

**UCLA**

**UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations**

**Title**

Portraits of Praxis: Lessons from Filipino American Teachers Rooted in Ethnic Studies

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5sc9q5br>

**Author**

Curammeng, Edward Ryan

**Publication Date**

2017

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Portraits of Praxis:

Lessons from Filipino American Teachers Rooted in Ethnic Studies

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Education

by

Edward Ryan Narciso Curammeng

2017

© Copyright by

Edward Ryan Narciso Curammeng

2017

# ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Portraits of Praxis:

Lessons from Filipino American Teachers Rooted in Ethnic Studies

by

Edward Ryan Narciso Curammeng

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Daniel G. Solórzano, Chair

Momentum around the institutionalization of Ethnic Studies in United States K–12 classrooms is gaining widespread attention. Given the social, cultural, and political influences surrounding racialized schooling contexts, it is pertinent to understand the impact and importance of Ethnic Studies in schools and consider what can be learned from teachers who already possess knowledge and insights developed through Ethnic Studies. While increased attention is focused on the development, implementation, and teaching of Ethnic Studies content, this dissertation examines the role of Ethnic Studies in shaping Filipino American teachers' classroom practices and pedagogies.

Guided by critical race theory and portraiture, I conducted two rounds of in-depth interviews and two focus groups with seven Filipino American public school teachers working in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles regions. Through analysis of their experience

regarding how Ethnic Studies shapes their teaching, I determined that having a background in Ethnic Studies: (a) enabled critical perspectives to be woven into mainstream content; (b) affected teachers' engagement with students and communities; and (c) and shaped their teacher identities.

I conclude that Ethnic Studies has the potential to transform how teachers of color are recruited, retained, and developed, legible in the narratives of Filipino American teachers working to deconstruct systems of power with frameworks learned in Ethnic Studies.

The dissertation of Edward Ryan Narciso Curammeng is approved.

Robert T. Teranishi

Tyrone C. Howard

Victor Bascara

Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales

Daniel G. Solórzano, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2017

For  
Florita Dayao Hernandez  
&  
Vito Segundo Curammeng

My maternal grandmother and paternal grandfather,  
whose lessons I have learned through my parents' generosity, brilliance, kindness, and love.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements _____	viii
Vita _____	xiii
CHAPTER 1: Introduction _____	1
Emergence of Ethnic Studies _____	2
CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Frameworks and Review of the Literature _____	9
Race and Racism _____	11
Critical Race Theory: Trenchant Beginnings _____	11
Critical Race Theory in Education _____	13
Teachers of Color _____	15
Value of Teachers of Color _____	16
Teachers of Color and Critical Consciousness _____	19
Ethnic Studies _____	23
Ethnic Studies Frameworks _____	24
Impact of Ethnic Studies _____	26
Critical Pedagogies _____	30
Critical Pedagogies and Ethnic Studies _____	31
Critical Ethnic Studies Pedagogies in Action _____	33
CHAPTER 3: Methodology _____	37
Streams of Methodology: _____	39
Portraiture, Critical Race Studies, and Intersectionality _____	39
Portraiture’s Essential Features _____	41
The Impressionistic Record _____	42
Blending Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality _____	42
Study Design, Sample, and Analysis _____	45
On Limitations _____	46
Sample _____	46
Data Collection Methods and Analysis _____	47
Semi-Structured Interviews and Artifacts _____	47
Focus Groups _____	48
Critical Race Coding and Analyses _____	49
Snapshots of Teachers _____	50
Andre Paseo _____	50
Allan Hernandez _____	51
Cassie Ventura _____	51
Erica Banaag _____	51
Jossey Enriquez _____	52
Lisa Pagasa _____	53
Portraiture as Collage or Toward an Ethnic Studies Portraiture _____	53
Classroom, Chavez, Collage _____	54



Toward an Ethnic Studies Portraiture _____	55
Positionality _____	57
CHAPTER 4: Learning From The Divergent Voice, Teaching With an Ethnic Studies Lens__	59
Lesson One: A Teacher/Activist _____	61
Lesson Two: “. . . as taxing as teaching is” _____	65
“I’ve been processing this for the longest. . .” _____	67
“How sustainable is this?” _____	68
Lesson Three: “Find the connections” _____	70
Making Connections _____	72
CHAPTER 5: Praxis Toward Community Responsive Teaching _____	74
Lesson Four: Legitimate Teaching _____	74
“To Be a Teacher to These Youth” _____	77
Lesson Five: Pinayist Pedagogues “At the Complexity of the Intersections” _____	83
“My Filipinoness, amplified” _____	84
“Made Me Feel Brave” _____	90
“It’s hard work, It’s community” _____	97
CHAPTER 6: Ethnic Studies Shaping Teacher Identity _____	105
Lesson Six: A Radical Politic, A Radical Teacher _____	105
“That class was an Ethnic Studies class”: Early Identity Formations _____	108
Ethnic Studies Pedagogue _____	114
Lesson Seven: “I Didn’t Get, This” _____	118
Portals and Pathways _____	120
Being a Pinay Teacher, Here _____	123
“I Want to be a Teacher!” _____	123
The “This” Of It All _____	126
CHAPTER 7: Conclusion _____	129
Lessons Learned _____	129
Teacher Education Rooted in Ethnic Studies _____	132
Ethnic Studies as Portraiture, Portraiture as Pedagogy _____	133
A Project of Critical Hope and Healing _____	135
Epilogue _____	137
APPENDICES _____	139
Appendix A: Email Recruitment Letter _____	139
Appendix B: Email Recruitment Call Out _____	140
Appendix C: Interview Protocol I _____	141
Appendix D: Interview Protocol II _____	142
Appendix E: Focus Group Protocol _____	143
Appendix F: Concluding Free Write Activity _____	144
REFERENCES _____	145

## Acknowledgements

The ideas and portraits in this dissertation have developed because of numerous conversations and collaborations with many people – to them I am grateful. Many thanks to the teachers of this study – whose lives and lessons, pedagogies and practices were shared so generously.

I was fortunate to have assembled a stellar cadre of Education and Ethnic Studies scholars to be a part of my dissertation committee. Tyrone Howard’s insights were formative in my thinking around why race, culture, and Ethnic Studies matter. I am appreciative for him believing early on in my work and that a focus on Filipino Americans is necessary. Robert Teranishi has provided countless opportunities to engage policy and practice, research and responsiveness. Among many lessons, I am grateful to Rob for teaching me the importance of context and for his precise and sage advice. Victor Bascara has been a trusted mentor, example, and generous teacher since I began UCLA. My deepest thanks for always reminding me to engage our work with wonder and critique. Daniel Solórzano is the model for the kind of mentor, teacher, and scholar I hope to become. Thank you for all of the invisible labor, time, care, and energy you give. I am beyond grateful to have learned alongside you – thank you for believing in me and encouraging me every step of the way. If there were a single teacher whose impact on my life I have only begun to learn, that teacher would be Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales. Through her brilliance and relentless support, Allyson continues to teach and model the importance of purpose – thank you for your time and guidance since I was an undergraduate, for countless collaborations and opportunities, for believing in me, for changing my life and countless others, maraming salamat, Ate.

This dissertation benefited greatly from generous support of UCLA's Department of Education and UCLA's Graduate Division through the Dissertation Year Fellowship. Early versions and ideas of *Portraits of Praxis* were shaped through engagement with audiences at the American Educational Research Association and Association for Asian American Studies conferences. At those meetings key scholars graciously offered critical feedback and brought nuance to this project in ways that reflect their respective expertise – special thanks to: Allyson Tintiango-Cubales, Danny Solórzano, Ernest Morrell, Leigh Patel, Soo Ah Kwon, Tracy Lachica Buenavista, and Victor Bascara.

At the Institute for Immigration, Globalization, and Education with the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education, I am grateful for my friends: Bach-Mai Dolly Nguyen, Cynthia M. Alcantar, Edwin Hernandez, Jason Chan, and Mike Hoa Nguyen. I am also thankful for those a few years ahead. Each provided me with crucial institutional knowledge, strategies, and encouragement, they include: Elexia Reyes-McGovern, Elizabeth González Cárdenas, José Aguilar-Hernandez, Nancy Acevedo-Gil, Michaela Mares-Tamayo, and Ryan Santos. Danny's RAC has served as incubator, counterspace, and community for critical scholarship. My gratitude for the feedback, community, and friendships from individuals in Danny's RAC including: Bryant Partida, Christine Vega, Josephine Pham, Michael Moses, Sharim Hannegan-Martinez, and Tanya Gaxiola Serrano. I am also grateful for feedback and friendships in Teranishi RAC: Abigail Bates, Audrey Paredes, 'Inoke Hafoka, Reuben Deleon, and Victoria Kim. In recent years through conference circuits, I have made wonderful friendships with excellent thinkers and teachers like: Arturo Nevárez, Elaine Andres, Erica Cheung, and Rocío Mendoza.

At UCLA, I have grown from supportive faculty including: Edith Omwami, Lucy Burns, and Thomas Philip. In GSEIS, many thanks to Amy Gershon and Harmeet Singh who made navigating the logistical side of graduate study seamless. I extend appreciation to Meg Thornton and Melany De La Cruz-Viesca who shared opportunities and resources through UCLA's Asian American Studies Center. In the field of Asian American Studies I received generous mentorship, guidance, and support from scholars including: Dawn Bohulano Mabalon, Dina Maramba, Roland Sintos Coloma, and Robyn Magalit Rodriguez. My professors at San Francisco State University served as influential teachers in learning Asian American Studies, especially: Danilo Begonia, Dan Gonzales, and Benito Vergara. San Francisco is also home to Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP), a community and space I hold dear. PEP was foundational in my teaching and learning about Filipino American studies. Special thanks to the continued encouragement of Arlene Daus-Magbual and Roderick Daus-Magbual. To my ELPS and AAS students at California State University, Northridge, thank you - you all are incredible scholars and education is better because of you.

Thanks to my dear friends who made UCLA and graduate study productive, insightful, and enduring through a delicate balance of humor and humility, generosity and grace. Friends like: Oscar Navarro, Michelle Smith, Carolina Valdez, and Alma Itzé Flores. Carolina Valdez's sharp political analysis and unwavering friendship have been crucial – thank you for all of the check-ins, I am excited for years of collaboration and friendship. Alma Itzé Flores has been a lifeline - incredibly generous, encouraging, and critical in many aspects of my life and in our becoming scholars – I am indebted to our friendship as you pushed me forward at critical times, thank you. To Cati de los Ríos for her feedback, constant support, and check-ins and to Stephanie Cariaga for her insistence on the ways healing is a necessary import for this work.

While at UCLA, I have been benefited from a community of scholars that share productive ways for navigating the academy while demonstrating how to remain accountable to the communities we come from. Much admiration, appreciation, and thanks to: Antonio Martinez, Bree Picower, Dimpal Jain, Jordan Beltran Gonzalez, Mark Bautista, Patrick Camangian, and Rita Kohli. Special thanks to Tracy Lachica Buenavista, whose constant reminder and example to do work that is “dangerously relevant” have been especially formative. Tracy is an incisive, thoughtful, and critical scholar, who from the beginning has been a key mentor, teacher, and friend – thank you for all you do for so many of us. An asset I attribute to my journey toward the PhD rests in the friendships that have sustained me. The wit and equally profound thinking of Xavier J. Hernandez and supportive and critical insights of Jonathan Magat have been wonderful lessons as we traverse academic paths. Over the last decade, Ray San Diego has been a key interlocutor and dear friend, whose undeniable grasp of theory and enduring friendship I have benefited from since the beginning. This journey has been much more enjoyable alongside the three of you.

Creating community in Southern California was easier with routine check-ins, shared meals, and candid conversations as we made sense of newer chapters in Los Angeles. I extend admiration and thanks to: Aldrich Sabac, Danielle Parker, Eduardo Taylor, Jill Acompañado-Guevarra, Katrina Evasco, Lauren Daus, Maurus Dumalaog, Ray San Diego, Reinier Acompañado-Guevarra, Stacy Shin, and Verma Zapanta. Others who made Los Angeles home include: Ashley Baltazar, Joanne de Guzman, Joey de Guzman, Larissa Baltazar, and Thereise Maniulit. My respect and appreciation to the People’s Education Movement for creating a necessary and crucial space for critical educators. To my dear friends from back home who have kept me grounded, reminded me to laugh, and offered encouragement at every turn: Aric

Johnson, Benedicto Macatangay, Edfrance Orjalo, Justin Hamady, Melanie Anvari, and Mikey Anvari. Jennifer Chang has been a huge support and listener, offering constant reminders of how far we've come and cheering me along the way. Daisy Lopez is a fantastic friend, partner in belief, and an excellent teacher I continually learn from. Thank you, Daisy for your excitement, intellect, and contributing to this study in enormous ways.

Finally, many thanks to the Curammeng and Narciso families. Special thanks to my caring and amazing older sister Juanita, her humble husband Fernando and their children, Fernando, Jr., Nicolas, and Mateo and my role model and compassionate older brother Charles, his thoughtful wife Crystal, and their son Koa, and my cousin Faith. Your shared excitement have sustained me, I love you all. I thank my parents, Vito Aguda Curammeng, Jr. and Lilia Hernandez Narciso Curammeng for their encouragement, belief in my pursuits, and always checking in. My love for stories begins with my parents. My father talking story about life on Kauai, Hawai'i are fond memories I carry. Our morning breakfasts are treasured moments. Thank you Dad, for your generosity and love. Many times I found myself attempting to tap into but an ounce of my mother's work ethic. She is the hardest working and hardest loving person I know. Thank you Mom, for your kindness and love. Lastly, Maurus Dumalaog's critical and caring feedback, imprint and intellect, kindness and love are throughout this dissertation and beyond. Thank you for your prayers and patience, encouragement and engagement, and for growing with me each day. It will always work out.

## Vita

- 2006 B.A. Speech Communication  
San Francisco State University  
San Francisco, California
- 2010 M.A., Asian American Studies  
San Francisco State University  
San Francisco, California
- 2007–2011 Teacher  
Pin@y Educational Partnerships  
San Francisco State University
- 2008 Curriculum Consultant  
San Francisco Unified School District
- 2011–2013 Teaching Assistant  
Asian American Studies Department  
University of California, Los Angeles
- 2013 Teaching Assistant  
Graduate School of Education & Information Studies  
University of California, Los Angeles
- 2014–2017 Research Associate  
Institute for Immigration, Globalization, and Education  
National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islanders in  
Education  
University of California, Los Angeles
- 2015–2016 Part-Time Faculty  
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies  
California State University, Northridge  
Northridge, CA
- 2017 Part-Time Faculty  
Department of Asian American Studies  
California State University, Northridge  
Northridge, CA
- 2016–2017 Dissertation Year Fellow  
University of California, Los Angeles

## PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Curammeng, E. R., & Tintiango-Cubales, A.** (2017). Growing our own hope: The development of a Pin@y teacher pipeline. In B. Picower & R. Kohli (Eds.), *Confronting racism: Narratives of critical teacher educators* (pp. 157–163). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Curammeng, E. R., Buenavista, T.L., & Cariaga, S.** (2017). *Asian American Critical Race Theory: Origins, directions, praxis*. CCRS Research Brief, no. 9. Los Angeles, CA: Center for Critical Race Studies at UCLA.
- Tintiango-Cubales, A., & **Curammeng, E. R.** (Forthcoming, Spring 2017). Pedagogies of resistance: Filipina/o “gestures of rebellion” against the inheritance of American schooling. In A. Ali & T. L. Buenavista (Eds.) *At war!: Challenging racism, materialism, and militarism in education*. Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press.
- Curammeng, E. R. (2016). Discipline/Pedagogies. Research Roundtable Presentation. Palimpsests 2 Conference on Filipino Studies. University of San Diego. San Diego, CA.
- Curammeng, E. R. (2016). Toward a Filipina/o American critical race theory in education. Critical Educators for Social Justice SIG Research Paper Presentation. American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. Washington, DC.
- Philip, T. M., & **Curammeng, E. R.** (2015). New starting points: Becoming API educators in a multiracial and multicultural society. In N. D. Hartlep & B. Porfilio (Eds.), *Killing the model minority stereotype: Asian American counter-stories and complicity* (pp. 19–39). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Teranishi, R. T., Nguyen, B. M., Alcantar, C. M., **Curammeng, E. R.**, & Nguyen, M. (2015). *The hidden academic opportunity gaps among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: What disaggregated data reveals in Washington State*. Los Angeles, CA: National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE).
- Maramba, D. C., **Curammeng, E. R.**, & Hernandez, X. (2015). Trends, themes, and threads: A critical meta-analysis of Filipina/o Americans and education research. Research panel participant. Association for Asian American Studies Annual Meeting. Evanston, IL.
- Tintiango-Cubales, A., & **Curammeng, E. R.** (2014). De-imperializing pedagogy: Teaching and learning Filipina/o American Studies with urban youth. Critical Educators for Social Justice SIG. Research Paper Presentation. American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. Philadelphia, PA.
- Curammeng, E. R. (2013). Retention is gendered & racialized: Biopolitics, critical race theory, and Filipina/o American college students. Thinking Gender Graduate Student Research Conference. University of California, Los Angeles.



## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

12.09.10

Be a part of history and come support the resolution to get Ethnic Studies for all SFUSD schools!

Wear Red. Bold letters against a black background communicated the powerful message: show up and speak out at the school district board meeting. Flyers were posted throughout the hallways of Philip and Sala Burton High School, where I was in my third year of teaching Filipino American and Ethnic Studies. The same flyers were attached across corkboards and taped snugly outside professors' offices at San Francisco State University. This was going to be an important and massive meeting. Two months earlier at Balboa High School, another meeting focused on understanding how efforts in San Francisco were in relation to students, teachers, and communities in Tucson, Arizona. Key members of the Tucson community came and spoke about the challenges and struggles they were facing to a room filled with students, teachers, and administrators from across San Francisco.

In hindsight, it was an interesting and insightful meeting demonstrating the varied contexts under which Ethnic Studies was either supported or attacked. These two key moments were integral in deepening my understanding of localized efforts for Ethnic Studies and a broader, more national perspective. Returning to that night, hundreds of parents, families, young people, teachers, professors, and community leaders convened at the SFUSD Board Meeting and showed their support for the resolution to institute Ethnic Studies across all San Francisco public schools. Lines of speakers shared their convictions about the impact Ethnic Studies had had on their lives beyond academics. My favorite moments were hearing the students I worked with boldly speak their truth.

Upon hearing two hours of community commentary, it was time for the board to vote. As each board member voted, and just like a domino effect, their voice echoed their colleague's: "Aye." Some board members audibly emotional and moved by the multi-generational stories of Ethnic Studies' impact paused to add their experiences. They shared about learning their histories, about the community they were a part of, and how Ethnic Studies provided tools to interrogate oppression as well as to critically understand it. The resolution passed: "unanimous." Immediately the crowd roared into celebration. People were hugging, tears were abundant, and a feeling of solidarity permeated the dark, wood-paneled room. The hundreds of bodies clad in red, moved into the foyer. Sighs of relief and high-fives bounced off the smoothed concrete lobby area. "The work continues," one leader remarked.

The evening of the school board meeting is an extension of a longer protracted struggle for access to a relevant critical education. The next abridged section describes and sets up an historical and political context from which Ethnic Studies materializes.

### **Emergence of Ethnic Studies**

An approach to ascertain some of the key aspects animating the push for Ethnic Studies in K-12 schools is to think of the social and political conditions that preceded it. Some scholars mark the origins of Ethnic Studies to social movements in the 1960s encouraged by anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, and anti-war resistance (Hu-DeHart, 1993; Sleeter, 2011). Motivated by transnational efforts challenging U.S. imperialism abroad, student organizers were immersed in reading works by Mao Tze Tung, Frantz Fanon, and Malcolm X critiquing the disenfranchisement of students of color as a form of colonization (Collier & Gonzales, 2009; Murase, 1976). Collier and Gonzales (2009), at the time of the 1968 strike at then San Francisco State College, were students and would later become professors of Asian American Studies,

recalled their formative experiences in Ethnic Studies. They write, “We met others from our communities and engaged in discussions about our social, economic, and cultural circumstances with a frequency, scope, and depth that we had never done before, exploring and modifying the few methods taken from the classroom and related texts that best fit the task. At the core of these discussions was a developing articulation of the needs and desires of our communities that we were both witnesses to and participants in” (p. 7). To that end, demands made for Ethnic Studies by students and community members included radical changes to access, hiring of faculty of color, and guarantee for people of color-run educational spaces within the university (Acuña, 1996; Juan, 1991; Umemoto, 1989). In so doing, the founders of Ethnic Studies believed these efforts as consistent with the principles for democracy countering the misrepresentation of Third World peoples abundant in the academy (Gonzales, et al., 2009).

Murase’s (1976) historical study of Ethnic Studies expressed the ways students at the time drew connections between themselves and their communities. Murase’s (1976) carefully researched account of the development of Ethnic Studies culled archival materials accounting for how Ethnic Studies fits along a trajectory of changes in education history. Murase’s description of the development of Ethnic Studies is cited at length, as it provides a thorough characterization of what this development entailed. He describes Ethnic Studies (specifically Asian American Studies) as:

. . . The first organized effort within the context of the formal educational system to reinterpret the history of Third World peoples in this country to accurately reflect our perspectives . . . an honest attempt—through rigorous research and investigation, through critical analysis of ourselves and of the social institutions in our society, through dynamic and innovative approaches in instruction and sharing, and through bold new attempts to actively *apply* what is learned to reshape our society—to disseminate the life stories of millions of non-white people in America. (Emphasis in original, p. 205)

An important distinction from Murase's study begins with his tracing the struggle for Ethnic Studies to San Francisco State College to the fall of 1966. That fall, "Black and other Third World students" presented a proposal to administrators calling for an increase in Third World students as well as a "Black-controlled Black Studies Department" (p. 205). Murase's point is especially important to highlight, honor, and acknowledge the ways in which Ethnic Studies emerged because of Black student organizing and activism.

Sixteen months later, upon exhausting "every possible avenue in the bureaucratic maze" a general student strike was called by the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF). Another important contribution stems from Murase's (1976) critical analysis of the nexus between Ethnic Studies, race, class, the military industrial complex and the rise of institutions of higher education. He writes, "institutional responses to the need for ethnic studies . . . mirror the racial discrimination of an entire society" (p. 210). For instance, he describes how as the United States entered the period of the Cold War, the U.S. government poured money into research for "weapon development and space exploration programs"<sup>1</sup> while "war-oriented educational programs" like the National Science Foundation and the National Defense Education Act simultaneously sprung up. Murase's (1976) study supports further the complexity of contexts from which ethnic studies as a part of a larger history of the U.S. education system emerged.

Similar to Murase, Umemoto (1989) explores the role of Asian American students to the San Francisco State College Strike. She draws upon oral histories of members of three prominent Asian American student groups that were members of the TWLF. She explored the

---

<sup>1</sup> Murase elaborates further how the U.S. government championed the University of California system's research endeavors. He writes, in the 1967–68 academic year, UCLA had no less than 79 research projects financed by the Department of Defense. Further, UCLA's mutual recruitment programs (the Placement Center) actively recruited for the Central Intelligence Agency. In this way, the university used ethnic studies programs as a medium for recruiting individuals to study foreign countries and "gather intelligence data on customs, lifestyles, and social and political institutions" (p. 213).

influence of two guiding principles upon students: “serve the people” and “self-determination.” Among her findings was a distinct political consciousness inspired by students’ engagement with the communities they were a part. For example, Chinese American students actively sought to improve the living conditions organizing afterschool programs for youth in Chinatown. Similarly, members of the Philippine-American Collegiate Endeavor<sup>2</sup> (PACE) organized efforts to recruit high school youth through the Educational Opportunity Program. Umemoto (1989) highlights how Ethnic Studies informed Asian American students about the interconnectedness of community issues, namely housing and anti-eviction. In particular, she describes coalitional efforts to advocate on behalf of elders facing increased evictions; the fight for tenants of the International Hotel is one prime example of interethnic and multi-generational organizing (see Habal, 2007).

In sum, the emergence of Ethnic Studies was marked by interrogating “fundamental questions of oppression and power” and an insistence on cross-racial and intergenerational coalition building and struggles for liberation that “confronted the historical forces of racism, poverty, war, and exploitation” (Omatsu, 2000, p. 56). Almost half a century later concerns and contexts of Ethnic Studies proponents remain and were echoed after the school board meeting in San Francisco that opened this chapter: “the work continues.”

\*\*\*

Indeed, the work has continued for the countless students, teachers, and community members advocating for Ethnic Studies in their schools. Several years have passed since that

---

<sup>2</sup> The organization would later change its name to “Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor” (PACE) and continues to be the oldest student-led college organization in the United States. Similar efforts to expose high school students to college also remain, specifically the Uniting Pilipino Students for Success (UPSS) annual event. PACE also began the cultural phenomenon of the “Pilipino Cultural Night” now a right of passage and found across college campuses. For more see (Gonzalves, 2009) and (Hernandez, 2010). Student-initiated cultural organizations remain an important pipeline and site of exposure for Ethnic Studies.

historic night. I am reminded of the many nights that lead up to that evening. How, at one point as a new teacher with Pin@y Educational Partnerships, I was invited to spend a summer working with teachers in the school district to create the curricula for SFUSD’s Ethnic Studies Pilot program. That summer was a lot of work. It was hard work attempting to build a curricular foundation aligned with standard at the same time working to build relationships with other teachers. Which is to say, to build an Ethnic Studies Pilot program, we needed to build with one another. An abbreviated survey of past and current efforts and contexts to build Ethnic Studies in schools offers insights into the continued work. For example, Ethnic Studies curricula and programs in the primary and secondary levels of education (Begay et al., 1995; Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2013; Halagao, 2013; Lee, 1995; A. Tintiangco-Cubales, Daus-Magbual, & Daus-Magbual, 2010) offer models for curricular and programmatic approaches for building Ethnic Studies.

Across the nation, only two school districts—Tucson Unified Public Schools and San Francisco Unified District—have district-wide Ethnic Studies courses. El Rancho Unified School District in Southern California is following suit. Their school board passed an historic resolution that would make Ethnic Studies a graduate requirement for all high school students. These districts reflect disparate views and growing tensions amongst the public regarding the overall efficacy and need for Ethnic Studies. For instance, in 2010, Arizona’s Senate Bill-1108 commonly referred to as the “anti-ethnic studies bill,” sought to eliminate all Ethnic Studies programming from state-funded education. That same year, as the opening moments of this chapter revisit, the San Francisco Unified School District unanimously called for the adoption of a resolution that would expand Ethnic Studies across San Francisco high schools. More recently, the National Education Association (NEA) commissioned a review of the research regarding the

relationship between student achievement and ethnic studies curricula and programs. The NEA (2011) reported: “well designed and well-taught ethnic studies curricula have positive academic and social outcomes for students” (Sleeter, 2011, vii). The NEA’s review raises important questions, particularly questions around what constitutes “well-taught ethnic studies curricula” and what characteristics might a teacher engaged in Ethnic Studies possess.

While attention to the value of Ethnic Studies has been focused on students’ learning, academics, and educational experiences, I am moved to consider: What about teachers whose first entry into teaching was through Ethnic Studies? For me, the teachers whom I worked closely with were Filipino American. My decision to focus on this particular group helped me raise questions into the multi-layered and complex ways such an emphasis provided insights toward race and racialization, im/migration, colonialism, and schooling. I ventured into understanding these questions guided by Portraiture.

*Portraits of Praxis: Lessons from Filipino American Teachers Rooted in Ethnic Studies* highlights the work of seven teachers through lessons they taught me by their generous and illuminating stories about their experiences as teachers and relationship to Ethnic Studies. My examination of Filipino American teachers and Ethnic Studies were guided by the following questions:

1. How does Ethnic Studies shape Filipino American teachers’ practices and pedagogies?
2. How does Ethnic Studies prepare teachers to be more community responsive?
3. What are the possibilities of imagining Ethnic Studies as teacher education?

Across each of the *Portraits of Praxis*, the common *lesson* connecting them are the ways Ethnic Studies has shaped each of the teachers’ worldviews, pedagogies, and practices in their pursuit of a transformative education. Furthermore, each of the lessons illuminates the

possibilities and potential of *praxis*, loosely defined. That is, the ways through which each of the Filipino American teachers apply what they have learned in their practice as educators. In the following chapters, I present the theoretical frameworks and literature that guide my understanding of teachers of color, Ethnic Studies, and critical pedagogies. The third chapter presents my thinking around Portraiture and how I am melding other qualitative methodologies to work toward an Ethnic Studies portraiture. Each of the next three chapters presents seven lessons of Filipino American teachers rooted in Ethnic Studies. The last chapter offers insights, implications, and recommendations for this work through Principles of Ethnic Studies Teacher Praxis. I close *Portraits of Praxis* with an Epilogue returning to my entry point into Ethnic Studies.



## CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Frameworks and Review of the Literature

In his landmark essay, “The Mis-Education of the Filipino,” Philippine historian Renato Constantino (1970) writes of the debilitating impact that the imposed American schooling system in the Philippines had on Filipinos. Constantino’s claims help us to understand the liminal status of Filipinos in the United States, and how such a status is produced by U.S. imperialism, reinforced through (neo)colonialism, and maintained under white supremacy in this contemporary moment. Constantino’s essay mirrors the widely popular “The Mis-Education of the Negro” (1933) written by Carter G. Woodson; the perspectives each take are strikingly similar. Upon graduating college, Woodson joined a fleet of American-trained teachers to establish and teach English in the Philippines. There was an existing mass of teachers already in the Philippines. Specifically, in July 23, 1901, 509 American teachers aboard the U.S.S. Thomas departed from the San Francisco bay en route to the Philippines. Historian Paul Kramer (2006) writes, “of all the icons of U.S. colonialism, there was none more vivid or long-lived than the arrival of the Thomasites” (p. 168). Their arrival signaled the ascendance of the United States as a global power and the installation of colonial education.

One might argue that Woodson’s experience teaching in the Philippines forged by the Thomasites shaped his understandings of race against a broader globalized context (Siyam, 2003). Furthermore, so too are the possibilities that teaching in the Philippines was a precursor for how the United States more generally has come to appreciate and acknowledge Black history in schools; this history was a hallmark of Woodson’s legacy and a foreshadow of current education legislation like California’s AB-123, which would move school instruction to include Filipinos as an integral part of the labor in the California labor movement. This example, multi-

layered and ripe for unpacking, demonstrates the interplay between race, colonialism, and White supremacy serves as a point of departure for this chapter.

Guided by critical race theory as its organizing methodological and analytical framework, *Portraits of Praxis* draws from the tools of critical race studies<sup>3</sup> and re-imagines these tools to expand analysis of systems of power. Moreover, I proceed acknowledging the ways critical race theory can be complicated and re-conceptualized for the specificities of what I am calling a Filipino American critical race theory of education (FlipCrit). Such an analysis draws attention to the ways (neo)colonialism, U.S. imperialism, and White supremacy affect the material lives of racialized subjects and acknowledges the tenuous relationship between race and structures of society including education. This chapter begins by operationalizing race and racism. I then provide an overview of CRT generally and CRT in education more specifically. The following sections review three bodies of literature to explore: (a) Teachers of Color, (b) Ethnic Studies, and (c) critical pedagogies. Below are questions raised of the literature I reviewed:

1. How are Teachers of Color characterized? Why are they being characterized in this way? What if, any, aspects of the literature point toward the impact of colonialism in shaping teachers' racialization?
2. How has scholarship on Ethnic Studies in education departed from or extended its roots in resistance and civil rights movements? How, do these aspects arrive in how Ethnic Studies is taught today?

---

<sup>3</sup> Critical race studies' tools include the works and contribution of legal scholars such as Derek Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Cheryl Harris, and Mari Matsuda. The tools explored in this chapter also find inspiration from the work of key thinkers of CRT in education like Gloria Ladson-Billings and Daniel Solórzano. Dean Spade's path breaking scholarship has greatly influenced my thinking and stands as an exemplar for how CRT can grow.

3. What are the limitations—theoretical and methodological—of critical pedagogies associated with Ethnic Studies teaching? What do these pedagogies foreclose when considering their value for students and schools?

