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Permalink

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Journal

Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 48(3)

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Publication Date

2017

Peer reviewed

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Orellana, Marjorie Faulstich. "Solidarity, Transculturality, Educational Anthropology, and (the Modest Goal of) Transforming the World." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (2017): 210-220.

This essay originated as the Council of Anthropology and Education presidential address, delivered at the CAE Business meeting in the fall of 2015. I found myself completing revisions of it in fall 2016, in the days following the U.S. presidential election. The essay explores two constructs that I have pondered in different ways, both in my current work as an applied educational anthropologist (of sorts), and some thirty years ago, when I identified principally as an activist and a teacher. These twin constructs - *transculturality* and *solidarity* - take on new urgency in the current polarized political climate. I am honored to have six esteemed colleagues as respondents who will extend the conversation.

Transculturality

First, let me unpack the notion of transculturality. As anthropologists who take a processual view of culture (González, 2005), some might wonder at the idea of putting “trans” in front of the word that is at the heart of our field. There are similar debates among sociolinguists about the notion of “translanguaging.” (See for example Garcia & Wei, 2013.) Isn’t it just the nature of culture, and language, to change over time - to ignore the borders that people construct and defend? Aren’t we just talking about *culture*, and *language*?

Still, the prefix “trans” has some power of its own. It reminds us that things are always in motion, not fixed. It defies the binaries that bind our thinking. It suggests the possibility of moving beyond what currently exists, into something we perhaps cannot even imagine.

Transculturality is not really a new term, but its meanings have shifted over the years. The Cuban scholar Fernando Ortíz first introduced the term to Anthropology in 1940, in his book, *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar* (Ortíz, 1995). Looking at what was happening in Cuba at the time, Ortíz defined transculturalism as the “reinventing of a new common culture” based on the intermingling of different peoples. His was a hopeful stance on culture blending and the new hybridities that can emerge when borders are crossed.

In his introduction to the 1995 Duke University republication of Ortíz’ book, Fernando Coronil notes that the pre-eminent anthropologist at the time, Bronislaw Malinowski, wrote the introduction to the original 1940 version. In that introduction, Malinowski praised Ortíz’ use of the term “transculturation” and vowed to use it in his own future work “constantly and loyally,” while acknowledging its paternity. But in fact, Coronil points out, Malinowski only used the word twice in his subsequent career. The term was not taken up into the field of Anthropology until very recently. It is now used in rather different ways, and with virtually no acknowledgement of its founding father.

In the contemporary era, when words with the “trans” prefix are burgeoning, the concern seems to be less with identifying emergent phenomena, and more on understanding *movement within* metaphorical borderlands. Pennycook (2006) for

example, talks about “transcultural flows,” defining these as “ways in which cultural forms move, change, and are re-used to fashion new identities in diverse contexts.” Guerra (2007) speaks of transcultural *repositioning* as rhetorical moves that people engage in as they move both within and across cultural contexts. Stockhammer (2012) directly challenges the notion of hybridity, suggesting “transcultural” as an “entanglement” more than a flow. Pratt (1991), who does build on Ortíz, reminds us that in contact zones, cultures “meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (p. 34) under highly asymmetrical conditions of power.

Like these contemporary scholars, I am most interested in what happens *before* any new cultural form coheres and takes form, either as a new hybridity, a mixture, or a knotted mass. In that sense while I recognize Ortiz’ founding definition, I suggest that the interesting part of transculturality lies in the movement itself, both within and across constructed borders - before we have a chance to create new borders that define a new culture in opposition to other things. What do people they learn from movement *within* cultural contact zones (Pratt, 1991), as they bring different world views together, grapple with their differences, and/or “translate” between them??

Being “in the middle”

Now let me step back and take what may be a presidential prerogative of beginning with my childhood, in order to explain the emergence of my interest in transculturality. I do this because our childhood experiences shape our work more than we realize, in both direct and indirect ways, and we may gain new insights into

the things we study by considering the earliest inspirations for our inquiries. As anthropologists of our own lives, we built our own “emic” perspectives, and then modified them through experiences that made our familiar lives strange.

