Philippine Sea Theorizing:

Activism, Communication, and Performance

by

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ABSTRACT

The Philippine Sea refers to the East and West Philippine Sea that are within the sovereign territory of the 7,641 islands of the Philippine archipelago. Historically, Spain, the United States, and Japan have colonized the islands, and the United States and China continue to maintain imperial interests in the area. Filipino/a/x diasporic activists in the U.S. and allies have participated in the anti-imperial struggle in support of demilitarization of the Pacific and of neo-colonized states across the globe. Responding to the problematics of anti-imperialism and solidarity, this dissertation advances the concept of agos or moving relations to attune to the sea as an analytic in theorizing activism, communication, and performance. This project was written on the unceded ancestral homelands of the Onk Akimel O'odham and Xalychidom Piipash, was inspired by the works of Black and Indigenous communities and scholars, and was influenced by Kale Fajardo's notion of crosscurrents and Loma Cuevas-Hewitt's concept of archipelagic poetics. Across critical organizational communication, critical intercultural communication, and performance studies, agos theorizes the relationalities of movements and the movements of relationalities. Utilizing critical qualitative, rhetorical, and performance methods, this project develops three instantiations of agos. In "Whirlpool Organizing," the processes of anti-imperial organizers' relationship and coalition building are examined to demonstrate the liquidities that animate dialectics and differences. In "Anchored Relationality," U.S. diasporic Filipino/a/x' varied and complex reconnections with Philippine waters are explored to illustrate the fluidities of positions and relations. In "Archipelagic Performance," the staged production of "What sounds do turtles make?" is analyzed to showcase the flows of a decolonial and relational mode of performance.

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MOVING RELATIONS

I am from my barkada's laughter resonating in the hallways of CAS and their slaps for how loud and boisterous our cackles are in the library
I am from my siblings' ice candies, and their asking for limang piso (10 cents) to play bunutan (lottery) or to buy sundot kulangot (coconut candy booger) from Ate Pearly
I am from my Tita Glo's assurance that she will be back from Japan with pasalubong (souvenir), but she just had to work there briefly
I am from my grandmother Rosemarie San Luis' somber reminder at the airport, na kapag nagsama-sama tayo, magugutom tayo (if we stay together, we'll get hungry)
I am from my mother Noralyn Labador's dubbing of muted commercials, when the family would sleep side by side on the floor, our guts aching for how hard we're laughing
I am from my father Aldrin Labador's lessons of class analysis and power, long before I was even able to understand them
I am from my grandfather's distinctly brown eyes, like when the sun shone too bright and too directly on the soil, right when he told me I must help my family first, right there in the middle of dirty water and poverty
I am from my grandmother Dolores Labador's stories too deep into the night of the times she toiled in Saudi
I am from my aunt currently toiling in Saudi, and from Pinays all over the globe, rendering my academic presence an anomaly
I am from my grandparents' land in Bangar, La Union, and from my grandparents' land taken away from them because they did not have the authority
I am from eating lots of rice, alimasag (crab), pinakurat (spiced vinegar), mangga, adobo and bangus (milkfish)
I am from airplanes crossing over the Pacific, 12 hours of difference away from the precipice
I am from Labador, often misspelled as Labrador, but Labador as in strength of peasants and farmers
I am from San Luis, Catholic colonial reminder for some, but San Luis as in being loved and empowered
I am from the sea, the sea that has always felt like home, that if it allows, I will allow to be submerged
And I am from 500 years of struggle and resistance, from the ancestor who glance at me when I look in the mirror
—gelay, "Saan Ako Galing" (Where I Am From)

I wrote this poem April 23, 2021, two years ago, in Karen's sexuality studies class, in response to classmates (Liahnna & Ashley) prompting us to do the activity of "Where I

Am From" poem, an Indigenous community methodology and tool of futurity from Laura Harjo's *Spiral to the Stars* (2019). Notably, Harjo was writing for an Indigenous audience, particularly the Mvskoke community. As someone who is neither part of the Mvskoke community nor Indigenous to the U.S., I offered the following reflection on my positionality:

