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Uplifting the Cultural and Ethical Desires of a Student of Color

Phenomenological Exploration of Marginalized Desires in Teacher Education

Younkyung Hong

Abstract

In this study, I engage in the intercultural phenomenological analysis of discovering and naming marginalized and undervalued desires in a teacher education space. Based on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) conceptualization of desire, I challenge the understanding of desire as an absence or a lack. I focus on an Asian American female student's story that has the power and potential to provoke awareness and prompt further examination and discussion about the complex realities of preservice teachers' learning practices. This study highlights the value of adjusting the understanding of "what is manifested" in a phenomenological study to "what is not manifested" to discover and name desires that were not prioritized and valued in teacher education. By taking this route, this study prompts a critical dialogue about the issues of teacher education in which, though preservice teachers of color's cultural and ethical desires are the strong foundation and drive in their education, relationships, and lives, their expressions have been rather suppressed.

Introduction

Teacher educators have raised concerns about the "overwhelming presence of whiteness" (Sleeter, 2001) in U.S. teacher education programs, which seldom support students of color in building immune systems for the oppression and exclusivity prevalent in institutional and social systems and values (Jackson et al.,

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2021; Kohli, 2014). Despite efforts to recruit and retain more students of color and students from different backgrounds, U.S. teacher education curricula still heavily focus on white female prospective teachers being more aware of their positionality and issues of race and racism (Cheruvu et al., 2015; Philip, 2014). Teacher education structured for white teachers does not "sufficiently address their [students of color's] unique needs as teachers of color," while white students are likely to attain "increased awareness of whiteness and its intersection with their identity and role as teacher" (Philip, 2014, p. 236). It is an ironic expectation on preservice teachers of color that teacher education encourages them to become empowering educators for their own communities and other communities of color, while teacher education provides identical educational experiences for both preservice teachers of color and white preservice teachers. Within the current teacher education system and practice, there is little room for preservice teachers of color to address their needs and claim their desires. This means that preservice teachers of color may downplay their identities, perspectives, and values in the teacher education classroom (Pham, 2018).

In this study, I engage in the intercultural phenomenological analysis of discovering and naming desires that are often marginalized and overlooked in U.S. teacher education. Based on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) conceptualization of desire, I challenge the understanding of desire as an absence or a lack, or its common association with sexual and corporal interest. Tuck (2010) elaborates on Deleuze and Guattari's desire: "desire is not an absence—not something that is blocked or missing, so therefore wanting. It is not a hole, not a gap, not a lacking, but an exponentially growing assemblage" (p. 639). From this perspective, desire can be perceived rather as potential and possibility. A story pivoted on a female student of color, Choua, will introduce the discussion of multiple desires I have come to notice in a justice-oriented educational space. Specifically, what I intend in this study is a twofold process: first, looking at desires as generative forces and flows. Second, finding and discovering multiple desires, especially marginalized and undervalued desires, in the teacher education space and naming them. Considering the multiplicity of desire, I acknowledge that a researcher cannot highlight every desire in one paper. As I zoom in to certain desires and their manifested relationships, other desires and other aspects of desires inevitably remain unnoticed and not discussed. In this study, I aim to provide a clearer description of normalized dominant desires and undervalued desires in the teacher education space.

Theoretical Frameworks

Third World Feminism

It was difficult to decide on a title for this section—whether I would choose "Women of Color in Feminism" or "Third World Feminism". If I were to follow Sauvy's[1] commonly known definition of "Third World," then I am not quite a

Third World woman as a South Korean woman because South Korea would not be considered such due to its political and economic alliance with the U.S. Considering the politics of using the term "Third World," Minh-ha (1989) explains, "Whether 'Third World' sounds negative or positive also depends on who uses it. Coming from you Westerners, the word can hardly mean the same as when it comes from Us members of the Third World" (p. 97-98). Then, she further articulates that naming people and countries as Third World can be an empowering tool that promotes solidarity amongst those people. Minh-ha (1989) writes,

> "Third World" now refers to more than the geographically and economically determined nations of the "South" (versus "North") [. . .] there no longer exists such a thing as a unified unaligned Third World bloc [. . .] What is at stake is not only the hegemony of Western cultures, but also their identity as unified cultures. (p. 98)

Based on this insight, I carefully situate my work with Third World feminism as it is still critical for me to be mindful of other people's differences and any dominant aspects in my positionality as I seek solidarity with other Third World feminists and their works. By utilizing Third World feminism, this study attends to disrupting coloniality, whiteness, and Western/Eurocentric ideologies and logic in feminism.