My own childhood did not offer me many experiences to develop the kind of rich transcultural competencies that are normative in the new immigrant communities I now study. In that sense I was, arguably, transculturally *impoverished*. I also suffered from the deficit that Luis Moll (personal communication) defined as being “LTEP” - not limited *in* English, but limited *to* English proficiency. Growing up in a largely homogeneous, white, English-speaking, working class suburb of Boston, I had virtually no experiences crossing linguistic, cultural, geopolitical, or other kinds of borders.

Or did I? The homogeneity with which I now view my childhood is really a contemporary adult’s perspective. As a child, I was quite aware of *differences* between families in my community: I knew who was Irish, Italian and French Canadian, the ethnicities that were alive and meaningful in my hometown at a time when whiteness was still being constructed (Jacobson, 1999). Almost everyone I knew was Catholic, but I distinguished my friends by which church they attended, or whether they went to Catholic school or public. I was aware of who lived in small single-family homes like mine, and who lived in two-family units, apartment buildings, “the projects,” or big fancy modern houses on the north side of town. I knew who got free lunches and who carried peanut butter sandwiches wrapped in wax paper and placed in brown paper bags.

Within my own family I also had some experiences that I have come to see as intimately connected to my interest in studying how people see things from different perspectives – a kind of transculturality. I was the sixth of eight children, the third of five girls. Within my family, the emic categories were “the big girls,” “the little girls,” “the boys,” and Margie. This position of being “in the middle” became central to my understanding of myself and motivated my interests in children who are similarly positioned in the middle between cultural worlds (Orellana, 2009).

Growing transculturality as the familiar becomes strange

Childhoods are important not just because they provide a core foundation for our lives that we then somehow leave behind; they continue to shape our ongoing life experiences. In recent work with social psychologist Ann Phoenix, Ann and I analyze four narratives by one adult child of immigrants as she reflects on her experiences as a child language broker (Orellana and Phoenix, 2016). The open-ended narrative interviews took place when Eva was 19, 26, 27 and 33. We identify variations in how Eva oriented herself to her own story; what was salient and invisible in each recount; the values she associated with language brokering; and the meanings she took from her experience. In each interview, Eva seemed to re-interpret early experiences in relation to unfolding life events.

This is one way in which childhood experiences are actively taken into adult lives and integrated into a sense of “enduring self” (Spindler and Spindler, 1992). Reflections on changes across our lives may also foster transcultural capacities: we come to see social processes in new ways as we gain fresh reference points. The

familiar becomes strange, as we reconsider, reinterpret, and reconstruct our own life stories. For example, through her analyses of adults' narratives as they reflected on their childhoods, Phoenix (2011) showed how mixed race families grappled with different logics of race/ethnicity, gender and social class. Their lived experiences led them to deep understandings of intersectionality, seeing race, class, gender and other categories not as interchangeable and equivalent sets of variables, but ones that have different logics and that operate on different levels. This is evident as well in the autobiographies of Barack Obama (1995) and Trevor Noah (2016).

In my own case, I came to understand my large Catholic family experiences in new ways as I grew older and moved away from home both literally and figuratively, in space as well as time. In my hometown, large families were normal: all but a few of my friends and cousins were rooted in broods of six, eight or ten. But like the kids I later came to study, as I moved away from home, I learned to read subtle social cues that revealed what others saw as normal, or strange. I came to expect the slight raising of eyebrows or in-leaning of heads when I mentioned having seven siblings. Moving out into the world led me to see that my family was *not* what Karen Pyke (2000) calls the "normal American family."

Solidarity and the remaking of familiarity

A second major set of formative experiences that I now see as shaping my interest in transculturality comes from the period when I had just left home for college.

