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Advancing teacher preparation through ethnic studies: portraits of Filipino American self-identified male teachers

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ABSTRACT

At once a political and cultural intervention, Ethnic Studies as a field sought to create an education whereby students' knowledges and experiences were valued. While research demonstrating how Ethnic Studies affects students' academic and social-emotional outcomes, the prowess of Ethnic Studies, as a site for teacher preparation remains under examined in empirical research. Drawing from portraiture, critical race and Ethnic Studies frameworks, I analyze in-depth interviews, focus groups, and artifacts with Filipino American self-identified male teachers. I work to make explicit how Ethnic Studies prepared these teachers in ways their formal teacher education did not. I conclude with recommendations for how teacher education steeped in Ethnic Studies supports culturally sustaining, critically conscious, and community responsive learning for students and teachers committed to justice.

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Introduction

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.
-Hughes (1995, 490)

Langston Hughes's words remind us of the tension between some Students of Color and teachers whose lived experiences differ from those they teach. As calls for diversifying the teacher workforce are amplified against the United States' changing demography, the field of teacher education has also been charged to increase the number of male Teachers of Color (Sleeter, Neal & Kumashiro, 2014). Although significant strides have been made on this front, the need to further explore the affordances of recruiting and

preparing male Teachers of Color through Ethnic Studies remains. This particular moment, then, occasions an opportunity to consider Ethnic Studies and teacher education at their nexus. What do the intersections across Ethnic Studies and teacher education indicate for the recruitment and preparation of self-identified male teachers of Color? What are the innovative ways Ethnic Studies might be considered as such a site?

It is not only fitting but also timely that this special issue responds to calls to increase and support male teachers of Color. Such voices amplify and build upon the important scholarship in this area offering attention to the complex issues of recruiting, preparing, and sustaining male teachers of Color in a predominantly white female profession. Drawing from critical race theory (CRT) and Ethnic Studies (ES) frameworks, this article explores the portraits of two teachers who are Filipino American self-identified men working in Los Angeles and San Francisco public schools. Their experiences demonstrates how Ethnic Studies provided a criticality missing from their mainstream teacher education programs. That is, I examine how Ethnic Studies supported these teachers' abilities to enact culturally sustaining (Paris and Alim 2017), critically conscious, and community responsive teaching. Such a focus on their experience in and learning from Ethnic Studies affords us trenchant insights toward improving teacher education. Drawing from Roland Coloma (2006), I work to 'disorient' calls around male teachers of Color in general and Filipino American self-identified male teachers specifically as a means to envision innovative pathways for recruiting male-identified teachers. The following research questions drive this study: How does Ethnic Studies shape Filipino American male teachers' pedagogies and practices? In what ways does Ethnic Studies prepare Filipino American males to become better teachers? And what are the possibilities of imagining Ethnic Studies *as* teacher education? I begin by reviewing the literature on Ethnic Studies and teacher education. Next, I highlight the theoretical framework and methodology of this study with a review of critical race theory, attending closely to Asian American critical race theory, and describe portraiture and the methods used in the study. Presented as portraits, I highlight key findings from the study and conclude with a discussion for the recruitment, retention, and preparation of Asian American male teachers of Color within the broader need for male teachers of Color.

Situating ethnic studies and teacher education in the literature

Ethnic Studies (ES) focuses on the interdisciplinary examination of the social, political, cultural, racial, and economic forces that shape the lives of Communities of Color. Centering the ways power circulates, ES engages with the perspectives, cultures, and contributions of those who have historically shaped United States society (Butler 2011; Hu-DeHart 1993; Murase 1976). ES emerged alongside social movements in the 1960s as a result of intergenerational, interracial, and interethnic coalition building. A hallmark of Ethnic Studies' legacy exists in the founding of the only College of Ethnic Studies at the then San Francisco State College, the result of a five-month student-led strike. The collective organizing – while tenuous at times (see Collier and Gonzales 2009) – coupled with the work of the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) fundamentally changed higher education institutions. For many Asian American

students, political awakenings occurring across college campus emphasized how Black political thought and activism were vital in their consciousness raising and community organizing (Lee 2013). It is important to acknowledge and name then, both the impact of Black students' labor, intellect, and activism while highlighting the transformation of consciousness among student participants. Asian American Studies professor and activist Glenn Omatsu (2003) writes:

Through their participation, a generation of Asian American student activists reclaimed a heritage of struggle – linking their lives to the tradition of militancy of earlier generations of Pilipino farmworkers, Chinese immigrant garment and restaurant workers, and Japanese American concentration camp registers ... [they] forged a new vision for their communities, creating numerous grassroots projects and empowering previously ignored and disenfranchised sectors of society (p. 60).

