that multiple subcultures can exist within a culture (Lehi, the town in which this incident takes place, is middle class and is 92% white). Here, we see, for example, a subgroup of people within white American culture that deviate from a ‘belief’ in climate change, highly correlated with disbelief in legally mandating masks during the Covid-19 pandemic as well as ‘disbelief’ in the full humanity of LGBTQ+ people. It offers a good example of white culture itself as dynamic, this video being a transcultural ‘object’ (cf. Juneja, Kravagna 2013, p. 5–6). For example, when Kinyon declares: “You can believe whatever you want to believe, but keep it quiet in here because I’m probably going to make fun of you!”, it makes me wonder: Is this expanding ways of knowing, being and understanding? Is it generating criticality, diversity and clarity of thinking, or does it foreclose where it shouldn’t?

CH: Some questions and things that stood out to me centered on the content of her talk and her pedagogy. I think that diffraction enables us to turn and to return

to her pedagogy and what it is that she's trying to say. It opens up a space for us to consider transculturality and her classroom as a contact zone which influences other spaces beyond the classroom. And even though she's dominating the contact zone created in her classroom, I think there are differing opinions. There are her opinions and she's clearly someone who is not conservative. Then there are students, and some of them are conservative and some are not— I feel. I think there is some consideration of the different perspectives and things that people are feeling. However, in this classroom space and with this particular teacher, we mostly see her 'attempting' to dominate the space. I agree that this does bring up the question of is this good teaching? Or does this expand our way of knowing, understanding, criticality and clarity of thinking?

MF: What appealed to me was the number of times the room went silent despite multiple simultaneous conversations. The initial silence occurred when the teacher told her class, "I would be super proud of you if you chose to get the vaccine." After that, however, she adamantly voiced safety concerns about her exposure risk level to COVID-19 but needing to be in the classroom. Although Kinyon did not wear a mask, which may be indicative of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) initially advising that vaccinated people did not have to wear masks, and presuming she was vaccinated. Kinyon told her students, "This is my classroom, and if you guys are going to put me at-risk you are going to hear about it because I have to be here!"

Thinking about contact zones and what Kinyon said about having to be in the classroom, her comment suggested she did not have the luxury of choice to stay home. As a result of Kinyon having to be in-person for work, she wanted to ensure she could preserve her personhood and the health of her family against COVID-19 variants. Thus, Kinyon encouraged her students to vaccinate and turn off Fox News, a media outlet with a reputation for appealing to right-leaning ideological audiences. Being cognizant of the political perspectives of her student's parents, she aimed to assert her autonomy by describing her beliefs. Ultimately, she declared that her students needed to hear the truth and begin to think for themselves instead of listening to and believing their parents. Her personal comments and professional role as a chemistry teacher made me reflect on her pedagogical approach as indicative of her method of communicating with youth.

RR: I recall Kinyon telling her students that "most likely your parents are dumber than you." You know, that's similar to the messaging church and state-sanctioned teachers gave Indigenous American children in the residential schools of the 19th and 20th centuries. "Kill the Indian, spare the man" was an explicitly stated purpose of these boarding schools based on a mission of the 'aggressive civilization'

of more than 150,000 Indigenous children taken away from their families and communities. Recently come to light are the pedagogical practices employed in these schools across North America: Students would be punished for speaking their native language; their long hair, carrying spiritual significance, would be cut, and they were subjected to rampant mental, physical and sexual abuse.

And though I amusedly appreciate Kinyon stating: “I hate Donald Trump. He’s a sexual predator. He’s a literal moron,” I wonder how her choice of words facilitates or stifles the development of critical *political* thinking. It raises, for example, a question about the degree to which we can hold *accountable* Trump and his followers, which we can assume could represent at least some of the “dumb parents” Kinyon refers to. Is she implying that Trump supporters are literal morons, too? Does calling someone a moron too easily remove responsibility (and complicity!) for failing to employ critical, conscientious, and *compassionate* reasoning in their decisions?