### **Race and Racism**

The ideological foundations upon which the United States were built cannot be separated from the influence race had in guiding the founding forefathers' vision of the nation. Race has been traced from its historical emergence (Gossett & Gossett, 1997; Horsman, 1981) beginning with the belief in the superiority of Whites. I define race as a social construct, a political category and complex concept involving power; this power has resulted in the ability for the meaning of race to change over time. Many scholars have carefully attended to examinations of race and its real life effects upon Students of Color (Solórzano et al., 2000; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Yosso, 2000). Attempts to understand why “race matters” (Howard, 2010; West, 1993) and the deeply textured question of “what’s race got to do with it?” (Parker & Lynn, 2002) are among the linkages between such inquiries. W.E.B. Du Bois’ (1994) powerful and haunting question, “How does it feel to be a problem?” asked at the beginning of the twentieth century still lingers at the beginning of the twenty-first century for Students of Color. Thus, interrogations of race are historically linked and reflect the changing dynamics of race in relation to power (Omi & Winant, 1994). What becomes clear is what Toni Morrison (2007) noted, “race has become metaphorical”—how race is embedded in our lives is hidden through subtle everyday racism.

### **Critical Race Theory: Trenchant Beginnings**

Mrs. Biona MacDonald is part of a cast of characters that open law professor Derrick Bell’s influential *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* (Bell, 1993).

Moved by Mrs. MacDonald's resilience, Bell asks, "Where she found the courage to continue working for civil rights." Mrs. MacDonald responds, "I can't speak for everyone, but as for me, I am an old woman, I lives to harass white folks" (xii). Bell remarks on Mrs. MacDonald's response and her ability to "use courage and determination as a weapon" foregrounds distinct characteristics of critical race theory. I operationalize critical race theory in education as a trenchant theoretical, methodological, pedagogical and praxis-oriented framework intent on dismantling white supremacy (Bell, 1979; Lynn, 1999; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). The lineage of CRT is rooted in critical legal studies' response to the limitations that legal scholarship conveyed when addressing race and racism in articulating the experiences of People of Color (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Mari Matsuda (1991) offers a succinct definition of CRT:

. . . the work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and that work toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination. (p. 1331)

Matsuda's definition of critical race theory alludes to multiple forms of subordination. Since its inception many "offshoots" have emerged beyond CRT and the law confronting multiple forms of subordination. For example, Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit) examines the "multidimensional identities" of Latinas/os and is concerned with other issues such as immigration, language, and phenotype (Montoya, 1994; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001); tribal critical race theory (TribalCrit) addresses issues connected of U.S. colonialism endured by Indigenous Peoples living in the United States (Brayboy, 2005; Labrador & Kahunawaika'ala Wright, 2011); and Asian critical race theory (AsianCrit) calls attention to the unique issues of

discrimination and exclusion endured by Asian Americans<sup>4</sup> (Chang, 1993). The continual proliferation of critical race theory reflects the multiple forms of subjection experienced by People of Color and similarly dispossessed communities. An important site where many of these forms of subjection are learned, confronted, and compounded is education. How then does CRT become a valuable and insightful lens to understand teaching? Ethnic studies? In understanding the experiences of Filipino Americans?

### **Critical Race Theory in Education**

Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate's (1995) groundbreaking work "Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education" vehemently challenged multiculturalist paradigms and ahistorical reforms that were pervasive in educational discourse and offered a "radical critique of both the status quo and purported reforms" (p. 62). Ladson-Billings and Tate expressed that race is perpetually playing a significant role in "determining inequity" and utilized a CRT framework as a way to "theorize race and use it as an analytic tool for understanding school inequity" (p. 48). Daniel Solórzano's influential "Images and Words that Wound: Critical Race Theory, Racial Stereotyping, and Teacher Education" (1997) provided five guiding principles for conducting CRT research in education. These tenets are productive for comprehending how racist practices and policies serve to subordinate People of Color while reifying white supremacy. The "five themes that form its basic perspectives, research methods, and pedagogy" (Solórzano, 1997, p. 6) are: (a) The centrality and intersectionality of race and racism; (b) The challenge to dominant ideology; (c) The commitment to social justice; (d) The centrality of experiential knowledge; and (e) The interdisciplinary perspective. These tenets are helpful in

---

<sup>4</sup> Sora Han's (2006) "Politics of Race in Asian American Jurisprudence," calls for a deeper analysis of Chang's oft-cited work. In particular, she calls attention to how legal victories for Asian Americans reinforce anti-Black racism.

framing how a CRT perspective in education can work towards deep systemic change and the transformation of conditions.

Critical race theory in education has produced scholarship that closely interrogates the contours of systems of power in schools. Examples of CRT in education can be found in the conceptual and methodological approaches to critically examine racism in education elided in other frameworks. Some concepts include: *racial microaggressions* (Solórzano et al., 2000; Yosso & Garcia, 2010); *campus racial climate* (Allen & Solorzano, 2000; D. Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000a; Teranishi, 2002); and *resistance theory* (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) are among the many growing scholarship that have expanded CRT in education. Moreover, critical race “tools” have aided researchers, students, teachers, and practitioners to confront racism. Some useful tools include: *critical race counterstorytelling* “a method recounting the experiences and perspectives of racially and socially marginalized people” (Yosso, 2002, p. 10); and *critical race methodologies* (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Malagon, Perez Huber, & Velez, 2009) allowing “CRT scholars to move towards a form of data collection and analysis that builds from the knowledge of Communities of Color” (Malagon, et al., 2009; p. 12). CRT acknowledges multiple issues (class, sexuality, gender, citizenship) that intersect with race and deepen the complexities and underpinnings of racism as they manifest in schools.

For scholars conducting research in race and Ethnic Studies, critical race theory offers a productive and essential role in understanding the complexities of race and racism. Critical race theory advances the lived experiences of Communities of Color and views them as sources of strength (Yosso, 2002). For Filipino Americans, CRT can assist in unpacking the moments of “interest convergence,” the complex and diverse issues encountered while challenging racist stereotypes. CRT also highlights the challenges ahead for People of Color in the U.S. as the

belief in a post-racialism proliferates. Yet, as Lawrence and Matsuda (1997) remind us, “The struggle itself is the point. To stand for a brighter vision of human possibility gives life meaning” (p. 278). A critical race perspective helps reflect this brighter vision aided with tools necessary to build it.

### **Teachers of Color**

The anticipated and continuous growth of Communities of Color has encouraged research in a number of ways, particularly toward understanding the value of teachers of color. A decade ago in 2004 the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (NCDTF) organized to examine issues of equity, diversity, and teacher quality in the wake of the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. They found the percentage of Teachers of Color is nowhere near the approximate number of Students of Color in any state with a distinctly diverse population; with exceptions in Hawai’i and the District of Columbia. According to the National Center for Education Statistics’ (NCES) Schools and Staffing Survey (2014) 90 percent of public school teachers were White and some 40 percent of schools had no Teachers of Color on staff. Research around the diversification of the teacher force has influenced two important strands of thinking: the need to recruit and retain teachers of color (Sleeter, 2013; Ana María Villegas & Irvine, 2010) and understanding the value of teachers of color (Darder, 1993).

A growing body of research has explored the ideological perspectives that critical educators bring. That is, the ways teaching is viewed as a political act (Camangian, 2013; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Freire, 1970). For the purposes of this project and building off of my own experiences I frame these studies as iterative of Paulo Freire’s *conscientização* or *critical consciousness*. This review of the literature extends Marilyn Cochran-Smith’s (2004) call to “work the dialectic,” between the value of Teachers of Color and their critical consciousness and

work to challenge what Kevin Kumashiro (2012) identified as the current neoliberal frames that blame the failings of schooling upon “bad teachers.” These lines of thinking present important emphases on ways the question of how education will respond to the need for more critical teachers. The following section explores two bodies of literature: (a) the value of Teachers of Color and (b) Teachers of Color and critical consciousness.

### **Value of Teachers of Color**

Research suggests the impact of Teachers of Color can have a favorable affect among Students of Color because of their ability to be viewed as role models (Milner & Howard, 2004; Ana Maria Villegas & Clewell, 1998). For instance, in their study on the need for Teachers of Color, Villegas & Clewell (1998) described that without seeing Teachers of Color in professional roles in schools children are taught “implicitly that White people are better suited than racial/ethnic minorities to hold positions of authority in our society” (p. 121). Therefore, one way to counter this rests in the active recruitment of Teachers of Color. Given the number of white teachers in schools, research studies have explored the “overwhelming” and “unexamined” whiteness of teaching (Picower, 2009; Sleeter, 2001) that speak to the stark reality that a vast amount of teachers are white women. Yet, a number of studies have found what made these teachers effective is their willingness to interrogate colorblindness, racism, and power (Howard, 2010; Matias, 2013; Matias & Liou, 2014; Sleeter, 2001, 2004). These teachers, therefore, hold a particular critique of racism and social oppression that allowed them to make concerted efforts to disrupt the status quo similar to the criticality this project explored. Teachers of Color that have insights about inequality in the United States may present opportunities to develop unique relationship with students from similar groups. Villegas and Clewell (1998) report these



relationships “allow the teachers to challenge students of color to invest in learning, despite the many academic and social barriers these youngsters must overcome along the way” (p. 122).

Complicating the charge for diversifying the teacher workforce, is the assumption made that a Teacher of Color is innately prepared and qualified to work with Students of Color. In some cases, the expectation and pressure placed upon Teachers of Color adversely contributes to accounts of teacher burnout (Haberman, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001). In their study of preservice Teachers of Color, Achinstein & Aguirre (2008) reported 93 percent of the participants in their study were characterized as “culturally suspect” by the Students of Color in their classes, questioning their authenticity and how the teachers identified. In this way, Achinstein & Aguirre (2008) highlights the tensions between suggesting a decontextualized cultural match. For example, teachers reported that some students asked particular questions to verify whether or not they can be trusted. Christine Sleeter (2013) explicates this further:

...teachers operate within and through systems and institutions that shape their work with students. A teacher’s racial or ethnic background does not determine a teacher’s ideology, shared background with a particular group of students, or ability to teach. Further, the systemic and institutional support or lack thereof that teachers receive can sometimes serve as roadblocks for teachers of color in their work with students. (p. 179)

The tensions that are illuminated in such studies regarding the value of Teachers of Color are important considerations to be made. Sonia Nieto explains (2000) Teachers of Color may have related experiences but it does not “automatically lead to understanding cultural orientations/ oppressions” they or their students might have experienced (p. 67). It is important to note that although an overall recommendation from the research suggests Teachers of Color bring a whole host of important insights and sensibilities relative to the students they teach, calls for diversification of the teaching workforce are not a cure-all for the prevailing inequitable schooling experiences experienced by those same students. That is, a simple charge for

diversifying teachers is only one part of larger issues within education. At a moment when Teachers of Color are being heavily recruited, it is equally imperative to ask questions of who these teachers are and how they see themselves shapes their teaching.

Studies that sought to identify the value of Teachers of Color while demonstrating the challenges associated to their teaching offer helpful perspectives. Informed by critical race theory, Rita Kohli's (2009) study on Women of Color pre-service teachers' experiences with racism highlights both the value and challenges of being a Teacher of Color. She explained that the participants her study endured racism at their school sites from school staff. The women also expressed hearing racist remarks by their pre-service teacher colleagues in a teacher education program that is highly characterized as social justice oriented. Therefore, much work needs to be done in the ways Teachers of Color are well prepared to navigate racism at school sites in addition to opening space for critical dialogue with peers. Kohli's explanation for the cyclical nature of racism in schools is consistent with the research of earlier studies by Valencia (1997, 2010) and Solórzano (1998) around deficit thinking. Kohli's (2009) model for "critical race reflections," provides an important tool that teachers can employ such that students' and teachers' challenges to racism in their schools are realized.

Huong Nguyen's (2008) case study of Vietnamese American pre-service teachers offers nuances to the racism experienced by some of Kohli's (2009) participants as well as larger trends of role modeling associated with Teachers of Color. Nguyen found that the participants' escape or departure from Viet Nam were especially important in shaping their teacher identities. She also reported how her participants felt they were perceived by students and white teachers, she writes, "in becoming "American," the participants' *cultural* identity was not only questioned by the larger society, but their *teacher* identity was also scrutinized" (p. 133). Nguyen's work

presents implications for how important a sociopolitical and historical context shapes teachers' experiences and the institutional challenges associated that must be met with tools to confront those challenges.

According to Rong and Preissle (1997), the number of Asian Americans pursuing teaching as a career is low in comparison to the continued increase in Asian American students. Their study explored the "continuing decline" of Asian American teachers and make important recommendations concerning the limitations of aggregated data. Interestingly, the ways Asian and Asian American are used interchangeably reveal shortcomings for how generalizations are deployed. Their findings are helpful for understanding on-going convergences regarding the increased conflation between Filipino teachers recruited from the Philippines to teach in the United States and Filipino American teachers (Books & de Villiers, 2013; Teranishi, 2010).

Research on the value of Teachers of Color are important for understanding ways to meet their needs as well as highlighting the numerous contributions this group bring. Because of the potential benefits Teachers of Color bring to all students and schools, it is also important to bring attention to the criticality of these teachers that the research found. The next section examines literature around critical consciousness and teachers whose perspectives inform their teaching.

### **Teachers of Color and Critical Consciousness**

Critical consciousness as a concept can be traced to early works of critical pedagogy and educational theorists. What scholars work to reveal are the ideological underpinnings that shape one's actions in the context of education. I nominate "critical consciousness" as defined by the work of Paulo Freire (1970, 1973) as an organizing term for this study, because of the emphasis that critical consciousness is a multi-faceted process. In this way, the process through which a teacher develops their critical consciousness is through engaging in reflection and action. As a

dialectic, Teachers of Color and critical consciousness acknowledges the linkages across theories that have opened new ways for thinking about teaching—here, I am thinking of Ladson-Billings’ (1994) and her extension of Hill Collins’ (1991) “Afrocentric feminist epistemology” and Tintiango-Cubales and Sacramento’s (2009) “Pinayist praxis” whose conceptions fuse applications of Freirean praxis with Third World Feminisms.

Responding to the ways teachers utilize various constructs for immigrant and low-income students Bartolomé and Trueba (2000) maintain that teachers must work to develop ideological and political clarity, such that inequitable circumstances in schools can be changed. Therefore, teachers must view teaching as a political act in that “they must understand the meaning and risk of solidarity so as to protect the dignity of their students” (p. 289). The relational aspect of teaching is an important function for developing critical consciousness; relationships extend beyond simply teacher and student that include the necessary work to develop relationships with the families and communities a part of the school. For instance, of the work that explored the beliefs and practices of African American male teachers (Howard, 2001, 2013; Lipman, 1998; Lynn, 2002), a consistent theme from these studies concluded that all of these teachers held a “distinctly African American political and cultural dimension in their practice . . . anchored by a philosophical and practical desire to achieve social justice” (Brown, 2009, p. 474). Luis Moll’s (1994) research examining classroom teaching from the perspective of immigrant and community life is an exemplar of the connections between ideology and teaching. He contends that teachers must utilize the cultural aspects abundant in communities’ “funds of knowledge.” Moll (1994) explored the relationship between a Mexican working-class community and a local school in Arizona and expressed the need for re-thinking literacy in a way that accounts for the “valued resources of the culture” of students, families, and communities (p. 201).

Antonia Darder's (1993) study on critical Latino teachers is an important example that demonstrates how critical consciousness informs the practices of Teachers of Color. She asserts Latino teachers must serve as "translators of the culture of power" that is they are able to affirm their students' linguistic and cultural experiences by sharing their own similar life experiences. So, too are these critical Latino teachers able to convey that the Latino students they work with are deserving and capable of achieving in schools. Darder (1993) explains:

they are able to understand the expressed concerns of their students, particularly with respect to dealing with problems they encounter in society (racism, resistance, and so on) . . . . Latino educators express a strong commitment to making explicit the students' cultural worldview and histories, not just from books but in the living experience of the classroom. (p. 207)

The strong commitment and work to "make explicit" the lived realities of Latino students is an ideological stance. She challenges researchers to make further explications around the role of culture in the principles of critical pedagogy. Darder's (1993) study provides an interesting list of queries that are useful for critical Latino teachers to reflect upon. Some of these include:

- Are the everyday lives and community realities of Latino students integrated into the daily life of the classroom? If so, how is this done?
- Does the teacher make explicit relations of power at work in the classroom, school, community, and society, with respect to the students' lives?
- Does the teacher understand the relationship between theory and practice? (p. 204)

What scholars work to reveal when considering the relationship between Teachers of Color and critical consciousness, are the ways such a critical stance challenge and confront systems of oppression in schools. What are needed are tools to name the oppression as well as identifying ways that counter that oppression. Tara Yosso's (2005) "Whose culture has capital?: A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth (CCW)" is one such set of tools.

Building off the theoretical frames of CRT and Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit), Yosso positions a seemingly oppositional paradigm—Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital—to unearth what deficit framings often discount: the cultures of non-dominant groups. She identifies a set of capitals (aspirational, familial, social, navigational, linguistic, resistant) that are a part of communities of color. Taken together, Yosso suggests these capitals shift focus from deficit views to insist on learning from the numerous assets and wealth a part of these communities. As a tool for education research, community cultural wealth provides a lens through teachers can be reflexive with the students and communities they teach. That is, the CCW frame offers a model for identifying how the teachers in this study view their students’ communities.

Critical consciousness can be developed in multiple spaces, many of which are in non-traditional learning spaces. For example, Lynn and Hassan’s (1999) portrait of a critical African American teacher in Los Angeles connected his consciousness raising occurring in activist organizations. The teacher in their study participated in grassroots organizing movements for a number of years. They reported the teacher’s comments were “emblematic of his nearly two decades of struggle to proffer emancipatory pedagogies” (p. 48). Thus, I am able to acknowledge how ideological clarity and critical consciousness often occurs in community activist spaces.

For Teachers of Color, the preparation they receive from teacher education programs more often than not does not encourage the development of their critical consciousness. Informed by Derrick Bell’s (1979) interest convergence thesis, Richard Milner (2008) describes how interest convergence can be applied to teacher education policies and practices to work towards interrogating the salience of race and racism within these programs. As a teacher educator, Milner observed teachers disengaged when it came to discussions of race and racism.

He provides tenets for an emergent “theory of disruptive movement” in teacher education. The purpose of this theoretical response to teacher education are to “serve as a tool in explaining processes and developments of racialized and equity-centered movements” and “assists social-justice-oriented individuals in organizing to actually do something to challenge racist systems, policies, and practices” (p. 8). Among the important aspects from the theory he outlines, are his emphases that point to the “interests and their ideological convergences that are most profound for movements to be successful” (p. 9). Although Milner does not explicitly name Ethnic Studies as a foundation from which the tenets he offers are informed, I would argue what he outlines are in line with the goals for Ethnic Studies to “disrupt, interrupt, and counter dominant ideologies.”

A summary of the literature on the value of Teachers of Color and the role of critical consciousness suggests a need for additional research. The research demonstrates how these two lines of thinking inform one another, but it is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of how, if at all, Ethnic Studies inform teachers’ experiences. The following section reviews a historical genesis of Ethnic Studies and schools and examines closely studies where Ethnic Studies was centered.

### **Ethnic Studies**

The “glamour” and excitement of periods of open conflict like the Strike often serve to obscure the reality that any new vision becomes successful only with subsequent implementation, involving long and arduous effort, which is often anything but glamorous.

Malcolm Collier and Daniel Phil Gonzales  
Origins: People, Time, Place, Dreams, 2009

Every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably. To articulate the past historically does not mean to

recognize it the way it was [to quote 19th-c. German historian Otto] Ranke. It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.

Walter Benjamin  
Theses on the Philosophy of History, 1968

“The Strike,” as the now infamous and longest student-led strike in United States history is referred, may be thought of as a moment from history when Ethnic Studies emerged. Or as Benjamin’s (1968) statement in the second epigraph illuminates, the Strike, offers an opportunity to “seize hold” of Ethnic Studies in the contemporary moment amidst “danger.” Which is to say, a version of a history of Ethnic Studies involves the evocative and “glamorous” moment of The Strike as original strikers Collier and Gonzales (2009) remind us; so too are the ways Ethnic Studies in the present continues to be up against “danger” writ large. Ethnic Studies, as it emerged in the 1960s, continues to be in “danger” or more fitting, endangered. This section begins by describing Ethnic Studies frameworks. I then review a growing body of research that supports the positive impact of Ethnic Studies on students, schools, and communities. Explored this way, the research provided a clearer understanding of the dimensions an Ethnic Studies lens holds for the teachers in *Portraits of Praxis*.

### **Ethnic Studies Frameworks**

In *The Reorder of Things: The University and its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*, Roderick Ferguson (2012) traces genealogies of “difference” as their incorporation are re-cast and regulated by the university. For example, he refers to the history of U.S. Ethnic Studies and women’s studies protests as moments of transition that were later inducted into the culture of the university. That is, “minority difference was deployed against institutional hegemony and . . . claimed by and managed within the province of institutions thereby alienated from its originary mission” (p. 75). This taking up or rather, taking *of* minority difference (institutional language



codified as ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’) is an important caution towards the parasitic nature of the state and institution. Simply put, what is at stake are the terms for safeguarding the on-going co-optation of Ethnic Studies by the university?

E. San Juan, Jr.’s (1991) analysis of historical and cultural accounts of the tensions between Ethnic Studies and multiculturalism provides critical insights. While earlier scholarship exploring Ethnic Studies as a curricular intervention draw connections to the rise of U.S. multiculturalism education reform, San Juan’s work takes seriously an alternative and important intervention.<sup>5</sup> Through a critical interrogation of archival and literary texts, San Juan (1991) questions the terms of U.S. racial politics through patterns of racial oppression against Blacks, Latinas/os, and Asian Americans as they arrive in Ethnic Studies. San Juan (1991) incisively writes:

Ethnic studies can revitalize itself by challenging the orthodoxies of Establishment intellectuals and of state policies. This critique would strive to establish the groundwork for the fusion of theory and practice. It would seek to recapture the activist impulse presiding at its birth, mobilizing the agenda of popular memory by inscribing the history of people’s struggles at the center of the discipline. As critique and praxis, Ethnic Studies can reshape the cultural landscape and contribute to the empowerment of oppressed groups and sectors. (p. 468)

San Juan (1991) articulates the promise of Ethnic Studies as a theoretical and spatial intervention nodding towards the productive possibilities of an Ethnic Studies “critique and praxis.” As such, he calls for a recuperation of the “inaugural vision” of Ethnic Studies to achieve “social transformation.” What we find in tracing histories of ethnic studies is that it has always been highly political and driven by critique and praxis.<sup>6</sup> Yet, it is also from within this

---

<sup>5</sup> Sleeter and Delgado Bernal (2004) offer an insightful engagement with multiculturalism, critical pedagogy, and critical race theory. Their analyses provides helpful directions for Ethnic Studies in education research and acknowledges how theoretical frameworks can be productive rather than disparate.

<sup>6</sup> Glenn Omatsu’s (2003) “The Four Prisons and the Movements of Liberation” is an excellent example of a history of ethnic studies, specifically Asian American Studies. He provides insights for how movements in the 1960s have

terrain that critique and praxis are made visible in the classroom. In the next section, I explore studies whose focus on Ethnic Studies reported encouraging results.

### **Impact of Ethnic Studies**

Attacks on the Mexican American Studies (MAS) program in Arizona represent the violent discursive contours against Ethnic Studies. Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade (2014) analyzes the Orwellian “doublethink” nature of Arizona’s challenges to Ethnic Studies. “Doublethink,” he writes, is “not just lying” but also “self-deception that requires people to fool themselves” (p. 160). He discusses how the state claims MAS is divisive, yet, does not challenge the Eurocentrism of state standard curricula towards non-white groups. Duncan-Andrade (2014) highlights this point further:

When curriculum and instruction lean heavily on an Anglo-Eurocentric worldview, delivered by an overwhelmingly white teacher workforce, there is no threat to the well-being of children or national security. It is deemed acceptable to use a curriculum that numerous scholars have shown to be exclusionary, incomplete, or even categorically false in its representation of African, indigenous, Asian, and Latin and South American peoples because there is not enough room in the curriculum to cover them. (p.162)

The doublethink discourse operating in Tucson runs contrary to proponents of Ethnic Studies and researchers whose findings are consistent in reporting the academic and social values of Ethnic Studies for all students, communities, schools. Although as a formation, Ethnic Studies remains relatively new in comparison to traditional fields, recent developments in scholarship point towards the field of education beginning to account for the value of Ethnic Studies as pedagogy, methodology, and venue for advancing the field.<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of this

---

been framed through critical principles—such as “advocacy”; “self-determination”; “power to the people”—raising questions of how these inform our understanding of and guidance through contemporary political moments.

<sup>7</sup> A cursory search of the six academic journals sponsored by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) for either keywords or abstracts with “ethnic studies” yielded *one* (reviewed here) peer-reviewed article published as of October 2014.

section, I examine key research contributions to continue to chart Ethnic Studies research in education.

Research supporting the value of Ethnic Studies positively effecting educational outcomes of students was eclipsed by the dismantling of the MAS program in Arizona by the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD). Although the program produced participants' reading, writing, and math scores significantly higher than those not in the program, exceeding state sanctioned measures of success still were not enough. The National Education Association commissioned curriculum studies scholar Christine Sleeter (2011) to determine from the research what, if any, academic and social values were attributed to ethnic studies. Of the sixteen research studies she analyzed, fifteen were found to have influenced students' academic achievement. Sleeter (2011) reviewed studies where Ethnic Studies curricula played a role in raising students' sense of agency and through a critical consciousness of race and racism, persevered through negative campus climates (e.g., Cammarota & Romero, 2009; Carter, 2008; O'Conner, 1997). Sleeter found consistent for teachers were ways seeing one's self in the curricula developed students' academic ethnic identity whereby "education can serve as a tool for their own advancement as well as for serving their community" (p. 9). Additionally, Sleeter's analysis of the literature revealed Ethnic Studies as having an impact on the development of student literacies (e.g., Bean, Valerio, Senior & White, 1999; Brozo & Valerio, 1996; Krater, Zeni, & Carson, 1994; Rickford, 2001). Likewise, Sleeter cited Lomawaima and McCarty's (2006) ethnographic research with Indigenous languages directly improved students' "academic learning, ability to work in English" and graduation rates (p. 11). Sleeter's analysis of the literature and particularly the ways Ethnic Studies curricula benefits Students of Color and

White students' academically and socially strongly refutes claims of encouraging division and framings of the curricula and courses as non-academic.

Among the challenges of late in considering Ethnic Studies in schools has been the manner in which effective teachers of Ethnic Studies will be prepared. Similar to Sleeter's (2011) review of Ethnic Studies curricula, Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales and collaborators (2014) examined studies that document effective K–12 Ethnic Studies teachers to begin outlining an, "Ethnic Studies Pedagogy." From the research they identified guiding principles for Ethnic Studies pedagogy, namely a pedagogy that is: academically rigorous, community responsive methods with culturally responsive curriculum, and engages critical reflection for teachers. Moreover, they assert that an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy is deeply an anti-racist and decolonial project that "deconstructs structural forms of domination and subordination, going beyond similitic additive of multicultural content to the curriculum" (p. 4). Tintiangco-Cubales and colleagues cited Roderick Daus-Magbual's (2010) study of nine Filipino American teachers trained in critical Filipino American and Ethnic Studies. Daus-Magbual (2010) found that through an Ethnic Studies framework allowed for the teachers to do "deep identity work" in preparation that resulted in engaging and working to develop their students' academic, political, and cultural empowerment.

Their contributions to Ethnic Studies in education research are important for a number of reasons, especially the ways they identify significant barriers for teacher of color candidates interested in bringing their ethnic studies backgrounds into the classroom. For Tintianco-Cubales and colleagues (2014), testing bias is a challenge preventing teachers of color candidates face. Their analysis of California state-mandated examination tests for proficiency in social studies found "limited references to the history of US-based racial and ethnic minorities" (p. 5).

In other words, the standards are “written through a Eurocentric perspective where the references of people of color are both essentialist and additive.” A way to challenge these limitations in the recruitment of Ethnic Studies-prepared teacher candidates come from Tintiango-Cubales and colleagues’ recommendations calling for dramatic shifts in the ways teachers are prepared. One example is to incorporate Ethnic Studies content into teacher credentialing programs. Similarly Tintiango-Cubales and colleagues contend, school administrative leaders must engage their professional development sessions to strengthen teachers’ Ethnic Studies knowledge, which includes committing the time, compensation, finances to ensure their support. It is no coincidence that an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy involves developing partnerships between students, teachers, and institutions such that the institutions that typically challenge Ethnic Studies are held accountable for Ethnic Studies’ sustainability.

Here we can begin to see how the academic and social value of Ethnic Studies can be understood through an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy. Such an unapologetic conception is supported in the research of its utility and value. Indeed the relationships between Ethnic Studies scholarship must be include studies whose quantitative findings support the same claims as the research reviewed above. Nolan Cabrera and colleagues’ (2014) work conveys this relationship adhering to a fundamental inquiry: do Ethnic Studies classes raise student achievement? Their empirical strategy was concerned with an appraisal of the MAS program. Their quantitative analysis used de-identified student-level administrative data in TUSD (courses taken, state standardized test scores, school services utilized, demographic data) to answer their overarching research question. From the sample of TUSD cohorts that would have graduated in the 2009, 2009, 2010, and 2011 cohorts (N = 26,022), they reported taking more than one MAS course “significantly increased the probability of graduation” (p. 23). Furthermore, they considered

how the data raised an issue considering who were more likely to take the courses—students typically characterized as “lower performing,” revealing a trend in which “MAS students generally outperformed their non-MAS peers” (p. 19).

Within their findings, however, they identified one cohort where the impact of the MAS on academic achievement declined. Among the possible reasons they suggested were challenges scaling up the program. The researchers considered the intensified political contexts occurring when this cohort was in the MAS program “because the turmoil that students, families, and the school district experienced likely distracted from the day-to-day rhythm of classroom life” (p. 24). What with the quantitative empirical data providing “evidence” for opponents of ethnic studies in TUSD, a rather important issue was raised, that of being able to discern which elements of the MAS program contributed to student achievement. In a word: praxis. This is an important distinction—the theoretical underpinnings utilized in the MAS program, coupled with the pedagogies that Ethnic Studies Pedagogy offers, must also be examined more deeply to robustly push forward the valuation of Ethnic Studies in schools.

### **Critical Pedagogies**

In “Teaching, Minoritarian Knowledge, and Love” José Esteban Muñoz (2005) shares a sharp and deeply personal reflection on teaching, theory, and love. He writes, “. . . the showing of the seams of one’s pedagogy is the laying bare the here and now of pedagogy, which has everything to do with promise, possibility, and potentiality (not inevitably) of failure” (p. 120). Muñoz’s meditation opens up space for how one might strip the dyad of “critical” and “pedagogy” to consider more thoughtfully, ways that reposition “critical pedagogy” as invested not only in interrogating systems of power but also envisioning the power of the systems

operating across individuals, in this case students/teachers. Which is to say, getting to the commitments associated with teaching and the forces that drive those commitments.

In this section, I briefly examine critical pedagogies that have been utilized in Ethnic Studies teaching and classes. To begin, I operationalize the “critical” that characterizes these pedagogies. Zeus Leonardo’s (2013) explications of the terms associated with critical offer a point of consideration. He warns, “as critical descends into common sense, it is in danger of becoming non-sense, adopting an uncritically critical stance” (p. 14). Therefore, a trait across these critical pedagogies is a particular political stance, one that is engaged and invested in thinking critically about how “schooling ought to distinguish between the surface and substance in an unequal, if not also racialized, context” (p. 14). I am not suggesting that other pedagogies are unproductive in thinking about how Ethnic Studies teachers, teach; rather, acknowledging in a cautionary fashion the need to operationalize more clearly what exactly Ethnic Studies and Ethnic Studies teachers are critical of. This section reviews scholarship on critical pedagogies. I then review studies I found to infuse critical pedagogy and explicitly engaged with Ethnic Studies content and curricula.

### **Critical Pedagogies and Ethnic Studies**

“Purpose” in an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy, Tintiango-Cubales and colleagues (2014) write, needs to be “embedded in its pedagogy” (p. 8). That is, it is a pedagogy that begins from the premise that decolonization, self-determination, and anti-racism are transparently factored into Ethnic Studies Pedagogy. Culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010) are also among the ingredients of Ethnic Studies pedagogy. Gloria Ladson-Billings’ (1994, 2000) groundbreaking study of highly effective teachers of African American students helped identify what she termed, *culturally relevant*

*pedagogy*. She defined it as “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically using cultural referents” (p. 17). Her study signaled the need for teaching to move away from deficit approaches prominent decades earlier and made explicit the ways students’ needs and culture are at the center of classrooms. As a methodological tool, Ladson-Billings’ work provides a model for how a study design focused on effective teachers can proceed. And, her explication of the “community nomination” process indicates how researchers can engage with the school community in the research process.