> I can't even start, without being reminded of all the ways that I have been uprooted and predisposed to navigate a place I did not grow up in, I did not grow up with. I can't even start, without feeling like skirting around an invisible center, trying to remember specific things from my childhood and my life in Manila, without feeling like I am losing bits and pieces every day that I am here. Just this afternoon, I broke down upon seeing clips of Manila in an experimental film, and I did not realize how quiet it is here until I heard again the noisiness of that capital and I did not realize how still it is here until I heard again how different birds and insects sing with the wind in the countryside. I am so out of my element, so out of depth, so out of water; it feels like I have lost my most precious belongings at sea. I would like to think I have been brought here to the u.s. by currents, but it is probably just the transnational capitalist and imperialist forces of higher ed. And so, I'm here, as a migrant, an arrivant, interpellated via histories of colonialism; diasporic, always in two places at once, and always yearning for where I am from.

Byrd (2011) coins the term "arrivant" to refer to groups of people who are neither Natives nor settlers, but who found themselves forced to migrate to lands that are not their own via imperial routes. Still, that term does not excuse my presence here, I am still

an unwanted visitor here, I am still caught up in colonial circuits, in academic wires, straining to do one thing, to get free, while the strings pull me to do another.

My family rehearsed the selling of the American Dream to me, and I took up the opportunity to go to graduate school in the States, without realizing how that would change everything for me. I was naïve. I was colonially educated. I was earning $500 per month right out of college, while my Canadian counterparts were earning $2,000 per month for the same work. Yet, I was already earning higher than the minimum wage. My mother was happy for me. Still, my family did not see a future for me. They do not see a future for themselves in the archipelago. They want me to stay here.

But I am not here, as I am there.

And I am not there, as I am here.

Moving relations was born out of this condition.

Arriving and Settling on Turtle Island

In writing this dissertation, I have been an uninvited visitor to the unceded ancestral homelands of the Onk Akimel O'odham (Salt River People or Pima) and the Xalychidom Piipash (Upriver People or Maricopa), or people who live toward the water. According to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (2022), they are respectively the descendants of the Huhugam, or "those who have gone before," and the Piipaa Nykor. They built complex irrigation systems – the most advanced canal system in North America – and provided oases in the desert for travelers. The Onk Akimel O'odham and Xalychidom Piipash are two distinct tribes who rallied as a single political unity against the settler state of the United States of America. The Executive Order on June 14, 1879 then reduced Salt River to a reserve, from 680,000 acres to 46,627 acres.

The U.S. government built their own dams and irrigation projects for settlers, which diverted and interrupted the flow of water downstream and disrupted the tribes' way of life. To this, Allen (1995) pens a poem entitled "O'odham Himdag" or The O'odham Way:

today
the songs and legends of the *Old Ones*
can no longer be heard
the waters of the *akimel* no longer flow
but they linger in our eyes
and in our hands
and land

we, *Akimel O'odham*, long for
the sweet music of flowing water
one day, we, *Akimel O'odham*, will hear
the sweet music of flowing water (p. 88)

The Onk Akimel O'odham and Xalychidom Piipash have fought to reclaim their waters. While modern Phoenix was built on top of the ancient canal systems and the tribes have been using and irrigating the Gila River since time immemorial, Robbins (2023) describes how the federal law did not recognize this. The legal fight ensued until in 2004, the Congress passed the Arizona Water Settlements Act, granting the tribes access and rights to 653,500 acre-feet of water per year. But the reservation was skeptic after a century of the U.S. government stealing water from them. After an 8.5-mile-long canal was built amidst the community in 2009, growers have nonetheless started to come out and the Onk Akimel O'odham and Xalychidom Piipash have started holding their traditional ceremonies by the river openings again. The community's governor, Stephen Roe Lewis, stated, "Respecting water is in our blood; being water protectors is in our

DNA. We are being visionary in how we bring technology in and meld it with our traditional history and values" (Robbins, 2023, par. 34).