At once a political and cultural intervention, momentum around the institutionalization of Ethnic Studies in K-12 classrooms in the contemporary moment is gaining traction reminiscent of the incisive energies that animated its emergence. As was the case for Ethnic Studies in the 1960s, this particular political moment is reflective of similar sociopolitical contentions with Ethnic Studies. An example that has been closely followed on media outlets is the attacks on the Mexican American Studies (MAS) program – an Ethnic Studies program that centers the experiences of Mexican Americans – in Tucson, Arizona. The state of Arizona claims MAS is divisive, yet, scholars have found the curriculum in the MAS program is not divisive at all, rather is impactful for students (Cabrera et al. 2014; Duncan-Andrade 2014).

In 2017, Judge A. Wallace Tashima, a U.S. circuit court judge, ushered an historic ruling, deciding the state of Arizona in their elimination of the Mexican American Studies program violated the constitutional rights of Mexican American students (Strauss 2017). In spite of the vicious racialized attacks against Ethnic Studies and Mexican American studies specifically, a growing body of empirical studies demonstrate how Ethnic Studies supports students socially and academically (Cabrera et al. 2014; Dee and Penner 2016; de Los Ríos 2013; Halagao 2010; Tintiangco-Cubales et al. 2014). Sleeter's (2011) review of Ethnic Studies curricula highlighted ways Ethnic Studies played a role in raising students' sense of agency and through a critical consciousness of race and racism, persevered through negative campus climates. Sleeter (2011) found consistent for teachers were ways seeing one's self in the curricula developed students' academic and ethnic identity whereby 'education can serve as a tool for their own advancement as well as for serving their community' (p. 9). A central thread running through each of these studies are their explicit engagement with race and racialization framed within structures of power. For instance, de los Ríos' (2013) study skillfully demonstrates how youth of Color yearn for culturally relevant curricula and tools to challenge the myopic and colonial constraints that have historically affected Chicanas/os and Latinas/os. Relatedly, Salinas, Fránquiz, and Rodríguez's (2016) study of Latina pre-service teachers revealed the utility of a critical historical inquiry approach toward Chicano history, one that points to the teachers' critical consciousness and their ability to focus on resistance and agency that addresses prevalent distortions of history curriculum. Such engagements are not inherently unique to Ethnic Studies. Rather,

they nuance and operate from an asset-based perspective centering the histories, experiences, and perspectives of Communities of Color.

Efforts to recruit teachers of Color are not new and must be historically situated. Established in 1968 as a partnership with the Department of Anthropology at California State University, Sacramento the Mexican American Education Project ‘recruited Mexican American teachers’ and was ‘an attempt to prepare educational change agents to overcome the decades of educational neglect suffered by Mexican American students in schools’ (Campbell, n.d.). Similar programs were created at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). In the 1970s Operation Chicano Teacher (O.C.T.) was created as a bilingual, bicultural training program. OCT’s pilot cohort was made up of fifty one men and women and ‘were specially trained to meet the social and psychological needs of barrio children’ (‘OCT grads begin job search,’ 1975). The program’s recruitment efforts offer clear insights for current efforts to recruit teachers of Color. Applicants were ‘carefully screened for teaching ability, interest and desire to teach Chicanos, involvement with the Chicano community, bi-lingual ability and financial need’ (‘OCT grads begin job search,’ 1975). These examples punctuate an on-going concerted effort to address the needs of students of Color. What is more are how these programs align with Ethnic Studies principles of transforming education to address issues of access, relevance, and community (Tintiango-Cubales et al. 2014).

Against a historical backdrop of efforts to recruit teachers of Color, similar calls have been raised nationally. For example, former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan urged the need for teachers to reflect the diversity of the students they teach and called for an increase in Black and Latino male teachers (Department of Education, 2011). Haddix (2017) highlights the nuance in calls for diversifying teachers arguing ‘the solution is not as simple as providing same-race teachers for students of color’ (p. 144). The examples above gesture toward this nuance as equally important are the ways teachers are prepared. Haddix continues, ‘simply recruiting more teachers of Color but doing nothing to change the current system would be a failure,’ (p. 145). Therefore, such calls for systemic change and a different kind of teacher preparation have emerged in the form of ‘growing your own’ teacher programs (Duncan-Andrade 2007; Haddix 2017).