Similarly, Geneva Gay’s (2010) *culturally responsive pedagogy* engaged with students’ cultural knowledge and urged teachers to create learning encounters that were more relevant to their lived experiences. As these and other pedagogies become more refined, the possibilities of them losing their original object and sharpness of both utility and critique come to the fore. Paris’ (2012) call for pushing forward Ladson-Billings’ (1995) important work is one such example. He raises the question of whether or not these pedagogies “go far enough in their orientation to the languages and literacies and other cultural practices of students and communities to ensure the valuing and maintenance of our increasingly multiethnic and multilingual society” (p. 94). Django Paris (2012) suggests a *culturally sustaining pedagogy* that “support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence” (p. 95). While Paris’ conceptions are ripe for evaluating the directions and shifting contexts critical pedagogies in general must move toward, not as clear is *how*. The following section explores studies whose pedagogies are grounded in Ethnic Studies.



## **Critical Ethnic Studies Pedagogies in Action**

Cathy Schlund-Vials (2011) argues the importance of programs, departments, and classes committed to focusing on race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality as ways to “deepen conversations of the ‘color line’ and the problem of the ‘colorblind’ within the classroom” (p. 102). She analyzes discursive trends on college campuses that purport post-racialism. She suggests ethnic studies and more specifically Asian American studies as “a significant pedagogical and intellectual site of identity inquiry and critique” (p. 107). Through a comparative Ethnic Studies approach and building off the work of Asian American scholars Okimoto (1994) and Takaki (1979) Schlund-Vials proposes an “intersectional pedagogy” that brings students back to the “politics and progressive histories” (p. 108).

Similarly, Cati de los Ríos’ (2013) longitudinal study of critical teacher inquiry takes seriously the need for more ethnic studies in education research. Her yearlong study of a Chicana/o-Latina/o Studies social science elective course aligned with California state U.S. history and English Language Arts standards. Through a borderlands analysis, de los Ríos examined the impact the course had on both students and teachers. Pedagogically, the course resulted in students developing skills to “name their worlds and talk back in ways that disrupted normative discourses about Chicana/o and Latina/o young people” (p. 65). Moreover, students reported feeling “accepted” and the “classroom community fostered a sense of agency, participation, self-love, and love of one’s people” (p. 69). A key example of de los Ríos’ study aligning with the principles of an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy was the community-wide encuentro. Students partnered with a neighboring college class and collaborated to convene a gathering of families, teachers and administrators. They reported the findings from their action research

projects on topics ranging from labor issues, identity formation, and challenges to patriarchy; a rich example of Ethnic Studies pedagogy in action.

Patricia Halagao (2004, 2010) is credited for developing an innovative decolonial Ethnic Studies curriculum known as *Pinoy Teach*. Halagao's (2004) study examined the experiences of six Filipino American college student teachers. Through document analysis and phenomenological interviews, Halagao found the curricula involved heavily influenced the teachers' sense of self. For instance, the participants learned about Filipino American history through a multicultural approach and later taught to youth the same lessons. In essence, participating in *Pinoy Teach* was a service learning opportunity that developed students into being role models and collaborators in the creation of curriculum. Moreover, *Pinoy Teach* was for the teachers an entry into a decolonizing education carving out a space for them to "dispel myths and stereotypes about one another" and "problematized the participants' conceptions of their ethnic and racial identities" (p. 476). In this way, pedagogies employed in Halagao's study engaged directly with Ethnic Studies pedagogy's concerns for self-reflexivity, producing transformative outcomes for the teachers themselves. While Halagao's work engages the consequences of colonialism in the United States, Michael Viola (2014) encourages a transnational lens. He draws a transnational connection between critical pedagogy and Filipinos, specifically engaging with the national democratic movement in the Philippines. He combines interviews with political prisoner Melissa Roxas to the political education developed by U.S. students on exposure trips to the Philippines. Viola provides an early framework that merges Roxas' experience with critical pedagogy to develop what he has termed Filipino critical pedagogy (FilCrit). Viola's focus on the transnational and interconnectedness of the experiences

of the Philippines in the contemporary moment is informative for Ethnic Studies' need for a more globalized perspective.

An exemplar of Ethnic Studies pedagogy in action was found in the work of Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales' (2007) Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP). PEP is a service learning teaching organization and Ethnic Studies leadership pipeline located in San Francisco (A. Tintiangco-Cubales, 2007). PEP trains undergraduate and graduate students interested in teaching in the principles of Freirean pedagogy, Ethnic and critical Filipino American Studies. PEP teachers serve primarily low income and recent immigrant Filipino American students and teach across the K-community college pipeline. Tintiangco-Cubales and colleagues (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2010) describe the organization of PEP mirroring what she termed, "barangay pedagogy." In Tagalog, barangays are small communities or political units. They explain, philosophically a barangay can mean "we are all in the same boat" or "the people in a barangay are in the struggle together, for better or worse (p. 7)." Moreover, barangay pedagogy provides a sense of what Lawsin (1998) describes as the bayanihan spirit, a strong feeling of belonging to a community. Tintiangco-Cubales and colleagues (2010) elaborate this sentiment further writing, "the process of developing barangay pedagogy is directly related to decolonization" and "puts forth to healing a process that is both individual and communal" (p. 7). In this way, barangay pedagogy and the critical work of PEP creates transformative solutions to issues Filipino Americans face in their schools and communities. Ethnic Studies pedagogies work towards unsettling inequity at its core through an incisive critique, imaginative teaching, and a deep commitment to the students and communities one works with.

The next chapter details Portraiture's influence on my methodological approach to this project. I describe the various theories that inform my methodology, provide snapshots of each

of the seven teachers, and discuss my approaches toward data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes with my positionality as portraitist.

### CHAPTER 3: Methodology

How we see a thing—even with our eyes—is very much dependent on where we stand in relationship to it.

Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o (1994)

As I listen to these stories, I hear deep and powerful currents. It is no longer possible to think of a single stream. There is both loss and new strength as these mingled waters carry ancestral wisdom to the next generation. Our stories are dynamic, unsettled.

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994)

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's metaphor of the river flows throughout the pages of her pathbreaking *I've Known Rivers: Lives of Loss and Liberation*. I begin this chapter with the selected epigraph from *Rivers* because of how it conveys a significant lesson about stories: stories are multiple, complex, “dynamic,” and “unsettled.” For Lawrence-Lightfoot, stories contain depth and power that can be heard in a multitude of ways, inaudible in a “single stream.” By encouraging the reader to listen for the “deep and powerful currents” of stories, Lawrence-Lightfoot provides an analytical blueprint for what she would later describe as “Portraiture.”

Taking up this idea of “deep and powerful currents,” portraiture, then, as method and theory becomes legible in the “currents” of this particular moment. Which is to say, the political stakes upon which this project travels across “mingled waters.” In this way, the “currents” of this study are concerned with the on-going assaults on communities of color, most overtly to Black trans women and men's bodies and communities, imbued through the “deep and powerful” violent structures of white supremacy. “Currents” include the erosion of the public university all the while the neoliberal enterprise is met with an equally “deep and powerful” resistance animating student activist movements across the nation. “Currents” also include the “deep and

powerful” effects of Ethnic Studies and education, as evidenced by a growing body of empirical research (Dee & Penner, 2016).

Energized by the “currents” described above and the ongoing political and racialized contexts that mark the moments this study occurs within, I draw upon critical qualitative research methods to envision “new strength” in Ethnic Studies and Education. Therefore, *Portraits of Praxis: Lessons from Filipino American Teachers Rooted in Ethnic Studies* aims to investigate the impact and influence of Ethnic Studies on Filipino American teachers. Specifically, I am interested in understanding how having an Ethnic Studies background informs one’s practices and pedagogies as a classroom teacher. That is, how Filipino American teachers make sense of their lives and their worlds as educators committed to social and racial justice. *Portraits of Praxis* endeavors to learn from the stories and rich experiences of Filipino American teachers and identify possibilities for application across multiple areas in education. In so doing, I hope to examine more fully the potentiality of Ethnic Studies and Education as a critical site for the recruitment, retention, and sustained preparation of teachers of color in general and Filipino American teachers in particular.

In this chapter, I will: (a) detail the theoretical frameworks and tools that guide both the project’s design and analyses; (b) explain the study design, sample, data collection methods, and limitations; (c) provide snapshots of each participant; and (d) present an emergent methodological approach for how findings are shared. Collectively, the methods used in this study work to answer the following research questions:

1. How does Ethnic Studies shape Filipino American teachers’ practices and pedagogies?
2. How does Ethnic Studies prepare teachers to be more community responsive?
3. What are the possibilities of imagining Ethnic Studies as teacher education?

## Streams of Methodology:

### Portraiture, Critical Race Studies, and Intersectionality

In *Reflections on Portraiture*, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's (2005) offers what she sees as the future directions for portraiture in educational research. She concludes her reflective essay with hopes that the methodological inquiry "will spread to places where it will be challenging, illuminating, and useful" (p. 14). Taking up this invitation, I posit such a place that is finding utility in the intellectual energy and methodological luminance of portraiture exists at the nexus of Ethnic Studies and Education. Portraiture as a methodology is valuable for this study for a number of reasons, primary among these, however, are the ways portraiture is "about boundary crossing" in its approaches to "illuminate the complex dimensions of *goodness*" (xvii).

Portraiture is fitting because of its interdisciplinary nature. A portraitist "listens for" goodness in conversations, observations, and meditations with subjects. Below is an excerpt that begins the introductory chapter of Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' (1997) *The Art and Science of Portraiture*, what many consider the how-to guide for engaging in portraiture. Lawrence-Lightfoot describes portraiture as:

. . . the term I use for a method of inquiry and documentation in the social sciences. With it, I seek to combine systematic, empirical description with aesthetic expression, blending art and science, humanistic sensibilities, and scientific rigor. The portraits are designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences. The portraits are shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each one participating in the drawing of the image. The encounter between the two is rich with meaning and resonance and is crucial to the success and authenticity of the rendered piece. (p. 3)

In so doing, Lawrence-Lightfoot highlights the contours of blending art and science with a goal of "capturing the richness, complexity, and dimensionality" of her subjects across various contexts including the historical and political. Dialogue then, is significant because of "the

encounter,” and therefore, becomes a way in which the portraitist enters into the research process.

This approach echoes what performance studies scholar, Soyini Madison (2010) described in her work in South Saharan Africa with human rights activists as “performative-witnessing.” Madison encourages “acknowledgement of others as contemporaries moving away from the “Other-as-theme to Other-as-interlocutor. Performative-witnessing is to speak “with” not “to” or “at” others” (p. 25). Her use of Other, acknowledges the histories of research wherein the gaze upon the Other was always already imperialist, racialized, and colonial. Encouraging researchers to move away from “Other-as-theme” signals a recasting of power dynamics between researcher and researched. Madison’s description is important because of the emphasis placed upon engaging research *with* your participants and acknowledging the critical insights they provide when approached as an “interlocutor” and not just as a data point. She explains, “witnessing does not stand from a position of ideological and axiological purity; it contributes to the labor and performances of those researchers and activists who do not simply attempt to reflect the world as a mirror but take up the hammer to build and imagine it differently” (p. 25).

Drawing from German dramaturg and poet, Bertolt Brecht, Madison links the work of the researcher to that of an artist. She suggests that researchers have the tools to encounter the world by building, contributing, and imagining it “differently.” Additionally, my methodological approach finds kinship in the thinking around and pushing forward of portraiture. Such emergent theorizing, methodologies, and practices include: Portraits as “selfies” (Valdez, 2015); Muxerista Portraiture (Flores, Forthcoming); Women of Color blended portraiture (Cariaga, 2017); and portraiture as a decolonizing praxis (Nievera-Lozano, 2016). Encountering the



research process as both Madison (2010), Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994, 1997), and the scholars mentioned above becomes a guiding principle of *Portraits of Praxis*.

### **Portraiture's Essential Features**

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) suggests five essential features of portraiture: context, voice, relationships, emergent themes, and aesthetic whole. *Context* takes into consideration the setting of the encounter, be it the physical, geographical, metaphorical, historical, and cultural contexts. She writes, "it is used to place people and action in time and space and as a resource for understanding what they say and do" (p. 41). *Voice*, acknowledges how the researcher's voice is found throughout the research process and works to honor the voices of research participants. She argues that portraitists listen *for* a story as opposed *to* listening to a story. This perspective, as Lawrence-Lightfoot and Madison maintain, positions the researcher as a part of the process that brings their own biases, perspectives, and hypotheses into the study. Equally important of this methodology are the *relationships* created, nurtured, and developed. Portraits are constructed and shaped because of what emerges from the relationships between portraitist and participant. *Emergent themes* involve the "disciplined, empirical process of--description, interpretation, analysis, and synthesis--and an aesthetic process of narrative development" (p. 185). Important to identifying emergent themes is understanding that they are a part of an iterative and generative process and practice that the portraitist engages. The *aesthetic whole* becomes clearer working in concert with the aforementioned essential features. This includes the process of creating the final portrait weaving together the tapestry of texts and themes, colors and imaginings, images and contexts, reflections and voices.

## **The Impressionistic Record**

An essential tool of the portraitist is the impressionistic record, akin to what some might refer to as a field note journal. The impressionistic record is an on-going source for recording reflections and an important tool used when developing portraits. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) states, “with each stage of data collection, at the close of each day, the portraitist gathers, scrutinizes, and organizes the data, and tries to make sense of what she has witnessed” (p. 187). In the impressionistic record are the following headings used to guide the portraitist’s recollection of the day’s encounters, contexts, conversations, and reflections. The headings include: emerging hypotheses, suggested interpretations, shifts in perspective, puzzles and dilemmas (methodological, conceptual, ethical), and a plan of action. In my impressionistic record, I added the following headers: The school, the teacher, the interview, on teaching, on being Filipino, on race to guide my reflection and interests in questions of race, pedagogy, and practice. The impressionistic record allowed me to revisit and often reframe approaches for subsequent conversations. This tool allowed for a robust recollection that would later be useful when crafting each portrait.

## **Blending Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality**

Critical race theory in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano, 1997) is a key methodology that this project relies on. Critical race methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991) are productive for helping think through questions around how Filipino American teachers draw upon Ethnic Studies as a lens for their teaching but also how Ethnic Studies engenders pedagogical influence. Therefore, these theoretical frames have opened up space for productive critiques and approaches for interrogating the everyday, the normative, and the common sense. This section explores how I

am using an intersectional analysis. Because CRT guides *Portraits of Praxis*, this section focuses on intersectionality while highlighting how it can be used in tandem with critical race methodology.

Solórzano and Yosso's (2002) outline for a critical race methodology (CRM) "offers a way to understand the experiences of people of color along the educational pipeline" (p. 36). They define CRM as a "theoretically grounded approach to research that: (a) foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process; (b) challenges the traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of students of color; (c) offers a liberatory or transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination; and (d) focuses on the racialized, gendered, and classed experiences of students [and teachers] of color. Furthermore, it views these experiences as sources of strengths and (e) uses the interdisciplinary knowledge base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, humanities, and the law to better understand the experiences of students [and people] of color" (p. 24). CRM, therefore, makes possible ways for education researchers to challenge dominant research paradigms that have historically marked Communities of Color in deficit and racist ways.

In 1997, Daniel Solórzano defined the first theme of CRT as, "The centrality and intersectionality of race and racism" (1997). This tenet and the multiple iterations scholars have deployed to advance critical race tools remains a powerful approach for understanding complex issues in education. Challenging discrimination laws inability to account for the "multidimensionality of Black women's experiences with single-axis analysis" (p. 139), Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) offers the concept of "intersectionality." She argues that as it stood, a single-issue analysis had certain conceptual limitations. For instance, feminist theory re-centers whiteness even in attempts to rationalize how "feminist theory remains *white* and its potential to

broaden and deepen its analysis by addressing non-privileged women remains unrealized” (p. 154). Crenshaw (1991) continued to push forward her conception of intersectionality by grounding it in examples of violence against women of color. She offers three thematic ways for understanding intersectionality: *structural* intersectionality; *political* intersectionality; and *representational* intersectionality. These categories and their modifications were helpful in analyzing the environments the teachers are in. For instance, I consider the structural and political challenges that teachers encountered in their schools. Similarly, I sought to understand how they approached issues of representation and how their confluence manifested the teachers’ approaches to teaching.

Applying these to education research, Crenshaw (1991) reminds us that although identity markers are indeed important to reveal complexities of one’s person (in the case of Black women: race and gender), an intersectional analysis is directly concerned with troubling systems of power (racism and sexism). Such an analysis therefore supports “thinking about the way power has clustered around certain categories and is exercised against others” (p. 1297). Taking this further, while CRT maintains the centrality of race and racism, an intersectional analysis will advance conceptions of how colonialism and patriarchy emerged through data collection.

The guiding tenets of critical race methodology combined with the epistemological and conceptual depth of intersectionality, and centrality of portraiture provide an ensemble of theories that frame the methodology of this study. To extend critical trans legal scholar Dean Spade’s (2008) challenge—education researchers must work “to bring our tools to the problems. . . . we must examine our role and engage transformative strategies that ask hard questions and relentlessly and self-reflectively pursue meaningful answers” (p. 373). A critical race methodology, intersectional, and portraiture approach enables such pursuits.

## Study Design, Sample, and Analysis

*Portraits of Praxis* takes a case study approach (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 1994) and employs qualitative methods to collect data. For this project, the case (Filipino American teachers) allows the opportunity to examine comparisons between teachers, and explore similarities and differences across geographic location and type of school. To answer my research questions, I used two main data collection methods: (a) semi-structured interviews and (b) focus groups. Excerpts from my impressionistic record were also a part of my research strategy.

The nature of the research problem—the possibilities of Ethnic Studies and its implications for schools on one hand, and examining the experiences of effective Filipino American teachers rooted in Ethnic Studies on the other—warrants a case study approach to “investigate complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon” (Merriam, 2009, p. 51). Case study allows me to investigate “contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). The phenomenon under investigation is how having ethnic studies background informs teachers’ pedagogies. Moreover, a case study design is the preferred approach because of my “firm grasp of the issues” concerning ethnic studies and ability to “know immediately” if the sources of information result in needing additional evidence” (Yin, 1994, p. 58).

The study took place across two geographic regions: public schools in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles. San Francisco has been at the forefront of efforts to mobilize Ethnic Studies teaching in schools. Los Angeles has a rich history involving Filipino American as well as collective efforts to advocate for Ethnic Studies.

## **On Limitations**

Here, I briefly state the limitations of the study. I intentionally break with bookending this chapter with limitations and present them at the outset so as to not end with the study's shortcomings. First, not all of the participants in the focus groups were present. One of the teachers was unable to attend because he was out of town and the other was preparing to give birth to her son. Therefore, both the San Francisco and Los Angeles focus group consisted of three teachers each. The three-person focus group allowed for a more intimate space and a balanced speaking time for all participants. The participants that did not participate were asked to reflect on the topics and questions that were asked in the focus group and submit their answers as a written reflection. A second limitation of the study was not including classroom observation. The study would have benefited from a sustained observation of each of the teachers teaching. A few of the interviews, however, did take place during and at their school. I was able to catch glimpses of their teaching, interactions with students as well as colleagues, which nuanced the "aesthetic whole" for the study.

## **Sample**

To populate this study, I created an online Google Form (see Appendix B) to solicit participants. Possible participants were asked to provide descriptive characteristics (number of years teaching, grade level and subject area). I also asked for short-answer questions around how Ethnic Studies influenced their teaching and preparation as teachers. I used social media and email lists of national critical educator networks to share the online flyer and online interest form. The final selection of participants was made based on: responses they offered in the initial interest form, purposive sampling approaches, an equitable balance among genders, teaching experience, and grade level. Snapshot profiles of each of the final participants are shared below.

## **Data Collection Methods and Analysis**

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) write that critical race theory can serve multiple theoretical and methodological functions. Specific to my analysis are how this study “generates knowledge by looking to those who have been epistemologically marginalized, silenced, and disempowered” (p. 36). One could argue that Ethnic Studies is often marginalized in how it is characterized within mainstream education. Similarly, the epistemologies of Filipino Americans tend to be conflated with Asian Americans more generally. In their recommendations for research on teachers Anderson and Burns’ analysis of (1990) six studies of teachers conducted over the past 60 years write: “typically, multiple sources of evidence and multiple perspectives should be used to increase our understanding of the teacher characteristic(s) under study. Observations of teachers can be used to document characteristic actions of teachers or to stimulate teachers to reveal and reflect on the beliefs that underlie those actions” (p. 343). The multiple sources and perspectives gathered through the interviews and focus groups were very productive for answering the main research questions. The section below shares the purpose and goal for the selected method and concludes with my approach for data analysis.

## **Semi-Structured Interviews and Artifacts**

My purpose for choosing interviews as a primary data collection method is that they “allow the knowledge of communities of color to be viewed as a strength and an asset” (Delgado-Bernal, 2002, p. 116). The open-ended nature of the semi-structured interview allowed participants to share in a free flowing environment. That is, I was able to use language that asks hypothetical, ideal, and interpretive questions to elicit how participants feel as well as why their responses are as such (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009). In “Research as Solidarity” Glesne (2007) challenges how typical interviews tend to be formal. Glesne explains the

interview “depends on the individualization of the self, rather than a “collective” self. We need to consider this when doing cross-cultural work and also ask how we can co-construct interviews, and in the process, co-construct knowledge” (p. 173). In this way, I encouraged the teachers to share questions and reflections they wanted to add as well as invited questions of myself and the larger objectives of the project.

For organizational purposes, the teachers were separated based on locale: a San Francisco cohort and a Los Angeles cohort. Each teacher was interviewed twice, audio recorded, and lasted anywhere from an hour to an hour and a half. The first interview focused on gathering insight into the teacher’s life, their schooling experience, family, and how they came to teaching. The second interview focused on the teacher’s relationship to Ethnic Studies, challenges they experience in the classroom and with teaching, and on their experience in teacher education. The second interview began with the teacher sharing artifacts that embodied their experiences with and learning of Ethnic Studies. These artifacts included photographs, books, students’ work, and event flyers. Most of the interviews took place at the teacher’s school in their classrooms. For convenience, some of the second interviews were conducted in their homes. Once all of the interviews for a cohort were completed, we reconvened for a focus group. See Appendices C and D for protocols.

### **Focus Groups**

Focus groups “works best for topics people could talk about to each other in their everyday lives—but don’t” (Merriam, 2009, p.94). This an important feature for the study because the focus group provided a space for the teachers to learn from one another, exchange ideas and insights, and engage in reflection. The focus groups were comprised of three teachers, most either knew of each other, were meeting for the first time, or were colleagues having taught



in the same school district as one another. This characteristic was in line with Stewart and Shamdasani (2014) explained as “enough common ground to reveal differing perspectives and ideas and generate some creative tension” (p. 19). All of the focus groups were audio recorded and a research assistant accompanied me to support note taking which allowed me to freely engage in dialogue with the teachers.

Each of the focus groups began with an exercise I call, “Critical Concepts Circle.” In reading my impressionistic record and reviewing transcriptions from interviews, I identified several key concepts related to teaching and Ethnic Studies. These concepts sparked a conversation for each of the participants to share their insights and build off one another. The goal of this exercise was to cull a collective definition for concepts and terms largely used by Ethnic Studies-trained educators. Afterward, the focus group shifted topics to engage participants in a conversation around what it means to teach from an Ethnic Studies perspective. Once the focus group questions were discussed (see Appendix E), each of the teachers participated in a silent writing activity (see Appendix F) that asked them to reflect on the whole experience and what they learned.

### **Critical Race Coding and Analyses**

At the time I was ready to begin a closer analysis of the data, I began teaching a graduate seminar on research analysis in higher education. The seminar was in the middle of a three-part series where students had already collected their data and would begin the analysis process; we were, in many ways, at the same stage of our respective projects. Preparing for class each week led me to questions about the ways one’s theoretical and epistemological orientations inform how they engage in the process of coding. That is, how does one *do* critical race theory work in the analysis phase of research? What might a critical race qualitative coding approach look like?

And, how might you do it? I brought these questions to the students I was working with and shared excerpts of my raw data. We engaged in a collective process of analyzing and applying various strategies. Guided by Johnny Saldana's (2012) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, we practiced coding. Then, I proposed that each of the students apply the theoretical framework they are using in their projects to the data. What emerged was what I am calling, a "Critical race coding" approach for qualitative research.

Returning to the essential features of portraiture, the strategies that were beginning to take shape when applying a critical race framework to analysis, and principles of intersectionality I continued to analyze my research data. With a clearer set of codes all of the research data was uploaded into Dedoose, an online qualitative software program. The emergent themes, impressionistic record, and critical race codes coalesced to become the portraits of the participants presented below.

### **Snapshots of Teachers**

#### **Andre Paseo**

*Andre Paseo* has been teaching for about a decade. He is an English teacher working in South Los Angeles. A Los Angeles transplant who is originally from the San Francisco, Bay Area. Andre found Ethnic Studies accidentally. He was originally an engineer major, however found it challenging and disengaging. Andre would later be a founding teacher for Pin@y Educational Partnerships, an Ethnic Studies service-learning program that supports students interested in teaching to research, create curricula, and teach Filipino American studies. For Andre, Ethnic Studies "helped me find myself in my education and thus, led me to be more engaged in my studies as an undergrad and beyond. Ethnic Studies has also provided me with a more critical lens as an educator/person of color."

### **Allan Hernandez**

In his third year of teaching, *Allan Hernandez* is a kindergarten teacher at a charter school in his hometown of Stockton, California. Allan has returned home after completing his degree in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley. Regarding his relationship to Ethnic Studies, Allan offers, “Ethnic studies has given me the following mindset: I am *with* the students on their journey towards critical awareness, not ahead of them. Being in solidarity with my students motivates me to make learning culturally relevant, entertaining, revolutionary, and transformative.” Upon returning home from college he and his childhood friends, both teachers, have built an after-school program for Filipino American students.

### **Cassie Ventura**

A seasoned community organizer, *Cassie Ventura*’s schooling has taken shape in a variety of countries. Cassie is completing her eleventh year of teaching and has taught all levels of elementary. She currently teaches grades 4 and 5 math and science. This Pinay-identified teacher believes Ethnic Studies has impacted her life because it has “given me a perspective in how I live and learn and teach on a daily basis.” She continued, Ethnic Studies “has impacted me in a way that it has become a part of my everyday life and the struggle that I know I am a part of. The struggle for basic human rights for all, the right to learn about history through multiple perspectives, not just from the perspective of the people in positions of power.”

### **Erica Banaag**

*Erica Banaag* is in her first year of “officially” teaching. She has been at the Pilot School for the past three years as a student teacher and later as a long-term substitute. Erica is originally from San Francisco, specifically the Fillmore District. While in San Francisco, Erica was a teacher with Pin@y Educational Partnerships and was able to apply what she learned in

Asian American Studies to PEP classrooms. Her school in Koreatown, Los Angeles focuses on the humanities and visual arts. There, Erica teaches 10<sup>th</sup> grade World History. “Ethnic Studies saved my life,” Erica offers. “It’s helped me find my identity as a Pinay, take pride in my history, connected me to my community and motivated me to take control of my education . . . I decided to become an educator and wanted to teach Filipino American studies. I had the privilege of learning early on that I wanted to be an AAS major. Ethnic Studies not only motivated me to finish high school and be a teacher, it drove me to be the first person in my family to graduate from college.”

### **Jossey Enriquez**

A die-hard Angeleno, *Jossey Enriquez* now calls San Francisco home. He has established and helped build the Filipino American community in San Francisco since his arrival. An “American Born Filipino” is in his fifteenth year of teaching high school. Jossey has taught all grades and social studies. He credits his organizing background in Filipino communities in both Los Angeles and San Francisco as being foundational to his learning of Ethnic Studies. Jossey states, Ethnic Studies “helped me develop, broaden and organize my critical framework collectively with other teachers/practitioners.” “Things are always better when done together,” he says.

### **Rochelle Banay**

*Rochelle Banay* has returned home to the East Bay, to the same middle school she attended as a young person. This self-identified Pinay has been teaching for four years and is currently teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts. While at SFSU, she learned more about Asian American Studies and taught high school Ethnic Studies with Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP). She reflects, “Ethnic Studies allowed me to have a better understanding of my own

identity and the impact that the history of the Philippines has on my present and future. It also taught me the value of serving my community versus solely focusing on my personal goals.”

### **Lisa Pagasa**

*Lisa Pagasa* is a middle school history teacher working in Los Angeles Unified School District. She has seven years of teaching experience from working as a test tutor in Pasadena to having multiple substitute teaching jobs. Over the course of the study, Lisa was returning from maternity leave at a school that, for her, was challenging at best. She was notified of the likelihood of being RIF'd (reduction in force); she was one of several teachers to be RIF'd. In the fall of 2015, at our Los Angeles focus group, she had just completed interviewing and accepting an offer at a new school. Lisa is also an active member of Malaman Pilipino (MP), a grassroots organization in Los Angeles. MP focuses on providing a political education for its members around the relationship between the Philippines and the United States and organizing locally and transnationally ways to address these issues.

### **Portraiture as Collage or Toward an Ethnic Studies Portraiture**

The paradoxical nature of Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's pioneering work on Portraiture—a social science methodological inquiry that evokes richness, captures complexities and subtleties, and blends art and science to portray human experience—is the massiveness found within each life story, concept, and portrait Lawrence-Lightfoot paints. She offers, “The process of creating narrative portraits requires a difficult (sometimes paradoxical) vigilance to empirical description *and* aesthetic expression and a careful scrutiny and modulation of voice” (2005, p. 10). There is no dispute that an aspiring portraitist may at once feel intimidated to aspire to create a portrait in the shadow of Lawrence-Lightfoot's fantastic *Balm in Gilead* (1988) or *I've Known Rivers* (1994). Yet, it is Lawrence-Lightfoot's own description of the *process* of creating portraits that I

meditate upon to gain intellectual and methodological traction. How does “careful scrutiny” and “paradoxical vigilance” arrive in my own work? Enter, the collage.

### **Classroom, Chavez, Collage**

Across the room from the round table where Prof. Solórzano and I sit are two photos. One, a sepia-toned photograph of a Black student sitting attentively in a birch veneer desk, makes up the foreground of the photo. The photograph is of George McLaurin, who had been denied admission into the University of Oklahoma and successfully sued the U.S. District Court to gain admission into this university basing his argument on the Fourteenth Amendment. The photograph captures the ways the color line remained in tact even after successfully suing for violating his Constitutional rights. McLaurin’s desk grazes a classroom doorway flanked by a half dozen white male students sitting in the same birch veneer desk, but the White students are inside the classroom. The hues of the photograph, slightly black and white but conveying more sepia toned highlights the stark contrast of a single Black man, George McCluarin, to the White students. The same wall hangs a dark red-framed poster of Cesar Chavez. It is a movie poster for the documentary film, “The Fight in The Fields” (1997). Several smaller cropped photos of picket signs, farm laborers, snapshots of faces mid shout are pieced together like a mosaic forming the wings of the distinguishable farm workers’ logo.

We liken Lawrence-Lightfoot’s portraits to that of the George McLaurin photograph: powerful, a single frame, incredibly complex yet simple in form. Our conversation moves to the Chavez poster. “See how there’s so many different pieces that make up the larger whole?” I ask. “I feel the data are those pieces making up a larger picture.” “Kind of like a collage, thinking about how the themes you’re finding, the multiple themes, create a collage,” Prof. Solórzano adds. We were talking at length about how issues of colonialism or Filipino identity were not

explicit in conversations with teachers; rather they were subtly present and intersected with other themes around race, teaching, and Ethnic Studies. I arrived at our meeting with what Lawrence-Lightfoot would refer to as an “analytical dilemma” confused about how “all of this” [data] goes into a single portrait. “For our next meeting, I want you to write up a working definition, of how you’re thinking about portraiture, of portraiture like a collage,” he says. I left his office relieved with various pieces of data floating in my head, the same small mosaics that were unclear when I first arrived starting to take form.

### **Toward an Ethnic Studies Portraiture**

Early on when I began developing this *Portraits of Praxis* I came across Joe Kincheloe’s (2009) “Bricolage and the Quest for Multiple Perspectives: New Approaches to Research in Ethnic Studies.” I hit the ground running immersing myself in literature on bricolage, turning to Levi-Strauss (1974) and more recent works connecting the concept to education research (Kincheloe, 2001; Kincheloe & Barry, 2004). I mention this body of work, as they were productive in my thinking around what I am naming “Ethnic Studies Portraiture.” Relatedly, other scholars whose work are influencing this development of portraiture include: critical race studies and counterstorytelling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002); kuwento in Ethnic Studies classrooms (Jocson, 2008; 2009) and conversations in the area of community responsive literacies and Ethnic Studies praxis storytelling (Curammeng, Lopez, & Tintiangco-Cubales, 2016).