Lugones (2014) points out that the development of feminisms has not explicitly addressed different social categories—such as race, gender, class, and heterosexuality—with which women of color are associated in how they are racialized and oppressed within specific contexts and power relations. This tendency is also observable in the rising discourse of global feminism and sisterhood, which seems to address various women's oppressions in the world. Instead, this "global" discourse allows white feminists to avoid confronting women of color's and Third World women's inequality issues by emphasizing the common victimhood experience "as woman," despite that women of color's struggles are intertwined with global whiteness, of which any white woman cannot be free from responsibility (de Jong, 2013; Lorde, 1984/2007). Scholars have argued that the monolithic discourse on gender invalidates and silences women of color's oppression because there is little space for various languages to articulate the complex state and condition of being a woman of color in specific contexts (Anzaldúa, 1987; hooks, 1981/2014; Lorde, 1984/2007). This discourse is rooted in the analogies between sex inequality and racial discrimination which still reproduce and perpetuate a limited and distorted understanding of gender (May, 2015; Lugones, 2007, 2014). In this regard, scholars have urged us to reconstruct the homogeneous understanding of gender which is centered around white and masculine norms as it erases a multiplicity of genders in various cultures and races (May, 2015; Lugones, 2014). Lugones (2007, 2010) suggests this work include unraveling functions and the arrangement of gender systems before colonization and modernization, as Western/European forces—such as capitalism—have confined the concept of gender and its functions.

(Re)Writing Her/His-story

The majority of institutionalized ideas and stories have been shaped into theories and histories which were (re)written and documented from androcentric and white supremacist perspectives, and schools have played the role of transmitting this knowledge and these experiences in the name of education (Villegas, 2007). Stories voiced by women and/or people of color were denigrated as "difficult to understand" and "not valid" by men and/or white people, and this pattern has been a vital part of constructing conventions and canons in the U.S. (Minh-ha, 1989). Minh-ha (1989) observes the male-biased culture and systems of academia (in this bias, male is inclusive of all males, but mainly white males), and she provides discussion of anthropological research and understanding man. She articulates that "Anthropology, like all these sciences of man, is, therefore, male-biased not only because 'we who are ourselves men study men', but also because it is gender blind in its pretensions to science" (p. 105). Likewise, the problems of androcentric culture and systems are not only rooted in the fact that male researchers conduct research with their male-biased perspectives, but also it is built upon the traditions which have been oblivious to the dynamics of gender systems and roles and how they operate in the context in which they are studied (Grande, 2018; Sunseri, 2000).

Women scholars have noted that many women had to learn and become familiar with dominant languages and modes of being (e.g., Mason & Ngo, 2019; Minh-ha, 1989; Lorde, 1984/2007; Lugones, 2014). Lorde (1984/2007) shares that people "had to become familiar with the language and manners of the oppressor, even sometimes adapting them for some illusion of protection" (p. 114). However, this process does not stay limited to performing languages and manners; the institutionalization shapes people's "cognitive modality" (p. 79), so it is likely that people have embodied and internalized the dominant values and perspectives while engaging in intellectual works (Lugones, 2014). Thus, transforming institutions into equitable and inclusive groundings requires unlearning patriarchal and white supremacist languages and values while engaging in issues of gender, race, and educational systems (Asher, 2019; Keddie, 2006). The paths paved by a number of women in the world who have relentlessly worked toward rejecting patriarchal and white supremacist institutionalized language imply the need for establishing new systems, operative norms, and cultures (Mason & Ngo, 2019; Minh-ha, 1989). In other words, our work must envision a radical renewal of the basic infrastructure in intellectual spaces (Mason & Ngo, 2019; Spivak, 1978). Mason and Ngo (2019) emphasize that we are likely to be occupied by dominant institutional power if our work remains at surface level "diversity discourses" (p. 17).

Therefore, instead of adding women to the existing history, it is crucial to rewrite the current stories with women's voices and from women's perspectives. This work challenges various ideas and values which have been universally construct-

ed and accepted by men (Spivak, 1978). Spivak (1978) exemplifies this process through re-reading Marx and Freud theories in her article "Feminism and Critical Theory." In her re-reading of Freud's understanding of normality and health, she troubles Freud's notion of pain as abnormality in that it does not account for how pain operates differently for men and women (Spivak, 1978). The rereading and rewriting of canonical literature enable people to cultivate new awareness because they alter patriarchal and homogenous understandings of humans, concepts, and systems (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Minh-ha, 1989; Spivak, 1978). Feminist scholars have shared the pleasure of restoring undiscovered and invalidated women's stories and customs, despite that this mission may take much energy, time, and courage to trace them due to dominant cultures and powers (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Minh-ha, 1989). As scholars have emphasized, this work is not only important in research and institutional education but also is a critical grounding for the reconceptualization of women in legal systems, social movements, workplaces, and many other sectors of society (Cho et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1991; Spivak, 1978).