Studies have found teachers effectiveness involves their willingness to interrogate color-evasiveness, racism, and power (Howard 2010; Matias 2013; Matias and 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 study explored. Within teacher education research, studies point to the favorable impact of teachers of Color among students of Color, especially given their positioning as role models (Milner and Howard 2004; Villegas and Clewell 1998). Teachers of Color that have insights about inequality in the United States may present opportunities to develop unique relationships with students from similar groups. Relatedly, scholarship examining the role of male teachers of Color provide insight toward troubling discourses associated with the figure of the male teacher in schools (Bristol 2017; Brockenbrough 2012; Lynn 2002; Milner and Howard 2004). For instance, of the work that explored the beliefs and practices of African American male teachers (Howard 2001, 2013; Lipman 1998; Lynn 2002), 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, 474). Patriarchal discourses, as Brockenbrough's study (2012) highlighted, demonstrates the need to further examine how 'Black masculinity politics' shape both pedagogy and practice; in this case Brockenbrough's critical analysis provides insight toward how discourse around male-focused recruitment ought to be what Coloma (2006) theorized as 'disoriented.' In other words, how might the field contend with difference around gender? In this sense, gender offers insights that disrupt biological, heteronormative, and essentialist constructions around maleness or femaleness toward the ways masculinity and femininity are socially defined. Rather than solely focus on the Filipino American teachers' 'male-ness,' I found these teachers perform gender in critical and sophisticated ways, developing critical consciousness about what it means to be a self-identified man *and* a teacher alongside supporting their students' notions of what gender is and can be.

As momentum for Ethnic Studies in K-12 classrooms continues (Cabrera et al. 2013; Curammeng, Lopez, and Tintiangco-Cubales 2016; de Los Ríos 2013; Halagao 2010a), notable shifts at the policy level mark the current state of Ethnic Studies. Indiana (Senate Bill 337) and Oregon (House Bill 2845) will require all high schools to offer Ethnic Studies courses and K-12 Ethnic Studies courses respectively. In California, the creation of a statewide Ethnic Studies curriculum by the 2020 passed (Assembly Bill 2016). Two years later, however, Governor Jerry Brown vetoed a proposed requirement (Assembly Bill 2772) for all high school students to take at least one Ethnic Studies to receive a high school diploma. In May 2019, Assembly Bill 331 was passed by the California state assembly with a 60-6 vote and will move on for a Senate vote to make Ethnic Studies a high school graduation requirement in the State of California. The political agency found within grassroots community efforts to demand Ethnic Studies is nonetheless gaining traction, revealing a necessary opportunity to consider its impact on teacher preparation.

Positionality

I am a Filipino American self-identified man that taught Ethnic Studies in San Francisco public middle and high schools. My ongoing collaborations with Ethnic Studies teachers in San Francisco and Los Angeles have helped provide access to teachers' lives. As a researcher and portraitist, my knowledge and similar lived experiences with Ethnic Studies supported my abilities in "witnessing and interpreting the action, in tracing the emergent themes, and in creating the narrative (Lawrence-Lightfoot 2005, 11). With the other male teachers in this study, I understood the kind of consciousness raising affects characteristic of Ethnic Studies classrooms. Because of our shared backgrounds and proximities to Ethnic Studies and education work, these teachers came to understand the value of my research. Like the Filipino American teachers in this study I, too, became a teacher through Ethnic Studies.

Theoretical framing & methodology

Legal scholars' thinking around critical race theory (CRT) in the 1980s and 1990s positioned discussions of race and racism within a Black-White binary. Such a framing inadequately captured the nuance of political, economic, and social assaults against People of Color, especially Asian Americans. The resulting proliferation of CRT

movements included Asian American jurisprudence, that which refers to the critical study of Asian Americans and the law through efforts such as APACrit, DesiCrit, and critical Asian American legal scholarship (Chang and Gotanda 2006; Han 2006; Harpalani 2013; Song 2004). In the field of education, scholars have outlined an AsianCrit educational framework. Ifkitar and Museus' (2018) tenets include: Asianization; Transnational Context; (Re)Constructive History; Strategic (Anti) Essentialism, Intersectionality; Story, Theory and Praxis; and a Commitment to Social Justice. These tenets underscore the need to understand the racialized histories of Asian Americans, honor experiential knowledge, and closely examine issues of heterogeneity. Curammeng, Buenavista, and Cariaga (2017) offer directions for critical race theory to remain relevant and responsive to Asian American communities and all communities committed to envisioning deep systemic change and struggles toward justice. Our treatment of CRT and Asian Americans insists upon: examining Asian American complicity in anti-Blackness, focusing on (settler) colonialism, and attention to Ethnic Studies as it relates to interlocking systems of power such as heteronormativity, sexism, transphobia, and ableism.