Pushing "far" away from the familiar (45 minutes from my town!), I met people from a much wider range of backgrounds than I had known growing up, both in the

college itself, and in the community-based volunteer experiences that I sought out to balance the class-privileged university space that felt so alienating to me. This was followed by further transcultural moves, when I headed west to California after college, secured an emergency credential to work as a teacher, married an undocumented immigrant (or unofficial refugee) from Guatemala, and became intensely involved in what was known as the “Solidarity Movement.” The Solidarity Movement involved a collection of people who were trying to raise awareness of the civil wars that were happening in Central America at the time, and the role of the United States in that region’s history. As North and Central Americans (or so we called ourselves), and as teachers, students, unionists, indigenous activists, church leaders and more, we organized house meetings, walk-a-thons, cultural events and rallies. We spent countless hours in meetings, task forces, and study groups, building coalitions and working together across our many differences. (See Chinchilla et al, 2009; Gosse, 1995; Nepstad, 2007; 2004; 2001; and Perla, 2008 for more information about the Central American Solidarity Movement.)

This leads me to the second construct that is the focus of this manuscript: *solidarity*. The Oxford English on-line dictionary defines solidarity as “the fact or quality, on the part of communities, etc., of being perfectly united or at one in some respect, especially in interests, sympathies of aspirations.”

(<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/184237?redirectedFrom=solidarity#eid>).

Google’s dictionary defines it as “Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.”

(<https://www.google.com/search?q=solidarity&oq=solidarity&aqs=chrome..69i57j>

[69i6012.5599j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](#)). But this wasn't quite how we understood the term at the time. The U.S. Solidarity Movement was about standing with others across lines of difference that would normally divide us. It was about working together across geopolitical, social, cultural and linguistic borders. It assumed a relational stance on the differences, considering how they got constructed through our interconnections – e.g. through the actions of the U.S. government and a long transnational history that had led to the 1980s civil wars. These reconstructed relational narratives were key to the construction of transnational collective identities (Nepstad, 2001) that acknowledged power relations while seeking to transform them. (See Abu El Haj, 2006, for elaboration on a relational notion of difference.)

The philosopher Kurt Bayertz (1999: 3) claims that the term “solidarity” originated in Roman law, as a principle of mutual responsibility for debts “within a family or other community.” He discusses its transformation into a broader notion of fraternity or brotherly love. He also underscores the mutability of its meaning: “The concept of solidarity thus shares the same fate as other central concepts of ethnical and political terminology, namely that of not being defined in a binding manner, and consequently of being used in very different and sometimes very contradictory ways.” Perhaps a core question to consider is what are the boundaries of the family, society, or group within which a sense of mutual obligation is forged? Under what conditions is that mutuality or “groupness” (Hechter, 1988) created? And what does it take to forge wider, broader and more fully encompassing commitments to what Tanaka (2015) refers to as “mutual immanence?”

To forge a sense of mutual obligation among people who are differently positioned – and thus likely to see the world in different ways - seems to demand the kind of transcultural perspective-taking that I have discussed above. The process of working together across geopolitical, linguistic, disciplinary, racial/ethnic, gendered and other differences gives us many opportunities to grow our transcultural competencies. But it isn't easy, and it won't likely just *flow*. If we hope to address global-scale issues, we need to find ways to cultivate a broader and deeper sense of shared humanity.

Growing transculturality by brokering cultural worlds

By 1990, the Solidarity Movement was waning, despite a lack of resolution to the conflicts that fueled it. Simultaneously, I was feeling limited in my power to make systemic change as a classroom teacher. So I did what many of my peers did: I went back to graduate school. It was here that I encountered the work of Shirley Brice Heath, Fred Erickson, Courtney Cazden, Norma Gonzalez, Luis Moll and many other CAE scholars. Their ideas opened new worlds to me. Echoing Gabrielle Oliviera, I distinctly remember the awe I felt when I first came to a CAE business meeting and “stood in the same room with half of my lit review” (Oliviera, personal correspondence, 2015). I never imagined then that I would write a presidential address.