Philosophical Perspective and Methodology

Intercultural Post-intentional Phenomenology

Post-intentional phenomenology (Vagle, 2018), which grounds this research, is one of the emerging branches of phenomenological approaches. Post-intentional phenomenology opens generative spaces to explore how a researcher is intentionally related to a phenomenon through conceptual dialogues with various philosophies, theories, and ideas. As post-intentional phenomenology is inspired by post-structuralism and post-qualitative inquiry, it disrupts rigid hierarchies and structures which have been constructed as conventions in qualitative research. This empowers researchers to explore and initiate discussions about phenomena, especially those which have been restricted by research traditions and procedures that researchers were expected to follow. Post-intentional phenomenology also acknowledges the impossibility of tracing the beginning and end of each intentionality. In this regard, post-intentional phenomenology encourages a researcher to jump right into the middle of the intentionalities and focus on how a phenomenon is becoming and being rather than expecting clear and linear features of intentional relationships. This aspect of post-intentional phenomenology also allows researchers to start a phenomenological exploration with less burden of understanding the history of phenomenology in the conventional way of tracing its genealogy from Husserl's transcendental phenomenology.

Based on Lau's (2016) work on intercultural phenomenology drawing on Czech philosopher Jan Patocka, I (Hong, 2019) have developed a philosophical and conceptual dialogue with a hope to produce and provoke insight into reading and developing post-intentional phenomenology as intercultural philosophical inquiry. The conversation started with the review and discussion of intercultural

phenomenology based on the understanding that mere comparison of non-European philosophy with European philosophy and identification of common ideas from the comparison hardly overcome the Eurocentric disposition and its role as a philosophical benchmark of validity. The review and discussion of intercultural phenomenology developed by Lau (2016) imply that the intercultural understanding of phenomenology calls for a renewal of ontological and epistemological viewpoints in phenomenology. Patocka's phenomenology not only buttresses a non-egocentric approach to post-intentional phenomenology by pointing out the pitfall of the egocentric worldview that conventional phenomenology has not overcome, but it also paves a way to acknowledging and further articulating the plurality of the lifeworld. Furthermore, it directly challenges the egocentric tendency prevalent in academia and raises our awareness of egocentric calls which reduce a human to a being that controls the world with their power. Based on this philosophical understanding of phenomenology, I take up intercultural post-intentional phenomenology to pay explicit attention to the plurality of the lifeworld and to take this approach as a political inquiry disrupting a Eurocentric and exclusive attitude in human research and teacher education practice.

Methods

Post-intentional phenomenology allows other methodological approaches to join the researcher's exploration of a phenomenon. Vagle (2018) states that "the practice of a post-intentional philosophy is to remain open, flexible, and contemplative in our thinking, acting and decision making" (p. 135-136), meaning that this research methodology encourages a researcher to distance themself from dichotomous thinking and practice. For my phenomenological exploration, I employ discourse analysis and narrative inquiry to better understand preservice teachers' lived experience, which is embedded in their interviews and written assignments, and to include the students' and my own embodied knowledge, which often has not been much articulated or theorized. Discourse analysis provides a theoretical lens to understand language resources that students bring to the course as well as allows recognition of the multiple dimensions that their verbal and textual discourses represent (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 2014). I also call upon the capacity of narrative inquiry to focus on validating and generating questions from individual people's experiences and understanding the stories on various levels (Clandinin & Huber, 2010).

Context for Data Collection

The context for data collection in this study is an introductory elementary teacher education course at a midwestern research university. The course focuses on understanding various aspects of elementary schools, elementary teaching, and the role of the teacher, which include the social contexts influencing students and

their families, as well as educational policies. The university can be considered a predominantly white institution as over 64% of the enrolled students in fall 2019 were white, while 0.27% were American Indian, 10.92% were Asian, 5.95% were Black, 4.83% were Hispanic, 7.36% were international, and 4.41% were multi-racial (UMN Office of Institutional Research, 2019).

Study Participants

Participants for this study consist of the students in the course, 10 students enrolled in Elementary Education 110 (EDU110). The course consisted of two Asian American students, one Hispanic student, five white students, two international students and an instructor, and one student who identified as multiracial.

Researcher Positionality

To describe my identity within the language and categorization commonly used in academia, particularly in the United States, I identify as a middle-class, heterosexual woman from South Korea. I consider myself an educational researcher, teacher educator, and former classroom teacher. In this research project, I was an instructor of the course and also an observer and researcher conducting this study. Regarding the purpose of this study, I am another participant while holding greater institutional power in the course.