I open with the Onk Akimel O'odham and Xalychidom Piipash's relation to water, to offer respect for the Indigenous tribes and their ongoing histories, epistemologies, and communities. And yet, my settling on their unceded ancestral homelands possibilized the writing of this dissertation. Tuck and Yang (2012) declare, "Decolonization 'here' is intimately connected to anti-imperialism elsewhere. However, decolonial struggles here/there are not parallel, not shared equally, nor do they bring neat closure to the concerns of all involved – particularly not for settlers" (p. 31). One of the primary driving forces of my dissertation is theorizing and contributing to the movement of anti-imperialism, but that does not excuse the settler colonial conditions – affiliated with the university, no less – that afforded this research. Tuck and Yang (2012) further deepen the incommensurabilities and map the parallels, noting:

> The Colt .45 was perfected to kill Indigenous people during the 'liberation' of what became the Philippines, but it was first invented for the 'Indian Wars' in North America alongside The Hotchkiss Canon – a gattling gun that shot cannonballs. The technologies of the permanent settler war are reserviced for foreign wars, including boarding schools, colonial schools, urban schools run by military personnel. (p. 32)

The U.S. colonizers developed and perfected their weapons as they settled on Turtle Island, and these were the very same weapons that they used in the westward expansion, into the Pacific. In addition to military violence, the violence of boarding school that promoted the forced assimilation of Native kids, their separation from their communities,

and their destruction of their lifeways and languages was one of the settler colonial technologies that the United States brought to the Philippine archipelago to repress the anti-colonial revolution and to foster a love for America among the Filipinos. Writing about the mis-education of Filipinos, Constantino (1970) describes:

> The lives of Philippine heroes were taught but their nationalist teachings were glossed over. Spain was the villain, America was the saviour. To this day, our histories still gloss over the atrocities committed by American occupation troops such as the water cure and the re-concentration camps. (p. 433)

Looking at historical records, Hasian (2012) argues that the U.S. diminished the violence of water cure, a form of interrogation torture that they used against Filipino insurgents. In hiding these atrocities behind the façade of "benevolence," the U.S. has ensured the installation of the American Dream. The department of education was neither entrusted to nor led by a Filipino during the American colonial period (Constantino, 1970). The assimilationist and colonial education subdued Filipino resistance and furthered American interests, such as fostering a lack of criticality towards foreign control and welcome exploitation of the country's natural resources. Moreover, English became prioritized as the medium of instruction over native languages. All this had the result of alienating Filipinos from their own lands and histories:

> The history of our ancestors was taken up as if they were strange and foreign peoples who settled in these shores, with whom we had the most tenuous of ties. We read about them as if we were tourists in a foreign land. (Constantino, 1970, p. 433)

"Tourists in a foreign land" continues to be the refrain and reality of "balikbayans" (Filipino migrant workers returning to visit the Philippines). The U.S. assimilation project was almost successful, only it was not. It is still ongoing, and so is resistance. As the rest of this dissertation will hope to show, Filipino histories are intertwined and inextricable from Native American histories. Decolonization requires land and ocean back and the eradication of settler colonialism. Anti-imperialism recognizes the larger structure—the empire—that settles, that extracts, that kills, that incarcerates, that displaces, and that profits. My history is one that moved from being colonially miseducated in the Philippines, to realizing the extent of colonialism and imperialism in the U.S., and to figuring out that abolition, decolonization, solidarity, and anti-imperialism may be the answers to the question of emancipation.

Situating Moving Relations in Communication Studies

This dissertation situates itself within the field of communication studies by extending oceanic orientations in communication (Cruz & Sodeke, 2021; Na'puti, 2020) and in doing so, contributing to the field's three subdomains: critical organizational communication, critical intercultural communication, and performance studies.