As I began to conceptualize my interpretation of portraiture, I knew that at the heart of *Portraits of Praxis* and what has been driving my inquiry is Ethnic Studies. That is, the Filipino American teachers who have shared their stories and experiences with me are all connected because of Ethnic Studies. Therefore, because a bricoleur “makes do with whatever is at hand”

(Levi-Strauss, 1974, p. 17), a critical race theorist “challenges ahistoricism and the unidisciplinary focus of most analyses . . . using interdisciplinary methods” (Solórzano, 1998, p.7), and portraitists listen *for* a story, I am reminded of how the stories shared with me are indicative of how Ethnic Studies has opened up a space for these stories to surface. Therefore, Ethnic Studies Portraiture:

- (a) Centers Ethnic Studies values of love, respect, hope, solidarity, self-determination, critical consciousness, and community;
- (b) Is an expression of how systems of power structures identities and circumstances; and
- (c) Blends art, science, and interdisciplinarity through the construction of portraits as collages—constellations of multiple histories, experiences, and social locations.

In what follows are the major themes—presented as lessons—I as the Ethnic Studies portraitist have found resonant and reflective for honoring these teachers’ stories. Returning to the opening epigraph, Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) declares: “our stories are dynamic, unsettled.” That our stories are unsettled proves that there is still room to import the dynamism, resistance, and complexity nestled in the “ancestral wisdom” that the teachers share and carry. The Ethnic Studies portraits that follow diverge from a “single stream” and are not linear. As Madison reminds us, “linear time is not and could not be captured . . . the events and experiences . . . go back and forth through time, memory space, and reflections” (p. 26). The stories, scenes, and reflections presented here are sometimes interrupted or are unfinished or alongside direct excerpts of exchanges between the teachers to depict and invite the readers more deeply into the portrait. This invitation, a communal journey down the “rivers” of Ethnic Studies and education contained in these pages work to honor the practices and pedagogies of Filipino American teachers and highlight the affordances of Ethnic Studies in their praxis.



## Positionality

In the summer of 2008, I was asked to participate in the “Ethnic Studies Course Development Project (ESCDP)” A year earlier, the Office of Teaching and Learning in San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) reported a decline in course offerings of Ethnic Studies in the preceding five years, from only a few courses to almost none in the 2006–07 school year. The Curriculum Committee of the Board of Education charged the ESCDP team to develop a framework for an Ethnic Studies course for 9<sup>th</sup> grade SFUSD students. The team comprised of 10 high school teachers and an academic advisor from the College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University as well as a smaller team of curriculum consultants who would work with the teachers to design curricula—I was one of the consultants. That summer marked my first year as a teacher with Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP), an Ethnic Studies leadership pipeline that serves primarily low-income and immigrant Filipino families in the Excelsior neighborhood of San Francisco. Although I was a new PEP teacher and admittedly surprised at my invitation to join the ESCDP collective—what kind of “consultation” could I offer these teachers, I thought—I was eager and excited to learn from and work with teachers on the project. That summer we engaged in critical and at times tense conversations around topics concerned with the purpose of Ethnic Studies and who should teach these courses. Fast forward to 2010, the SFSUD board unanimously passed a resolution to expand the pilot program that the ESCDP team began developing just two years prior. I would have never fathomed the impact of what we were working on in the summer would manifest into a huge institutional victory for Ethnic Studies in SFSUSD.

In between those two years I taught critical Filipino American studies at Philip & Sala Burton High School in the Visitacion Valley neighborhood of San Francisco. Inspired by and

reflecting upon the work PEP was doing with students and communities characterized as “urban,” I was motivated to pursue a master’s degree in Asian American Studies at SFSU. I conducted a study that asked questions of the possibilities of Ethnic Studies for Filipino American youth attending suburban schools. On the night of the historic SFSUD Ethnic Studies vote, I was moved by the passion that fueled PEP students’ speeches in front of the board. The PEP students’ educational experiences signified transformation and growth because of Ethnic Studies. If anything, the classroom space that we created was special enough to motivate them to share their story, their truth, express their politicization and agency. Moreover, the relationships they strengthened with their peers displayed a humbling and organic sense of solidarity with other students that convened from throughout San Francisco schools.

PEP is an important factor for myself as a student, teacher, and researcher. PEP has been formative in developing my understandings of critical theory, practice, and praxis. PEP was instrumental in my pursuit of my MA and now PhD. Furthermore, PEP itself has transformed education for Filipino Americans in the pipeline, dramatically shifting (and graduating) record numbers of Filipino Americans pursuing teaching credentials, masters, and doctorates in the fifteen year since its creation. The work of PEP, the network of teachers associated with PEP, and PEP’s pivotal role in the institutionalization of Ethnic Studies in SFUSD are unmatched. Ethnic Studies helps me “see” because of where I “stand in relationship to it” as the epigraph from Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong’o opening this chapter conveys. We turn now to the lessons that make up *Portraits of Praxis*.

## CHAPTER 4: Learning From The Divergent Voice, Teaching With an Ethnic Studies Lens

A key component of portraiture involves the portraitist's task of vigilantly analyzing the codes, categories, and emergent themes that do not fit anticipated or converging patterns. In this chapter the perspectives gleaned from the data—"those perceptions that depart from the norm"—was useful. This perspective, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot writes, "helps us see the quality and contours of the convergent themes more clearly" (p. 193). This is known as the deviant voice. Lawrence-Lightfoot encourages an attentive listening *for* the deviant voice. Knowing these features, the lessons described below collectively shape an "aesthetic whole" that I referred to as a "divergent voice." To note, I elect "divergent" rather than "deviant" because the stories and experiences shared with me were not aberrant. Rather, they diverged in ways that opened up a deeper and more critical conception of matters concerning Ethnic Studies and education, pedagogy and practice among others. In this way, "divergent voice" as an analytic and thematic categorization was a productive finding for this study. These were the unexpected, the interruptions, the divergent moments in which I needed to pause because they diverged far from what their contemporaries shared prior. Analyzing and witnessing the data for divergence led me to what Soyini Madison (2010) suggests to "imagine differently" the experiences and lessons the teachers shared with me.

While Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) encourages a listening *for*, I maintain the importance of *learning from* the divergent voices shared in this study. In so doing, we become akin to the important lessons we can learn from the teachers themselves. Learning from the divergent voices detailed the harsh conditions, emotional and physical exhaustion, and trauma that many teachers endure. And, this learning directs us to the possibilities and potential for healing and

resistance even under copious amounts of harm. Learning from the divergent voice also highlighted the need to affirm and listen to colleagues regardless of the number of years one has had in the classroom. This approach engages a dialogue with the expectation that each individual can learn from one another.

**Lesson One: A Teacher/Activist** introduces us to Lisa Pagasa. Lisa's lesson brings our attention to the often invisible and feminized labor of care she has for her students in the simple act of having nourishment readily available for them. These constraints—an under-resourced school coupled with colleagues whose efforts for collaboration were few—left Lisa fatigued from teaching. Questions concerning whether or not teaching was the “right choice” and feeling guilty about being away from her newborn son compounded her flux between her role as mother, teacher, and activist. Her involvement in activist spaces provided opportunities to develop political consciousness and maintain connections to the communities she is accountable to. The political education offered in activist spaces offered important lessons that education as a whole can learn from. The teacher/activist identity Lisa presents is instructive for teachers interested in finding community, sharpening political clarity, and learning the needs of students in order to identify how your practice can best meet their needs.

We then are introduced to Andre Paseo in **Lesson 2: “. . . as taxing as teaching is”** and listen for the challenges associated with his teaching. With Andre, we witness the mounting pressures teachers of color endure, yet, gain insight into ways he taps into his knowledge of Ethnic Studies with his teaching. Finally, in **Lesson 3: “Find the connections,”** I take up Lawrence-Lightfoot's (2004) call to explore “the subterranean dimensions of dialogue” and Madison's (2010) question “how does one write about it?”—“it” being her ethnographic field observations of activist performances in Ghana. That is, I purposefully pivot with the last lesson

in this chapter to juxtapose and insert dialogue from a focus group with the teachers that “depicts the simultaneity of temporalities and discourses that are more authentic to how it was lived and remembered in the field” (Madison, 2010, p. 26). What follows are lessons *learned from* the divergent voices. Let us learn first from Lisa.

### **Lesson One: A Teacher/Activist**

I kind of always knew that I wanted to be a teacher, but I did not know what like, I did not know what kind of teacher.

Lisa Pagasa

It’s not all going to be “excellent teachers” with these backgrounds, not to say that she isn’t but there are material circumstances preventing a teacher from developing into an excellent teacher. What role does ethnic studies have in countering that challenge?

(Impressionistic Record)

“Hold on,” she said. Two young Latina students were knocking at the door. “They do this all the time,” she shared as she made her way toward the door. The classroom was somewhat dim to suggest nobody was in the class, but the light knocks against the metal door persisted. “Thanks Miss!” The two students smiled excitedly. Lisa handed out two small juice cartons and what appeared to be two individually wrapped sandwiches. She passed them out to the students as if it were second nature, taken from atop a small pile of sandwiches and juice boxes on pile of papers. She walked back to her chair, leg tucked under her leg. The break in between our conversation was somewhat refreshing. Our conversation around her educational background had made its way to college. “That’s why I saved the breakfast, they don’t eat lunch here,” Lisa said. “Hungry?” I ask. “No, they just want to play, but anyway . . . so where was I?” There was a lull, a syncopated slow softness to our conversation, which at the time was frightening. Where was the energy and excitement around Ethnic Studies? I wondered. The

following excerpt depicts her description of Ethnic Studies, the energy I was hoping to encounter at our first meeting:

Ethnic Studies has allowed me to view our society with a decolonized mindset. Knowing how our system is set from the government, to the 9–5 jobs, to our school systems, all of this is because of capitalism and imperialism. Ethnic Studies has allowed me to see that this is a global situation and the struggles of the people is shared by all.

Lisa shared early on that she always knew she wanted to be a teacher. She also had aspirations to become a social worker and thus felt pulled between the two, when she was offered acceptance into a nearby master’s program.

Topped off with maneuvering series of RIFs—reduction-in-force notices or “pink slips” as they were sometimes referred—the instability and under-resourcing of her previous schools, and birthing her new son, Alex, Lisa was navigating a host of new life moments. Lisa elaborated:

It's just been hard for me because coming into this school was already like do I want to be a social worker do I want to be a teacher. To be a teacher is messing with my mind and am I whole hardheartedly here as a teacher right now and being a mom, a new mom and a teacher am I whole hardheartedly here right now?

The “messing with my mind” was clear, and in many ways a result of a number of challenges. “I feel like I don't have enough time to prepare. I also feel like I don't have enough knowledge of the content, so I become that teacher I didn't want to be, reading from the textbook kind of teacher,” Lisa shared when asked about specific challenges she encounters. “I came into the teaching role like with most teachers would like with this ideal mind-set of 'I want to change the world and everything is going to be great' but once I got into it, it just like 'reality hit',” she remembered.

Lisa went on to recall her first-year teaching and the trauma that, in many ways still remains unaddressed that have contributed to feelings of isolation, uncertainty, and fatigue:

I remember my first year of teaching, I was a teacher who came in like five subs, probably late March almost the ends of the school year. I cried all three months or whatever months was left in that first year. I think that was a tragic event, traumatizing event for me as a teacher who wants to teach these kids all those things that I've learned . . . really affected me it was really traumatizing and I think I still am traumatized because there are so many things that I want to do and I want to bring into the classroom that I feel like I don't have the capacity to.

As an active member and leader with Malaman Pilipino, a lot of Lisa's politicization has been in community organizing spaces.

This background informs her critical consciousness and activism as well as provides ongoing Ethnic Studies learning and praxis. Central to the efforts of many activist organizations, MP included, is the collective action component toward engaging in social justice work. Thus, it was unsurprising that Lisa expressed the lack of collaboration with colleagues as a challenge.

Lisa explained:

When I was teaching 4th grade we had a 4th grade team we all thought the same subject and but we had our own kids and we work together to build that curriculum, but here I feel like it's each man for themselves or each woman for themselves with curriculum and I don't feel like collaboration to the teachers here maybe because it's different because what they call a core teacher, teaching English and history while most of teacher, while most of the 8th grade teachers only teaches history, only teach English, only teach science. So, there is no sense of unity with the 8th grades, you know what I mean?

“There is a lot of, ‘I wish I could do this stuff,’” Lisa stated. One of the spaces that both Lisa and I have crossed paths in before is Education 4 The People (E4P), a grassroots space that connects critical educators working in various educational spaces across Los Angeles. “I’ve been to a few meetings and their [E4P] curriculum sharing and I’m like, ‘Oh this is really cool!’ and then that’s all I get from it . . . I want it implemented in my classroom and I just don’t know how,” Lisa stated.

Furthermore, when I asked her about the other teachers at her school site, Lisa shared that she keeps to herself and stays in her classroom. “I feel like I don’t . . . I don’t know, maybe I haven’t really sought out the teachers who are in the same level as me. I do want to teach that

way I just haven't had time, or, I don't know, resources to do it." The "same level" she was referencing includes a type of critical perspective and insight that Ethnic Studies offers. Because Lisa did not feel like her colleagues shared the same sentiments, as well as not having been able to build a strong community with other teachers at her school resulted in feeling lost on how to implement and include critical curricula. If there were opportunities to collaborate and build curricula with her same grade-level teachers, Lisa might not have felt so isolated and would have been able to benefit from the mentorship of another teacher on ways to incorporate critical perspectives.

Lisa, did however, leverage her political education developed in MP. Glimpses of her background and activism were expressed in discussing her identity as a teacher. "Just last week at our house we had an educational discussion here [her home]. They're [members of MP] reviewing the PSR (Philippine, Society, and Revolution). That was cool reviewing the PSR, too, because I've reviewed it many times before but then we have a lot of new leadership," Lisa said. "I'm not on ExeCom anymore." "What's that?" I asked. "Executive Committee," she said. "I have been for like the past, I don't know, six years. I was like chair at one point, vice chair. I think, I was every position except for educational and I'm a teacher you would think but what am I looking for but it was interesting because we saw it in a different perspective," she recalled.

Interestingly, although her identity as a teacher was not as salient in her organizing work with MP, this was very much a part of her approach to being a leader in the organization. This experience—being active in a community organization that is targeted at developing the political consciousness of its members through education—is certainly valuable. Similarly, his characteristic of her teaching that I do not think resonated as thoughtfully as a strength for Lisa



as it probably should have. She recalled an example of her teaching and when a student applied the same critical analysis that she teaches in the community organizing space. Lisa shared:

I have that one student telling me about how, who are we talking about, Britain coming to America and colonizing the land here . . . One student said, "Well, Miss it's like how/what we are doing to Iraq." I'm like, "Yes... yes!" I'm trying to tell you that, but not tell you guys that. It was just some like, I have all those little moments where they get it. That's really rewarding or just getting to know their personalities, they have make laugh sometimes I've been trying to keep it strict and serious for a long time that ever since I came back from my bonding time, I loosened up them a little bit and they're actually are showing themselves more to me and it's fun.

The lull ceased when she recalled this moment, an important moment because her student was “getting it.” As her reflections displayed, there’s a rich connection between developing a critical analysis and applying it to classroom learning. And, although Lisa was experiencing a number of challenges especially with the material conditions and lack of support she had in her school, these challenges were assuaged in outside spaces. Lisa’s experiences embody the “deviant voice” that Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) encouraged portraitists to listen for, a deviance that expressed goodness in many variants, a deviant type of Ethnic Studies-background ripe for learning from.

### **Lesson Two: “. . . as taxing as teaching is”**

For many teachers of color, burnout is an everyday occurrence that leaves teachers pondering how much more they can give. We learn from Andre Paseo a divergent take on Paulo Freire’s praxis model of reflection and action. Equipped with a strong foundation in Ethnic Studies and critical frameworks for education, Andre’s story brings us to see the realities of teaching in “tough-to-teach” schools. For Andre, the critical reflection of whether or not he should continue teaching signaled a divergent voice. His connections and relationships are evident, especially in how so many students greeted Andre in our short walk to his class. This particular lesson, however, brings attention to the question of sustainability and how institutional

policies, or lack thereof, or even more in the name of experimental schooling design has lasting effects on teachers. What is more are the ways the conditions the students he works with had a secondary impact on his mental health. Therefore, important paradigm shifts must be made from the administrative level enacting school policies to usher in supports for students as well as teachers. Andre's case was an important lesson in divergence in that, although Ethnic Studies is proven to be effective for students' learning (Dee & Penner, 2016), more work needs to be done to identify how Ethnic Studies and education can also address the material conditions teachers like Andre encounter. Now, Lesson Two.

\*\*\*

I've been here before for another project focusing on the relationship between racialized and gendered labor to teacher of color burnout. I park nearby and make my way to the front gate where Andre said to meet him. I text him to let him know I'm there. School just ended and crowds of young people make their way out of the main gates. Shirley Chisholm High School serves majority Latino and Black students, eighty and twenty percent, respectively. I see Andre walking toward the front of the gate, he blends in with the students; bike messenger hat, turquoise polo buttoned to the top, light denim jeans and white sneakers. Our paths have crossed several times before; we were both a part of the same teaching program in San Francisco. That earlier crossing gains salience as I approach the stairs.

*Flashback: 2002*

Prior to even transferring to SFSU, I tagged along with one of my friends to visit the campus. I knew nothing of its history, nothing of the important legacy of activism and ethnic studies, no knowledge of SFSU for students of color. SFSU was not even on my radar in

preparing plans to transfer. Ironically, or perhaps serendipitously, Andre was in the same class as my friend and he said to me, “Yeah. There’s a lot of Asian-Am classes here.”

**“I’ve been processing this for the longest...”**

Almost a decade later, I was meeting with him to learn more about his teaching and the impact Ethnic Studies has made on his teaching. In many ways, Andre’s brief words with me as an outsider to SFSU would bring us full circle to his classroom at Chisholm HS. As I approached and made my way through the gate against the tide of young people, we made eye contact followed by a common relational greeting, a head nod upwards. Although it has been awhile since we have seen each other, let alone sat down to talk, there is a calming familiarity.

As we walked through the campus—multiple storied floors, butcher paper posters with colorful messages and announcements—a few students greeted him, “Hi, Mr. Paseo” and “Hey, Mr. P!” He greeted them back with either a hello or a hello accompanied with their first name. One student called to him in a deep baritone teenage voice: “*Andre*,” and mumbled something about homework scores—I could not really make it out. As we were walking up the stairs to his classroom, another student greeted him. “How long have you been here?” I asked. He shares he had been at Chisholm for two years now after several years teaching at James Baldwin High School fifteen minutes away. We approach the end of the hall where his classroom was, we barely made it to the door and he said, “Let’s meet in the conference room.” We went through another office to get to a large room; three long tables, a large copy machine, and computer station were there. A brown tray of baby carrots, ranch dressing, and a stack of brown industrial paper towels were at the table. I had not figured out why or why not to ask him why we were not going to meet in his classroom. I thought it odd, but perhaps, I can ask him to describe it later. From the small-elongated rectangle door window peering into the class, it looked like any other

classroom, posters along the walls, a few strings ornamenting the ceiling, and what appeared to be students' work.

### **“How sustainable is this?”**

Our conversation continues. We shift to discuss challenges he experiences in the classroom and the school as a whole. Andre shares, “. . . because it's new, there are certain things that are not in place that affect the day to day work.” Chisholm HS is made up of three smaller schools a trend that many campuses in Los Angeles are testing out. The confluence of challenges most schools throughout the district are experiencing eventually affect the teachers and students in disheartening ways (Apple, 1993; Leonardo, 2007; Picower & Mayorga, 2015). The current moment exasperated by a host of challenges is a result of what Pauline Lipman (2011) has referred to as “a laboratory for neoliberal restructuring” (p. 46). Los Angeles schools are an exemplar of the treatment of education as experimental. In other words, the “historical disinvestment in communities of color and persistently second class, Eurocentric, and racist public education” system, ushered in charter schools and models of “progress” similar to those at Chisholm’s “schools within a school” model. Andre teaches English and is a part of the Social Action and Entrepreneurship (SEA) wing of Chisholm. He elaborated:

The lack of a discipline and the lack of a dean, right kinda lead students to realize there's not that extra level of accountability. That the teachers can use to adjust behaviors, right? But we do have, you know we do have sort of justice here, we do have equity and access here, which are really progressive techniques to or progressive responses to discipline. It's just a matter of fully like implementing it and embedding it in the everyday practice of every person here at school from the admin. to the teachers to the students.

Andre’s description of the trickle down effects more generally and “progressive responses to discipline” in particular reveals the importance of school leadership and trusted systems in place such that “progressive” approaches—restorative justice as one such response

the SEA team enacts -can be utilized, modified, and generate sustainability for students and teachers alike. Challenges with school leadership and ineffective school policies are one aspect compounding Andre's experience. The context of teaching in South LA itself raises additional stress for Andre. "There's also obviously the struggles that just come with teaching in urban areas or in a city, right? Like I said a feeling with foster homes, feeling with gangs and violence and just inconsistencies across the board and the students' lives lead them to act certain ways in the classroom that, that just make it that much harder to teach," he says. Andre's account of the sociopolitical contexts that accompany teaching at Chisholm is significant and adds layers to the lived realities of the young people he works with which in turn affects him. He continued:

Because it's taking a toll on, I just don't know how sustainable it is for me and it's not, I mean I think it's a combination of being at a new school, it's a combination of being in this neighborhood I've only ever known South L.A. It's probably my age too contributes to lost patience maybe and then it's also me kinda just wanting to know what teaching in another area would be like? To really know if teaching is it for me.

At first, I'm surprised at Andre's admission, not because of my unfamiliarity with the multiple contexts and pressures he describes, rather, Andre's experience sheds light on the everyday material challenges teachers of color endure. Hearing from Andre so declaratively yet still a nascent thought, was telling. Yet, Andre's self-reflexivity comes to bear an even brighter assertion coloring the question of sustainability and teaching; "if teaching is it for me," is incredibly insightful as this contemplation demonstrates the importance of self-reflection that many of the teachers in the study determined as essential for becoming better teachers. He adjusts his posture in the seat across from me, "I mean I think there is, there are those struggles kind of you know whether you can manage it or not or I think yeah it leads you to, has lead me to kind of really assess and reflect on my place." How significant, the "toll" is taking on him and

how he will “manage it or not” is yet unclear. “I actually filed paperwork with my principal last week requesting for a transfer,” Andre adds.

### **Lesson Three: “Find the connections”**

The divergent voices of Cassie, Alan, and Jossey illuminate a number of important lessons that invite us to “find connections.” For instance, the historical and political context that teachers connect themselves to was significant. Cassie and Jossey teach in San Francisco, which is often viewed as the epicenter for Ethnic Studies. Yet, as they teach us, we see a divergence to acknowledge the important role of Stockton in galvanizing labor organizers as well as being a critical site for early Filipino American community building (Mabalon, 2013). Another important lesson is in the excerpted transcript that concludes the section above. In it, we view a dynamic interplay of teachers—two of whom could be considered veteran to Alan, the younger teacher. What they teach us is how intergenerational dialogue amongst teachers committed to learning *from* one another is productive, critical, and reflective. Finding the connections, therefore, encourages a deeper engagement with others when considering the importance of Ethnic Studies in teacher education and in classrooms more generally. Lesson Three brings us to San Francisco, in Cassie’s classroom.

\*\*\*

It is almost noon and we are nearing the end of our conversation. Our morning together for this focus group has been incredibly insightful. The room has been filled with head nods, collective sighs of agreement as well as feelings of empathy. I have learned so much from their perspectives. My eyes peer down at some of the questions I prepared. I ask, “As Filipino American teachers with this background, what key lessons from your expertise can be learned with regards to Filipinos, education, Ethnic Studies—what can we learn from you all as

experts?” Jossey says, “Love . . . learn to love ourselves. Reunite with our beauty, and intellect, and culture, and language. I think that’s the root of this protest, for example. And that’s just internalized at a discomfort with us being showcased, or at the fore, or having a name like Itliong.” Jossey continues connecting earlier parts of the conversation with Cassie and Allan. “This protest” Jossey referenced was in response to an earlier comment I made about the divisive stances many people in the Filipino American community are making over the renaming of a middle school that honors Filipino farm laborer leaders Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz. Of the three teachers in the focus group, Allan is the youngest and newest to teaching. Throughout the conversation, Allan references several times how excited he is to discuss topics around Filipinas/os, education, and Ethnic Studies with Jossey and Cassie; the two of them each having over a decade of classroom experience and are well known activists in the Filipino American community. Allan is from Stockton and returned to teach there after graduating from UC Berkeley in Ethnic Studies. Jossey and Cassie have both been living and teaching in San Francisco most of their lives. Jossey shifts his focus to Allan:

Stockton is already of . . . honestly like it's maybe weird . . . like . . . I always . . . I've looked at Stockton as at the forefront of organizing and radical politic. So you're looking at, “Oh the bay, what have they got that I could . . .” but I think it’s mutually beneficial, and that’s the next, like, “Oh!” The Filipino community needs to continue to interact, exchange experiences and lessons and resources.

A flash of surprise is visible on Allan’s face. He had previously pointed to San Francisco and the Bay Area as the epicenter for social movements involving Filipino Americans and ethnic studies more broadly. Jossey’s distinction of Stockton “at the forefront of organizing and radical politic” signals a decentering of prominent narratives in Asian American Studies citing San Francisco as the birthplace of Ethnic Studies. Jossey offers a challenge to the dominant narrative of Asian American Studies resonant with Kandice Chuh’s (2003) elaboration that “the vitality of

this narrative . . . had tended to overshadow other possible narratives of the field's emergence" (p. 5). Locating Stockton as historically influential for social activism in the form of labor movements more broadly and for Filipino American community building more specifically is especially productive. Therefore to "exchange experiences," which in one way can be read as the number of years one possesses as a classroom teacher, as well as exchange across locales and teaching contexts must be acknowledged for the importance of such exchanges.

### **Making Connections**

**Cassie:** I also think about the experiences of all the kids in my class. Like the Latino kids who . . . are families are experiencing the same thing, leaving their countries. I feel like in my classroom, I can get the kids on the same page, I guess, in terms of like, "Hey, your family is experiencing the same thing as this kid's family, your mom is still in the Philippines and you're here with just your dad, this is exact same thing as your fellow student who's experiencing the same thing." . . .

**Allan:** Zooming out . . .

**Cassie:** Yeah and like . . .

**Allan:** Find the connections, not just . . .

**Jossey:** The connections, yeah, yeah.

**Allan:** ...from personal to the curriculum but personal to another person, inter-personally.

**Cassie:** Yeah and then it's happening all over the world. There's like Filipinos all over the world, you know, that are experiencing what our kids and families are experiencing here, they're just experiencing it in a different country for the same reasons. So . . .

**Jossey:** That's super key. That. The root of that . . .

In this chapter, we learn from the divergent voices of Lisa and Andre. For Andre, the very real question around the sustainability of teaching is salient. In Lisa's case, challenges associated with not having necessary materials or support and alignment with colleagues politically present very real challenges. Yet, in both cases, they are able to utilize what they have come to learn in Ethnic Studies as both a lens to develop curricula and as a source of strength in



spite of emboldened fatigue teachers of color endure. Finally, Allan, Cassie, and Jossey's conversation echoes Madison's (2010) notion of "performative witnessing" that works to "capture the active, risky, and intimate engagement" through their dialogue about teaching and Ethnic Studies. For the teachers in this chapter, Ethnic Studies shaped their pedagogies and practices, however, it is from instances where their voices diverge from what one may perceive Ethnic Studies to inextricably *do*, that we are able to listen closely for and learn from lessons of struggle. In the following chapter, we learn from lessons around what it means to move toward community responsive teaching as an Ethnic Studies-prepared teacher.

## CHAPTER 5: Praxis Toward Community Responsive Teaching

This chapter begins with Andre Paseo. It has been several months since I last spoke with him and there's a noticeable change. Previously, we left off with Andre submitting a letter of resignation. Teaching was too taxing. Yet, months later, Andre and I are sharing space at a reunion for an organization that was integral to our paths as teachers. **Lesson 4: Legitimate Teaching**, provides a deeper insight into Andre's becoming a teacher. This particular lesson weaves Ethnic Studies through the literary musings of famed Filipino writer, Carlos Bulosan. Then, in **Lesson 5: Pinayist Pedagogues "At the Complexity of the Intersections,"** we learn from Erica and Rochelle and the ways through which they enact a Pinayist praxis. Taken together, Rochelle, Erica, and Andre demonstrate how praxis animates their teaching through community responsiveness. That is, centering the experiences of students and families they work with and acknowledging the nuances of the communities they work in and teaching in ways that respond to those needs. In another sense, these teachers' engagement with community responsive teaching then reveals how critical race studies emphasis on experiential knowledge becomes both curricula and content in classroom settings. Our learning then begins with Bulosan's writing as an anchor to highlight Andre's praxis.

### Lesson Four: Legitimate Teaching

"However, I'm not worried about that part of the deal," he said, showing his protruding rotten teeth. He bit at a twisted chunk of chewing tobacco, rolled it from cheek to cheek and said: "I've confidence in myself. But some men use their education to enslave others. I thought education is meant to guide the uneducated. Did some educated man lie about this thing called education, Nick?"

"I don't think so, Magno. Education is what you said: for the educated to guide the uneducated. And it's more than that. Education is a periscope through which a common ground of understanding should be found among men."

"The Romance of Magno Rubio" by Carlos Bulosan (1979)

In a seemingly lesser-known short story in acclaimed Filipino American writer Carlos Bulosan's repertoire is *The Romance of Magno Rubio*.<sup>8</sup> Against a lonely backdrop rife with racism, discrimination, and harsh working conditions, *Magno*, depicts the life of Filipino farm laborers and hovers around the central character, Magno Rubio. Magno is a short, "brown as a coconut ball" Ilocano farm boy, whose transfixed enchantment is set upon his white American "girlfriend" Clarabelle, a pen-pal whom "from the backpage she flirts." Their exchanges involve a third participant, Magno's close friend, Nick, whose formal education exceeds his own and is tapped to scribe love letters from Magno to Clarabelle.

CHORUS:

We were FOB's fresh off the boats  
When some SOB's in ties and coats  
Said, "Good jobs are yours, wages so fine.  
Sign your X's and O's on the dotted line.  
We love all Filipinos, especially you.  
We treat you with respect and dignity too.

Bulosan's tale is outfitted with all the trimmings of a tragic, albeit resilient, love story: heart break, questions of belonging, lust, sex, and in the case of early 1930s Filipino male laborers, desire that fueled these young men's yearning for a chance encounter with the American Dream, with aspirations of success. The selections of Bulosan's *Magno* throughout this portrait provide layered contexts of and against histories of U.S. empire—Filipinos' liminal status as American colonial subjects, Jim Crow statutes in the form of anti-miscegenation laws and segregation barring integration, for example. In so doing, "the analytic of empire can enable new questions to be asked and persistent problems to be addressed differently" (p. 640), as

---

<sup>8</sup> *Magno* was later produced into an off-Broadway play by Lonnie Carter touring throughout the United States. The production was heralded by critics and theatregoers alike. In 2008, Filipino American professors: Liza Erpelo (Skyline College), Dawn Bohulano Mabalon (San Francisco State University, History), and Allyson Tintiango-Cubales (San Francisco State University, Asian American Studies) curated an online platform filled with original lesson plans, readings, and supplementary curricula on Carlos Bulosan and early 1930s Filipino America. Their efforts sparked a resurgence in Bulosan's work more generally and introduced a numerous students of Filipino American Studies to the important literary, historical, and pedagogical contributions of Filipina/o Americans.

education history and Filipino American studies scholar Roland Coloma (2013) asserts. *Magno* then, enables a nuanced perspective into the relationship between Magno and his “formally educated” colleague, Nick. In many ways, *The Romance of Magno Rubio* is a love story with all things education: pedagogy, literacy, teaching, and learning. That this portrait insists on focusing on Magno and Nick, two men whose educational backgrounds differ, yet, find themselves in the same vexed environment, points toward more recent and ongoing calls for research on male teachers of color.