CH: I think that that’s a huge question – what is our responsibility? I think a part of the response is the criticality that you just mentioned. As I think about this question, I’m thinking specifically about James Baldwin. He states that it’s about helping students get to the point of where they can think for themselves and live with the answers to their own questions.

Minerva you said that you noticed where there were silences. I didn’t think about the silences initially, but listening to you brings silence to the forefront of my thoughts. I think that the silences bring an affect to the space and allow us to see moments where there is an eruption of noise or some other type of response. Airton (2020) would likely say that this is a way to use one’s “affective barometer of rises and falls in intensity, coupled with an attention to speech and silence” (p. 99). And I am wondering what is in those moments of silence. What do those moments mean? What are students thinking in those moments and how are they responding? Are they responding to what’s being said or are they responding to how it’s being said? I wonder what kind of potentialities the teacher and students are opening in the space as well what type of foreclosures and closures she is creating?

MF: I am also reminded of the work of Lanas et al. (2017) that aimed to express the difficulty in teaching theoretical reflectivity in teacher education, but inadvertently discovered the presence of theoretical diffraction. Taguchi (2005), as cited by Lanas et al. (2017), states there is “the mismatch between what is taught and what is taken up” (p. 530). Theoretical diffraction surfaced during course discussions that influenced Lanas et al. (2017) to redirect the focus from instinctively

asking what is absent to what is being presented. Through fostering a discursive environment with Finnish students about the meaning of education Lanas et al. (2017) identified three themes in student responses: (1) Teachers are expected to maintain an ethos of control for the safety of students; (2) Students see the teacher as a representative of the school, and (3) Prioritizing practice over theory. Although Lanas et al. (2017) article is about students diffracting, we can consider the first and third points. Applying these two points to the Utah chemistry teacher, what example does she set in practice or theory by giving her students an ultimatum to exit her classroom? Additionally, she did not discipline her emotions, control her approach or censure her responses to be politically sensitive or in practice with the conventional norms of an educator.

CH: I think it is difficult to determine with certainty if she prioritizes practice or theory. If I had to guess what assumptions underlie her diatribe, I would say that she is displeased that she has to teach under her current conditions; she is displeased with the general conservative stance. I think her feelings about all of these things fuel her theory. To me this could be a demonstration of theory over practice and not practice over theory. But then again, maybe her practice is to allow theory to dominate. We also see that she is pulled back to reality by ‘something’. And we see this when she says that she could continue to speak about politics, but she does not think students really want her to.

RR: You know, Chinyere, you are right. I was struck by Kinyon’s warning to students that “politics” is on top of the list of “topics to avoid in this class”. I wonder if this outburst could be somehow a recognition that politics is always and forever very much *present* in the classroom *all* the time and is not something that can be left at the door. Once a teacher realizes this, what changes does their teaching demand? How does such a realization (mis)align with the hidden curriculum? Does the teacher become viewed as dangerous?

CH: The teacher straddles two opposing roles between liberation and control. One which allows her to uphold her own identity which may or may not be accepted. And the second which forces her to act within a prescribed regime of knowledge. What are her pedagogical practices enabling her to do and not do? What questions does it raise for teacher education?

Minerva I appreciate your mentioning of the first point of the article which discusses disciplining emotions and focusing on control of the classroom space. I think she was in control for a little bit and then she lost control when she began talking about her family and what being in the physical classroom space meant to her. Maybe she just never had control.

RR: I think it is important to consider that we are looking at just a moment, and not this teacher's entire career, which unfortunately was eventually terminated. To your earlier point, Minerva, about how teachers are positioned as 'frontline workers' during COVID. Teachers are leaving the field in record numbers all across America. The ones that stay report tremendous amounts of stress and even symptoms of PTSD. The term 'teacher burnout' no longer holds weight as locating the brokenness in the teacher. COVID has highlighted and exacerbated the failure of the system to provide its teachers with the resources and supports needed to do their jobs.