This dissertation builds on the work of Black and Indigenous scholars in communication as they turn to oceanic orientations and liquid organizing to theorize Black and Indigenous communities' agential navigations of colonialism and relational enactments of futurities. On one hand, Na'puti (2020) advances *Oceanic rhetoric*, "which insists upon the centrality of Indigenous subjects to the ocean, islands, atolls, and archipelagos–orienting our research to attend to peoples' experiences as interconnected exchanges and kinships that belong to these places" (p. 95). Centering Indigeneity,

Na'puti implicates the communication field's erasure of ongoing colonialism, militarism, and imperialism and challenges the field to reconsider transnational publics as cyclical and tidal, "to emphasize their ebbs and flows, the Pacific as a starting point" (p. 98).

While Na'puti foregrounds the Oceania and Pacific Islander communities, Filipino/a/x are notably not Pacific Islander, and thus this dissertation departs and broadens oceanic orientations from the Philippine historical-material vantage point. In writing about Filipinx studies in Hawai'i and Asian settler colonialism, Achacoso (2022) points out two problematics in theorizing the oceanic for the Filipino/a/x diaspora. First, different Philippine ethnicities have various relationships to Philippine ecologies, and thus not all Filipinx are necessarily oceanic and automatically related to native Pacific relationalities. Second, Achacoso (2022) warns against utilizing the ocean "as only a metaphor to map all diasporic movement" (p. 392) at risk of colonially erasing Native Pacific scholars. Instead, Achacoso (2022) argues for an oceanic turn that is "an intentional emerging praxis and methodological approach that is used to reimagine the decolonial potentiality of being relation to the oceans" (p. 393). Such is an oceanic turn that always unsettles settlers, that is predicated on being a good relative to the oceans and to its Peoples, and that is mindful of where Filipino/a/x and Native Pacific Islanders' historical and material currents overlap, parallel, and diverge.

On the other hand, Cruz and Sodeke (2021) reconceptualize Western theory on liquidity by foregrounding marginalized organizational actors' lived experiences with liquid organizing in surviving colonialism in Nigeria and Liberia. Theorizing liquidity as adaptive organizing and shapeshifting, Cruz and Sodeke (2021) propose the concepts of motion, solvency, and permeability, where "motion refers to movement, solvency refers

to the ability to dissolve into one's surroundings, and permeability refers to organizing that infiltrates life and vice versa" (p. 528). Cruz and Sodeke deem liquid organizing as a culturally anchored tool in postcolonial communities as they navigate colonial violence. Further developing Cruz and Sodeke's (2021) conceptualization of liquid organizing, this dissertation specifically accounts for anti-imperial organizers' experiences with relationship and coalition building in the U.S., thus shifting the focus on liquidity from marginalized organizational actors as situated in their environment to the relational space between organizational actors as they navigate and resist oppressive structures such as imperialism. Expanding liquid organizing and oceanic orientations in the field of communication is also informed by sea-based theorizing as it emerges from Filipino/a/x communities' lived experiences with water and engagements with the Philippine Sea.

Philippine Sea Theorizing: Moving Relations

The Philippine Sea refers to the East and West Philippine Sea that are within the sovereign territory of the Philippines. On one hand, the East Philippine Sea is part of the Western Pacific Ocean, and it has been the location of the battle between Japan and the U.S. during World War II (Britannica, 2021). On the other hand, the West Philippine Sea has been a territorial space of contention between the Philippines and China (Bolledo, 2022; Chan, 2022). Moreover, despite popular claims that there are no more U.S. military bases in the Philippines, former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte failed to terminate the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) with the U.S. – which allows U.S. troops to operate on foreign soil – thereby continuing to permit the construction of U.S. military facilities in the archipelago (Robson, 2021), often in strategic ports like the Subic Bay. Now, Philippine president-elect Ferdinand Marcos Jr. plans to strengthen ties with the

U.S., with no intentions of scrapping VFA and instead emphasizing security and trade (Morales, 2022). These accounts of the Philippine Sea show how the Philippine archipelago and its seas have been pawns for the larger geopolitical forces of China and the U.S., with the Philippine government complicitly facilitating their neoliberal and imperial interventions. I focus and evoke the Philippine Sea as metaphor for anti-imperialism beyond this geopolitical location.

