



# Brown Skin, White Minds: Filipino -/ American Postcolonial Psychology

By E. J. R. David

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**Brown Skin, White Minds: Filipino -/ American Postcolonial Psychology** By E. J. R. David

Filipino Americans have a long and rich history with and within the United States, and they are currently the second largest Asian group in the country. However, very little is known about how their historical and contemporary relationship with America may shape their psychological experiences. The most insidious psychological consequence of their historical and contemporary experiences is colonial mentality or internalized oppression. Some common manifestations of this phenomenon are described below:

\*Skin-whitening products are used often by Filipinos in the Philippines to make their skins lighter. Skin whitening clinics and businesses are popular in the Philippines as well. The "beautiful" people such as actors and other celebrities endorse these skin-whitening procedures. Children are told to stay away from the sun so they do not get "too dark." Many Filipinos also regard anything "imported" to be more special than anything "local" or made in the Philippines.

\*In the United States, many Filipino Americans make fun of "fresh-off-the-boats" (FOBs) or those who speak English with Filipino accents. Many Filipino Americans try to dilute their "Filipino-ness" by saying that they are mixed with some other races. Also, many Filipino Americans regard Filipinos in the Philippines, and pretty much everything about the Philippines, to be of "lower class" and those of the "third world."

The historical and contemporary reasons for why Filipino -/ Americans display these attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors - often referred to as colonial mentality - are explored in *Brown Skin, White Minds*. This book is a peer-reviewed publication that integrates knowledge from multiple scholarly and scientific disciplines to identify the past and current catalysts for such self-denigrating attitudes and behaviors. It takes the reader from indigenous Tao culture, Spanish and American colonialism, colonial mentality or internalized oppression along with its implications on Kapwa, identity, and mental health, to decolonization in the clinical, community, and research settings. This book is intended for the entire community - teachers, researchers, students, and service providers

interested in or who are working with Filipinos and Filipino Americans, or those who are interested in the psychological consequences of colonialism and oppression. This book may serve as a tool for remembering the past and as a tool for awakening to address the present.

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### **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"David's 2013 research expands not only the field of ethnic minority psychology but also the fields of Filipino American studies and multicultural education...(and his) psychological perspective is a significant contribution to Filipino American studies as it expands scholarship dominated by historians, sociologists, and literary theorists. His research is also relevant to multicultural education because of its critical interrogation of colonial education paradigms that create and perpetuate racial hierarchies...*Brown Skin, White Minds: Filipino-/American Postcolonial Psychology (with commentaries)* is a heartfelt and reflective analysis of the negative impact of colonialism on the Filipino people....(It) is an important addition to the existing research."

#### ***Multicultural Perspectives***

"E. J. R. David offers wisdom through a nuanced discussion of the role of culture and colonialism on psychological experiences...and mental health of Filipinos and Filipino Americans..the author details the intricate process by which colonialism continues to impact individuals today and how messages have been internalized, reinforcing systems of oppression. Through insightful attention to the relationship between these processes, the book engages and awakens readers to the contemporary effects of colonialism and the implications for the field of psychology."

#### ***Asian American Journal of Psychology***

"Presented in both a personal voice and an academic voice, this labor of love is a critical representation of the histories, lives, psyche, struggles, and contributions of Filipino-/Americans. Author E. J. R. David draws on postcolonialism and psychology to articulate cross-cultural analyses of the processes and effects of colonialism as well as the efforts to recover from them. It will be a useful reference, especially for undergraduates in Asian American studies, psychology, and history."

#### ***Columbia University Teachers College Record***

#### From the Back Cover

*"Simply put, Dr. David's work is an act of psychological liberation. Through his command of the research, his skillful integration of both history and psychology, and his self-evident passion, he challenges Filipinos and Filipino Americans to look in the mirror and examine the psychological impact of Spanish and American colonialism. More importantly, his work is also an act of hope...hope that rests with the invitation to decolonize ourselves and our communities and to see ourselves and our histories with both clarity and pride. Frankly, it's an invitation we should all be accepting."*

Alvin N. Alvarez, Ph.D., Professor of Counseling, San Francisco State University

Co-Editor of *Asian American Psychology: Current Perspectives*

Past President of the Asian American Psychological Association

*"Dr. David's work is passionate to the extent that it arouses many collective emotions - anger at the centuries of historical oppression of Filipinos, sorrow for the lives lost to suicides and depression, dismay at the insidious and long-lasting nature of the legacy of colonialism, and the urgency to right the course for the community's psyche"*

Sumie Okazaki, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, New York University

Co-Editor of *Asian American Psychology: The Science of Lives in Context* and

## *Asian American Mental Health: Assessment Theories and Methods*

*"Brown Skin, White Minds is an accessible text...because the author understands the need to communicate beyond the discipline of psychology even while grounding the discourse within its parameters. This book is readable and palatable, for academics and the general public, which paves the way for mass decolonization to take place."*

Leny Mendoza Strobel, Ed.D., Professor and Chair of American Multicultural Studies, Sonoma State University

Author of *Coming Full Circle: The Process of Decolonization Among Post-1956 Filipino Americans*, and Editor of *Babaylan: Filipinos and the Call of the Indigenous*

*"Brown Skin, White Minds is an important contribution to the ongoing debate and discussion about the afterlife of colonialism in the lives of Filipinos and Filipino Americans. This book is bound to be a major reference and a source of inspiration for future research on the topic."*

Martin F. Manalansan IV, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Anthropology and Asian American Studies University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Author of *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*

### **About the Author**

Dr. E. J. R. David was born in the Philippines and was raised in Alaska. He obtained his Masters and Doctoral degrees in Clinical-Community Psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Currently, he is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Alaska Anchorage, with his primary duties being with the University of Alaska Ph.D. Program in Clinical-Community Psychology that has a Cultural and Indigenous emphasis.

Dr. David has traveled to various cities and states as an invited workshop facilitator, speaker, and presenter on colonial mentality or internalized oppression, and other Ethnic Minority, Asian American, and Filipino American psychological issues. His work on colonial mentality led to him being awarded the Distinguished Student Research Award by the American Psychological Association (APA) Division 45 (Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues) for "his significant contribution in psychological research related to ethnic minority populations." Most recently, due to the impact of his work in only five years since obtaining his Ph.D., Dr. David was honored by the APA Minority Fellowship Program with the 2012 Early Career Award in Research for Distinguished Contributions to the Field of Racial and Ethnic Minority Psychology, citing his "outstanding scientific contributions and the application of this knowledge toward the improved mental and physical well-being of people of color."

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**Virgie Haynes:**

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