Data Sources

Vagle (2018) suggests researchers who study a phenomenon "find the best way to study [the] vibration" (p. 86) of a phenomenon. Keeping this suggestion in mind, I chose interviews, observations, field notes, and course artifacts as data sources.

Post-reflexion. Post-intentional phenomenology considers the researcher an important part of the study regarding how the phenomenon is manifested to the researcher and how they capture the productions. I implemented post-reflexion beginning with the very first step and continuing with every process of this study. Following Vagle's (2018) suggestion for this process, I included sections such as connect/disconnect, assumptions of normality, bottom lines, and moments in which I am shocked (p. 154).

Phenomenological Materials. I gathered materials produced during the course: course artifacts include students' reflective journals and video recordings of the classroom to capture multifaceted classroom interactions (Rymes, 2016). I conducted semi-structured interviews during the following semester of this course, transcribed the audio-recorded interview data using an online transcription service, and reviewed and revised the transcriptions for accuracy.

Data Analysis: Exploration of the Phenomenon

I employed a "whole-part-whole" analysis method throughout this study that consists of holistic readings, line-by-line readings, and subsequent readings (Vagle, 2018, p. 110). In the subsequent reading process, a cross-analysis across participants and materials, I revisited reflexive notebooks, interview recordings and transcripts, field notes, and post-reflexion materials and organized them by tentative themes I named "entrances" to the phenomenon.

I chose a narrative approach—storytelling method—as a way to situate myself and the reader in a phenomenological discussion. This approach helped me illustrate phenomenological examples (van Manen, 2016) with rich descriptions of the meanings through the participants' lived experiences and reflections (Wang & Geale, 2015). Even though achieving truth and reality based on factual data and experiences is not an object of narrative inquiry, I feel obligated to acknowledge and take responsibility for fictional aspects of stories, as they were told and retold throughout various stages in the research process. In this respect, I decided to refer to my participants represented in the stories as characters; their utterances, interactions, and other performances illustrated in the stories correspond with phenomenological materials shared by participants and those I collected. However, I made some changes to the structure of factual components as I wrote the narratives, and it was an intentional choice to construct plots negotiating different temporal locales and spatiality present in the lived experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This change is relevant to what Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe about story and restory:

> We restory earlier experiences as we reflect on later experiences so the stories and their meaning shift and change over time. As we engage in a reflective research process, our stories are often restoried and changed as we, as teachers and/or researchers, "give back" to each other ways of seeing our stories. (p. 9)

Choua's story opens up the analysis of cultural and ethical desires that have been marginalized and undervalued in teacher education. The story is followed by the analysis of the story; through this structure, I aim to provide an in-depth discussion for the story and analysis.

Choua's Story: "You don't always have to gain something back"

Choua is a Hmong American female student. She was in the college of education but had not declared her major when she was taking this course. Choua was interested in resources and programs that support students who may not get enough support from home as well as creating a caring learning environment.

Choua is a good listener, but she does not share her stories much during class. During the interview, Choua shares her ambivalent feelings about sharing her stories in classes, especially when it comes to her cultural background:

> At first, I thought that they are really interested in my cultural background. But sometimes they keep asking me questions that make me think, "Do you really not know anything about this?" I'm like, "Are you really interested in learning about my cultural background?"

She considers it a positive change that people are willing to learn about other cultures, and she wants people to know about her cultural background and experiences. However, Choua also feels frustrated and upset when others try to comprehend her culture from their standpoints and judge her cultural practices and customs:

> It's difficult to explain my culture to others. I also worry about whether I'm correctly representing my culture, you know. Also, I do not always agree with my culture. We also clash in my community, and there are people who do not practice traditional things anymore.

When I ask her what motivates her to be a teacher, she shares in a determined voice, "I really like focusing on giving to the community. It's like taking your time and doing nice things or volunteering for stuff, even though it doesn't really benefit you." Choua considers giving back to the community to be the main motive in her teacher education: "I know some people don't do that. Why do you think, it's like, if you give, [you] need something back? You don't always need to get something back." She is calm, but the melancholy in her voice is still noticeable as she continues, "I feel like people don't care about that anymore. It's like everything you do, [you] have to get something back, and it sucks. You don't have to gain back. I want to change that mindset in education." When Choua adds that something we potentially gain back from giving might be hidden or invisible at the moment, it reminds me of my grandmother who asks me to do good things for other people without thinking of gaining something from the actions. I ask what might influence and motivate her to be this kind of person, and Choua shares that her religious beliefs are an important basis of her moral values: "I practice shamanism, so I believe in spirits and all that. Being a shaman pushes me to really cherish my family because that's what we're all about is family. Even when someone dies, we go visit them."