Regarding the primacy of theory or practice, I would argue that the two can never be separated. Practice always is informed by theory, or assumptions, we make and carry – whether our own or someone else's (dogma?). And theory or assumptions we make and hold always show up in how we respond to the world around us. We can act without being aware of the assumptions or theories that shape how we're acting. Sometimes we act just to obey and the assumptions and theories are someone else's. Sometimes we hold particular assumptions but for some reason (coercion, fear, etc.) we fail to embody those assumptions in our actions. Human action is always laden with assumptions, theories, commitments and purposes. To teach mindfully calls us to constantly examine the alignment between our assumptions, values, purposes and our practice.

MF: It is possible the teacher was terminated from her position instead of being placed on administrative leave because of the number and class of people that she offended. She offended many groups, including students, parents, and administrators and everyone who loves the 45th President of the United States. There is something called negative reinforcement, and telling students that they are smarter than their parents may have been her method to encourage them to make better decisions. We know her comments positively landed with some of her students as someone is heard saying, "I think I love you even more now!" However, those who may be deemed a privileged class and felt offended by her commentary, is presumably what got her terminated.

RR: I think students *should* be taught to think critically about the ideas of older generations, but this doesn't have to come at the cost of respecting them. As a matter of fact, by calling her students' parents dumber than them, Kinyon is taking away from the humanity of the parents who, like all humans, are likely right about some things and wrong about others. It is a type of dogmatic othering that leads to dehumanizing people wholesale – and encourages a hubristic self-righteousness. I mean, European history is rife with examples of labeling

entire groups of people “dumb” as pretext for exploitation and/or theft of human and natural resources.

I also hear a similar argument in my teacher education classroom: “We are waiting for the older generation of teachers to retire out. Then things will get better.” This belief in our own rightness can be a dangerous thing because when we fail to think critically about our own beliefs and practices we can end up (re)producing inequity. This stance also reminds me of the white supremacist notion often found in, surprisingly, white liberalism of the inevitability of the progress of the white race. This is based on an assumption through which whiteness sees itself as the most evolved/evolving. This line of thought also undergirds white internalized dominance (e.g. Karen) that is explored by Gerth van den Berg et al. (2021).

CH: The idea that knowledge lies in the present and young generation or that certain groups of people are just inherently right, brings many questions to surface for me. Such as is there really enough time for young people to develop the knowledge that is required to construct or improve the world or can they account for the benefit of discarded knowledge held by previous generations? What do we consider old, and what is young? I also wonder at what age we begin to demarcate knowledge. Is it between the ages of 20 and 30? Is oldness something that happens at 30 and up? Or do we disregard knowledge that comes from certain age groups such as 30 to 50? Is that the theory from which we want to base our knowledge and information?

I agree that a lot of what Kinyon says will resonate with many people, but her pedagogy leaves me wondering what her goal is. And is she really achieving it? The quick answer would be no because she’s been fired. She won’t be able to enact her pedagogy again. I’m just curious what she sees as her purpose. Is this really, to her, what it means to be a teacher and what is the experience like with those students today? What happens now?

MF: Well, it depends on where she is at now both literally and figuratively. Scientific discovery is ever evolving. Although the evidence and CDC guidance that she had at the time of the recording regarding COVID-19 has changed her pedagogical approach and conversational boundaries may have also changed.

CH: Perhaps. Finally there’s also this larger question of what is acceptable for teachers to do and to say. This question emerges because this teacher, as we said, has been fired. I personally don’t believe that she should have been fired. I think she was just acting out of her frustration. I think there was a point where she lost control. She started talking about what COVID personally meant to her.

I would ask now, what does the conclusion of her career or disposition mean for teacher education and how our bodies as teachers are governed? And what does this mean for classrooms as transcultural spaces? This woman was in the US; she was in Utah. But what would happen if a teacher or teacher educator in France or Canada decides to speak out and make statements that go against COVID regulations that govern schools, teachers, and teacher education?