CRT's application in education has gained a firm foundation for interrogating race and racism in schooling in an effort to challenge the deficit perspectives of Communities of Color (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995; Solórzano and Bernal 2001; Yosso 2005) and Asian Americans more specifically (Buenavista 2010; Buenavista, Jayakumar, and Misa-Escalante 2009; Kolano 2016; Teranishi 2002). Daniel Solórzano (1997) defined the first tenet of CRT as, 'The centrality and intersectionality of race and racism.' This tenet and the multiple iterations scholars have deployed to advance critical race tools remains a powerful approach for understanding complex issues in education. My turn to intersectionality acknowledges its formation through Patricia Hill Collins' (2015) theorizing of Edward Said (1983) and others to consider the concept as a 'traveling knowledge project' (p. 7). In this way, Collins reminds us of the multiple forms of Black feminisms and Black women whose intellectual labor have created what is widely known and used as 'intersectionality.' Challenging discrimination laws inability to account for the 'multidimensionality of Black women's experiences with single-axis analysis' (p. 139), Crenshaw (1989) offers her theorizing around 'intersectionality.' She argues that as it stood, a single-issue analysis had certain conceptual limitations. Applying this to education research, Crenshaw (1990) further 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 heterosexism). Such an analysis therefore supports 'thinking about the way power has clustered around certain categories and is exercised against others' (p. 1297). The guiding tenets of critical race methodology combined with the epistemological and conceptual depth of intersectionality provided 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). An intersectional and Asian American critical race theory approach enables such pursuits. In other words, critical race theory is at once a theoretical framework and methodology for this study.

In *Reflections on Portraiture*, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) describes the future directions for portraiture in educational research. She anticipates portraiture ‘will spread to places where it will be challenging, illuminating, and useful’ (p. 14). Taking up this invitation, I suggest a provocative exploration of portraiture can be found within Ethnic Studies and education. Such a move follows the work of scholars that have utilized CRT and portraiture (Chapman 2007; Dixon, Chapman, and Hill 2005; Lynn, Johnson, and Hassan 1999) and pushed the methodology to engage women of color feminisms (Cariaga 2018; Flores 2017) and decolonial pedagogies (Valdez 2018). Portraiture as a methodology (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis 1997) 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) for the Filipino American male teachers. The connection between portraiture and critical race theory is of great importance. A portraitist ‘listens for’ goodness in conversations, observations, and meditations with subjects. In doing so, Lawrence-Lightfoot expands the methodological horizons for blending art and science with a goal of ‘capturing the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of her subjects’ summoning historical and political contexts necessary for critical qualitative inquiry.

The participants’ portraits (all names are pseudonyms) in this article included two Filipino American, self-identified men and is part of a larger study that examined the role Ethnic Studies had on public school teachers. These men were working in public schools, one in Los Angeles and the other in San Francisco. They were recruited with criteria based on their self-identified knowledge and expertise in Ethnic Studies as well as Filipino American and Asian American studies. I also acknowledged how some participants’ learning and consciousness raising occurred in grassroots and community organizing. This was due to my understanding that for many teachers of Color and specifically teachers whose preparation first began in Ethnic Studies, teacher education programs were not sufficient in the kinds of development they sought and anticipated. That is, from teacher education programs to the field, teachers of Color are often silenced, invisible, and isolated. The two main qualitative methods for data collection included: two rounds of semi-structured interviews (Merriam 2009) and two focus groups (Stewart 2014) took place in San Francisco and in Los Angeles. Interviews ranged from an hour up to two hours and each of the focus groups lasted an hour and a half. The interviews focused on teachers’ educational histories, their relationship to schooling and Ethnic Studies, experiences becoming politicized, their work as classroom teachers, and experiences coming to learn about Ethnic Studies. Focus group topics included teachers’ challenges and rewards of teaching, reflections on their teacher education experiences, and how their racialized identities shape their pedagogies. The open-ended nature of the semi-structured interview allowed participants to share in a free-flowing environment. Artifacts were also used in the data collection process ranging from students’ work, photographs, posters, and textbooks. Our conversations were audio-recorded and transcribed content verbatim to begin coding for ‘emergent themes’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997). These emergent themes were guided by an iterative and reflective coding process to understand how Ethnic Studies shaped their pedagogies and practices and teachers (Saldaña, 2015). Exemplars from these emergent themes frame the two portraits of this article.