Mapping Desires

If I had not interviewed her for this project, I would have remembered and interpreted Choua as a student who did not show much interest in developing her learning and engagement in racial and cultural issues in education. Based on my limited understanding of Choua and relying on the given information in her paper, my first reading of this reflection made me wonder why she did not have much to say about racism and inequality in the current public school system as a student of color (Kohli, 2009; Kohli & Pizarro, 2016). Her viewpoint on students of color's efforts in their schooling conveyed in this assignment, as well as in other assignments, also concerned me that Choua believed the myth of meritocracy (Delpit,

2012). During the semester, as an instructor, I focused on encouraging her to reflect and elaborate more on racial and cultural issues in education and society. My comments on her assignments were centered around asking Choua to address more about critical issues we discussed in class as well as correcting some of the words she used, such as "colored people" instead of "people of color." Admittedly, my own teaching philosophy and understanding of what critical engagement could and should be in teacher education were the basis of this pedagogical approach with Choua.

The story above, constructed on Choua's narrative shared in the interview, opens up multiple desires she did not explicitly express during the teacher education coursework. My reading of phenomenological materials produced by Choua completely shifted after I completed this interview with her. With the mixed feelings of surprise, gladness, and regret that I experienced during and after the interview, Choua's desires conveyed in her narrative started manifesting to me. I was surprised to encounter her enthusiastic presence in engaging in a conversation about topics of culture and race which contrasted with her minimal articulation during the semester.

Zembylas's (2007) pedagogy of desire provides valuable insight into understanding multiple desires in an institutional space, such as a teacher education classroom, and how different desires are valued or suppressed in the space. Zembylas (2007) develops the pedagogy of desire based on Deleuze and Guattari's sociopolitical notion that desire is a generative force and flow that "is continuous and is always becoming" (p. 336). As Zembylas (2007) evaluates, this pedagogy enables us to examine various norms and assumptions in teacher education and to map "new landscapes of possibility for political resistance and transformation of oneself and one's world without being confined in repressive discourse" (p. 335). With this approach, I aim to interrogate Choua's desires as a "historical practice" (Zembylas, 2007, p. 338) that is intertwined with other desires, social powers, and relations in teacher education.

Cultural Desire

Tuck's (2010) understanding of desire based on Indigenous knowledge systems broadens our viewpoint that desire is not only sociopolitical but also generational. Tuck (2010) introduces,

> Desire, for my part, accumulates wisdom, picking up flashes of self-understanding and world-understanding along the way of a life. This wisdom is assembled not just across a lifetime, but across generations, so that my desire is linked, rhizomatically, to my past and my future. (p. 645)

With this, we can start looking at Choua's desire as a sociopolitical and generational desire that maintains links to the past and the future of herself, her community, and broader society (Tuck, 2010, p. 645).

Choua's desire generated an action of bringing in Hmong culture to the teacher education space with a hope of making the culture properly acknowledged, appreciated, and shared in society—not through the "white supremacist gaze" (hooks, 1995, p. 62). Based on Tuck's (2010) elaboration, I interpret that Choua's desire was fueled by inherited wisdoms and power from her ancestors and community that resist white supremacist and racist desires against her culture. The university system was where Choua found it challenging to pursue the desire, not only because of the oppressive desires and forces that tried to subjugate her desire, but also because there were so few people of color on campus that she could unite in pursuing her desire. This difficulty is illustrated at the end of the first part of the story, in which Choua encountered a dilemma in explaining her culture to others. As an insider to her own culture, Choua was aware of the multiplicity and multidimensions of Hmong culture and her experiences as a Hmong (hooks, 1995).

As Alvaré (2017) states, essentialized assumptions are often projected onto people of color and their cultures. Choua indicated during the interview that she "agrees with some of the things in [her] cultural background, and there are some things that [she does not] agree with." This implies she holds a complicated stance and viewpoints on Hmong culture. The fact that Choua practiced a cultural custom in her family does not mean that she agrees with the custom; at the same time, maintaining a critical stance on cultural practices should not be simply viewed as Choua hating her culture. Due to the complexity and multiplicity of which Choua was conscious, she was cautious about the possibilities of misrepresenting her culture to other people. This understanding demands a nuanced interpretation of Choua's desire to promote a better recognition and understanding of Hmong culture to more people. The desire is not simply to have people learn and know about Hmong culture; it also wishes for her culture not to be "essentialized nor exoticized" by individual people and society.