I continued teaching by day, and raising a young child, while taking doctoral classes at night. This required crossing between and sometimes brokering the worlds of parenting, teaching, and academia – a transcultural move of its own sort.

My daughter was two when I went back to graduate school, and I remember very consciously not mentioning that I had a child at home, even when we discussed the infamous home-school divide in educational research and practice (Orellana, 2007). This contributed to my thinking about movement across distinct cultural worlds, and my interest in the work that children do in brokering them.

After graduate school, I spent many years watching and listening as the children of immigrants engaged in and reflected on the complex transcultural work they did as interpreters/translators or language brokers. The linguist Paul Ricouer (2007) describes translation as work with “a double duty: to expropriate oneself as one appropriates the other. We are called to make our language put on the stranger’s clothes at the same time as we invite the stranger to step into the fabric of our own speech.” This is evident in the words of Sammy, a 15-year-old whom I interviewed in Chicago in 1999, whose words have long stayed with me, propelling my interest in transculturality:

Today I was caddying for Mrs. J. She’s pretty nice but a little cocky and uptight. Well anyway it was pretty hot and we were walking to the 10th hole. It’s a pretty large walk so one of the field workers offered to give us a ride. We hopped on and began talking. I translated back and forth. I felt weird though because I felt that Ms. J didn’t really want to talk to him. It made me feel like the guy was thinking of me as a stuck up rich kid. Of course I’m not. It was like Ms. J’s attitude was being shown through my translating.

Sammy's words reveal that he was aware of how he adjusted his speech for different speakers, as he took up their language, speaking for them and to distinct others. He was also conscious of how *he* wanted to be seen by each audience, as he tried "not to seem, or to swing, either way:"

This kind of transcultural perspective taking and metacultural awareness is evident as well in the words of a sixty-eight-year old man (Matt), as he reflected back on his childhood work as a language broker.¹ Matt explained:

I never had any problem with the idea of perspective in, very largely, I think, because of this experience. I mean it would have been available to me to learn anyway just from my life...But that isn't the same as perspective, um, because it's only when you get a di-direct encounter between the two differences and you see the, the reasoning around the same pieces of information is different, that you see that there is such a thing as perspective. That is, that there is a subjective reasoning practice that is particular to the position that people hold and when you see a doctor trying to reason around, or a lawyer, reason, more importantly, around bad news information using a legalistic reasoning. And you can see actually this person isn't being a bastard you know...but he's actually thinking this way but that my

¹ This quote is from an interview conducted as part of Ann Phoenix's ESRC Professorial Fellowship, Award number: RES-051-27-0181. See Phoenix and Brannen, 2013 for more information about this study of narratives of childhoods.

father can't comprehend that. I mean his thinking is just profoundly different but not wrong either.

Matt argues that it is the very work of language brokering that facilitated the ability to see from different perspectives. Both Matt and Sammy were keenly aware of being "in the middle" as they actively mediated between divergent ways of seeing the world.

Ethnographic and interview data like these, revealing the complex metalinguistic and metacultural reflections that are prompted by language brokering, led Angie Shu-Sha Guan, a graduate student in Psychology at UCLA, to devise a transcultural perspective-taking task. This involved asking the young adult children of immigrants to choose one of two culturally-laden options in an experimental scenario. The concern was not with which option participants chose - choices that could be ascribed either to "independent" or "interdependent" cultural values (Greenfield, 1994). Rather, we were interested in participants' responses to a follow-up question: "Could you explain *why someone might choose the other option?*" We scored explanations that revealed an awareness of how cultural values shape decision-making as "high" in TCPT. Through this mixed-methods research we found that language brokering experiences were associated with higher levels of TCPT. Perhaps not surprisingly, experiences brokering cultural perspectives seemed to lead to greater understanding of those perspectives (Guan et al, 2014).