The connection I aim to make here is big and could possibly be characterized as a leap; however, a deeper engagement with the Bulosan’s characters relies less on tying two ends of history into a seamless and “linear” thread as historian Reynaldo Ileto (1988) argues against. Rather, one need to look only toward their engagement and interactions as interlocutors, as evoking “literacies of power” (de los Ríos, López, & Morrell, 2015) to identify the ways through which pedagogy and critical literacy are enacted and produced. Magno astutely proclaims, “I’ve confidence in myself,” then proceeds to ask Nick about this “thing called education” simultaneously asserting his own literacy all the while acknowledging Nick’s “official” knowledge as a measure to affirm how and what he knows. Nick’s use of Magno’s own philosophy of education, “for the educated to guide the uneducated” foreshadows a Freirean dialectic and critical pedagogy undergirded by a literacy of the oppressed. Although Nick writes Magno’s love letters to Clarabelle, Nick foregoes the idea that he is the single bearer of knowledge. Between these two Pinoys are exchanges of learning and pursuing what many admirers of Paulo Freire would refer to as “reading the word and the world” (Freire, 1985).

## **“To Be a Teacher to These Youth”**

The feelings I recall in the last moments of my conversation with Andre Paseo last summer were of uncertainty and hinged upon a looming question of him leaving the classroom. It appeared that Andre’s sentiments were in line with challenges associated with the attrition of teachers of color (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010; R. Ingersoll & May, 2011) and “coming crisis” with regard to a significantly low supply of teachers of color (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). For teachers of color generally and male teachers of color specifically, there exists additional responsibilities that contribute to their stress, fatigue, and eventual departure from the teaching profession. For example, Black male teachers are expected to be teachers that serve as disciplinarians, “father figures” (Brockenbrough, 2012) and “role models” (Rezai-Rashti & Martino, 2010). These roles assigned to Black male teachers in previous studies suggest the ways some schools reify heteropatriarchal modes of performing gender and how, often without hesitation, some male teachers take up the additional tasks demanded of them. Added modes of labor then, compound their roles as teachers and strong male figures in the lives of their students, which, in the case of Andre, elicit questions of sustainability.

With regards to teaching, Andre offered, “I still will put my heart into it . . . so I come to this point where I almost feel like walking away from it.” And, while Andre’s sentiments rang true with the literature, more recent conversations contradicted his earlier statements. When asked to describe for himself what it means to be a Filipino American teacher, Andre firmly said, “I come from a history of folks who didn’t back down.” It is important to clarify that the structural, emotional, and material conditions that shape the decisions of teachers of color to leave the profession are compelling, insidious, and painful at best. Andre’s delicate balance

across the polemical relationship of leave or stay exemplifies this well. Rather, his assertion of being part of a community “who didn’t back down” signals the importance of critical formations of community and like-minded peers to offer necessary support when faced with a host of factors for why teachers leave the classroom and why, many teachers of color endure similar predicaments. What makes Andre unique, as the portrait continues to piece together, is access to and association with a critical community—the Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP)—a community he helped plant roots over a decade ago.

### *Setting*

San Francisco State University, Cesar Chavez Student Center, Rosa Parks Conference Room,  
Pin@y Educational Partnerships  
“15 Year Reunion Panel”  
October 2016

I could only imagine what it was like to be viewing “live” on the other end of the social media landscape. Allyson Tintiango-Cubales—affectionately referred to as Ate Allyson (*older sister* in Filipino)—founder and director of PEP repositions herself in the front row of seats, leg tucked away under the opposite leg to stabilize her recording hand. iPhone carefully capturing candid moments as the “reunion panel” and the rest of the room quiets down. The adjoined Rosa Parks conference rooms were full of multiple generations of PEP students, many of whom were now teachers, PEP family members, and student/teacher alumni. Seven of the first PEP teachers and students are seated in the front row facing an eager and excited crowd. We just finished introducing new arrivals to the room. It was October, fittingly, Filipino American History Month and we were celebrating fifteen years of Pin@y Educational Partnerships. To Andre’s earlier sentiment of being a part of a “history of folks who didn’t back down,” the site and setting of the 15 year reunion encapsulates this history.

The Cesar Chavez Student Center is adorned with colorful student and community painted murals depicting important moments, figures, and histories of resistance of People of Color. It is said that the Center had been designed in response to the infamous shutdown of San Francisco State College in the late 1960s that resulted in the first and only College of Ethnic Studies. Because of that particular student-led strike, the new concrete structure stands erect with huge, thick concrete open walls functioning as wall and door at multiple sides of the building. These walls are moveable to allow a free flowing space as well as to shut out “harm” should another strike rise up. We were quite literally in the belly of a beast whose designers’ aesthetic response was to learn from the activist energies of students and community leaders to shape-shift as a mode of protection for itself.

Andre Paseo is among the panelists, sandwiched between his now-again colleague Dante Francisco, one of the first PEP students, Ava Casas, and his lifelong friend, Elijah Bondoc. Imagine, for a moment, Dante/Elijah as Nick to Andre’s Magno.

MAGNO  
What would you like to have?

NICK  
Have?  
Have  
I have everything I need . . .

NICK  
The stars, dear Magno, are where poets go

MAGNO  
That’s where I want to go, Nick.

NICK  
We’ll get you there, kaibigan [*friend*]

MAGNO  
Kaibigan.  
That’s what I like about you, Nick. You use your college education

In the right direction.

NICK

I'll write for you because I like to help you.  
Maybe I'll need your help someday.

There's a rousing silence as Ate Allyson's voice fills the room cueing we'd begin. She asks, "I'm just going to start it..so, in any shape or form has PEP changed or impacted your life? And, just how . . . ." The enormity of the question is omnipresent—"in any shape or form" is, for many of us an understatement. For most if not *all* of us, it'd be safe to state with broad strokes that PEP is a life force for its students, teachers, families, and communities. And as her question to the panel simultaneously is posed to the potential viewers across online social media landscapes, the educational landscape, one might argue, indeed has been "changed" and "impacted," within Filipino America. Her subtending question, ". . . and, just how" is felt with an immediate and collective pause as the "hows" of PEP impacting our educational and life trajectories come to mind. Andre leans back in his chair, confident, assured: "I'll start."

In the car on the way here, I rode with my boys right here, Elijah and Dante. Me and Dante drove up from LA. The whole time coming up, it just turned into this whole reminiscing session and they picked me up this morning on our way here, and kind of joking . . . PEP saved . . . at least for me, PEP saved my life, right? Like hip hop did for Lupe . . . PEP did that for me. But honestly, I could honestly say that it did. I was on academic probation here when I was at SF State, when I got introduced to PEP. I started as mechanical engineering major, not really feeling the classes, instead of kind of being proactive. just stopped going to class and ended up failing and was put on academic probation.

I sit a little off to the side, listening into Andre's story and I'm instantly pulled back to a summer ago when he described this further. We are sitting in the teacher lounge of Andre's school. I ask him of his transition from high school to college. Andre reflects:

I got accepted into San Francisco State as a Mechanical Engineer Major, and a lot of that was because my uncles were—a lot of my uncles were Engineers. I was really into just building and designing as a kid and even throughout high school, so I thought Engineering was my path. I started taking the classes and I was not into them at all. A



lot of it was because they were really hard, they were really math-heavy and I didn't know Engineering was like that going into it.

That Andre's academic aspirations were influenced heavily by the male figures in his life suggests nuances of "pedagogies of the home," to echo Dolores Delgado Bernal's (2001) concept, calling into question how to interrogate more deeply the overwhelming presence of gender functioning in learning about academics. That is, the ways through which "strategies of resistance that challenge the educational norms of higher education" (p. 624) involves challenging heteropatriarchy as a normative mechanism shaping how we think about college majors and educational pathways.

We might also glean from the sociohistorical contexts through which, say, Filipino males pushed toward the natural sciences can be situated in relation to colonialism in strikingly similar ways Filipinas have historically and continually are steered toward the nursing profession in the "empire of care," as Cathy Choy's excellent work (2003) has detailed. Andre's example highlights the importance of attending to gender within education as it intersects with other structures of power. As Andre's portrait unfolds, it can be said that through Ethnic Studies, specifically Asian American Studies and learning from professors whose experiences were similar to his own, that his entrance and subsequent decisions to stay in the teaching profession emerge. He reflects, "And I think I was literally, maybe a year or a semester away from getting kicked out of school because you had to get your GPA or I had to get my GPA up above 2.0 . . . at that same time that I got the notice for academic probation is when I first got introduced to Asian-Am classes. And it tripped me out just initially that there were Filipino professors."

Although San Francisco State University is known for its institutional commitments to "diversity," Andre's surprise "that there were Filipino professors" is in line with previous studies examining the few Filipino American professors there are in the academy. Maramba and

Nadal's (2013) study found only 114 Filipino American tenure-track/tenured faculty in the humanities, arts, or social sciences, revealing the nuance hidden in the aggregate for Asian Americans. And while there are certainly affordances for teachers, and in Andre's case professors, whose racial backgrounds are similar to whom they teach (Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008b; F. Ríos & Montecinos, 1999), I would argue that the pedagogical and political dimensions of racially-matched teachers have a far greater impact on the politicization and consciousness raising characteristic of Ethnic Studies pedagogies (A. Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2014). Which is to say, there are limits to calls for recruiting male teachers of color when the political economies and criticality of teachers remain unexamined as this may have the potential to reproduce the very pitfalls of schooling (Milner & Howard, 2004; Noguera, 2003; D. Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000b) has on male students of color more generally.

Andre continues to share his experience about how the PEP space impacted his life. At this point, the entire room is filled. He answers with his own "and just how" almost in a single breath, you can feel the conviction in Andre's voice. I hear a tune of renewal, I see before me a refreshed and recommitted teacher. Andre says:

Elijah told me about PEP because he was taking Ate Allyson's class . . . said it was an opportunity to kind of introduce Filipino Studies to Ocean High School, here or to just youth in general. And I think we were still kind of flushing out what it [PEP] would look like and just hopped on, mainly because Elijah was my boy, we've known each other since 8th grade [from the crowd, a collective "awww" follows] he was handling his stuff, and you know, I knew I needed to start doing that and so I was like, ok, let me see what is this all about.

We started doing workshops, after school, working with youth . . . and kind of realizing that one, it was fun, you know, to be around young people talking about my culture, and to educate them about Filipino American studies and at same time educate myself. And then it kind of dawned on me that this was legitimate teaching, right? And then looked at myself as a result of that and realized, I couldn't continue to be a teacher to these youth if I wasn't handling myself in my own studies. I officially changed to Asian American studies because I started gravitating toward taking those classes more and was doing really well, had really strong relationships with professors like Ate Allyson and . . . it just

changed from there to where I knew that teaching was what I was gonna do career-wise. So, legitimately for me it saved my life.

Andre's distinction that he "couldn't continue to be a teacher to these youth" if his own performance as a student confirms previous studies that found Teachers of Color have higher expectations, and are more likely to see students of Color as capable learners (Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 1998). They often have insight to the racialized experiences of non-dominant students, and can support their effective navigation of structural barriers (Gomez & Rodriguez, 2011). Returning to the opening epigraph involving Nick and Magno, Nick describes education as "a periscope through which a common ground of understanding should be found." From Andre's discussion about the moments when his college academics changed to the surprise that there were teachers like him, the periscope nature—mirrors reflecting off one another—to describe education is fitting. The "common ground of understanding" then, for Andre and teachers that have shaped his life helps us rethink what constitutes "common ground" alongside key characteristics like race and gender, but also consider the cultural and historical dimensions that Ethnic Studies brings to bear. For Andre and other teachers in this study, Ethnic Studies legitimized their experience in ways previous experience with schooling had not.

### **Lesson Five: Pinayist Pedagogues "At the Complexity of the Intersections"**

This lesson centers on the experiences of two teachers, Erica and Rochelle. Their backgrounds are similar as they both were students of Ethnic and Asian American Studies at SF State. In many ways, their craft and calling as teachers were influenced by women of color educators they had throughout their lives. As Beauboeuf-Lanfontant (2005) argued, "Drawing from and embodying such examples of confident women were key to the teachers' desire to demonstrate possibility for their students and to encourage them to see that like all people, they 'stand on the shoulders of others.' In locating themselves in such traditions of activist women—

familial or cultural—these two teachers became neither the first nor the last to challenge themselves to work for productive social change” (p. 441).

We’ll learn from their portraits the many ways they work guided by a Pinayist praxis. According to Allyson Tintiango-Cubales (1995) Pinayism “aims to look at the complexity of the intersections where race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, spirituality/religion, educational status, age, place of birth, diasporic migration, citizenship, and love cross” (p. 141). It is at the “complexity of the intersections” that I encourage us to listen for a story. Both Rochelle and Erica embody and straddle a multitude of intersections, it is there that their praxis as teachers becomes clear. Their lesson describes the “willingness” then teaches us about taking risks with your students and teaching, learning from communities, and understanding that “complexity” in and of itself is critical pedagogy.

### **“My Filipinoness, amplified”**

“The Fillmore. They call it the ‘Harlem of the West’ because it’s a predominantly Black neighborhood,” Erica says. She leans back in the desk and describing the neighborhood she grew up in. We are seated in the middle of her classroom and her desk is just behind her. The San Francisco born and raised Erica is months deep into her first “official” year of teaching in Los Angeles. She is a world history and arts teacher at Social Justice Community School (SJC). The white board in back of her desk is intricately decorated. Pennants adorn the walls: UCLA, San Francisco State, and a graduation stole made of red, blue, and white satin—for the colors and star of the Philippine flag—are pinned neatly. Two 49ers pennants and a “Quest for Six” fan towel are pinned alongside the trail of college triangles. Melanie Cervantes and Jesus Barraza’s “Viva La Mujer” stands out amidst numerous posters and flyers.

“Before African Americans moved in, it was an immigrant neighborhood of Russians that lived there and then Japanese-Americans settled in the Fillmore up until Japanese internment and then all of those, all the properties opened up, that’s when a lot of Black folks moved in after World War II,” she shares. Research has explored the relationship Asian Americans have with racialized dynamics of communities (Kurashige, 2010; Pulido, 2006) and schools (Cheng, 2013; Ochoa, 2013). Erica’s memories of life growing up in the Fillmore offers a unique insight into the ways *where* one grew up and attended schools and the racialized nature of those experiences shape how she interacts with students. Three students are working quietly at a table hovering over a laptop. It is funny to see how attention evenly split between our conversation near her desk and the students working after school. The two young men were working on a video montage for Teacher Appreciation Week.

“How would you describe yourself as a child?” I ask. “Weird. I was an only child. My mom was a single mom. My grandmother raised me for the most part,” Erica says. “My grandma was the one who’d pick me up, drop me off in school. My mom was working two jobs in San Francisco and she was seeing—who’s my stepfather now—but it was just me and my grandmother a lot.” Erica’s pathway into college involved what she characterized as “resilience capital.” As a first-generation college student, working full-time, and attempting to navigate higher education, much of her learning about the process she taught herself. She elaborates, “I tell the students be prepared to feel isolated. It’s like you have to know. You have to build a network of community at school in order to survive. It was hard. I got kicked out at my first year at SF State. I went to City College and even then like trying to. I don’t know how I did it. I still can’t.” What Erica shares is aligned to previous research around the challenges associated with gender, immigrant families, and familial responsibilities for Filipinas (Maramba, 2008).

Erica continues to share stories and ways her grandmother taught her about being Pinay, being a Filipina. She recalls a conversation she shared with her mom and grandma just after graduating with her teaching credential. "I just trusted that you would make right choices and you would just do it," Erica says replaying the emotional conversation with her mom. Erica's voice slightly cracks. Her eyes glisten. Erica's relationship to her foremothers offers an important pedagogical lesson on womanist teaching. Which is to say, womanist teaching offers ways to repair such relational breakdowns by emphasizing the following: the agency that each of us has to treat others as our own; the obligation we have to understand as fully as we can the world around us; and the responsibility we have to make sure that our actions contribute to the larger human goal of freedom for all" (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002, p. 84). Our conversation moves across memories learning from strong women in her life: her mom, grandmother, and aunt who had recently passed a few years prior. She shares, "My grandmother and my aunt did a really good job of just making sure that I knew I was Filipino. And I don't know if it's because of the food, or I've listened to a lot of Tagalog romance songs growing up, that's why I can speak Tagalog because of just watching movies with them, listening to songs."

This early influence from her aunt and grandmother are similar to Delgado Bernal's (2001) study with Chicana college students and the role women had on their educational trajectories. Delgado Bernal highlighted the ways the home offers an alternative site for teaching and learning by putting "cultural knowledge and language at the forefront to better understand lessons from the home space and local communities" (p. 624). For Erica and her family, their teaching would be integral for a Pinay teacher working in a community outside of her own. Erica describes being able to "work in a community that isn't predominantly Filipino because

that just proves to me that ok, now I know that I can teach students that aren't Filipino and I can do it well."

When I first entered her classroom, Erica was checking in with her students working on the video montage. During that time I perused the walls of her classroom. One wall was filled with the covers of the school history textbooks. I later learned those were pictures of the actual textbook they use throughout the school. There on the front cover was Abraham Lincoln and transposed on an opposite cover were students' counter-narratives. One in particular copied the same figure of Lincoln standing atop dozens of headstones. Erica would later share that the students had learned about slavery and capitalism. "My first semester teaching, it was like really bad. Semester and a half, I'll say semester and a half. Every day, I went into work feeling like I was such a—like I hated what I was teaching," she laments. "I was going off of the textbook, in terms of like timeline . . . My own internal debate, the internal debates I had about when I was teaching because I really felt: "That's it, I need to teach ethnic studies. Like teaching World History is like boring and it's Euro-centric, like all of these things that I know, I'm not even applying it." Erica was voicing a tension she felt regarding knowing the importance of a counterstory to how the mainstream history curricula was to be taught. Yet, she felt she was doing an injustice to the students by not teaching them from an Ethnic Studies perspective. She continued:

But by the time I got to the spring semester, I realized that what I'm teaching is ethnic studies. So, like when I taught World War II, instead of just focusing on U.S. imperialism and whether it was a good idea to take over the Philippines and the bombing of Pearl Harbor, I decided to focus on genocide and massacre. So, looking at the human side of, how dropping the atomic bombs affected Japanese civilians, rather than focusing on like this event, right? It's more of the human aspect of all of these historical events. I don't think I would have been able to do that without Ethnic Studies, right, because you look at individual people, like stories. You look at the human factors of history. So, we focused a lot on marginalized people—like women, children, old folks and indigenous

people. The last unit was really great for my part because a way of front loading our transformation.

As our conversation moves to describing pedagogical approach toward teaching U.S. history, I am reminded of one of the first parts of her classroom I noticed. On her whiteboard was a large Cartesian Plane. Four quadrants read: self-defeating resistance, reactionary behavior, conformist resistance, and transformational resistance. Each arrowed point of the grid labeled “Critique of social oppression” and “Motivated by social justice.” This was Solórzano and Delgado Bernal’s (2001) “Transformational Resistance” model. Erica described how her students had just read the article and were learning about the school blowouts paired with another text, a documentary entitled “Maria’s Story: A Portrait of Love and Survival in El Salvador’s Civil War.” “We looked at a documentary, *Maria’s Story*. So, this woman who was leading the guerilla fighters in the jungle during the war in El Salvador, civil war in El Salvador. I really wanted to show that film, not because it's interesting which it is but because a lot, a majority of my students are products of that war.”

Erica’s pairing of texts was intentional to discuss the intersections of gender, war, and race, while also paying close attention to both the local and diasporic experiences akin to the students with whom she works.

So, it came back to their own experiences or the experiences of the parents and grandparents. I think that that's informed by Ethnic Studies. Focusing on their ethnicities, their parents' lived experiences. We also looked at a character from *Walk Out* so that was more of like local history Los Angeles. I'm really trying to find more ways of doing that, even if we're in the seventeenth century and it's like how do I apply all this stuff to the French revolution. Now, that I have an idea of what, because I was also learning all the history along with them.

I feel like my Filipinoness amplified. When I came to L.A. like make it very clear . . . But I think it's my identity as a Filipino—it's amplifying since I came out here but like for me like being conscious of being Filipino American teacher has been amplified since I moved out here, because I don't have a lot of Filipino students.



And I'm finding that I'm able to relate much more with my Latino students, because our experiences are the same in terms of our socioeconomic class is very similar, our home life so I see a lot of myself in my students. And I feel like that they can see a lot of their experiences in the things that I share with them.

Erica's amplified Filipinoness, then, becomes a way of connecting to students. For her, it's about drawing upon the similar lived experiences she had growing up in the Fillmore. Guided by the pedagogical and intellectual tools she's developed through Ethnic Studies, Erica is able to work toward inspiring her students. As Patrick Camangian (2015) found in his study of teaching in Oakland, "To inspire, teachers and students must be able to not only identify and illuminate the intimate ways hegemonic thought is present in the immediate reality but also craft a social commentary so that it bares out perspectives that resonate with oppressed people's most pressing needs" (p. 443). What is more are the creative and artistic ways Erica's students create a critical "social commentary." For instance, on one her walls were students' artistic renditions of Ball's (n.d.) framework of the "4 I's of Oppression." Students were able to draw various instances of oppression using Ball's framework and their own lives as the centerpiece for application.

Another example was Erica's "Growing Roses in Concrete" essay and drawing project. There, students interpreted the Nikki Giovanni poem, popularized by Tupac in a creative medium. A border of colorful posters captured the project's main elements—the rose petals symbolized students' goals, thorns were hardships, and the concrete and soil were about loss and metaphoric nutrients. These projects all make sense and offer glimpses into what Erica values as a teacher and is reflective of an Ethnic Studies classroom and teaching that "prioritized the centering of those in the margins, reciprocal knowledge construction processes, and learning through community engagement" (Reyes-McGovern & Buenavista, 2017, p. 4). Erica states:

I'm trying to learn more about like where their families came from, and see how that relates to me. And then make that connection so that we're not just making these connections in history, but then we're like making connections together as a community. Because I feel like that it is so important, I feel like that. It needs to start there. They have to have the buy-in that they can trust me and know that I'm open and there's willingness to learn about who they are, and where they come from and their history.

“I’m still kind of trying to understand what it means to be a Pinayist pedagogue,” Erica confirms. “But the way I’m making sense of it now is just taking my experience as a Filipino American woman and making it relevant to my students.” I sit and listen eagerly. Learning and discovering so many ways Erica has grown as a teacher. You can sense the deep commitment and concern she has for her students. I also feel the authentic care she has. Her eyes peer over my shoulder to the back table. “How y’all doing?” she asks the boys. “We’re almost done, Miss.”

### **“Made Me Feel Brave”**

Papa explains the war like this: “When the elephants dance, the chickens must be careful.” The great beasts, as they circle one another, shaking the trees and trumpeting loudly, are the Amerikanos and the Japanese as they fight. And our Philippine Islands? We are the small chickens. I think of the baby chicks I can hold in the palm of my hand, flapping wings that are not yet grown, and I am frightened.

*When The Elephants Dance - A Novel*  
Tess Uriza Holthe (2002)

“This was a really important book to me,” Rochelle said as she handed one of her artifacts to me. The book was familiar—who could forget the cover? A woman stands stoically, both hands clasping fabric of her long golden-yellow and orange striped dress. The bodice of her Filipinana dress is a deep maroon. Its front is firmly constructed yet bares the delicateness of the fabric accentuating the sober features in her face. Just behind her is another woman, she’s almost shadowy and in a sepia tone. I have come to learn that the cover design is from a photograph, “Women From Bacoar.” The other women in the photograph wrap around to the

back as if guarding the words and stories between each cover in what seems to be three generations of Filipina women. Their faces also stoic with piercing eyes. What stories might their eyes have witnessed? I wondered. “One of the first Ethnic Studies classes I took was Filipino American Literature,” Rochelle shared. “I remember this because this is the book I talked to with my mother. I would bring up that stuff because it talks about World War II.” Rochelle flips through the pages and recounts how her mom heard stories of the war from her grandmother. “And, it's interesting because my stories are from here [the book] and like, ‘Oh, what were you saying about the babies being killed?’” Rochelle recounts. “She knows that through the storytelling of her grandmother. And, I remember, ‘Oh, I'm reading this book and it was talking about that.’ I think this was the first book I was able to share with my mother and question and get some other, you know, more like a deeper context in things I've heard or mentioned before, but then to visualize it a little bit deeper through the stories in here. This was a really important book to me.”

Rochelle's experience is similar to my own. Being enrolled in an Ethnic Studies class, or in our case, a Filipino American literature class, opened up many venues for reflection. The class and the learning that occurred allowed us opportunities to ask questions of our pasts, of our families' experiences leaving or sometimes returning to the Philippines, and to make connections with our parents. I remember several instances when I would ask my mom about life growing up in the Philippines or sharing some of what I was reading with my dad. With my mom, Lilia, it was always an “oh yah” kind of sentiment. The questions I inquired elicited her memories and descriptions of what she lived through, which provided a richer context for me to understand the narratives and stories I read.

She would share memories of attending nursing school at the University of Santo Tomas and how at the same time some of her friends were active in local activist movements but she “stayed away” to focus on her studies. With my dad, he would repeat stories heard from his parents. Stories about when the Japanese came to my grandparents’ town and how they hid in caves to avoid Japanese soldiers. Or how his eldest brother, who was probably a toddler at the time, had been passed by Japanese soldiers because he looked Japanese with his shaved head. Holthe’s (2002) novel then, a story about the “chickens,” “elephants,” the “Amerikanos” put into motion a cast of characters for her readers to experience an untold history—for example, Japanese and U.S. occupation in and desire for claiming the Philippines—but also rendered stories many of us have heard throughout our lives into a narrative on the page.

There is something liberating to read and find a resonance, a sense of connection, with whom and what you’re reading. I recall my excitement at reading Pidgin on the pages of R. Zamora Linmark’s (1995) *Rolling the R’s*. *Rolling* is a colorful bildungsroman centered on Filipino youth growing up in Hawai’i—I am instantly drawn to my father, Vito, and his many stories of his childhood in Kauai, and of “Camp 6,” the sugarcane camp where some Filipinos from Ilocos lived when they first arrived on the island. Or Pati Poblete’s (2006) *The Oracles: My Filipino Grandparents in America*, whose affectionate story told from the perspective of the grandchild of Filipinos being raised in the United States and the tensions with identity, culture, and language; I’m transported to many moments with my paternal grandmother, Adelaida. I was clearly her favorite, or at least she made me feel that way. She taught me how to skillfully separate the leaves of the marrungay plant. The delicate green leaves gliding off the plant through her wrinkled fingers nestled in that old silver tin colander. Or how aloe is as a salve for cuts.

Or how to win at sungka, a game played with dozens of white cowry shells on a carved wooden gameboard. The aim of each player was to move their shells across several circles around the board and make way toward the opposite end. Each shell in the game of sungka a metaphor for traveling across places and space. Marrungay leaves, symbolic for being plucked from a stem, gathered with other leaves anew. In many ways, these stories and the memories they conjure up exhibit what Oscar Campomanes (1992) has referred to as the “exilic” nature of Filipinos in the United States. More specifically about the literary tradition of Filipino writing, “a literary tradition of Filipino exilic writing and an exilic sensibility that informs both the identity politics and cultural production of this “community-in-the-making” (p. 297).” Campomanes offers, “exile becomes a necessary, if inescapable, state for Filipinos in the United State—at once susceptible to the vagaries of the (neo)colonial U.S.-Philippine relationship and redeemable only by its radical restructuring” (p. 298).

Through these stories, moreover, we were able to experience, read, imagine, and learn from the pedagogical page turns of Filipino American writers, many of whom were women. Our educational experiences were enduring a “radical restructuring” through literature. “Nearly all the emergent writers are women, and this amplitude of women’s writing is a development observable for other emergent literatures in the United States and the postcolonial world” (p. 312), Campomanes writes. Rochelle continues, “I just remember being—I don’t think I finished *America is in the Heart*. I finished this [*When Elephants Dance*]. Oh, I was just so into—I was just visualizing everything described because it was nothing I’ve ever experienced in a book before, especially the setting in the Philippines. I was like, ‘Woah!’ I didn’t know this type of literature existed. So, this is an important book to me and my, I guess, being exposed to Filipino and Filipino American authors that I wasn’t aware of in my younger years.”

We flip through the pages of the book. Laughing, we recalled class activities we participated in the Filipino American literature class. Asian American Studies 363 was known as “the lit class” by students of Asian American Studies at State. One of the first moments that stuck to me was of awe as students in the class posted dozens of historical moments at a timeline of Filipino American literature. The timeline stretches across the chalkboard. White butcher paper spilled onto the opposite sides of the classroom walls. Rochelle explains how her surprise at the numerous Filipino American authors impacted her, too.

I ended up at SF State. And, let me think . . . I don’t think I took any Ethnic Studies classes until my sophomore year. That experience brought back that idea of being a teacher. Well, for the Filipino American literature class, we had to teach at Espinoza High School. And I had to work with a group on that one. I was scared. But, (she laughs) I was like, ‘this is fun!’ This woman [Professor Allyson Tintiango-Cubales] makes teaching and learning fun. So that’s when I realized again, that I *do* wanna be a teacher.

Then, it kind of just blew my mind. Everything I thought about teaching was supposed to be, it doesn’t have to be like that. Like everything I experienced in school, or that I complained about in school. It doesn’t have to *be* like that.

So that class, really, inspired me and kind of opened up my eyes. In addition to that, it wasn’t just teaching anywhere. I felt like, in that environment, it also brought up that idea that it matters where you teach. That’s a big thing. I don’t wanna just teach anywhere. Where do you wanna teach and why? That’s when I started thinking about coming home. So when in college, I already started thinking about coming home to teach. That was my ultimate goal.

The experience of seeing yourself in course readings was impactful on many levels. For Rochelle, “where you teach” was an added layer that would ultimately influence her return home to teach in the community she was raised. “I always liked school. Even though I didn’t feel like all my teachers impacted me, I could still enjoy reading. And I still went out and found things to challenge me,” she shares.

Rochelle further reflects on Ms. Stingley, her English teacher in high school:

Senior year I had a teacher, this African American woman, her name's Ms. Stingley. She taught at Ohio State. She went to Mills College. She just talked about how she wanted to return and work with students from her community, because she taught at the college level. I could just tell her purpose in the classroom was more than just passing time or making us do work. She wanted something greater from us. I could sense that from her. It was her class. I realized I really liked English class. I really liked reading and writing.

Yeah, it wasn't just senior year. It was her specific class. She would tell stories. She was one of the teachers who would tell stories of what it was like growing up here . . . a long time ago, in the fifties and sixties. She'd just tell stories, about how things are different.

I could just tell that her presence . . . There was something bigger in what she was doing. She returned home and she decided to teach back at her high school when she was, you know, doing bigger things. I'm sure there were other things that might have brought her home, she has family here. But I respected that. I respected the way she made me feel. She made feel like she respected me and she believed in me. Anyways, I really enjoyed her class. I think she really tried to teach it in a way that was more at the college level. She fostered that discussion environment. She had us sit in groups and had us discuss things that we read.

Similar to Rochelle, Ms. Stingley offered a detailed response. Ms. Stingley was able to provide Rochelle with a specific perspective, an historical insight to where she was teaching because she herself grew up in that neighborhood. And, for Rochelle, that example to return home stuck with her throughout her college.

Ms. Stingley was one of a series of influential women teachers Rochelle would have.

She remembers another important teacher, the professor in the Filipino American literature class she referred to earlier:

And then in college, Ate Allyson was definitely the most influential person, teacher, mentor. Just out of all of them actually, not just in college. But all my teachers in general . . . but one of my first Filipino teachers. I had to wait 'til I was a sophomore in college to have a teacher that I could identify with, and look similar to, and have similar family stories.

“She was another person who made me feel brave. She highlighted things about myself that I didn't see as strengths,” Rochelle remembered. Rochelle's recollection aligns with Beauboeuf-Lafontant's (2005) study of transgressive Black women teachers' impact on their students.

These teachers “considered themselves not self- made individuals but persons indebted to family or cultural examples of female resisters after whom they intentionally modeled themselves (p. 441).”

For Rochelle, Allyson and Ms. Stingley embody the type of teacher she hopes to become. Our conversation returned to an assignment in the Filipino American literature class where students would teach a lesson at nearby Espinoza High School. Rochelle’s group taught a lesson about narratives. Her bravery comes into play. “So I just went for it. I was telling the story, and then she [Ate Allyson] was just complimenting me on my storytelling ability. It was engaging or something. And she remembered that about me, later on. And I was like, ‘well, I don’t know!’ I was just winging it. I remember that, and so it made me think about, what other strengths do I not see in myself?” Rochelle ponders. Meanwhile all of the stories that students like Rochelle and like myself were able to connect to were the impetus for us to then teach to younger students. The experience of taking what you were learning and working with others to create a lesson plan was incredibly formative for both of our educational trajectories. This means that we were impacted by Filipino American literature and able to apply what we were learning and teach Ethnic Studies. Our “community-in-the-making” rested upon the transformative ways education and pedagogy aligned. Rochelle recalls:

I think that's deeply rooted in my Ethnic Studies background, like wanting to return to my community and transform it. Because I've seen too many people who I went to school with and even in my family like my cousin, my brother, who just kind of find themselves, just they don't do well in the way that schooling is set up. And they don't do well here in school. And so I don't think I would have had that, you know, if . . . I don't think I would have had that drive to want to return home and teach if it wasn't for Ethnic Studies.