4 Silent Discussion

4.1 Transculturality

CH: Juneja and Kravagna (2013) offer a definition of transculturality that allows us to explore what happens when individuals and cultures come together for extended periods of time. Juneja's definition of transculturality also provides us with a framework for understanding transculturality as a multidirectional process.

RR: Yes, transculturality's potency for helping educators to move away from binaries (like identity vs alterity, absorption vs resistance (cf. Juneja, Kravagna 2013, p. 26) reminds me of Braidotti's call to "the end of the self-reverential arrogance of a dominant Eurocentric notion of the human, to open up new perspectives" (Braidotti, Hlavajova 2018, p. 3). As transcultural entanglements become increasingly ubiquitous, there is an ethical imperative (for teachers, teacher education programs, policymakers) to consider, engage, take seriously historically suppressed indigenous ontologies – not through 'cognitive colonialism' – but with ethical intentionality, hesitation and humility (cf. Wu et al. 2018). What does this mean for teaching? What does it mean to end European arrogance and engage 'indigenous ontologies' in the classroom? What kind of instructional standards could be constructed from such aims? And how would they (mis)align with the hidden curriculum of schooling?

MF: Transculturality is all encompassing. The *analytical mode* provides a global holistic view that considers boundaries and surrounding territories (cf. Juneja, Kravagna 2013, p. 27). Transculturality seeks to understand the cultures relegated to the margins in relation to those spotlighted in the mainstream media. Transculturality seeks to explain how variations came before, during and after redistricting voting boundaries, for example. As more people interact or integrate there will be a melding of cultures so nation-states that seek *cultural purity* will have to contend with heterogeneity. Transculturality seeks to develop questions

and answers what is unasked. Transculturality nearly reminds me of the Danish fairy tale *The Ugly Duckling* which destigmatizes perceived difference within a population. In society difference either gets upheld, spotlighted, and promoted or difference leads to subjugation, diminishment, and punishment. Transculturality is like examining a puzzle piece, a piece doesn't make up the whole picture but the puzzle is the sum of its parts. How did that puzzle come to be? Who is interpreting the puzzle? What is the context of that particular puzzle piece? How does that puzzle piece integrate and fit in with its adjoining components? Transculturality is an invigorating concept to analyze and apply across disciplines.

CH: Juneja and Kravagna's conception of transculturality creates a space for us to consider our relations of being and the interactions that occur in our contact zones. Contact zones are comprised of circulating flows of power (cf. Stewart 2007, p. 3). Pratt (1991) also explains that contact zones refer "to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (p. 34). The circulations and flows of power are facilitating the clash of cultures and unequal power distributions that occur in transcultural spaces. I would add that the clashes seen in our contact zones are also the result of our difference in thought about general mental health and physical well-being. There should be space in our contact zones to consider how teachers engage students in discussion around social and political issues that are currently dividing our world. Schools as a transcultural space offer a unique opportunity for teachers, students, and families to engage in a conversation about economic, political, and biopsychosocial issues. One thing we must do is to find a way through and negotiate our differences. Transculturality contextualizes our interactions. It calls attention to the idea that all of humanity is in one shared space and forces us to reckon with each other and our different positionalities.

5 Recorded Discussions

5.1 Media Conversations

- YouTube: Father sues Michigan school district for \$1M after teacher cuts daughter's hair
- YouTube: Father of girl whose hair was cut at Mt. Pleasant school files \$1M lawsuit
- Video: Family says daughter's 2nd grade teacher ripped hijab off her head in NJ school

CH: We have not taken a traditional approach to writing which would point us to a strict outline that we execute in our discussion. Our process of writing this paper has been messy, affective, and involved. We are coming together, right now, in the section to talk about topics that we have not yet discussed. So, we enter this section with some observations of actions that have been inflicted on the bodies of children.