But while some degree of transculturality may be necessary for taking up a stance in solidarity with others, can understanding others' perspectives sometimes get in the way? Do these twin constructs – transculturality and solidarity – sit in

tension with each other? Perhaps solidarity within a group is premised on having an “other” to mobilize *against*. Or could we stand in solidarity with others, speaking up for things we believe in, and still understand why not everyone chooses to stand along with us? Could we hold firm to our own positions, in solidarity with others, without dismissing people who feel differently – even diametrically opposed to us - as automatically or categorically *wrong*? Could we do this while still recognizing the power relations that don’t make all positions equal, or just? These questions take on greater urgency in the polarized nation we are living in today. Ultimately, might transcultural perspective-taking get us further in our aim to truly transform the world – more than simply uniting around some enemy, and forming new forms of “us” and “them”?

Matt’s reflections on translating between his father and a lawyer suggest what is possible. Matt recognized that the lawyer “wasn’t being a bastard,” but that he thought in profoundly different ways than his father did. Matt underscored that *politically* he stood against the lawyer’s position, but he understood where their differences lay. He could separate the person from the position, freeing his energy to focus on his father’s defense. Matt’s capacity to understand the lawyer’s perspective actually *helped* him to better advocate for his father. Transculturality and solidarity worked hand in hand.

Cultivating transculturality in learning contexts

The research I have cited here suggests that some life experiences can facilitate transcultural perspective-taking, and perhaps some kinds of solidarity.

What about educational practices? What would it mean to *cultivate* transculturality and solidarity in schools?

As an applied educational anthropologist, like so many in the CAE family, I don't want just to *study* cultural competencies, I want to have something to say to the educational world about how to cultivate and build on such skills. I have done this in various ways across the years, such as by designing curriculum that recognizes and expands on immigrant youths' everyday language and cultural practices (Martínez et al, 2008; Orellana et al, 2012). Building on a strong history of educational anthropology that highlights the cultural nature of learning (e.g. González et al, 2013; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Heath, 1983; Lee, 2007; Nasir et al, 2006), my aim has been to help educators to see the value of what is learned everyday outside of school, and leverage those competencies for school.

Most recently, I have been focused on a space in between home and school, an afterschool program we call B-Club, which is part of a larger network of Fifth Dimension programs established by Mike Cole and Olga Vásquez (Cole and the Distributed Literacy Consortium, 2006; Vásquez, 2005). It's the direct descendent of a program run by Kris Gutierrez (Gutiérrez, 2016) at UCLA for many years. We're inspired by the work of CAE scholars Lucila Ek and Patricia Sánchez in Austin (Ek et al, 2011), who designed a pedagogy of "cariño" and "acompanamiento, within a "transworld pedagogy" (Flores et al, 2016); we similarly aim to engage what we call a transcultural pedagogy of heart and mind, within a community of learners framework (Orellana 2016; Orellana et al, forthcoming).

Informed as well by the anthropology of childhoods, we take seriously children's viewpoints and agency, considering children's positionality within an adult-centric world. Our program offers a space for undergraduates who are considering careers in education, and for aspiring teachers to see children in complex, respectful ways: as whole human beings and agents of their own lives. We build on anthropological approaches to Teacher Education (e.g. Landes, 1965; Buck & Sylvester, 2005; DaSilva Iddings et al, 2013) by encouraging teacher candidates to think deeply about the cultural nature of learning and of educational practice (Orellana et al, 2016). In the club, we focus on learning through play, and playing with learning. Our practices aim to *cultivate* transculturality, including through reflections on the social processes that unfurl within our own diverse group.