Snapshots of teachers

Andre Paseo has been teaching for about a decade. He is an English teacher working in South Los Angeles and is originally from the San Francisco, Bay Area. Andre found Ethnic Studies accidentally. As an undergraduate, he was originally an engineer major, however found it challenging and disengaging. While in San Francisco, Andre would later be a founding teacher for Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP), an Ethnic Studies service-learning program that supports students interested in teaching to research, create curricula, and teach Filipino American studies. According to 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.’

An ‘American Born Filipino’ raised in Los Angeles, **Jossey Enriquez** now calls San Francisco home. He has been active in the Filipino American community in San Francisco since his arrival and 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.

Building upon the work of education scholars utilizing portraiture (Catone 2016; Chapman 2007; Dixson, Chapman, and Hill 2005; Shalaby 2017) are the portraits of Andre Paseo and Jossey Enriquez. Findings from this study are presented through a narrative styling characteristic of portraiture. Each presents glimpses of key features of portraiture including emphasis on: voice, context, and what Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) describes as the ‘aesthetic whole.’ We begin first with Andre Paseo’s portrait and move to learn from Jossey Enriquez.

Ethnic studies as counter-space and recruitment

The Cesar Chavez Student Center at San Francisco State University 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. Nearly one hundred teachers, students, and family members came together to commemorate the Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP) fifteen-year anniversary. 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.

There’s a rousing silence as Professor Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales, director and founder of PEP, opens the convening. We were coming together to celebrate PEP, an Ethnic Studies educational pipeline that supports the development of teachers

interested in teaching Asian American and Ethnic Studies. Ate (sister in Tagalog) 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 in the audience 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' 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' (Solorzano and Bernal 2001, 624) involves challenging heteropatriarchy as a normative mechanism shaping how we think about college majors and educational pathways. 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 2013). Through the interviews, Andre shared how he wanted to become like his Filipino professors and credited his learning Ethnic Studies as shaping his own practice as a teacher – to be the teacher he waited until college to have. And while there are certainly affordances for teachers, and in Andre’s case professors, whose racial backgrounds are similar to whom they teach (Achinstein and Aguirre 2008b; Ríos and Montecinos 1999), 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 (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 upon minoritized students (Milner and Howard 2004; Noguera 2003; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

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 and Sleeter 1998). They often have insight to the racialized experiences of non-dominant students, and can support their effective navigation of structural barriers (Gomez and Rodriguez 2011). From Andre’s discussion about the moments when his college academics changed to the surprise that there were teachers like him, Ethnic Studies helped Andre because it opened up his ideas of what a teacher could be. Moreover, he was able to find a common ground of understanding with teachers that have shaped his life. Such a connection helps us rethink the role of race and gender, but

also consider the cultural and historical dimensions that Ethnic Studies brings to bear. For Andre, Ethnic Studies legitimized his experience in ways previous experience with schooling had not. Let us turn now to Jossey Enriquez's portrait.

A radical politic, a radical teacher

Nestled in San Francisco, 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. 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 encloses 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 but was not always that way. I walk up three sets of stairs to the main office. Colorful tiles form a thin glossed trim throughout the hallways.

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 (Villegas and 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.

'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 states. Learning to merge his commitment to activism with his teaching supported the development of critical literacy in urban settings (Camangian 2013) 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 smoothed. 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. The olive-green picnic tables personify a deep sense of community. 'What Ethnic Studies insists on is the multiplicity of points of view, of narratives and of countering the master narrative with other voices,' he shares. I admire the intentional and, to a larger extent, political and spatial move in Jossey's classroom. Our conversation continues and upon me asking about what Ethnic Studies does for his teaching, Jossey states:

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 identifies how Ethnic Studies offers a means toward developing his critical consciousness and maintains the importance of reflection as a teacher. He 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' or the politics surrounding what knowledge is taught within educational practice. 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 analysis. It's like Andrew Jackson, who was he? Why is he being credited with democratizing in the United States? 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 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 attention to teaching multiple perspectives is central to an Ethnic Studies pedagogy, especially as it foregrounds an approach to teaching and learning that sanctions multiple racial and ethnic histories and experiences. 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. He asserts:

Ethnic Studies teachers inoculate and instill certain frameworks and worldviews 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 and speaks to the question of the ways Ethnic Studies prepared him to become a better teacher. 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 and how Ethnic Studies sustains his teaching practice. ‘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 to support leading efforts at the district level for the implementation of Ethnic Studies. It is no surprise then that the ‘cross-cutting values’ of all 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.’