Because that's a big part of it, it's like how we're going to help the community, how we're going to transform it, how am I going to help my students see themselves, you know, as agents of change . . . And I don't, I also don't think that you get that just from many teaching program, you know, I think that it's based on the fact that I come from an Ethnic Studies background. Because I can't see myself teaching in any other community.



## **“It’s hard work, It’s community”**

A smart Indian is a dangerous person, widely feared and ridiculed by Indians and non-Indians alike.

As Indian children, we were expected to fail in the non-Indian world.  
I refused to fail. I was smart. I was arrogant. I was lucky.  
I read books late into the night, until I could barely keep my eyes open.

Sherman Alexie (1998)

“Superman and Me: The Joy of Reading and Writing”

“I do a lot of creative writing and poetry.” Rochelle’s eyes scan the walls of her room.

Accompanying her words, a sense of accomplishment as her classroom teems with stories.

Much of the walls are covered in students’ work—written, colorful illustrations. I remember noticing a xeroxed screenshot of Beyonce from her fantastic music video, “Single Ladies.” Just below Beyonce’s glaring eyes reads: “If you like it, you shoulda put a name on it”—several students’ stapled essays are push-pinned below; a hint at Rochelle’s playfulness and humor.

“And as far as the texts that we use—whatever text we use, I try to have students, I try to make it personal.” She continues, “We read this short story written by Sherman Alexie called, *Superman and Me* and in that he talks about his life on an Indian reservation and that’s interesting teaching our students. Rochelle straightens up in her desk preparing her posture for a middle schooler impersonation. Her imitative voice asks, “What, what do you mean Indian?”—he adeptly nails the pitch of curiosity and confusion.

Rochelle continues describing an interaction with a student where she explained how Sherman Alexie is Native American. “It’s like, ‘you know Native. They’re Native people, they’re Americans,’ she reenacts. “There’s a phase with himself as Indian and so on . . . with she’s like “Indi . . . where, what, in India?” Rochelle chuckles, “So that’s kind of a funny thing with middle school.” Rochelle’s use of Alexie’s text as an entry point for students’ creative

writing processes is important and noteworthy. The exchange with her student highlights her correcting the notion that the Indian “must always be disappeared” (Smith, 2006) even for middle school students. Taken further, Alexie’s essay highlights significant connections. For one, he describes his path toward literacy and the importance of using a variety of texts to support literacy. Additionally, his essay excerpted in the epigraphs offer parallels for Filipinos, Indians, and the impact of schooling.

Sherman Alexie (1998) attributes comic books, specifically Superman comics, as part of his early literary luminance. In *Superman and Me*, Alexie highlights an array of contexts that pointed him toward his love for reading and writing and how “each panel” was a “three-dimensional paragraph.” Contrary to his love for reading to which he describes as “equal parts joy and desperation,” Alexie’s *Superman* offers a critical and important historical depiction of schooling. Historians have described how the Indian boarding-school system set precedent for the ways the United States would utilize schooling in the Philippines and elsewhere (Buenaventura, 1998; Mabalon, 2013; Paulet, 2007; Williams, 1980). As Dawn Mabalon (2013) has argued, “Christian boarding-school education was regarded as a more practical and moral approach to the Indians than the genocide and forced removal from their territory that had been the previous hallmarks of Indian policy” (p. 330). This historical context is important because of the ways Ethnic Studies prepared Rochelle to understand the connectivity of colonialism. At the same time Rochelle’s teaching centered her students’ experience and developed their literacies to ultimately become “smart” and “dangerous” people. She highlights the importance of Ethnic Studies for preparing teachers. Rochelle offers:

Ethnic Studies is important for teacher training, because without a knowledge of colonialism and decolonization, teachers will not understand their importance in creating spaces where students can liberate themselves. Also, teachers would just continue the cycle of education that has failed many students of color in the United States. With

Ethnic Studies, many students would find a stronger connection to what is taught in the classroom. This cannot be achieved when teachers lack a background in Ethnic Studies.

Rochelle's emphasis on the "cycle of education" that has "failed" many students of color is a similar sentiment found in Alexie's assertion that Indian students were "expected to fail in a non-Indian world." The deficit notion of failure has been used to characterize students' performance placing the onus upon students and their families for their perceived failures (Baldrige, 2014; Gloria Ladson-Billings, 2006; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). Duncan-Andrade and Morrell's (2008) study of urban schools is premised on how schools are "doing exactly what they are designed to do" and recommend "shifting the blame from the victims of an unjust system onto the fiscal, political, and ideological policies that deliberately undercut urban schools" (p. 1). This is the same type of critique and practice that Ethnic Studies offers teachers. Especially important is Rochelle's emphasis on teachers possessing "a knowledge of colonialism and decolonization" as they are central to understanding and applying Ethnic Studies pedagogies (de los Ríos, 2013; Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2014; Valdez, 2015). Taken together, Rochelle's teaching, Alexie's reflection, and Ethnic Studies teacher preparation more generally enacts what Howard (2010) describes as asking "students to question deconstruct, and then reconstruct knowledge" (p. 76). Rochelle's return to her hometown and now teaching at the same middle school she attended offers an additional layer of experiential knowledge. Her insight allows her to be responsive to her students' needs and understand their community because she is a part of it. She states, "My experience is going to help my students here because I know. I know what they're going through, I know where they're from, I've been in that classroom, I've been in that seat and I know that it needs to improve."

Indeed Rochelle's assertion of knowing her students and their community is an exemplar for being a community responsive teacher. In this way, community responsive teaching

acknowledges “academic rigor is not compromised but rather heightened through applied critical consciousness, direct and reflective action, and the growing of transformative leaders,” (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015, p. 115). Through her teaching, Rochelle, like Alexie works to support her students’ love for reading their world until they could “barely keep their eyes open.”

To teach in responsive ways or to teach critically, takes time and is not prescriptive nor an easy task. Likewise, Rochelle’s teaching is not without its own challenges. State-mandated testing and the anxieties her students experience associated with pressures to do well is challenging. Rochelle says, “I don’t have to spend a week reviewing for it but it’s just crazy because these seventh graders, not just seventh graders but the middle school kids, they are taking way more tests than my eleventh graders took.” The frustration in her voice is amplified. It’s a familiar sound, one that I’ve heard in many conversations with the teachers throughout this journey. She continues:

And it’s really sad because they [tests] are just taking away from things that I would want to do and that’s really frustrating because there is multiple tests every quarter. Then in the spring, there is even more tests, the state testing, and other things and then we have all these writing assessments and so sometimes these writing assessments, it’s like okay, we have to teach them how to write an argumentative essay which is fine but then it’s like, ‘Well, what about other types of writing?’ So it’s hard to balance everything, all the things I want to do and then all the things that I have to do. So that’s one of the things I struggle with in my current placement.

Prior to her current teaching position, Rochelle taught in South Central working with primarily Black and Latino high school students. In that first year teaching, I co-taught with her one day, it was her high school English class and we taught “Star Power,” a learning simulation that teaches students about class and race using poker chips. The students were really into it and the dialogue was rich. Their critiques of what was occurring were sharp to say the least. “Sometimes I feel like the struggle is not with students. It’s different. It’s more of the . . . what’s the right word? The system.”

For instance, I spent two weeks this month testing. Every quarter, we have to give this benchmark exam that takes almost a week. That seems like two months of testing in a school year. Because if kids are missing, they have to make that up. To me, that's a struggle. There's so much time taken out of the work I want to do, meaningful learning and meaningful teaching that I have to put aside for certain tests.

Rochelle's naming of the challenges she faces with teaching rests squarely upon "the system" and how high-stakes testing is dangerous for students and teachers. Au (2016) writes, "high stakes testing evacuates multicultural, anti-racist perspectives out of the curriculum, creating a movement away from non-Whiteness toward a colorblind norm, a norm that ultimately supports Whiteness through racially disparate outcomes for students of Color" (p. 30). In spite of critical teachers like Rochelle pursuing socially just and community responsive teaching, the state's demands of teaching is grossly and unfortunately difficult to avoid. A reframing of schooling's relationship to high-stakes testing must interrogate the white supremacist logics that undergird its foundation.

That's a struggle for me . . . I feel so bad. I didn't do any of these tests when I was in seventh grade. But our kids are forced to. This is stupid, because then the scores come and it's like, whatever. They're not up to par. I mean, it's not a big difference from the other schools in the district. But we have to look at all this data, and be like, 'ok, these aren't great scores.' It can be disheartening because well, I put in all this work, and we're doing all this critical thinking in the classroom. But our students have all these questions now. There's all these trick questions now, where maybe all the answers apply. It's so hard! We didn't have to do that when we were in middle school. It was just one. Process of elimination.

It's so tough, and I'm not try to spend my time catering to that, because that's not what my kids are going to remember. I don't remember stuff. I remember writing a story and writing a report on an author. I want meaningful stuff. I want projects. I want the time with my students. When we spend all that time testing, there's such a big disconnect. I don't even get to interact with them, because there's quiet for the whole hour that they're in my class. That makes me sad. That's not why I came into teaching. I feel like I don't have any power to change any of that shit.

A muted pause fills the space between us. We both know how difficult and tiresome navigating “the system” is. Our conversation shifts and the room is suddenly bright again. Rochelle’s face lights up with excitement when I ask her to share more about her teaching. “But I love teaching poetry. I don’t know why. I just love it,” she shares. It’s no surprise to hear Rochelle discuss her love for poetry as the ‘lit class’ we were both part of fueled her interest in literature. “I just love the no boundaries type of thing and that’s hard for some students because they are like, ‘Well, how do I do this? Does it have to rhyme? How many lines?’ I will be like ‘Well, this is really creative. So you have got to decide. Here’s a model of what you can do but if you break those boundaries,’ then that’s fine.” Her impersonation of a middle school voice lightens the dampened mood after spending some time discussing the politics of testing.

So in the past I have done a Harlem renaissance unit and so we read poetry by authors during the Harlem Renaissance. For those poems, these are all reflective of the Black experience during that time and a lot of struggles that folks are having and them expressing that through poetry . . . this was another time for students to look at their own lives and see some of the different struggles and how they have gone through and it was another emotional project.

People talking about a lot of conflicts in their families and the reason I love doing poetry is because even those students will say that they will hate it but they really talk about things that they have struggled with and they share it with the class, and it’s like, “Well, damn. I didn’t know that about you.” And then it just creates a really supportive environment or community.

To open up space for students to make sense of their worlds opens up ways literature can be used as a tool for theorizing. In many ways, Rochelle’s use of the literary touches upon what bell hooks (1994) described as theorizing as a liberatory practice. hooks (1994) writes, “I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend-to grasp what was happening around and within me” (p. 59). Here, hooks is instructive for explaining the ways one can engage with their critical consciousness to understand themselves. This is not to suggest Rochelle’s students or all students for that matter are in a state of desperation or must be repaired. Rather, coming to

theory signals the ways teachers can view their students as theoreticians prepared to locate themselves and heal.

Rochelle's reflections offers insight toward how she teaches Community Responsive Literacies that support "learning to read and write while developing students' abilities to identify and respond to a community's needs as change agents and activists" (Curammeng, Lopez, & Tintiango-Cubales, 2016, p. 415). Rochelle continues, "When it comes down to it at the root of it my teaching philosophy is about caring and loving my students, because if I don't, I'm not going to give a fuck about what I do in my class . . . It's so easy, other teachers just pretend you never see something or not putting that extra effort, but the rule of my teaching philosophy is, you know, to take care of all my students."

And that's one of the reasons why . . . me coming back to my middle school and teaching there. It's like there is a stronger connection, it's like, 'You went to school with my cousins and know your step-mother well, I know your aunt.' Like, I know this, I know their families, not all of them, but I know as time goes on, I'm going to even know even more of their families.

"I think it's hard work. I think it's community. Building community. Making that a big part of the work I do in the classroom." Rochelle leans back in her chair, both hands gently caressing her belly. She's several weeks into her pregnancy. "Making my students feel like they're cared for, they're loved, they're respected. And fostering that relationship between students is a major part of that," she shares. Another pause passes between us, this time one that's hopeful. I'm excited for Rochelle and feeling the joy she's having at the new school.

In what follows, I examine the ways in which Ethnic Studies shaped teacher identities. The next chapter teaches us two lessons, first beginning with Jossey and how the ways his radical politic informs his teaching. Our last lesson brings us to learn from Cassie. Cassie's exposure to Ethnic Studies later in college significantly shaped how she engages with the

elementary school students she serves. Let us move forward to understand the multiple ways through which Ethnic Studies shaped these teacher's identities.



## CHAPTER 6: Ethnic Studies Shaping Teacher Identity

### Lesson Six: A Radical Politic, A Radical Teacher

Espinosa High School is beige and coral-hued, a three-story expanse with dozens of black-framed windows, white shades pulled down tucked into each rectangular glass frame. Espinosa looks like a school one might expect to be in the movies. It sits surrounded by rows of homes, each one tightly touching the other distinguishable by only a variety of bright pastel painted fronts. Styled in a Spanish colonial fashion, Espinosa's (or Espi as it is sometimes referred) stunning architectural character shifts where it meets the perimeter of the school. Cold, black, iron bar fencing enclose it. "It's like a jail," remarked numerous students and teachers. I am familiar with the neighborhood and area. I taught Ethnic Studies at two schools close by. Espinosa is or rather has become a gem for the school district. It was not always that way. I am at Espi to learn from Jossey Enriquez. I walk up three sets of stairs to the main office. Colorful tiles form a thin glossed trim throughout the hallways.

Jossey reflected on early moments in his teaching, how he came to teach at Espinosa, and how it has changed. Prior to coming to Espi he taught for three years at Thornton High School up the hill. "I thought, ok, I'll go into teaching. I'll go to this program at Ignatius University at night and I'll go into teaching in the day. Even though I had no prior experience. And I'm going to continue organizing. I linked up with folks who were doing Filipino community work," Jossey shared. An important factor in his teaching revolved around his activism and organizing, a thread that pulls close his path as a teacher. Jossey reflected:

I ended up not getting asked back after my third year. And also, almost thankfully so. I was like, man, I actually didn't want to come back for a fourth year. So I left teaching. I went to do this non-profit work . . . We did a lot of radical curriculum building and leadership training. I developed curriculum for their program. The only reason I came

back into teaching was because my wife, at the time, got pregnant, and we needed health insurance, and more stability and more money. But then I was only making \$28,000 a year here! That's what emergency credentialed teachers make; I didn't finish the program.

That at one point Jossey left the teaching profession is not unique. Forty to fifty percent of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching.

Moreover, only fourteen percent of all public school teachers in the United States are racial minorities (Feistritzer, Griffin, & Linnajarvi, 2011). Jossey's decision to return to teaching at a school with mostly students of color demonstrates this.

In going to the district, I was like, "I wanna work at Espi!" because Espi had always had the worst reputation, at that time even in '02. When I interviewed, they were like, "Why do you wanna teach here?" I was like, "This is the place to teach, because this is where folks are most struggling." When I came in, Espi was nuts! That first day of school, there were *sixteen* fights! By the end of the week, there was over *fifty* fights! And uh . . . it was a predominantly . . . it's not the school that you walk through nowadays. Maybe 20 percent at most, Chinese and Asian. And of that, they were working-class. Hood Chinese. Much larger Black and Samoan population. I think much larger Filipino population. And Latino, fill out the rest. Today, I think we're at 10 percent, 12 percent white? We used to have two White kids in the whole school. The class level is more middle. We even have some affluent children here; liberal White folk. Liberal radical White folk, who want to send their children to public school. But it's still, I think, 68 percent free and reduced lunch. It's up to 32 percent Chinese now.

Espinosa's multi-racial and class diverse student demographic was appealing for Jossey and made his selection of the school easier. His choice to pursue teaching at Espinosa is similar to many teachers of color who elect to serve schools with high populations of students of color (Ana Maria Villegas & Clewell, 1998). He continues, "Espi was the place where I thought I could make the most impact, as a radical teacher. But the irony is, I was radical. But not a very good teacher." I am surprised to hear him refer to himself as "not very good." From what I have known of Jossey, he is an exemplar of critical teaching and well-regarded as an excellent teacher by students, staff, teachers, and families throughout the district.

Jossey continues, “Because all of my extra work was spent out in the community organizing events and activities and workshops, education discussions. It impacted what I did in this space.” Jossey credits a friend he grew up with in Los Angeles, Philip Cruz, for helping him become a better teacher.

He [Philip] got into teaching. He started to really apply all this radical, critical pedagogy and started to get a lot of press. Then he got his doctorate at UCLA. Then he moved up here. I was like, wow! That practice is really what should be happening in this space. I gotta find a way to synthesize my organizing work, which is taking up all of my time, into my classroom practice, which *should* be taking up most of my time. It was when I was able to marry the two, is when I was able to become the teacher that I am now. That’s relatively recent, maybe the last seven, eight years.

For Jossey, learning to merge his commitment to activism with his teaching supported the development of an “ideological literacy” (Camangian, 2013a) and would contribute to setting a firm pedagogical foundation to enact such activism in his teaching and classroom. “This space”—Jossey’s classroom—looks and *feels* different. It’s inviting, warm even and exudes a quiet and energetic hum. Dozens of posters adorn the tall walls of the room; I notice several spots empty, posters rolled up, now peeking out from brown boxes. A large graffiti piece adorns one of the walls and welcomes you in. The class had two olive green painted wooden picnic tables facing one another. They meet at the center of the room, an anchor. The tables creak, their grains deep and smoothened. I can sense they are well-worn and have been put to good use. Working, learning, laughing—everything, in fact—you feel that from where we sit. I refrained from asking about the tables and am instantly regretting not inquiring more because I can already sense their purpose. They were just so alluring to me. The olive green picnic tables personify a deep sense of community. I admire the intentional and to a larger extent political and spatial move in Jossey’s classroom.

## **“That class was an Ethnic Studies class”: Early Identity Formations**

No, it's too late now in the process. He just has to stay. Plus, the bilingual class is in part taught in English, so he should be fine.

Well, what was about the other part?

Well, he could learn Spanish.

This was the exchange between Jossey's dad and the principal of Jossey's elementary school, which was almost entirely Latino. He was placed in a sixth grade Spanish bilingual class because of his surname, Enriquez. “There were relatively few Filipinos, even though it's Historic Filipinotown,” Jossey said. This type of exchange is all too common for many families of color. Jossey ended up staying in the class. His family's decision to keep Jossey in a class designated for bilingual-speaking students reflects what Yosso (2005) defined as “navigational capital” and “individual agency within institutional constraints” (p. 80). It is quite possible, moreover, that Jossey's dad and family would be able to anticipate and understand the benefits of such learning in spite of the deficit-based inclinations of the principal. The uncritical assumption that all Spanish surname children be placed in a bilingual class misses a complexity between race and colonialism. This is not to dismiss the critical importance and value of bilingual classrooms and learning (de los Ríos, 2016; García & Wei, 2014; Orellana, 2003). Rather, a teacher and school's ability to understand at the intersection of language and colonialism (Rafael, 2005) broadens how schools come to know the students they serve and subsequent services they provide.

“So it was this weird thing,” Jossey reflected, “I was a minority within a majority minority community. Moments clearly felt isolated and alone. But then in hindsight, that class was an ethnic studies class.” Jossey continues to talk about his experience learning from Ms.

Escobedo. “She had just graduated from Cal State LA, a young Chicana teacher. She was probably like 24 years old. She taught us about the Aztecs and the Olmecs and the Toltecs and the Inca. And I’m like, “this is supposed to be history!?! What about George Washington,” he remembers. Jossey continues, “this Filipino kid asking this brown teacher, *righteous* brown teacher, why we weren’t learning about any other history. Code for my sixth grade consciousness for ‘Why aren’t we learning White American history?’—that’s all in hindsight.” We can only wonder whether or not Ms. Escobedo’s background was in Ethnic Studies; to be clearly teaching against a Eurocentric curriculum at the time—late ‘70s early ‘80s—however, alludes toward her criticality. A Chicana teacher serving a majority of students of color, new arrivals, and bilingual students in critical ways supports the notion that, indeed teachers of color hold higher expectations for students of color (Oates, 2003) and use culturally relevant pedagogies (Howard, 2001; Lynn, 2006).

For example, Jossey attributed Ms. Escobedo’s impact on him as a sixth grader and his political consciousness later as an organizer in college.

So, was it college? Sure. But I think there was always something there. It goes back to Ms. Escobedo—really Chicano studies-framed sixth grade class. Everything. I went to a different English class, but history was Chicano Studies. Art and culture. Shit that we’d make was shaped by Chicano culture and people I was around, and *especially* her. Especially her. Like, ‘You’re not Mexican. I get that. But you’re Filipino.’ She’d always say, ‘You’re brown. You should know who you are.’ . . . ‘Learn about this. Learn who you are and where you’re from.’ Yeah, I didn’t get it. And it was just like, (clicks fingers), in a huge way.

“I went to community college. I was going to join the navy!” Jossey exclaims. Our conversation moves toward his latter years in school and later into college where his knack for community organizing and academics were heightened. To his surprise, he was accepted into a local university but remained set on committing to the navy. “I don’t know where this status thing

came from. All I know is that it was present . . . I'll just join the Navy," Jossey stated. It was a "reputable" and "positive thing to go to" rather than attending a state university.

But my girlfriend at the time. Her stepfather, this Jewish dude, he went to UCLA. He became kind of like my second father. He became this really significant father figure, in terms of mentoring and emphasizing the value of education, that I *shouldn't* go to the navy. That I should go to community college, and then transfer to UCLA. That's *exactly* what I did!

Jossey's dad joined the Navy at an early age, maybe 16 or 17, and received his citizenship that way. Jossey shares how his aunt from his dad's side was able to forge documents so he could sign up; he was stationed in Alameda. His dad later joined his aunt living in Los Angeles, which is where he met Jossey's mom. "My mom's a nurse, or at least in the Philippines and she was recruited," he said. She worked in LA, in a nursing home then in a hospital. But she never passed the nurse certification. She always internalized that as a deficiency on her part, but it was clearly a language thing—"cause she does everything."

Jossey also recalls memories with his parents. "It's kind of garden variety Filipino '60s migration," Jossey mentions. I think of my own mom, who, like Jossey's came to the U.S., she was also really young and had absolutely no family living in the States. She started working in a hospital and built community with other Filipina nurses. This labor can be tied to earlier colonial histories that enacted Filipinas' labor as nurses for U.S. administrative goals (Choy, 2003) and continues with Filipina migrant workers in care-related occupations because of the Philippines acting as a "labor brokerage state" (Rodriguez, 2010). For some immigrant families with young children navigating and negotiating their new contexts—educational, familial, societal—can be tricky at best.

"To some degree, I think my parents were also trying to figure out who they were in this new context," Jossey shared. He continues to share several stories about what life was like

growing up in Los Angeles. “In my neighborhood was the Satanas, and that was one of the first Filipino gangs. I always looked to them of these models of strength. Like man, that’s what it is to be Filipino, in a sea of Mexicans. This was one of the things that I really valued and appreciated,” Jossey remembers. He continues, “But I managed to stay away from that. And, I think just knowing people in the neighborhood, they were just like, ‘ah, he’s an athlete’ ‘he does graffiti’—I was basically left alone. Jossey’s reflections of Satanas highlights an insightful history of Los Angeles more generally, and intersections of masculinity, racialization, and youth cultures specifically. Alsaybar’s (1999) ethnographic study of Filipinos and gangs in Los Angeles explored a number of strategies young Pinoys mobilized in developing community with other men, teaching and learning, and their ethnic identities. Within these gangs, Alsaybar found Veteranos or *older homeboys* teach “Pinoy Pride” to the younger ones. Some of their teaching included lessons on Philippine history.

For instance, Alsaybar observed one Veterano recounting with younger recruits the history of the .45 caliber revolver and how American soldiers were unable to “put away Filipino Muslim fighters armed with sharp machetes and other bladed weapons.” (p. 131). The Veterano continues, “The Americans were forced to invent a more powerful handgun capable of downing these brave Filipino fighters.” Alsaybar writes, “Historically, “Pinoy Pride” arose as a direct response to the collective “hurt pride” felt by immigrant youths being insulted with racial slurs, called names, and beat up by marauding Latino Cholos” (p. 130). This is a stark departure from earlier interracial groupings when “Filipino men were cohorting with Latino men” and in the infamous Zoot Suit riot of 1942 were beaten up because in fact there were “Filipino pachucos.” Jossey’s childhood neighborhood in Echo Park, therefore, became one of his first classrooms

where he was able to learn from significant male figures a slew of lessons that were critical, historical, and political.

“Can you talk a little about your transition from high school to college?” I then ask. “It was Glendale Community College. I took this Filipino American studies class, ironically taught by this former CIA operative, turned priest! Or, maybe he did both at the same time.” Jossey recalls. “[He] ended up being my professor at city college. He ended up connecting me to this dude named Roy Morales. He’s kind of like our Uncle Fred?” Jossey thinks. “Who’s the poet? Uncle Al, up here.” He clarifies. Jossey speaks of a trifecta of Filipino American community leaders. Uncle Fred being the late Fred Cordova, founding president of the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS). FANHS is an important organization for Filipinos and houses the Pinoy archive in Seattle, Washington. Uncle Fred and Aunty Dorothy Cordova are pillars in the Filipino American community as they have become steadfast teachers and historians of Filipino experiences in the United States. Uncle Al is Al Robles from San Francisco, a renowned writer, storyteller, unofficial poet laureate for Filipino Americans whose activism and mentorship served countless leaders and teachers.

And lastly, Uncle Roy—Royal Morales, a prominent teacher and leader in the LA Filipino community, especially for youth. I have heard of him. I recall seeing his book “Makibaka: The Pilipino American Struggle” and have stories of his teaching at UCLA and the crucial role he played in establishing Pilipino Studies in the university.

Yeah, Uncle Roy, he started this organization called SIPA, Search to Involve Pilipino Americans, which was just down the street from my mom’s. Which I had gone to several times, but I was like, this is a weird thing. I walked in. One part was like, all the gangsters are here. I don’t like it, but I don’t fit in. And I never came back. *Until* I came back as this volunteer intern while I was at UCLA.

So, the Philippine studies class linked me to Uncle Roy, who linked me back to SIPA, who, when I transferred to UCLA, I stayed in touch with. And . . . that’s really where the



re-connection to my own neighborhood came from. I had to go to UCLA to recognize what was all around me.

One of the first folks I organized with was Peter, the brother after me. We did a lot of organizing. It became clear. There were a lot of UCLA kids who wanted to do Filipino community work. I think that was significant in my own development, because after that Philippine studies class, that led me to looking out for other ethnic studies opportunities. I took a bunch of ethnic studies classes after that point on. Then, with the whole purpose of doing work in Temple/Beaudry neighborhood, yeah . . .

In Jossey's voice I could hear an urgency, a fondness of those memories. The experience Jossey described is characteristic of many Ethnic Studies classes, a "re-connection to my own neighborhood," what Tintiangco-Cubales and colleagues (2014) have described as "community responsive pedagogy" or the "connecting classroom learning with students' home and community life, and helping students learn to analyze and act on community needs" (p. 115). Jossey would later connect all of these experiences as "just the spark" that led to a an "explosion of activity and desire to learn and study." Now at UCLA, he shared how his roommates, his "Chicano brothers" were influential in his active pursuit of social justice as a student organizer. "I even got arrested at the Chicano Studies Campaign, '93, I think it was '93, '94 . . . really synthesizing and bringing in my Filipino identity in solidarity with that effort," he grins.

That was significant, formative, and it even fueled more of my clear understanding that all of this shit needs to be taken back to the communities that all of us are from. I had the luxury of being from a community that was relatively near. Then, I was able to bring all of those folks who had that same outlook that everything we learn here needs to be benefitting and brought back to the places that we're from.

Many more lessons would follow as Jossey moved toward organizing, connecting, and building with people in Los Angeles and later nationally. "We started talking to folks in New York, Chicago, and Seattle. In San Diego, in the Bay, all around this national liberation politic," he shared. "All stemmed from the organizing work that started around '94, '95 in LA. We would go all over the country trying to organize folks around this politic, and it would always

coincide with existing stuff, but I think it got amplified, and my critical consciousness got amplified, from doing that particular work,” Jossey said. “It amazes me and my mom. We talk all the time. My younger brothers, we talk all the time. And we’re like, ‘dude . . . how did we get here?’

While in sixth grade, Ms. Escobedo would be his first Ethnic Studies teacher. I have learned that it was also a constellation of teachers, community figures, and family members that were central in forming his identities. Jossey’s eyes peer down and rest on the olive green picnic table. A brief pause enters—he is reflecting on all that was just shared. I seize that pause to think of my first Ethnic Studies teachers some of whom are Jossey’s contemporaries. These reflections help me think of a broadened definition for what a classroom could be, how Ethnic Studies shapes teaching. A buzz from the overhead fluorescent lights makes itself known so as if to confirm our meditations. There is a grate from underneath the olive green picnic table. The pause ceases and we resume our conversation.

### **Ethnic Studies Pedagogue**

The instructor said,

*Go home and write  
a page tonight.  
And let that page come out of you—  
Then, it will be true.*

I wonder if it’s that simple?  
I am twenty-two, colored, born in Winston-Salem.  
I went to school there, then Durham, then here  
to this college on the hill above Harlem.  
I am the only colored student in my class . . .

So will my page be colored that I write?  
Being me, it will not be white.  
But it will be  
a part of you, instructor.  
You are white—

yet a part of me, as I am a part of you.  
That's American.

Sometimes perhaps you don't want to be a part of me.  
Nor do I often want to be a part of you.  
But we are, that's true!  
As I learn from you,  
I guess you learn from me—  
although you're older—and white—  
and somewhat more free.

This is my page for English B.

Langston Hughes  
"Theme for English B" (1995)

In the epigraph above Hughes' "Theme"<sup>9</sup> is ripe with honesty and vulnerability attending to the dialogue some students have when difference, or in Hughes' example, when race functions in profound ways between student and teacher. I run the risk of ceasing so much of the powerful message his poem conveys, yet, do so to highlight the students' inner thoughts. He asks, "I wonder if it's that simple?" to just go and "*let the page come out of you*"—to just write. For some readers, one may glean the enormity of the students' critical consciousness and his casting of what Du Bois has referred to as "double consciousness." And, of important salience is Hughes' line "As I learn from you, I guess you learn from me." It is this kind of exchange, albeit potentially uneven in Hughes' example, that the student evokes. This exchange follows a cyclical characteristic of what Freire and others describe as "praxis." For much of Jossey's portrait, his "theme" for our conversations orbits on reflection. Jossey mentions, "You know, speaking for myself, but I don't think I'm alone. Teachers don't have enough time to reflect. Um . . . and I don't."

---

<sup>9</sup> Special thanks to Victor Bascara, who brought this poem to my attention at the Association for Asian American Studies meeting in Miami, Florida on a roundtable focused on Education and Asian American Studies.

For the student in Hughes' poem, one would hope that one day they would have Jossey or someone like Jossey as their teacher. Jossey shared, "What ethnic studies insists on is the multiplicity of points of view, of narratives and of countering the master narrative with other voices." To the students' credit, their critical consciousness is already sharp; coupled with a teacher who gets their experience and understands their experiential knowledge is key.

I think critical consciousness raising is what ethnic studies has to do. It's not just the telling of a narrative, but it's the development of a new way of looking at our experiences. And that new way of looking at our experiences empowered us to take action and that informs what we do, so that were more effective at getting change. And so that's the ethnic studies that I embraced, that I lived by that I want to develop. And what's crazy is none of us, there were very few of us have time to really reflect on our trajectory.

Jossey continues to situate his insight as a history teacher ways Ethnic Studies acts as an intervention into what Michael Apple has discussed as "official knowledge." Jossey shared:

. . . Even before Common Core, there were the California State standards for the social sciences. And there's specific content that they believe you need to tackle . . . We open it example of like, "F\*ck I don't want to teach Andrew Jackson" and his democratization of America. But in the same time it's like, "Hold On, that's an entry point for an ethnic studies in analysis. It's like Andrew Jackson, who was he? Why is he being credited with democratizing in the United State? And for whom was that established? And that all leads us back to other rising of African peoples and native peoples. And it's a perfect, it's an invitation to critique Andrew Jackson.