As it has grown over the years, B-Club has become a space where our child participants feel tremendous ownership, and they create activities of their own choosing that morph and change. For example, recently Baby Corazón (a club name and self-selected pseudonym) came into B-Club determined to set up a "salon." She created a display poster of color options and a sign-in sheet for a waiting room, hired staff, and set the fee (one paper dollar, but FREE if customers first went to her friends' scary story center). To ensure that customers could pay, Baby Corazón established a bank that distributed paper money on loan. One of our Teacher Education students tried to exceed the loan limit of \$10; his request for \$11 resulted in him being sent to "jail:" imprisoned within a cluster of metal folding chairs in the middle of the room. This led to a petition to free Roberto from jail, and the creation of new store, where everything was FREE. (It was announce with a sign that read,

“FREE! You can buy anything you want.”) In the course of the play, we asked many questions, trying to understand kids’ understandings of social processes, and to prompt their reflections on fairness and justice. In asking these questions, we were drawing out kids’ understandings of both transculturality and solidarity, and supporting their growth.

One day during this time I came into B-Club and found two second-graders, Cutie Pie and Rain (club names and pseudonyms), running a Talent Show contest. These two fourth-graders sat behind a desk, had our Teacher Education students line up for dance auditions, and scored their efforts. Some of the contestants were summarily dismissed by these young judges; others were selected for the finals.

In an effort to continue the conversation about power relations that had been started around Roberto’s jailing, a group of Teacher Education students and I pressed the girls on their criteria. We staged a mock protest of the scores and challenged the power of the judges. It was playful, but we asserted our dissident voices quite strongly. I was interrupted from these interrogations when I got pulled away to another activity.

A little while later, Cutie Pie came up to me and handed me a piece of paper. Rain was standing nearby, watching as I read their note. It said: “We are sad because it’s just a game Ms. not saying who id is was kind of mean come and talk to us.” A sad face was drawn at the bottom of the page.

The girls were calling me out for being “kind of mean.” They were also inviting me to talk about it. And so I stopped what I was doing and walked over to a bench with the girls and sat down. The girls spoke, telling me that they had found

my approach “rough.” I asked if I could record our conversation so that I could reflect carefully on what they said. This conversation ensued:

Rain: So we get that you’re just playing around and stuff, =like²

CP: =We understand and everything, but, you’re treating us like if we’re adults and big already.

Rain: Like we were just doing this for fun, and we were just trying to be like if we’re actually, like, doing it for real.

Marjorie: And you also said that I treated you, like, asked kind of rough questions?

CP: Yeah, like if we were adults, but we were just playing around, we’re kids, understand.

Marjorie: And it felt like the adults were teaming up against=

CP: =Yeah, and we’re just kids, and just two of us.

Rain: =Yeah, and, you guys are like six of you guys, and you guys are adults, so like, you guys are saying that we get all the power, but we’re just doing it for fun.

I learned a great deal from listening to these girls, and I think there may be some lessons about transculturality and solidarity, for all of us.

The girls’ words revealed to me that in my effort to engage the kids in critical analyses of power relations, I had in fact replicated and reasserted another kind of power: the power of *adults over kids*. Cutie Pie and Rain understood that we were

² = indicates overlapping speech.

“just playing” with them, but felt that we were using our power as adults to squash *their* play. In saying, “but you’re treating us like if we’re adults and big already,” Rain seemed to be saying that it was unfair for us to *pretend* that they had power that they did not in fact have. Sure, we were all just playing, but the playing field was uneven.

Importantly, Cutie Pie and Rain were able to stand in solidarity with each other and work together to call me out on these matters of power. They planned their approach, from the written note to their tandem discussion of their concerns, and seemed to gain strength from their collaboration. They used their unified stance to speak back to my adult power in ways that they might not have had the courage to do on their own. The culture of our club created space for this, as the girls could invoke our collective agreements, the principles that we organize around, which include being respectful, safe, responsible, friendly, and having fun.