We have seen two videos focused on two little girls of color: one girl named Sumayyah Wyatt, who had her hijab pulled off by a teacher and another student, named Jurnee Hoffmeyer who, against her will, had her hair cut by two teachers and a student. When I try to understand these situations and think about Minerva's question, made off the record, that asks how we can provide safety and protection to ourselves in a meaningful way. I wonder: what does this look like? Seeing these two videos, I began to consider the affects of the body and how in both of these situations the bodies of two young children were attacked and assaulted. People have been talking about and speaking out against these incidents. These incidents have been discussed both locally and globally through different news media outlets online, on broadcast, and on platforms such as Instagram. For me, I think the fundamental issue comes down to who is seen as being worthy of protection. Minerva and Rozena, what are your thoughts about these two situations?

MF: In both cases where the hijab was taken off the head of the second grader Sumayyah Wyatt and in the case of Jurnee Hoffmeyer, whose hair was cut. I cannot help but to think how central our heads are to our bodies. The head is where our brain, a major sensory organ, is located. Reflecting on the anatomical and the physiological considerations I am also thinking about Rozena's off the record comment about the perpetrators' anonymity. I heard the mom of Sumayyah asking, "Who took your hijab off?" as if she almost didn't believe her daughter, but then she went on to talk about the significance of the hijab as not just a religious symbol but as part of a larger lifestyle. The teachers in both incidents got to remain anonymous, whereas the second grader and Jurnee Hoffmeyer didn't receive anonymity but were subjected to a public gaze.

RR: Yes, the anonymity of the offending parties in both of these stories reminds of Zeus Leonardo's analysis of how "whites set up a system that benefits the group, mystify the system, remove the agents of actions from discourse and when interrogated about it, stifle the discussion with inane comments about the 'reality' of the charges being made" (2004, p. 148).

The Muslim mother's statement "She doesn't want to wear her hijab anymore. Being Muslim is not just a religion for us. This is our lifestyle" reminds me of the cultural genocide inflicted on the Indigenous American communities through the residential schools. One of the things that would be done was the cutting of the children's hair, considered sacred. Furthermore, the father of Jurnee Hoffmeyer says that he went through public school and experienced racism and the PTA representative refers to "protected classes". These are all historical realities that haunt our schools. Resisting anonymity of the perpetrators is one way to disrupt the mystification. Furthermore, the President of the School Board Boyd's reference to the haircutting incident as a "distraction" from the "real work of giving these students a world class education to prepare them for college and career readiness" points to the complicity of white supremacy and capitalism.

CH: It's like business as usual.

MF: My curiosity with Sumayyah Wyatt's and Jurnee Hoffmeyer's cases is, how does one determine whether something is motivated by religious or racial bias in the absence of pejoratives? We know implicit bias exists.

CH: I think that's a good question. In both the videos, to me there seems to be a shift. In the first video, the father didn't know if this was about race. In the second video we see he has an attorney and it's very clearly defined that this is an issue of race. And we now have the acknowledgement of protected classes of people. We also have the president of the school board of education who appears to want to move things along. This is something that Rozena brings up. We hear the president of the school board of education state that, "we will aggressively defend against these baseless allegations in court and will not allow this to distract us from our mission to provide every child a world class education that prepares them for college and careers". Now there are a few emerging questions which ask if this is really about race, is this an example of implicit bias, or is this a way to keep white supremacy as business as usual. I agree with both of you. As I watched these videos, it felt that we were on a moving trajectory, where we can see all of these events play out over time. Hopefully as these events continue to play out, we will receive answers to our questions. And we will continue to diffract on new emerging questions.

6 Intermission

Our call to action is to consider taking up transculturality and diffraction as heuristics to attend to the health of our society and teacher education. Thus far, we

have shared our ponderings and wanderings on a few transcultural entanglements that helped us to think more deeply about education broadly, and teacher education specifically. In this intermission between timespacemattering, we are left with the following question: How can transculturality make teacher education a more dynamic field and break the boundaries of what it means to be in the world with difference?

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