Considering Ethnic Studies as "an invitation" opens up the utility of how such a critical perspective can work toward subverting "official knowledge" to encourage and provide students with skills to seek counternarratives. Moreover, Jossey clarifies his hope and current work to "build ethnic studies, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, a class that's multi-racial, multi-ethnic versus African American or Chicano or Pinay, Pinoy education." His emphasis on engaging with and teaching multiple perspectives is important for a number of reasons, most especially for how this particular vision for Ethnic Studies envelops multiple racial and ethnic histories and experiences. Jossey declares the enormity of pressure to teach to standards as an "entry point" to continue to

teach in critical ways rather than a stopping point. Jossey's articulation of the role of Ethnic Studies-prepared teachers and Ethnic Studies more generally posits a centering of academic rigor alongside developing skills and strategies students can use in their lives.

. . . Our role as . . . Ethnic Studies teachers inoculate and instill certain framework and worldview as well as skills that will help them navigate . . . and protect themselves from a really toxic environment. We're not going to change the toxicity of their contexts immediately, but they need to be equipped with some survival mechanism, systems, outlooks, tools and be fortified by knowledge . . . Building academic success and critical consciousness that when faced with a deficit model thinking teacher, "You can't, you can't, why can't you, why can't you?" that the kid will be able to be like, "Tsk, ah . . . that's . . ." or even within themselves, on a meta level to recognize like that's internalized or that's institutional that . . . then they can at least from that moment, not further absorb negative messaging, curriculum content.

That that's going to be the first line of defense . . . like it has to be themselves. So before we get to a place where we have our own schools, we have to . . . we transform the existing schools.

The metaphor of inoculation is powerful. The idea that Ethnic Studies has prepared him as a teacher has been evident across the numerous stories and moments he's shared during our conversation. Yet, Jossey extends the healing characteristics and capacities of Ethnic Studies to express their impact on students. All of this is under the guise and reality that the urgent work involves the transformation of "existing schools" and supporting students to be able to navigate schooling "themselves." I ask Jossey to share some challenges he's experienced as a teacher. "It's exhausting. This work is exhausting. I think a lot of the exhaustion is unnecessary. It's part of the system," he laments. "I think ethnic studies teachers will tend to place themselves or go to schools or serve populations with higher need. So, just the human, the interaction with suffering." Indeed Jossey's analysis of schooling reveals the harsh reality that teaching is exhausting.

At the time of our conversations, Jossey was in the midst of packing up his classroom. And while the room was vibrant, I can hear and sense his exhaustion. Jossey would later be

taking a position to work with the school district and support leading efforts at the district level the implementation of Ethnic Studies. It is no surprise then that the “cross-cutting values” all of the curricula will be based on include “love, and respect, hope, solidarity, self- determination, and critical consciousness, and community.” In many ways these embody what I asked it meant for Jossey to be a Filipino American teacher. “To be a servant of the people at the bottom.” Jossey replied. “I think that's what anchors my activism which in the last couple of decades really is taking the form of teaching and then organizing or connecting the teaching to the organizing, like that's my position I'm going to play.”

### **Lesson Seven: “I Didn’t Get, This”**

“So . . . me . . . Ethnic Studies—what does it mean, right?” Cassie clarifies as she makes her way around the dining table into the kitchen. For the second interviews, I asked all of the teachers to share artifacts that represent their relationships with Ethnic Studies. The school year ended a few weeks prior so meeting at her house was most convenient. “So, I’m going to bust it out for you and you’re going to laugh. Actually, this is one of the first things that came up to my mind.” My back was facing the kitchen before I could turn and see what she was retrieving. “It’s kind of random. It’s not really related to the classroom but it’s related to my history.” Cassie returns and places a medium sized Mitsubishi rice cooker at the center of the table. My own family’s rice cooker enters my mind as the fond and familiar clink of aluminum chimes in— lid rattling pot. “Personally, let me tell you why though because it’s specific about this rice cooker . . . It’s older than me!” Cassie’s display of excitement connecting Ethnic Studies and the treasured appliance fills the room. “It was my mom and dad’s when they first moved here from the Philippines. And, when I went up to college . . .” Cassie gushingly describes. “It’s still in good shape, too!” I state. “And, it makes *the best* rice!” Cassie continues, “I think about what it

represents—It represents, history of my parents’ migration here and sort of the push factors of them moving here.” A memory of being scolded by my grandmother for not forcefully squeezing together fistfuls of rice in the cloudy water flashes—grandma demonstrating how you properly wash, squeeze, rinse, and tilt the pot to not lose any kernels of rice. “It’s awesome,” I offer admiringly.

Cassie recounts how her mother gave her the rice cooker when she went to college and has been using it ever since. “It’s the rice cooker I got my whole life. It’s the rice we’ve been cooking. We’ve been cooking rice in this like our whole life,” she says. Surprised that Cassie was still using the same rice cooker her mom told her, “We need to replace it” and bought a new one, a digital rice cooker. “To me it represents a lot of our family history. And, I mean, it’s really funny because it’s just an object . . . It’s like when I see it . . . I think about like my parents, their struggle, but yet not just that, but when they came here, they still kept who they were. Do you know what I mean?” Cassie continues:

Now, I should say it’s cliché. It’s only because I’ve just heard it so much just like the whole like ‘know self,’ right? And, I think that’s what I did. When I was in college, I was really trying to search for that: What is that? What is . . . Who am I? How come I’m in the freaking United States? Who would have I been if my parents didn’t move here and meet here and then, you know, have a family here? So then, I kind of imagine that. Who I would be, if I were in the Philippines. Would I be a teacher? Would I . . . I don’t know. Would I be doing something else? So anyways, “know self,” right? No history, no self. I know because I totally thought about that . . . If I say, I’ll come in cheesy, but I feel like: “*Lucas [her son], you’re going to college. Here’s your rice cooker,*” right?

with each rice grain i pick up  
A piece of my childhood  
Returns to its place in my mind  
In the family, is a picture  
. . . lost in rice and cleaning  
Photos and memories

Virginia R. Cerenio  
*Returning a Borrowed Tongue* (1995)

Connecting Cassie's affection for her family's rice cooker to Cerenio's poem, the rice cooker and rice itself, then, are both symbol and source of memory and meaning. Because her father was serving in the United States navy, the backdrop upon which her childhood and schooling rests consisted of early interactions with students with a range of backgrounds. "I was there [the Philippines] from second through fifth grade. I think of my students who I work with now, it's kinda where they're at." Cassie goes on to describe how many of the military kids attended a school that was away from the base and included children of international dignitaries. She reflects:

I went to a private school. But, the only reason we got to go there was 'cause the military paid for it, you know? And my parents would not be able to afford to send us there. So again, interacting with people from other class backgrounds was very interesting for me. These were kids whose parents were ambassadors from all over the world. I had classmates who were from all backgrounds, from U.S., from Asia, from India, all these places. I thought it was great in terms of my growth because I was able to say, whoa, there are all kinds of people from all over the world. And I appreciated the value of my education at that point. It was a really great education. And that was during really the basis of my learning.

### **Portals and Pathways**

With her first few years of schooling in the Philippines, Cassie's worldview was shaped by a number of factors. In particular, being a "navy kid" allowed her family the financial and political means to attend a school in the Philippines with children of ambassadors from throughout the world. Cassie's father's serving in the U.S. Navy is indicative of a long-standing knotted relationship between the Philippines and the United States undergirded by war, imperialism, made visible through schooling. Cassie's emphasis of the importance of those "earliest memories" shows up in how and why she teaches in the ways she does with her students—she was the same age of the students she teaches now when these key moments occurred.



Cassie continued to share more of her schooling in the Philippines, about her school and a nearby housing complex. “I remember one of my earliest memories is looking down my street and there was a huge wall, and we’d bike up and down the street, me and my brothers and there would be this door in the wall and there would be people walking through that door. And I remember vividly asking, *Where are they going? What are they doing? What is this place?*” It was not until one of the maids in her house told her, “Don’t you know, people like me who don’t live in the house like I do, that’s where they live. They go on the other side of the wall.” Cassie points out:

And whenever people talk about my politicization, or how I came to doing community work, that’s one of my earliest memories of like, thinking, Why? Why is it that I’m on this side of the wall, and why is it that there are people on that side of the wall? So the neighborhood was big, but it was that dynamic of people come from other places to work. So I remember that very vividly.

As a young person, Cassie’s curiosities were piqued because of the physical wall between herself and others. People with whom she lived close to and played with were shuffling along a narrow pathway through a tiny door. Movements through and beyond another side of the wall usher Cassie’s assertion to not view students as separate from their family units. In another conversation, Cassie makes the point clearer stating, “. . . there has to be an entry point, right? And maybe as an educator, this is our entry point that these kids that we have, that come through our doors every day—but I don’t see it as like here there’s this kid—they have a family or community that’s attached to them.”

She continued to describe the importance of understanding how students’ families are essential partners in teaching. Taking up chances to engage with and familiarize yourself with students’ families must be taken. Cassie offers, “At any moment, I feel like it’s an opportunity for us to do that, too. Build community with our families and for the students to know that that’s what it is. It’s like, ‘I am a part of your community.’ ‘Here is you’— because that’s how they

see themselves. ‘Here is me, here is my family, here is my teacher, my classmates,’—recognizing that is like their support and how can we give each kid the opportunity to use their voices. I feel like they're maybe not taught to speak up, taught not to voice.” In this way, Cassie’s classroom “doors” function as portals—inviting, opening, and maintaining a connection to her students’ families and communities.

In our many conversations on teaching, Cassie shared that she encourages her students to “speak up” and use their “voice” in ways that diverge from how other teachers they had and will have might encourage or interpret. She explains, “If you say something that's contradictory to what your teacher is saying and I'm like, ‘No, *please* question.’ I mean I might be the teacher here but I am also a student. I am learning from you, I learn everyday from you.” Cassie’s practice enacts a Freirean dialectic—valuing her students and herself as producers of knowledge. She is also embodying what hooks (hooks, 2003) would refer to as an “engaged pedagogy”—a pedagogy hooks describes:

Emphasizes mutual participation because it is the movement of ideas, exchanged by everyone, that forges a meaningful working relationship between everyone in the classroom. This process helps establish the integrity of the teacher, while simultaneously encouraging students to work with integrity. The root meaning of the word “integrity” is wholeness.” (p. 21)

An engaged pedagogue, Cassie acknowledges the fractures and fissures characteristic of schooling and their affect on students. To teach with integrity, to understand the importance of wholeness in relation to students, entails tapping into experiences that were not taught in mainstream teacher preparation or even her own schooling. Rather, involves Cassie drawing from the well of Ethnic Studies to inform her practice and pedagogy centering the relationships she develops with her students, their families, and the communities they represent.

## **Being a Pinay Teacher, Here**

We're sitting across from one another. The table is shaped like a lima bean—Cassie in its curved nook, almost like the helm of a flight deck. White sheets of paper peeking out of bright folders pepper her helm. “I tell my students this all the time, ‘Yo, I freaking love school!’—I’m not surprised I’m a teacher. I love school! I loved it . . . It’s funny because when I went to college, I went pre-med. And I was like, why did I do that?” Cassie’s excitement trails her as she heads toward a metal filing cabinet. Photos and artwork attached by magnets color the grayness. She glances through the top drawer. “And I don’t know when it happened, but apparently somewhere, I dunno if my parents brainwashed me or something—my mom’s a nurse, my dad’s a med-tech, so it’s kind of a med field. I remember vividly in high school thinking, ‘I guess I’m going to be a doctor.’”

Cassie continues, “But, I remember also specifically saying, ‘I wanna work with kids!’ I wanna work with kids. I wanna be a pediatrician. I wanna work with kids. I remember that! I remember feeling that.” Cassie grins as she walks back toward the table.

I love this story! I love it! Sorry, I was mentioning earlier that my earliest recollections of what I wanted to be a doctor, right? So that's what I thought. And then my mom gives me this box. I was already here in grad school. She gives me this big old box. They were cleaning out the garage, and she was like, ‘Here—here, look at this box.’ And I was like, ‘what is this?’—And I open it and it's like all this work my mom kept from when I was a kid. I think I have it . . . I found this piece of paper in there . . .

Cassie thumbs through the manila folder. “And here it is! You're gonna love it,” she gleefully smiles. She pulls out a pale brown paper, delicate, yet carefully kept. The handwriting is neat and innocent. The relic reads:

**“I Want to be a Teacher!”**

She continues, “I was seven years old, first grade or something and I guess I've always wanted to be a teacher. But somewhere in there was medicine or some other field. And so

again, it wasn't until I took that TEP class that I was like, 'I can do this! I can work with youth. I can do that. You know? And so that's when it really shifted for me . . . And I think it dawned on me, too that I didn't grow up with Filipino teachers. Even at my international school . . . I was in the Philippines, and my teachers weren't even Filipino!' She chuckles. "I think that was another factor for me. The youth need to see someone who looks like them and understands what their families go through." Indeed there is value as well as a "need" for students of color to learn from teachers of color, especially important is her distinction that these teachers "understand" the multiple contexts that shape a student's family context. Cassie's claim is aligned with academic literature that have found teachers of color bring with them a distinct perspective regarding the cultural experiences of students of color (Howard, 2010; Kohli, 2009b; A. Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2014; Ana María Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Moreover, her perspective is not simply an acknowledgement of only "what their families go through" but tied to her ability—developed through Ethnic Studies—to acknowledge and analyze the historical, sociocultural, and structural contexts that affect the material conditions of her students, their families, and communities.

The school Cassie teaches at is predominantly made up of students of color from immigrant and working-class homes with a mostly teachers of color. The affordances of parents and family members galvanizing in partnership with teachers to ensure a relevant and responsive education has led to dozens of curricular and programmatic interventions. For instance, she has been able to loop grades with her students and then those students enter her best friend Teresa's class. Because Cassie has been teaching at the school for a long time, she can witness her students grow and advance through the educational pipeline. She shares:

Oh gosh, I love when kids come back and they tell you . . . I had a couple girls that came back in here earlier this year, and they were with me for two years, with me and Teresa. They said, "Ms. Sama, we felt so prepared for middle school. Your math class has totally helped us, we felt so prepared." And I feel like, I know what I'm doing with them now.

They might not realize it now, how much. But it's not until later that they realize all this is, 'I really learned something that can help me now', you know? I love that. I love working with a group of kids starting at the same place and ending at a certain place, like over a span of time. In our case, with these kids, we loop them from [grades] four to five. I have them for two years so I can see really huge growth from when they came in from third grade and now they're leaving just about to be in sixth grade. That's a huge amount of time!

Having been able to work with the same group of students over time is important, as Cassie shared. Her example touches upon her effectiveness in preparing students but also alludes to the ways her Ethnic Studies sensibilities are part and parcel to that preparation. "And for me, I've always teased about this, even some of the teachers here. I'm like, anything to get these kids to love you because if you get this kid to love you as a teacher, and respect you, you can teach them. You know, they will really take in what you're trying to teach them—whatever, math, whatever subject you're teaching." I sit there taking it all in, I can sense the luminance of what Cassie is sharing. She's grateful, humble, and affirmed in her teaching. For Cassie, her students returning to thank her are invaluable. Questions swell my mind: What would it mean to support teachers' capacities to love their students? How can Ethnic Studies develop a love for learning?

I also feel like they feel more free to say it in writing. They feel more freely to write about their experiences in relationship to their race or their culture. They can express it and say it. They can say it without feeling like my teacher isn't going understand; it's more like: 'My teachers gonna get it.' So I can say this because I know they're gonna get. Or if my teacher doesn't understand, then I can actually explain. I think it's those core things. That's the value of being a Pinay teacher here.

If Cassie "doesn't understand" then her have students been taught and possess the language to convey what they mean and do so "freely." Freedom and "getting them to love you" in this way is reminiscent of what Freire (2005) has described the role of love in teaching: "it impossible to teach without a forged, invented, and well-thought-out capacity to love" (p. 3). That a student of

color's teacher is "gonna get it" is encouraging. Cassie's calm confidence sharing the effectiveness of her teaching is appreciated. I can see it in her eyes and can't help but think to myself, how valuable *you* are to your students.

### **The "This" Of It All**

Five desks are arranged to make a larger table, each of us is seated at one of the desks. Cassie is discussing the confusion that some students entering her class have when she pushes them to critique and question what they're learning, to question their teacher. "Like that's not—just because I come in and I'm like, 'I'm your teacher, I'm your . . . whatever' *no*, we are learning from each other. I think part of that's our role as well; they are part of a learning community. Not just in the classroom but outside. Yeah . . . I mean giving them access, giving them . . . I don't know, vocabulary knowledge," Cassie explains. Our heads are nodding in agreement with what she is describing, a critical-commonsensical understanding that the students we work with teach us as much as we hope we teach them. "I just keep thinking about where I was at as a young student in public schools in the United States and how different say these students, you know? Again, I'm like, 'Oh, I wish I had this.' You know? 'I wish I had half of what you're getting' Like, "That's so fucking awesome," you know, anyways, I think that's part of our responsibility."

Cassie's voice settles firmly at "responsibility."

"Yeah," Allan adds in unison with Jossey adding to the dialogue, "we are the difference of the community . . ." Cassie picks up, "Right? And again . . . yeah, maybe we're empowered by that idea that I didn't get this. So, you're going to get it and you're going to . . . [laughs] but you will have this. You will have access to this, you'll have this experience, you'll be able to put words to your experiences and you'll be able to articulate it in a way and if not, hopefully when

you get to middle school or when you get to high school, when you have Ethnic Studies, ‘Wow!’ You know? And you’re not just getting it when you get to college and all a sudden, it’s like, ‘What? What’s going on here?’ because that’s kind of how I felt.”

“Yeah, seriously,” adds Allan.

“I kind of felt that way like, ‘Wait, hold on, hold on.’ I was a part of the community, I knew I was part of something larger than I was but—Oh, that’s what it was. Oh, that’s the role I could play—Okay, all right.”

Cassie’s voice is affirmatively warm, confident in drawing connections to Allan, Jossey, and myself. We get it. We understand what she is saying. Cassie’s assertion, “I didn’t get this. So . . . you will have this” is useful for examining how Ethnic Studies underscores teachers’ motivations for teaching their students; they didn’t get “this,” so their students certainly will. *This* offers a critical register for thinking about what Ethnic Studies *does* for teachers’ preparation and practice. In other words, “this” captures a host of experiences and connections to Ethnic Studies that Cassie and the teachers in the study maintain were instrumental in their process of becoming teachers. So then, what is the “this” of Ethnic Studies? On the one hand, it is about accessibility to subversive knowledges. For Cassie, not having Ethnic Studies until college was a prime reason for teaching in the ways she does. Ethnic Studies is a form of subversive knowledge because the stories, learning, and experiences are in direct opposition to the majoritarian knowledge that saturates schooling. On the other, Ethnic Studies captures an affective, relational, and communal dimension that upends the existing subtractive schooling system we know.

Three scholars support a deeper understanding about the “this” of Ethnic Studies. First, drawing connections to W.E.B. DuBois’ (2008) work and the color line when he posed, “How

does it feel to be a problem?” DuBois was suggesting not that Black folks were not talked about; rather, DuBois illuminates the Reconstruction Era and his experiences of being Black and being considered property. Similarly, Gayatri Spivak’s (1988) query, “Can the subaltern speak?” was not whether the subaltern can speak, more precisely, Spivak leads us to consider the barriers and structures that keep the subaltern from speaking. *This*, then is different, it is subversive, healing, celebratory and goes beyond rote curricula and banking models of teaching. Again drawing from hooks (2009),

Education as a tool of colonization that serves to teach students allegiance to the status quo has been so much the accepted norm that no blame can be attributed to the huge body of educators who simply taught as they were . . . by forcing education to be the tool of mass colonization, dominator culture basically made the classroom a place without integrity. (p. 30)

Taken together, one can assert for Ethnic Studies—*this* is about self-love and in many ways traverses the Freirean model of praxis: guided by critical thought, reflection, and returning to move toward action(s). Cassie and the teachers of this study have taken *this* that they did not have and made it so their students will. *This* is revolutionary. It is reconciliation.



## CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

### Lessons Learned

Espacio Comunidad has been the gathering place for Education 4 The People (E4P) the past year. E4P is a grassroots organization made up of critical educators from across the Los Angeles area. E4P emerged out of the need for spaces outside of formal educational institutions where teachers can develop their political clarity on their own terms, their needs and be in community with like-minded critical educators. I half-jokingly have ascribed myself “friend of the Founders” gesturing toward my presence at E4P’s first ever meeting and supporting my friends build E4P the last five years. I have assumed a role in E4P’s leadership this past year. Espacio Comunidad is an ideal location for the two-dozen or so critical educators that meet once a month. Members often come to the space to re-charge after a long week of teaching. One particular Saturday, however, felt different.

On Saturday, November 12, 2016 we met to mourn, to console, to heal. We met to organize and to strategize. We held space to name what was ahead, to name our pains, our confusions, and our anxieties. The days leading up to this particular meeting, most E4P members were holding space for their students upon learning who would be the 45<sup>th</sup> President. “I’m tired of holding space for RJ,” a few members remarked referencing the restorative approaches some schools utilize. It was necessary for us to reflect, listen, and continue conversations on ways to support ourselves and the students, families, and communities we work with. This particular political moment is marked by an emboldened White supremacy; a system and sociopolitical context that teachers must navigate through. This particular moment also characterizes the ways through which Ethnic Studies has been under attack. Opponents of Ethnic Studies suggest its inability to prepare students for high-stakes testing or is not

challenging for students academics (Planas, 2012; Sanchez, 2007). Most notably is how Ethnic Studies has been attacked in Tucson, Arizona from the banning of books to the dismantling of the Mexican American Studies Program (O’Leary, Romero, Cabrera, & Rascon, 2012).

Undergirding all of these attacks are the violent logics of white supremacy.

I begin this chapter by turning to the generative wisdom of Audre Lorde (1982) whose words illuminate what this moment means for teachers like those found in these pages and what lessons we can still learn from. In a speech given at Harvard University to mark and celebrate the life of Malcolm X, Lorde offers lessons<sup>10</sup> from the period of the 1960s where activism, art, and organizing toward justice were precisely and unapologetically pursued:

If we are to keep the enormity of the forces aligned against us from establishing a false hierarchy of oppression, we must school ourselves to recognize that any attack against Blacks, any attack against women, is an attack against all of us who recognize that our interests are not being served by the systems we support. Each one of us here is a link in the connection between antipoor legislation, gay shootings, the burning of synagogues, street harassment, attacks against women, and resurgent violence against Black people.

The passage from Lorde’s speech, entitled “Learning from the 60’s” provides a number of premises that are instructive. First, she gestures to the interlocking nature and “enormity of the forces aligned against us,” be it racism “against Blacks” or heteropatriarchy “against women.” Lorde’s emphasis on an “us”—the “us” that are implicated and at times complicit in these attacks—demands attention to acknowledge who her intended audience actually is. Lorde speaking at an elite institution like Harvard is in itself an act of resistance, an act of hope for those whom share affinity and acknowledge membership in the “us” she speaks to. That “we must school ourselves,” is in many ways the mantra that accompanied Ethnic Studies’ emergence in higher education. Which is to say, the “ARC of Ethnic Studies” (A. Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014) focused on “Access” for students of color to a “Relevant” education, and connecting

---

<sup>10</sup> Grace Kyungwon Hong’s (2015) “Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference” is an excellent and incisive reading of Audre Lorde’s work.

institutions of higher education to the “Communities” they are in. The imperative that we “must” school and learn and educate “ourselves,” speaks to the importance of self-determination and creating modes of learning reflective of and responsive to “ourselves.” Lorde’s powerful words highlight the notion that “our interests are not being served by the systems we support.” That is, the system was never made with people of color—or in Lorde’s case, Black folks—in mind. The catalog of assaults including: “gay shootings,” “attacks against women,” and “resurgent violence against Black people” regrettably remain regular occurrences in the current moment. Just as Espacio Comunidad offered a site and space for Education 4 The People—critical educators committed to transformative education—Ethnic Studies provides a *space for community*, espacio comunidad. A space that is pedagogical, contextual, theoretical, and methodological. In so doing, we are *learning from Ethnic Studies*—to riff off of Lorde’s title.

Seeing the promise and strength outlined in Lorde’s words this chapter aims to synthesize the lessons learned from the teachers whose stories we’ve read thus far. These *Portraits of Praxis* are lessons that can be read in their singularity, yet, when taken together are what Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot has called the “aesthetic whole,” provides key insights that responds to the call to action Lorde concludes her speech with. Channeling once more the revolutionary spirit of Malcolm X she asks, “How are you practicing what you preach – whatever you preach, and who exactly is listening?” In what follows, I offer *Principles of Ethnic Studies Teacher Praxis*. These Principles guide portraitists, teachers, and students alike to build upon what Ethnic Studies Teacher Praxis looks like and what it teaches. Embedded within each Principle are implications and contributions developed through the dissertation.

## **Teacher Education Rooted in Ethnic Studies**

Central to all of the teachers' experiences were the ways Ethnic Studies permeated throughout their schooling and in turn shaped pedagogical practice and teacher identities. For many of the teachers, Ethnic Studies was not only a way of viewing their world or entry point toward developing their critical consciousness, but also a source of strength and a space for community. Ethnic Studies was life giving, in a number of ways. For instance, with Andre, the English teacher working in South Central, Los Angeles, the demands of teaching were so challenging that he was questioning the very sustainability of teaching. Yet, was able to persevere, coupled with being at a new school and teaching once again with his best friend, Elijah whom he learned Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies with at SFSU. Rochelle, the middle school Language Arts teacher in the Bay Area, remarked how her entry into teaching English was not via a "traditional" route, rather, through reading literary works written by people of color. This in turn, catapulted her pursuit of a teaching credential.

Especially important to highlight are the ways Rochelle was motivated to teach because another teacher, a Pinay professor, encouraged Rochelle to look into talents she had not thought she had. How can Teacher Education founded upon the philosophies, pedagogies, and commitments of Ethnic Studies respond to the alarming number of teachers leaving the profession? What partnerships may be made within higher education to encourage Ethnic Studies-prepared students to pursue careers as teachers? In other words, how might Colleges of Education and Ethnic Studies establish partnerships? Therefore, imagining a teacher education rooted in Ethnic Studies means looking toward Ethnic Studies as site of pedagogy and curricula, as a theoretical orientation and position to interrogate power in ways mainstream teacher education does not.

*Teacher Education Rooted in Ethnic Studies* is premised upon the understanding that schools are a part of the colonial project and have historically been sites of power, dispossession, and violence. Such a teacher education follows the lead of Ethnic Studies for teachers to interrogate power, privilege, and positionality in relation to this tenuous history. A teacher education rooted in Ethnic Studies demands students understand and learn from the communities they work in to better serve and be responsive for the needs of their students, their families, and communities.

### **Ethnic Studies as Portraiture, Portraiture as Pedagogy**

Among the many methodological assets portraiture offers, this study has moved me to consider the pedagogical dimensions of portraiture. That is, the ways portraiture has pedagogically informed how I understand these teachers' praxis and relationships with Ethnic Studies. Just as Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) describes the utility of "Context" as an essential feature for Portraiture, my use of artifacts ushered in rich insights for each teacher's context. Take Erica, the first year World History teacher working at a pilot school. Her students' artwork of Abraham Lincoln standing amidst dozens of unmarked graves and how their critical analyses of history were painted onto history textbooks all students use. In another instance, the walls adjacent to Erica's classroom had "Most Wanted" posters of historical figures the students learned about. While many of her students would not identify as Filipino American, it was eye-catching to notice a number of the students' posters were of Filipino revolutionaries, like Gabriela Silang –the first woman to lead revolutionary efforts in the Philippines. In many ways this act of subverting the school's walls with art and activism, demonstrated how Ethnic Studies is a part of Portraiture and the pedagogical dimensions of Portraiture.

Similarly, as each of the teachers participated in a focus group, the affirmations, intergenerational connections, and multiple voices present in each illuminated and initiated a space of commune. That is, the focus group organically allowed us to “break down the artificial barrier between researcher and community” (Fong, 2008, p. 2). With Allan, Jossey, and Cassie I witnessed how two veteran teachers admired and honored their younger colleague as holding valuable insights they too could learn. This instance pushed back on the hierarchical notion of a “master” teacher and suggests the importance of teachers viewing everyone as someone they could learn from, someone they can be in community with. Finally, this study provided insights into how Critical Race Studies more generally can be advanced to take seriously the knotted relationship between colonialism, racialization, gender, and other modes of power. This is understood through a process of coding data I referred to as “critical race coding.” Such an approach allowed me to code for patterns, instances, and insights through a critical race and Ethnic Studies lens.

A Filipino American Critical Race Theory of Education or FlipCrit, presents one such possibility to contend with those particularities. FlipCrit complicates the Black/white/Latino paradigm and advances a critical stance toward interrogating power. FlipCrit examines how such power circulates in structures and systems like schooling. This Principle of Ethnic Studies Teacher Praxis emphasizes the productive prowess of portraiture for its insights into theory, method, practice, application, and action.

*Ethnic Studies as Portraiture, Portraiture as Pedagogy* demonstrates the qualitative nature of achieving thick description and interdisciplinary analyses of data. In so doing, this approach toward research centers the Ethnic Studies principle of humanizing peoples’ lived experience at the same time the importance of one’s method(ology) enabling the same

humanization. This perspective moves beyond education research that is solely outcomes based, to highlight the ways methodologies simultaneously and necessarily demonstrate critical outcomes and honor the experiences with whom your work focuses upon.

### **A Project of Critical Hope and Healing**

Throughout all of the teachers' stories was an underlying and at times expressed commitment to being hopeful in spite of the challenges each of the teachers endured. Many teachers remarked on how they "couldn't turn off" their Ethnic Studies lens, or their ability to possess a critique of oppression and power and the real ways this manifests in their own and their students' material conditions. It is worth revisiting again what Jossey, the veteran social studies high school teacher, referred to as the "cross-cutting values" of Ethnic Studies which are: "love, and respect, hope, solidarity, self-determination, and critical consciousness, and community." How can Ethnic Studies develop a love for learning? What are the legitimate reasons for educational disinvestment from young people? How might we re-consider "academic success" through these values?

Considering the growing body of research that describes the layered challenges new teachers face and whose likelihood of remaining in the classroom are exasperated if you are a teacher of color. Ethnic Studies provides strategies for teachers to name, seek support, and identify opportunities for collective healing. Recall Lisa, the middle school teacher who from our first conversation did not convey the same excitement and energy as her recruitment form suggested. With Lisa now at a new school with more appropriate support from both administration and colleagues, her hope to finally apply what she originally sought when becoming a teacher—Ethnic Studies framed content—were coming to fruition. Another example is found in Cassie's portrait and how her years of community organizing and insistence on

providing an elementary schooling experience rooted in Ethnic Studies. Cassie's artifact, her parents' hand-me-down rice cooker served as metaphor and mirror toward the hope she cultivates with her students. We can also think of Jossey who described Ethnic Studies teaching as "protection" and prompted us to believe in and realize self-love and hope as essential for both students and teachers. How does Ethnic Studies incite ideologies, pedagogies, and cultural practices premised on hope and healing? How are hope and healing learned, taught, and practiced? What would it mean for the field to promote self-love, hope, and healing as "measurements" for "success"? How is the larger project of Ethnic Studies a site for critical hope against an era of complexity?

*A Project of Critical Hope and Healing* emphasizes the cross-cutting values of Ethnic Studies as foundational to students' and teachers' learning and living. From this perspective, hope and healing are central to the holistic well-being of teachers and their relational commitment to those they work alongside and serve. Hope, healing, and humanization are essential ingredients for a teacher education rooted in Ethnic Studies.



## Epilogue

some people  
when they hear  
your story.  
contract.  
others  
upon hearing  
your story.  
expand.  
and  
this is how  
you  
know.

nayirah waheed  
*salt.* (2013)

There have been many moments where I found myself “expand” “upon hearing” the luminous stories of these teachers. Listening intently. Throughout this journey I recall countless instances where my thoughts on what Ethnic Studies means and more importantly what Ethnic Studies *does*, expanded. It made me recount one of my first entry points into Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University (SFSU). At SFSU, colorful murals decorate the Cesar Chavez Student Center. Filipino Americans have their own mural designed by artists: James Garcia, Christina Carpio, and Andre Sibayan and painted by the artists themselves as well as community members, students, and teachers. The mural is effectively titled, “Filipino Community Mural.” The rectangular shape portrays themes of survival in the United States, survival in the Philippines, community, and solidarity. Portraits of Filipino and Filipino Americans—some key leaders and organizers, others unknown, representations of the masses—fill the concrete frame. Some portraits include long-time community worker and ’68 striker, Violeta “Bullet X” Marasigan; Princess Purmassuri, from the Sulu region of the Philippines who fought against

Spanish colonizers; and Andres Bonifacio's sun, representing the significance of the Philippine Revolution. On the left bottom corner of the mural is a phrase in Baybayin, a script used for writing in the Philippines. To its opposite is the words: "We Stand on Their Shoulders."