Related to what Alvaré (2017) articulates about cultural representation and understanding, the white supremacist desire and power reinforce inaccurate and exclusive understandings of the ordinary features of other cultures and desires of their communities (Alvaré, 2017). Based on this insight, I returned to Choua's assignments and reread to find her cultural desires conveyed in her writings, as I had previously missed the connotations. I realized that my expectation of a well-articulated discussion and reflection on her racial, social, and cultural identities and experiences was not very different from the essentialized understanding of culture. I kept looking for critical discussions on culture that addressed unique cultural practices and customs, struggles, and pain that people of color and their communities experience (Watkins & Noble, 2019). Due to this limited understanding and approach, the ordinary cultural experiences and insights that reveal Choua's desires slipped past my eyes. For example, during the semester, I concluded that she had not deeply considered the cultural and racial issues of students and classroom interactions when she was preparing her school visit assignment

through a reflexive notebook assignment. However, as I reread her assignment with new awareness, I was able to recognize that Choua succinctly expressed her observational foci relevant to her desires linked to her culture and community. Choua wrote,

> Because I am a minority, I understand that other students struggle and would not be all the same level. I can see the determined young ones who are eager to learn and help their fellow classmates. [. . .] Coming from a big family and the oldest, I can see that a lot of kids would want to be in charge of many things. They are very caring children but would like to be [in] charge of groups and people.

As we can see, what she was interested in observing for her school visit assignment was different from many dominant narratives in teacher education, such as how students of color are treated differently by their teachers or how racism is enacted in the classroom. Choua also did not use much vocabulary explicitly indicating that she was addressing the issues of race and culture, other than the word "minority". However, if we acknowledge her relationship with her culture and community and broaden our understanding of culture and cultural practice, this excerpt can be read as a composite of Choua's various desires associated with her cultural practices tied to her roles and viewpoints as a family member, a community member, a future educator, and a former K-12 student in local schools (Paik et al., 2014). In other words, her insider view and experiences with family, community, and educational backgrounds enabled her to notice these aspects in education that might not be discernible to others. Based on this ground, her desires generated the forces for her actions; the assignment is one of the actions that the desires produced.

Ethical Desire

The second part of the story introduces the reader to Choua's axiological orientation. Wilson (2008) highlights that our knowledge and social practices cannot be separated from our relationships to this world. These relationships include one's spirituality that is "[the] internal sense of connection to the universe" (Wilson, 2008, p. 90). From this viewpoint, one's spiritual beliefs—not limited to religious background—are an important basis to understand one's values, motivations, and needs. Prima (2014) reviews the idea that understanding students' axiological orientations enables identifying value-based priorities in school settings. Meanwhile, teachers can develop a "philosophical-pedagogical strategy" (p. 13) which differentiates instructions and the division of educational resources that support individual students' growth in embracing values and motivations they cherish (Prima, 2014).

In the given circumstances, Choua's response about her axiological orientation she shared during the interview offers an additional lens to better recognize her desires that were somewhat hidden previously. When Choua disclosed her

ethical values and her practice of shamanism that explain how this background influenced her to do good deeds, additional dimensions of her desire started to reveal themselves. The interview uncovers that Choua's ethical desire that motivated her to take time and actions for other people was not driven by an egocentric or materialistic desire to gain something back by doing. This contrasts with individualistic and capitalistic desires which represent the dominant U.S. ideologies that focus on accumulation of material wealth for one's own sake (Miller & Josephs, 2009).

In our conversation, Choua talked about how what we can see and know immediately are not all that exist in this world, including people's connections with other beings, both human and non-human. This perspective is quite different from the dominant ideologies in the U.S. that prioritize graspable causality and are confined to an individualistic worldview. By doing good things and helping the community, Choua does not mean that she intends the potential beneficiaries of the actions to be people in her own community. Choua elaborated:

> Why do you think, it's like, if I give, I need something back, but you don't always need something back? You always get more knowledge from other people. Especially, you should not just only help your own community, your own cultural background, but should help everyone who are not in your culture background. I feel like people don't care about that anymore. It's like everything you do is to get something back, and it sucks. You don't have to gain [anything] back.

In his comparison of dominant U.S. values and "some other traditional countries' values", Kohls (1984) juxtaposed the U.S.'s individualism with some other countries' value of "group's welfare". While his analysis is not completely invalid, Kohls (1984) failed to grasp the ontological and epistemological perspectives of many other ethnic and cultural groups different from his own. As discussed earlier, Choua's desire is rather opposite to individualism, but this does not mean that she prioritized her own cultural group's welfare. As we see in the excerpt above, Choua did not limit the scope of her actions and responsibility to her own community. Even though she did not elaborate further on her "hidden motivation" (Interview, January 29, 2020), this response tells us that we cannot recognize her ethical desire properly if our perspective is confined to a "single life world" (Lau, 2016).

