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Alon: Journal for Filipinx American and Diasporic Studies

Title

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Permalink

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Journal

Alon: Journal for Filipinx American and Diasporic Studies, 2(2)

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Publication Date

2022

DOI

10.5070/LN42258125

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A FILIPINX AMERICAN TEACHER IN THE U.S.?

Eleonor G. Castillo

The Lived Experiences of Filipinx American Teachers in the U.S.: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study. By Eleonor G. Castillo. New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis Group. Forthcoming August 5, 2022

During my thirteen years as a Filipinx American student in K-12 public schooling in the United States, I never had an Asian American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander teacher. Moreover, I had only one classroom teacher of color. When I became an urban teacher of color in Title I public schools, I rarely saw reflections of myself among my fellow faculty, site administrators, or school district leaders. According to a 2016 U.S. Department of Education report, 82 percent of elementary and secondary school teachers are White. Moreover, teachers of Asian descent represent only 2 percent of America's teaching corps. Thus, my scholarly turn to the phenomenon of the lived experiences of Filipinx American Teachers in U.S. public schools reflects an inherent calling from within—one in which I aim to bring forth the often unheard, and at times, diminished, voices of Filipinx Americans who serve as K-12 educators.

In my forthcoming book, I discuss the sustaining and supporting of Filipinx American teachers within U.S. public schools. This hermeneutic phenomenological study explores the lived experience of Filipinx American teachers in U.S. public schools. Grounded upon the tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology, the study is guided by philosophical works, including those of Heidegger, Gadamer, Merleau-Ponty, Arendt, and Casey. Furthermore, I draw from Philippine and Filipinx American scholarship, such as the writing of Enriquez, de Guia, and David. In conducting this research, I follow van Manen's methodological structure.

The Filipinx American teachers in this study have served as elementary, middle, and high school teachers. Through one-on-one conversations, a group dialogue, and reflective writing, their lived experiences of being racially and culturally misunderstood, and the loss of native language, emerged as essential themes. These revelations reflect the existentials of *lived body* and *lived relation* within the lifeworlds of Filipinx American teachers. In addition, the role of place, namely that of the distinct and limited presence of Filipinx American

teachers in U.S. classrooms and on school campuses, unveils the aspect of *lived space* upon their existence. The insights from this study can serve to inform teacher education programs, school districts, and the Filipino American community as to how Filipinx American teachers can be sustained and supported on K-12 campuses.