The "Filipino Community Mural" rests high along one of the Student Center's walls facing the North Plaza. Just below this mural, was, well, the ATM for my bank. Here I was, a community college transfer student who, for at least six months, was literally standing beneath a wealth of community knowledge. This mural symbolizes the ways Ethnic Studies helped me "expand." I knew that the stories depicted on the mural were stories I yearned for. And now, teach. I stand on the shoulders of the numerous teachers whom shared their experiences and lessons they've learned from Ethnic Studies with me. I stand on the shoulders of my own Ethnic Studies teachers who taught me about history, education, hope, and community. From this view, I am moved and grateful. I am reflective and prepared. I am rooted in Ethnic Studies. And the work continues.

Tatlong Bagsak!

## APPENDICES

### **Appendix A: Email Recruitment Letter to be sent directly by Edward R. Curammeng**

**Subject:** Study of Filipina/o American Teachers & Ethnic Studies - \$40 Gift Certificate

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I hope you're well! I am in the process of recruiting Filipina/o American teachers with an ethnic studies background for a study that I'm conducting. I am writing to see if you might be interested in participating.

Through this study, we are exploring and documenting the experiences of Filipina/o American teachers. As you probably know, only 18% of PK-12 teachers are people of color. While the public discourse is often focused on diversifying the teacher workforce, many have argued that the real problem is also in the recruitment, retention, and preparation of teachers of color. We are trying to better understand the experiences of Filipina/o American teachers who have a background in ethnic studies and how these experiences influence the ways they teach.

Please let me know if you might be interested in participating in this study. Participation includes (2) 1-hour audio taped interviews, (1) 1-hour focus group, and a few minutes to review the consent forms and answer any questions you might have about the study. The interview will be conducted in your classroom or another site that is convenient for you.

As a small gesture of our appreciation for your time, we will provide you with a \$40 gift certificate at the end of the focus group.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please complete the following information at this link: (see screening link file). The information provided in the background information form will be used to select participants for the study.

I look forward to hearing from you. And please feel free to pass this email on to other Filipina/o American teacher with ethnic studies backgrounds.

Sincerely,

Edward R. Curammeng  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Social Sciences and Comparative Education Division  
Graduate School of Education & Information Studies  
University of California, Los Angeles

## Appendix B: Email Recruitment Call Out

*Participant Link via Google Form*  
to be sent directly by Edward R. Curammeng

### Oral Consent

"If you have read and understand the above statements, please click on the "Continue" button below to indicate your consent to participate in this study."

### Background Information & Contact Information

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Best time to contact: Morning, Day, Evening

Years of Teaching Experience:

Grade Level / Subject Area:

School Name:

Type of School (Public, Charter, Pilot, Continuation, etc):

Race:

Gender:

### Background Information (short answer text fill)

1. Briefly share your background in ethnic studies (appropriate courses, professional development, community organizing):
2. How has Ethnic Studies impacted your life?
3. What has Ethnic Studies offered you?
4. How has Ethnic Studies prepared you to be a teacher?
5. What can teachers who don't have an Ethnic Studies background, learn about Ethnic Studies that would support their lives as teachers?

### Interest in Participating

Are you interested in participating in this study?

Yes

No

## Appendix C: Interview Protocol I

**I. Life Roadmap:** To begin our conversation, I'm going to ask you to share the first things that come to mind for the following periods, experiences, places, or people in your life. Think of this as a Life Roadmap. Describe in 3-4 sentences the following:

1. Your early years growing up
2. Family (Parents' jobs, who lived in your home)
3. Neighborhood (Geographic location, key descriptors, demographics of families, jobs)
4. Elementary school (Demographic of classmates, teachers, any key moments)
5. Middle/Junior High School (Demographic of classmates, teachers, any key moments)
6. High School (Demographics of Classmates, teachers, any key moments)
7. College
  - a. Probe: Formative experiences? Campus/Community involvement?
8. Post-College
  - a. Probe: Formative experiences?
9. Any other life-changing or significant events, realizations or decisions?

### II. Educational Experiences

1. What kind of student were you in elementary, middle, and high school?
2. What was your relationship to school? The curriculum? Teachers?
  - a. Probe: any particular moments that stick out, why?
3. What role did your parents, family, or sibling play in school?

### II. Coming to Teaching

1. What brought you to teaching?
2. Were there specific moments that brought you to

### III. Work as a Teacher

1. What brought you to teach at this school?
2. What might the students you work with say about you as a teacher?
3. What might your colleagues, co-workers, principal say about you as a teacher?
4. What are some challenges you experience in the classroom? In the school as a whole?
5. Can you share some of the rewards you notice and experience as a teacher?

## Appendix D: Interview Protocol II

### I. Artifact Reflection:

1. What about this item is special to you? What is its history?
2. [Students' work/syllabi] Can you describe this project? Lessons you taught that led to it?

### II. Ethnic Studies Experiences:

1. What brought you to ethnic studies? Were there specific moments that brought you to pursue ethnic studies?
  - a. Probe: What interested you? What was “going on” in the world then?
2. What did your family and friends think about your interests in ethnic studies?
3. How, if at all, did ethnic studies inform your pursuit of becoming a teacher?
4. Were there any challenges you experienced in your teacher education program?

### III. Teaching Experiences:

1. Describe your pedagogy
2. How does ethnic studies shape your approaches to teaching? Your teaching practices?
3. What are some examples of ways you bridge ethnic studies to the content you teach?
4. How if at all do you engage with the community?
5. Can you share a lesson or unit that does this? What impact did this have on students?
6. What would your colleagues and principal say about your ethnic studies background?
7. How, if at all, do you navigate your relationships with colleagues that don't share your teaching philosophy?
8. What do your students' parents/guardians think of your teaching?

### IV. Scenario (select scene depending on interviewees' previous responses)

1. **Principal** unexpectedly shows up to observe your teaching. You decide not to shift your approach to the content. Principal mentions you did a great job, but need to do less of that “political stuff.” How do you respond?
2. You are at a **department meeting** and reviewing test scores. A colleague makes a comment that communicates their surprise at how well your students are doing. How do you respond?
3. A **parent** emails you upset about what their child shared with them. That day's lesson was your interpretation of the California Missions project (or Indigenous People's Day; or police brutality and the school to prison pipeline; or violence in the community). How do you respond?

### V. Teaching Experiences and Maintaining Ethnic Studies:

1. What are some challenges you experience maintaining your ethnic studies perspective in the classroom? In the school as a whole?
2. How do you develop and maintain what you have learned in ethnic studies?
3. What does it mean to be a Filipina/o American educator with an ethnic studies background?

## Appendix E: Focus Group Protocol

**I. Critical Concepts Circle:** To begin our conversation, I'm going to facilitate an exercise called, "Critical Concepts Circle." I'll state a series of concepts or phrases that are related to ethnic studies, teaching, and Filipina/o Americans. For each, I want each of you to share briefly 2-3 sentences that first come to mind. At the end, we'll have a discussion about the exercise.

- a. Concepts:
  - i. Social Justice
  - ii. Community
  - iii. Identity
  - iv. Praxis
  - v. Decolonization
  - vi. Racism
  - vii. Intersectionality
  - viii. Imperialism
  - ix. Culturally Relevant/Responsive
  - x. Critical Pedagogy
  - xi. Ethnic Studies
  
- b. Phrases:
  - i. "Education is transformative"
  - ii. "If you want to know what we are, we are a revolution"—Carlos Bulosan
  - iii. "Ethnic Studies changed my life"

### II. Challenges

- a. What challenges do you face as a Filipina/o American teacher?
- b. What are the challenges that ethnic studies generally face? How do schools, teachers, and students respond to these challenges?

### III. Rewards

- a. What are some ways that you engage ethnic studies in your school? Communities?
- b. Should ethnic studies be required for teacher education programs? Why or why not?

### IV. Directions

- a. What advice do you have for a Filipina/o American with an ethnic studies background, interested in pursuing teaching?
- b. What can teachers of color learn from the experiences of Filipina/o Americans?

## **Appendix F: Concluding Free Write Activity**

### **FILIPINA/O AMERICAN TEACHERS & ETHNIC STUDIES: FREE WRITE AND REFLECTION**

---

*Thank you for your participation. Please take the next 10-15 minutes to write any closing thoughts and reflections about the conversations we've engaged in and the process as a whole.*



## REFERENCES

- Achinstein, B., & Aguirre, J. (2008a). Cultural match or culturally suspect: How new teachers of color negotiate sociocultural challenges in the classroom. *The Teachers College Record*, *110*(8), 1505–1540.
- Achinstein, B., & Aguirre, J. (2008b). Cultural match or culturally suspect: How new teachers of color negotiate sociocultural challenges in the classroom. *Teachers College Record*, *110*(8), 1505–1540.
- Achinstein, B., Ogawa, R. T., Sexton, D., & Freitas, C. (2010). Retaining teachers of color: A pressing problem and a potential strategy for “hard-to-staff” schools. *Review of Educational Research*, *80*(1), 71–107.
- Acuña, R. (1996). *Anything But Mexican: Chicanos in Contemporary Los Angeles*. Verso.
- Alexie, S. (1998). Superman and me. *Los Angeles Times*, *19*. Retrieved from <http://staff.uny.ac.id/sites/default/files/SUPERMAN%20AND%20ME.pdf>
- Allen, W. R., & Solorzano, D. (2000). Affirmative Action, educational equity and campus racial climate: A case study of the University of Michigan Law School. *Berkeley La Raza LJ*, *12*, 237.
- Alsaybar, B. D. (1999). Deconstructing deviance: Filipino American youth gangs, “party culture,” and ethnic identity in Los Angeles. *Amerasia Journal*, *25*(1), 117–138.
- Apple, M. W. (1993). THE POLITICS OF OFFICIAL KNOWLEDGE: Does a National Curriculum Make Sense? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, *14*(1), 1–16.
- Au, W. (2016). Meritocracy 2.0: High-stakes, standardized testing as a racial project of neoliberal multiculturalism. *Educational Policy*, *30*(1), 39–62.

- Baldrige, B. J. (2014). Relocating the deficit: Reimagining Black youth in neoliberal times. *American Educational Research Journal*, 51(3), 440–472.
- Beauboeuf-Lafontant, T. (2002). A womanist experience of caring: Understanding the pedagogy of exemplary Black women teachers. *The Urban Review*, 34(1), 71–86.
- Beauboeuf-Lafontant, T. (2005). Womanist lessons for reinventing teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(5), 436–445.
- Begay, S., Dick, G. S., Estell, D. W., Estell, J., McCarty, T. L., & Sells, A. (1995). Change from the inside out: A story of transformation in a Navajo community school. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 19(1), 121–139.
- Bell, D. (1993). *Faces At The Bottom Of The Well: The Permanence Of Racism*. Basic Books.
- Bell Jr, D. A. (1979). Brown v. Board of Education and the interest-convergence dilemma. *Harv. L. Rev.*, 93, 518.
- Benjamin, W. (1968). *Theses on the Philosophy of History* (Vol. 255). Illuminations New York.
- Bernal, D. D. (1998). Using a Chicana feminist epistemology in educational research. *Harvard Educational Review*, 68(4), 555–583.
- Bois, W. E. B. Du, & Edwards, B. H. (2008). *The souls of black folk*. Oxford University Press.
- Books, S., & de Villiers, R. (2013). Importing Educators and Redefining What it Means to be a Teacher in the US. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 11(2), 82–112.
- Boyle-Baise, M., & Sleeter, C. E. (1998). Community Service Learning for Multicultural Teacher Education. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED429925>
- Brayboy, B. M. J. (2005). Toward a tribal critical race theory in education. *The Urban Review*, 37(5), 425–446.

- Brockenbrough, E. (2012). "You ain't my daddy!": Black male teachers and the politics of surrogate fatherhood. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16(4), 357–372.
- Brown, A. L. (2009). "O brotha where art thou?" Examining the ideological discourses of African American male teachers working with African American male students. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 12(4), 473–493.
- Buenaventura, S. S. (1998). The colors of manifest destiny: Filipinos and the American other (s). *Amerasia Journal*, 24(3), 1–26.
- Bulosan, C. (1979). The Romance of Magno Rubio. *Amerasia Journal*, 6(1), 33–50.
- Cabrera, N. L., Milem, J. F., Jaquette, O., & Marx, R. W. (2014). Missing the (Student Achievement) Forest for All the (Political) Trees Empiricism and the Mexican American Studies Controversy in Tucson. *American Educational Research Journal*, 51(6), 1084–1118.
- Camangian, P. R. (2013). Seeing through lies: Teaching ideological literacy as a corrective lens. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 46(1), 119–134.
- Camangian, P. R. (2015). Teach like lives depend on it: Agitate, arouse, and inspire. *Urban Education*, 50(4), 424–453.
- Campomanes, O. V. (1992). Filipinos in the United States and their Literature of Exile. *Reading the Literatures of Asian America*, 49–78.
- Carbó, N. (1995). *Returning a Borrowed Tongue: Poems by Filipino and Filipino American Writers*. Coffee House Press.
- Cariaga, S. (April, 2017). Blended Portraiture: Nurturing Pedagogies of Self-Recovery with Young Women of Color. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Antonio, TX.

- Chang, R. S. (1993). Toward an Asian American legal scholarship: Critical race theory, post-structuralism, and narrative space. *California Law Review*, 1241–1323.
- Cheng, W. (2013). *The Changs next door to the Díazes: Remapping race in suburban California*.
- Choy, C. C. (2003). *Empire of care: Nursing and migration in Filipino American history*. Duke University Press.
- Chuh, K. (2003). *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique*. Duke University Press.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). *Walking the road: Race, diversity, and social justice in teacher education*. Teachers College Press.
- Collier, M., & Gonzales, D. P. (2009). Origins: People, Time, Place, Dreams. In *At 40: Asian American Studies @ San Francisco State University: Self-Determination, Community, Student Service*. San Francisco State University.
- Coloma, R. S. (2013). Empire: An Analytical Category for Educational Research. *Educational Theory*, 63(6), 639–658.
- Crenshaw, K. (1995). *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement*. The New Press.
- Curammeng, E. R., Lopez, D. D., Tintiangco-Cubales, A., Locke, T., & Simon, R. (2016). Community responsive literacies: the development of the Ethnic Studies praxis story plot. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 15(3).
- Darder, A. (1993). How does the culture of the teacher shape the classroom experience of Latino students? The unexamined question in critical pedagogy. *Handbook of Schooling in Urban America*, 195–221.

- Dee, T., & Penner, E. (2016). *The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence from an Ethnic Studies Curriculum* (Working Paper No. 21865). National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w21865>
- Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Learning and living pedagogies of the home: The mestiza consciousness of Chicana students. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(5), 623–639.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction, Second Edition* (*Critical America* (2nd ed.)). NYU Press.
- de los Ríos, C. (2013). A Curriculum of the Borderlands: High School Chicana/o-Latina/o Studies as Sitios y Lengua. *The Urban Review*, 45(1), 58–73.
- de los Ríos, C. V. (2016). Writing from La Panza!: Exploring Monologue Literacies with Emergent Bilinguals. *English Journal*, 105(5), 75.
- Duncan-Andrade, J. (2007). Gangstas, wankstas, and ridas: Defining, developing, and supporting effective teachers in urban schools. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 20(6), 617–638.
- Duncan-Andrade, J. (2014). Deconstructing the doublethink aimed at dismantling ethnic studies in Tucson. *Raza Studies: The Public Option for Educational Revolution*, 159.
- Duncan-Andrade, J. M. R., & Morrell, E. (2008). *The art of critical pedagogy: Possibilities for moving from theory to practice in urban schools* (Vol. 285). Peter Lang.
- Feistritzer, C. E., Griffin, S., & Linnajarvi, A. (2011). *Profile of teachers in the US, 2011*. National Center for Education Information Washington, DC. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/media/pot2011final-blog.pdf>

- Flores, A. I. (Forthcoming). *The Muxerista Portraitist: Engaging Portraiture and Chicana Feminist Theory*.
- Fong, T. P. (2008). *Ethnic Studies Research: Approaches and Perspectives*. AltaMira Press.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. *Myra Bergman Ramos*. New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness* (Vol. 1). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Freire, P. (1985). Reading the World and Reading the Word: An Interview with Paulo Freire. *Language Arts*, 62(1), 15–21.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Teachers As Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach With New Commentary by Peter McLaren, Joe L. Kincheloe*. Westview Press.
- García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). Translanguaging and Education. In *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education* (pp. 63–77). Springer.
- Gomez, M. L., & Rodriguez, T. L. (2011). Imagining the Knowledge, Strengths, and Skills of a Latina Prospective Teacher. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 38(1), 127–146.
- Gonzalves, T. S. (2009). *The day the dancers stayed: performing in the Filipino/American diaspora*. Temple University Press.
- Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, N. (2013). *The Seeds We Planted: Portraits of a Native Hawaiian Charter School*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gossett, T. F., & Gossett, T. F. (1997). *Race: The history of an idea in America*.
- Habal, E. (2007). *San Francisco's International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-eviction Movement*. Temple University Press.
- Haberman, M. (2005). Teacher burnout in black and white. *The New Educator*, 1(3), 153–175.

- Halagao, P. E. (2004). Holding up the mirror: The complexity of seeing your ethnic self in history. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 32(4), 459–483.
- Halagao, P. E. (2010). Liberating Filipino Americans through decolonizing curriculum. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 13(4), 495–512.
- Halagao, P. E. (2013). Theorizing From Pain, Passion, and Hope: The Making of Filipino American Curricula and Pedagogy. In D. C. Maramba & R. Bonus (Eds.), *The Other Students: Filipino Americans, Education, and Power* (pp. 145–165). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Hernandez, X. (2010, May). *Behind the Curtain: The Culture of Pilipino Cultural Nights* (thesis). San Francisco State University.
- Holthe, T. U. (2002). *When the Elephants Dance*. Crown.
- Hong, G. K. (2015). *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference*.
- Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching To Transgress*. Routledge.
- hooks, bell. (2003). *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (1 edition). New York: Routledge.
- Horsman, R. (1981). *Race and manifest destiny*. Harvard University Press.
- Howard, T. C. (2001). Telling their side of the story: African-American students' perceptions of culturally relevant teaching. *The Urban Review*, 33(2), 131–149.
- Howard, T. C. (2010). *Why race and culture matter in schools: Closing the achievement gap in America's classrooms*. Teachers College Press.
- Howard, T. C. (2013). *Black Male(d): Peril and Promise in the Education of African American Males*. New York ; London: Teachers College Press.

- Hu-DeHart, E. (1993). The history, development, and future of ethnic studies. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 50–54.
- Hughes, L. (1995). *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. (A. Rampersad, Ed.) (1st Vintage classics ed edition). New York: Vintage.
- Ileto, R. (1988). Outlines of a non-linear emplotment of Philippine history. *Reflections on Development in Southeast Asia*, 130–59.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499–534.
- Ingersoll, R., & May, H. (2011). Recruitment, Retention and the Minority Teacher Shortage. *GSE Publications*. Retrieved from [http://repository.upenn.edu/gse\\_pubs/226](http://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/226)
- Juan, E. S. (1991). Multiculturalism vs. hegemony: Ethnic studies, Asian Americans, and US racial politics. *The Massachusetts Review*, 467–478.
- Kohli, R. (2009a). Critical race reflections: Valuing the experiences of teachers of color in teacher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 12(2), 235–251.
- Kohli, R. (2009b). Critical race reflections: Valuing the experiences of teachers of color in teacher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 12(2), 235–251.
- Kumashiro, K. K. (2012). *Bad teacher!: How blaming teachers distorts the bigger picture*. Teachers College Press.
- Kurashige, S. (2010). *The shifting grounds of race: Black and Japanese Americans in the making of multiethnic Los Angeles*. Princeton University Press.
- Labrador, R. N., & Kahunawaika'ala Wright, E. (2011). Engaging Indigeneity in Pacific Islander and Asian American Studies. *Amerasia Journal*, 37(3), 135–147.



- Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. *Educational Researcher*, 35(7), 3–12.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate IV, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *The Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47–68.
- Lawrence, C., & Matsuda, M. J. (1997). *We won't go back: Making the case for affirmative action*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (1994). *I've known rivers: Lives of loss and liberation*. Perseus Books.
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S., & Davis, J. H. (1997). *The art and science of portraiture*. Jossey-Bass Incorporated Pub.
- Lee, C. D. (1995). A culturally based cognitive apprenticeship: Teaching African American high school students skills in literary interpretation. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 608–630.
- Leonardo, Z. (2007). The war on schools: NCLB, nation creation and the educational construction of whiteness. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 10(3), 261–278.
- Leonardo, Z. (2013). *Race Frameworks: A Multidimensional Theory of Racism and Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lightfoot, S. L. (1988). *Balm in Gilead: Journey of a healer*. Random House (NY).
- Lightfoot, S. L. (2004). *The essential conversation: What parents and teachers can learn from each other*. Ballantine Books.
- Linmark, R. Z. (1995). *Rolling the R's*. Kaya/Muae.
- Lipman, P. (1998). *Race, class, and power in school restructuring*. Suny Press.
- Lipman, P. (2011). *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city*. Taylor & Francis.

- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister Outsider Essays and Speeches*. Retrieved from <https://philpapers.org/rec/LORSOE>
- Lynn, M. (1999). Toward a critical race pedagogy a research note. *Urban Education, 33*(5), 606–626.
- Lynn, M. (2002). Critical race theory and the perspectives of Black men teachers in the Los Angeles public schools. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 35*(2), 119–130.
- Lynn, M. (2006). Education for the community: Exploring the culturally relevant practices of Black male teachers. *Teachers College Record, 108*(12), 2497.
- Lynn, M., Johnson, C., & Hassan, K. (1999). Raising the critical consciousness of African American students in Baldwin Hills: A portrait of an exemplary African American male teacher. *Journal of Negro Education, 42–53*.
- Mabalon, D. B. (2013). *Little Manila is in the heart: The making of the Filipina/o American community in Stockton, California*. Duke University Press.
- Madison, D. S. (2010). *Acts of Activism: Human Rights as Radical Performance*. Cambridge University Press.
- Malagon, M. C., Huber, L. P., & Velez, V. N. (2009). Our experiences, our methods: Using grounded theory to inform a Critical Race Theory methodology. *Seattle J. Soc. Just., 8*, 253.
- Maramba, D. C. (2008). Immigrant families and the college experience: Perspectives of Filipina Americans. *Journal of College Student Development, 49*(4), 336–350.
- Maramba, D. C., & Nadal, K. L. Y. (2013). The state of Filipino/a American faculty: Implications for higher education. *The Other Students: Filipino Americans, Education and Power, 297–307*.

- Matias, C. E. (2013). Who you callin' white?! A critical counter-story on colouring white identity. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 16(3), 291–315.
- Matias, C. E., & Liou, D. D. (2014). Tending to the Heart of Communities of Color: Toward Critical Race Teacher Activism. *Urban Education*, 0042085913519338.
- Matsuda, M. J. (1991). Voices of America: Accent, antidiscrimination law, and a jurisprudence for the last reconstruction. *Yale Law Journal*, 1329–1407.
- Milner, H. R. (2008). Critical race theory and interest convergence as analytic tools in teacher education policies and practices. *Journal of Teacher Education*.
- Milner, H. R., & Howard, T. C. (2004). Black teachers, Black students, Black communities, and Brown: Perspectives and insights from experts. *Journal of Negro Education*, 285–297.
- Moll, L. C., & González, N. (1994). Lessons from research with language-minority children. *Journal of Reading Behavior*.
- Montoya, M. E. (1994). Mascaras, trenzas, y grenas: Un/masking the self while un/braiding Latina stories and legal discourse. *Chicano-Latino L. Rev.*, 15, 1.
- Muñoz, J. E. (2005). Teaching, Minoritarian knowledge, and love. *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, 14(2), 117–121.
- Murase, M. (1976). Ethnic studies and higher education for Asian Americans. *Counterpoint: Perspectives on Asian America*, 205–23.
- Nguyen, H. T. (2008). Conceptions of teaching by five Vietnamese American preservice teachers. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 7(2), 113–136.
- Nieto, S. (2000). Placing equity front and center some thoughts on transforming teacher education for a new century. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 51(3), 180–187.

- Nievera-Lozano, M.-A. N. (2016). Portraits of Decolonizing Praxis: How the Lives of Critically Engaged Pinay Scholars Inform Their Work. *Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation*, University of California, Santa Cruz.
- Noguera, P. A. (2003). The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. *Urban Education*, 38(4), 431–459.
- Oates, G. L. S. C. (2003). Teacher-student racial congruence, teacher perceptions, and test performance. *Social Science Quarterly*, 84(3), 508–525.
- Ochoa, G. L. (2013). *Academic Profiling*. University of Minnesota Press.
- O’Leary, A. O., Romero, A. J., Cabrera, N. L., & Rascon, M. (2012). Assault on ethnic studies. Retrieved from [https://works.bepress.com/nolan\\_1\\_cabrera/10/](https://works.bepress.com/nolan_1_cabrera/10/)
- Omatsu, G. (2003). The ‘Four Prisons’ and the Movements of Liberation. *Asian American Politics: Law, Participation, and Policy*, 3, 135.
- Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. Psychology Press.
- Orellana, M. F. (2003). Responsibilities of children in Latino immigrant homes. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 2003(100), 25–39.
- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93–97.
- Parker, L., & Lynn, M. (2002). What’s race got to do with it? Critical race theory’s conflicts with and connections to qualitative research methodology and epistemology. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 7–22.

- Paulet, A. (2007). To change the world: The use of American Indian education in the Philippines. *History of Education Quarterly*, 47(2), 173–202.
- Picower, B. (2009). The unexamined whiteness of teaching: How white teachers maintain and enact dominant racial ideologies. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 12(2), 197–215.
- Picower, B., & Mayorga, E. (2015). What's Race Got To Do With It?: How Current School Reform Policy Maintains Racial And Economic Inequality.
- Planas, R. (2012, April 19). Neither Banned Nor Allowed: Mexican American Studies in Limbo in Arizona [Text.Article]. Retrieved May 2, 2017, from <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/04/19/neither-banned-nor-allowed-mexican-american-studies-in-limbo-in-arizona.html>
- Pulido, L. (2006). *Black, brown, yellow, and left: Radical activism in Los Angeles* (Vol. 19). Univ of California Press.
- Rafael, V. L. (2005). *The promise of the foreign: Nationalism and the technics of translation in the Spanish Philippines*. Duke University Press.
- Reyes-McGovern, E., & Buenavista, T. L. (n.d.). Ethnic Studies with K-12 Students, Families, and Communities: The Role of Teacher Education in Preparing Educators to Serve the People.pdf - File Shared from Box. Retrieved April 23, 2017, from <https://ucla.app.box.com/v/Ethnic-Studies-Role-Teacher-Ed>
- Rezai-Rashti, G. M., & Martino, W. J. (2010). Black Male Teachers as Role Models: Resisting the Homogenizing Impulse of Gender and Racial Affiliation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 47(1), 37–64.

- Ríos, C. V. de los, López, J., & Morrell, E. (2015). Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Race: Ethnic Studies and Literacies of Power in High School Classrooms. *Race and Social Problems*, 7(1), 84–96.
- Ríos, F., & Montecinos, C. (1999). Advocating social justice and cultural affirmation: Ethnically diverse preservice teachers' perspectives on multicultural education. *Equity & Excellence*, 32(3), 66–76.
- Rodriguez, R. M. (2010). *Migrants for export: How the Philippine state brokers labor to the world*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Rong, X. L., & Preissle, J. (1997). The continuing decline in Asian American teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34(2), 267–293.
- Sanchez, G. (2007, November 15). Horne seeks info on ethnic studies programs in TUSD. Retrieved May 2, 2017, from [http://tucson.com/news/local/education/precollegiate/horne-seeks-info-on-ethnic-studies-programs-in-tusd/article\\_8307409c-9594-5e9c-8290-04ea41fcc575.html](http://tucson.com/news/local/education/precollegiate/horne-seeks-info-on-ethnic-studies-programs-in-tusd/article_8307409c-9594-5e9c-8290-04ea41fcc575.html)
- Schlund-Vials, C. J. (2011). Re-seeing race in a post-Obama age: Asian American studies, comparative ethnic studies, and intersectional pedagogies. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 2011(125), 101–109.
- Siyam, F. A. (2003). Black History is Our History. *Filipino American Herald*.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools research and the overwhelming presence of whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(2), 94–106.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2004). How white teachers construct race. *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Multicultural Education*, 163–178.

- Sleeter, C. E. (2011). The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review. *National Education Association Research Department*. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED521869>
- Sleeter, C. E. (2013). *Power, teaching, and teacher education: Confronting injustice with critical research and action*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Smith, A. (2006). Three pillars of white supremacy. *Color of Violence: The Incite! Anthology*. In *Incite! Women of Color against Violence*, 66–73.
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000a). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 60–73.
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000b). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 60–73.
- Solorzano, D. G., & Bernal, D. D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, 36(3), 308–342.
- Solorzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23–44.
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, 21–78.
- Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the US. *Washington, DC: Learning Policy*

*Institute. Available at: [https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/A\\_Coming\\_Crisis\\_in\\_Teaching\\_REPORT.Pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/A_Coming_Crisis_in_Teaching_REPORT.Pdf).*

Teranishi, R. T. (2002). Asian Pacific Americans and critical race theory: An examination of school racial climate. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35(2), 144–154.

Teranishi, R. T. (2010). *Asians in the Ivory Tower: Dilemmas of Racial Inequality in American Higher Education. Multicultural Education Series*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Tintiango-Cubales, A. (2007). *Pin@ y Educational Partnerships: A Filipina/o American Studies Sourcebook Series. Volume 1: Philippine and Filipina/o American History*. Phoenix Publishing House International.

Tintiango-Cubales, A., Daus-Magbual, R., & Daus-Magbual, A. (2010). Pin@ y Educational Partnerships A Counter-Pipeline to Create Critical Educators. *AAPI Nexus: Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders Policy, Practice and Community*, 8(1), 75–102.

Tintiango-Cubales, A. G. (2005). Pinayism. *Pinay Power: Theorizing the Filipina/American Experience*, 137–148.

Tintiango-Cubales, A., Kohli, R., Sacramento, J., Henning, N., Agarwal-Rangnath, R., & Sleeter, C. (2014). Toward an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy: Implications for K-12 Schools from the Research. *The Urban Review*, 1–22.

Trueba, E. T., & Bartolomé, L. I. (2000). *Immigrant voices: In search of educational equity*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Umemoto, K. (1989). “On Strike!” San Francisco State College Strike, 1968-69: The Role of Asian American Students. *Amerasia Journal*, 15(1), 3–41.



- Valdez, C. (2015). Decolonizing the elementary classroom: possibilities and constraints in the Common Core era. *Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation*, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Valencia, R. R. (1997). Conceptualizing the notion of deficit thinking. *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*, 19, 1.
- Valencia, R. R. (2010). Dismantling contemporary deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice. Retrieved from <http://philpapers.org/rec/VALDCD>
- Valencia, R. R., & Solórzano, D. G. (1997). Contemporary deficit thinking. *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*, 160–210.
- Villegas, A. M., & Clewell, B. C. (1998). Increasing teacher diversity by tapping the paraprofessional pool. *Theory into Practice*, 37(2), 121–130.
- Villegas, A. M., & Irvine, J. J. (2010). Diversifying the teaching force: An examination of major arguments. *The Urban Review*, 42(3), 175–192.
- Viola, M. (2014). Toward a Filipino Critical Pedagogy: Exposure Programs to the Philippines and the Politicization of Melissa Roxas. *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 17(1), 1–30.
- Waheed, N. (2013). *salt*. San Bernardino, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. (1994). *Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature*. East African Publishers.
- West, C. (1993). *Race matters*. Random House LLC.
- Williams, W. L. (1980). United States indian policy and the debate over Philippine Annexation: implications for the origins of American imperialism. *The Journal of American History*, 66(4), 810–831.
- Woodson, C. G. (1933). *The Mis-Education of the American Negro*. New York: AMS Press.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69–91.