Irreconcilable Desire

Choua indicated during the interview that her spiritual background—shamanism—influences her to cherish her family even more. She explained,

> I'm shaman, and that's why I believe in spirits and all that. Being a shaman really pushed me to cherish my family, because we're all about family. Even when someone dies, we go visit them and attend a funeral. We do a lot of things as a family, like gatherings. (Interview, January 29, 2020)

This quote displays Choua's perspective on familial relationships, that a family does not just consist of relationships established based on blood relation, mar-

riage, and partnership in the present life; the connections transcend the present life as they are still interconnected through spiritual power and relationships. Her family, especially her parents, has a huge impact on her different desires, from cultural and ethical desires—as discussed earlier—to academic achievement. Choua cherishes her family, and what her family members pursue in their lives cannot be separate from her, especially if directly related to her. According to Choua, her parents put a great deal of emphasis on their children's education and having a better life through education. Her parents believe a public school education can give their children more opportunities to succeed in society which "they did not get when they were younger" (Personal Reflection, September 12, 2019).

Public education—from elementary to high school—was a space where Choua's desire for academic achievement was prioritized and supported. Choua acknowledges that her schools often taught content that did not really matter to her, and teachers failed to help her engage in the topics (Reflexive Notebook, October 15, 2019). Still, they provided practical support for Choua's desire, which was entering a good university and making her parents proud of her. I consider this to be why Choua mainly remembers public education as an empowering space.

Meanwhile, Choua felt she was losing a close connection with her parents as she pursued the desire of academic achievement that made her parents happy and felt rewarding. She shared that a gap between her parents and herself had already begun even before Choua entered college, and it was related to homework. Although her parents were willing to help with assignments and understanding topics learned in school as much as they could, she started to feel that academic topics were not something that could be discussed at home:

> I shouldn't be saying that because even though they don't have higher education, they might still have something valuable to say about it and how they feel about [the topics]. But I just choose not to [discuss schoolwork] because…I don't know.Maybe it's not what we can discuss, and there's other things we can discuss.

Choua recalled that, as she started thinking that she could not ask her parents for help with homework, it caused a disconnection between her and her parents. When she was describing her judgement that her parents could not help her with homework, she described this reality as "weird." Then, she added, "I know I can have less burden [if they help], but they can't really help me."

Within the current education system, her parents can be perceived as not smart enough, while their lived experiences are denigrated as invalid by the dominant perspective (Grande, 2018; Minh-ha, 1989). As if she were aware of this, Choua made her point clearly by articulating that she respects her parents, and they are the ones who want to and do help her to be at a better place. Choua also validated her parents' insights and knowledge in that they know much more than she does, and she is still growing by learning from them. The conflicting desires in this situation can be better identified with the understanding of the represented

and valued knowledge in school education. This provides a critical point that the gap between Choua and her parents was not caused by their desires conflicting with each other. Even if they attempt to narrow the gap through making the effort at an individual level to improve their communication approach, the gap cannot be closed because it is most impacted by the structural issue of education that does not value knowledge that matters to students.

Choua's point that her parents "might still have something valuable to say about it and how they feel about [the topics]" reveals that Choua might have come to know that her parents' perspectives and feelings about the topics are different from what the school expected their students to know, including in this teacher education program. Here, Foucault's (1971) perspective of how knowledge production and representation are exclusive to people who hold the power, and vice versa, is helpful to understand the relation between knowledge and the desire of white upper-to-middle class dominant culture. MacGilchrist et al. (2017) argue that the knowledge represented in school curriculum implies the message of which knowledge is considered necessary to maintain and increase the power of the socially dominant. This is not only a matter of what content is introduced and how much space the content takes up, but also which perspectives and emotions are validated in the curriculum. From this viewpoint, the problem that widened the gap between Choua and her parents regarding homework was not caused by the parents' lack of knowledge and insights on what she learned in school. As Choua assumed, her parents may have knowledge and insights on topics that were addressed in school, even if they might not be familiar with all of them. To be specific, it is a twofold issue of the school curriculum that was produced by the socially dominant's desire: first, the topics and themes in school curriculum are exclusive to the dominant; secondly, even if curriculum topics are inclusive to a wider range of people, the perspectives and interpretations reflected in textbooks and pedagogy are still usually skewed toward white upper-to-middle class emotions and perspectives (Hudson, 2003; Kanu, 2005).