Discussion

The two portraits shared in this article are lessons that can be read in their singularity, yet, when taken together coalesce into what Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot has called the ‘aesthetic whole.’ Central to Jossey and Andre’s experiences were the ways Ethnic Studies permeated throughout their schooling and in turn shaped pedagogical practice and teacher identities. For both, 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. 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, he 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. How can Teacher Education founded upon the philosophies, pedagogies, and commitments of Ethnic Studies respond to the alarming number of teachers leaving the profession? Therefore, one recommendation includes imagining a teacher education rooted in Ethnic Studies. This includes looking toward Ethnic Studies as site of pedagogy and curricula and as a theoretical orientation and position to interrogate power in ways mainstream teacher education does not. More immediate steps include rethinking what and whose perspectives are prominent in teacher education courses. That is, embedding critical scholarship across syllabi and moving beyond a single week or a few readings dedicated to scholars of Color and minoritized perspectives (Ali and Buenavista 2018; Coloma 2006; Halagao 2010; Halagao, Tintiangco-Cubales, and Cordova 2009; Spade 2015). Teacher educators can also carefully design ways for students to reflect on their ideologies and identities across courses. A 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 an approach to teacher education follows the lead of Ethnic Studies teachers to interrogate power, privilege, and positionality in relation to this tenuous history. While many Ethnic Studies programs can be found on university campuses on the West and East coasts this is not the case for most teacher education programs. Teacher education programs may need to identify grassroots community based organizations and national networks doing similar work. For instance, there is much work within communities for 'grow your own' models of recruitment as well as national networks and conferences committed to supporting teachers justice and equity (Curammeng and Tintiangco-Cubales 2017; Gist, Bianco, and Lynn 2018; Valdez et al. 2018). In these ways, teacher education programs can be more strategic in their collaborations to learn alongside spaces that center Ethnic Studies pedagogies while strategically seeking out pathways into recruiting populations into the teacher profession who otherwise may not have considered teaching as a career. Ethnic Studies has the ability to shape both content and method of how teachers are prepared to intentionally focus on minoritized perspectives and amplify the experiential knowledges of teacher candidates. 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 (Reyes-McGovern and Buenavista 2016).

Second, across the two portraits 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. In so doing, the two teachers express how Ethnic Studies shaped the ways they teach but also supported their practice to sustain their teaching practice. 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.' 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. 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? What would it mean for the field to promote self-love, hope, and healing as 'measurements' for 'success'? Therefore, a second recommendation includes the development of teacher identities that emphasizes the radical and cross-cutting values of Ethnic Studies as foundational to students' and teachers' learning and lives. Such an emphasis supported the male teachers in this study to develop a critical analysis of structures while also understanding how to teach their students values centered on love and justice.

Returning to the opening epigraph, Langston Hughes's 'Theme for English B' is ripe with honesty and vulnerability attending to the self-reflective dialogue some students have when difference, or in Hughes's case, when race functions in profound ways

between student and teacher. Especially significant are how the genders of the student and instructor remain unknown. The student asks, ‘I wonder if it’s that simple?’ to just ‘go’ and ‘let the page come out of you’ – to just write. The epigraph illuminates an important and urgent dilemma occurring in public school classrooms across the nation: improving teacher preparation to better serve students of Color. Therefore, one major goal for this research is to analyze critical issues within and across teacher education, especially as calls for recruiting male teachers of Color increase. The potential of Ethnic Studies to address attendant challenges in teacher education associated with targeted recruitment of male teachers is one such way the field can move. By bringing Ethnic Studies into the fore, this article contributes to recent bodies of research, which have explored the impact of Ethnic Studies on pedagogy and curriculum respectively, but have yet to fully realize how these intersections affect the experiences of male teachers of Color. And, as the student in Hughes’ poem and the portraits of these Filipino American self-identified male teachers express, it is not that simple.

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