At the same time, Cutie Pie and Rain displayed transculturality when they made clear that they understood my intentions. They knew why I did what I did. They “got it.” They spoke from a strong and firm, yet kind, compassionate, and loving stance. Their approach seemed driven by the aim not just of “talking back to power,” but of making a more fair and just community. Indeed, at the end of our conversation the two girls whispered to each other and then came around to my side of the table to give me a big hug. Like the approach that Bryan Brayboy’s six-year-old son took to conflict resolution, as reported in Brayboy’s CAE presidential address in (Brayboy, 2011), the girls wanted to restore good relations, not just push back on me.

On transforming the world

In this essay I have provided a grand sweep of my own journey into and through educational anthropology, from my childhood to my work in the Central America Solidarity movement of the 1980s and on into Academia. I have touched on the 2015 conference theme of “making the familiar strange,” as I considered what people learn from their movement within cultural contact zones across their life span (Pratt, 1991). Highlighting the transcultural competencies that the children of immigrants develop from their work as language brokers, I have considered how educational and cultural practices could better support both transculturality and solidarity.

But what about the “modest” goal of transforming the world? What do the twin constructs of transculturality and solidarity offer us? These questions take on greater urgency, and complexity, in the contemporary sociopolitical context. What lessons can we offer from B-Club, or “CAE-Club” in a time of polarization, retrenchment, and retreat from tolerance and trust?

Certainly, the work we engage in at B-Club, and in CAE, is not the kind of direct, political action that I always assumed was central to transforming the world. Work in small communities like these may seem unimportant or irrelevant in relation to larger contemporary national and global crises: racism, xenophobia, growing income inequality, Climate Change, refugee crises and more.

But local spaces offer rich opportunities for learning *how* to construct and live in the kinds of worlds we hope to see. The *ways* we build community can point

to processes of creating and maintaining a more just, equitable, transcultural and united world. They may provide bottom-up approaches to social transformation during a time when top-down, government-sponsored processes seem to be failing.

In B-Club, we are learning to create a social order that is guided by a set of principles and values: of friendship, respect, fairness, kindness, and having fun. In these spaces participants analyze power relations, and speak up about unfairness from firm, strong and vocal, yet kind, transcultural, and relational stance. Within this space, there is room for people to stand solidarity with each other, when it's important to do so, and room for us to come back together in our larger community of people of many ages, backgrounds, experiences, and social positions.

What will kids like Cutie Pie and Rain will take from their experiences at B-Club, and in the transcultural community they live in, into their own adult lives? I can only imagine what kind of thoughtful civic participants – and skillful ethnographers! - they will become if they continue to cultivate the competencies that they already display. The children of immigrants who negotiate language and culture every day have much to teach us – especially those, like me, who have grown up relatively impoverished in terms of translingual, transnational, and transcultural experiences. They have much to teach a nation that seems so fearful of cultural difference and so unable to see across diverse worldviews.

The 2016 election and its aftermath have presented tremendous challenges to transculturality. We are in a time of regressive politics, and the backlash - or whitelash (Henley & Chalabi, 2016) - that is evident in racist and xenophobic speech and action makes it difficult to maintain a stance of kindness, love, compassion and

understanding. People on both sides of this great divide are entrenching in their positions – seemingly disinterested in even attempting to understand how others see the world. Some calls for empathy, love and understanding are actively being railed against.

Nevertheless, the voices of history reverberate through these polarizations, pointing to possibilities for transcendence. Martin Luther King, Paolo Freire, Thich Naht Hahn, bell hooks, and so many more have argued that love is the *only* force that can cut through hatred. By endorsing *both* transculturality and solidarity, we can “find the love,” identifying points of shared, common humanity with people who think differently than us, while still standing strong for the things we believe in. We can speak back to power by calling on people to rise to their highest selves – and rising ourselves, whether or not others choose to join us. By “going high” when others “go low,” as Michelle Obama called on us to do, we keep our sights on what we want to see emerge. We don’t give any energy to the things we don’t want to foster. We imagine into being something that does not yet exist, nurturing the seeds we hope to grow.

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