Implication and Conclusion

I started this study with contemplations and questions about why teacher education's confidence and enthusiasm toward preparing future teachers to become socially just educators often overlook the experiences and needs of students of color in teacher education. I had assumed that common teacher education approaches focusing on educating white teachers perpetuate the problems related to the gap between theory and practice of culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy in teacher education. Knowing the urgency of disrupting white privilege and supremacy in the majority teaching force in the U.S., I came to admit that teacher education must prioritize the needs of teaching white teachers to be critically conscious of their positionality and their students' diverse backgrounds. However,

the current teacher education approach that only attends to the single lifeworld of white preservice teachers needs to be challenged and complicated after successfully launching its role to inspire white teachers to be on board with and invested in becoming equitable and inclusive teachers. If teacher education does not pay attention to the plurality of the lifeworld of preservice teachers, justice-oriented teacher education would ironically recenter whiteness in the teacher education space. To better understand and initiate critical dialogue about the complexity of preservice teachers of color's learning and practice in a teacher education program, I have looked at a student of color's cultural and ethical desires through Choua's story.

During this study, I had to adjust my understanding of "what is manifested" in a phenomenological study, because Choua's desires were "manifested vaguely" compared to other desires that manifested more vividly. However, these vague manifestations motivated me to focus on Choua's desires that were not prioritized in teacher education. Philosophically and methodologically, intercultural phenomenology guided me to acknowledge and articulate the plurality of lifeworld that Choua brings into the teacher education space. I interpreted Choua's cultural and ethical desires as the strong foundation and drive in her education, relationships, and life, while their expressions were rather suppressed in teacher education. I focused on the ironic expectation of preservice teachers of color to become empowering educators for their own communities and other communities of color, while teacher education provides identical educational experiences for both white preservice teachers and preservice teachers of color. There was little room for Choua to claim her desires and no safe space to unpack her cultural and ethical desires tied to her cultural and axiological beliefs that are very different from the dominant Western-centric and Christian viewpoint.

This study has implications for justice-oriented teacher education practice. I suggest teacher education be mindful that teaching approaches foster inclusive and diverse classes that celebrate different cultures tied to students' diverse ontological, epistemological, and axiological beliefs. It is important not to allow the approaches to produce ironic outcomes that result in non-dominant cultural traditions and perspectives becoming hyper visible and further otherized by the efforts. As I pointed out in this study, white Christians rarely receive requests to explain their insider backgrounds and perspectives in the U.S. On the other hand, people frequently ask people of color and non-Christians to translate and explain their cultures and spiritual beliefs with little hesitance as it is an expected job for people with non-dominant backgrounds. I argue that the teacher education space needs to be a space where translating and explaining cultures is properly appreciated and should not be taken for granted as the labor that many people of color and other people with non-dominant backgrounds endure. Meanwhile, I encourage teacher educators to reimagine inclusive and diverse teaching and classrooms where students collaboratively reflect on and discuss

how their own and their peers' different cultural and ethical perspectives shape their teaching and learning practices.

It is also important to acknowledge that the information and understanding revealed to teacher educators are always limited and partial, and students navigate and negotiate much broader and more complicated areas and relationships than those addressed in a course. My study reveals that students' performances and responses in a course are already framed by the context and expectations of the course. What we see in teacher education courses is just a fragment of students' multifaceted positions, relationships, and interests. Each student goes through their own process with learned knowledge in teacher education courses in relation to a variety of aspects in their lives. My students mentioned several times during the interviews that they often felt disconnected and conflicted with their families, friends, and other loved ones as they attempted to have a conversation about the topics and also tried to pursue the approaches and values encouraged in college.

Considering the process as inevitable but valuable to become an equitable and inclusive teacher, it is imperative to properly respond to the dilemmas and confusion that students encounter. I propose teacher education programs treat these struggles as practical and realistic issues that should be discussed in teacher education courses. These concerns should not be left as big questions mainly discussed on a philosophical and theoretical level or only in a retrospective and reflective manner. A teacher education program needs to be a safe and generative space for preservice students to process different and conflicting values and relationships in their lives, such as within families and communities. In that process, one possible teacher educator role would be guiding them to pose questions that matter to them and discuss the questions individually and together with other students who may be going through similar processes.

Note

[1] The term "Third World" was coined in 1952 by the French demographer and historian Alfred Sauvy in an article, "Three Worlds, One Planet," published in *L'Observateur*, a French weekly of socialist orientation. According to Solarz (2012), "Third World" is often used as a synonym for the underdeveloped world. In addition to this connotation, Sauvy also "assigned a political-international meaning to the concept in that he associated the idea of the Third World with the Cold War. From this perspective, the Third World was undoubtedly both a field on which inter-bloc rivalry played out and an obstacle on the road to the peaceful coexistence of the two blocs, and even the root cause of many disasters within the boundaries of each of these two worlds individually and as the world system as a whole" (Solarz, 2012, p. 1563).

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