It is with this historical and material context that I begin theorizing communication, activism, and performance from the Philippine Sea. Delinking from canon and inspired by oceanic works in communication (Cruz & Sodeke, 2021; Na'puti, 2020), I weave these with the oceanic work already being done outside communication by Filipino/a/x scholars, Kale Fajardo and Loma Cuevas-Hewitt. First, engaging with Filipino/a tomboy masculinities in migration, Fajardo (2014) proposes the concept of crosscurrents to delineate "alternative maritime or water-based borders where coconstitutive axes of identity (race, class, gender, sexuality) potentially or regularly get reconfigured through movement, travel, and migration" (p. 117). That is, crosscurrents centers migration-based identities and offers transnational optics that enable mapping connections to "elsewheres," tracing their marginalized trajectories (Fajardo, 2014, p. 125). Crosscurrents highlights the role of water-based movement and migration in troubling and complicating Western concepts like identity.

Second, Cuevas-Hewitt (2020) advances "the 'archipelago' as an alternative imaginary" to the idea of the Philippines as a "centralising, homogenising, and essentialising" (p. 25) nation-state, or the idea that the islands are disparate and not connected to each other at all. Cuevas-Hewitt's shift in conceptualization – "archipelagic

poetics" – functions in three ways. First, it prioritizes the autonomy of the different regions and islands of the Philippines apart and in resistance to the national government, located in what has been dubbed as the "Imperial Manila." Second, it recognizes the sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples in the archipelago, as not bounded by and as transcending the nation-state. And third, it opens the archipelago to transnational communities and diasporic relations. For instance, speaking from Taiwan, Ching (2021) considers "decontinentalization" and "archipelagic thinking" as decolonial tactics that respectively decenter major continents and forge transnational connections beyond the land-based nation and empire. In both archipelagic iterations, the water of seas and oceans becomes the focal trajectory and connective vein, emphasizing the relationalities that constitute islands. Overall, archipelagic poetics accentuate sea-based relationalities that resist and transcend empire.

Braiding Fajardo's (2014) work on water-based movement and Cuevas-Hewitt's (2020) work on sea-based relations provides the anchor for this study: *agos* or *moving relations*. As a Pinay, my roots are as much about origin (La Union and Nueva Ecija, Philippines) as they are about crossings and overlaps. That is, my roots are less grounded in land and more like routes across seas. The people that constitute my community are my roots, wherever they are, and wherever I find myself. It becomes less about fixed positions, and more about our moving relations. When so many of us – family, friends, mga kasama (comrades) – are always moving and migrating, it would be hard to pin down a precise and stable location, but what I can tell you are stories of migration. This project becomes part of those stories, in its endeavor to foreground accounts of joy, pain, survival, hope, and the radical futurities of my community and our allies within, against,

and beyond empire. In this dissertation, I present and develop three instantiations of moving relations: whirlpool organizing, anchored relationality, and archipelagic performance.

These three instantiations of moving relations speak to three subfields in the communication discipline. First, whirlpool organizing bridges a conversation between critical organizational communication literature on dialectics (Daskalaki & Kokkinidis, 2017; Mumby, 2005; Putnam et al., 2016) and critical/cultural studies and women of color theorizing of difference (Chávez, 2011; Cohen, 1997; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Hong, 2015, 2018; Lorde, 1984; Reagon, 1998; Sandoval, 2000) in order to theorize anti-imperial organizers' processes of relationship and coalition building. Second, anchored relationality facilitates a connection between critical intercultural communication literature on ecology (Cacophiliacs, 2021; de la Garza, 2020; Mendoza & Kinefuchi, 2016; Rife, 2020; Stanley, 2022) and borders (Cisneros; 2021; DeChaine, 2012) and Indigenous (Brave Heart et al., 2011; Harjo, 2019; Leavitt et al., 2015; Peña, 2011; Sheffield, 2011) and Filipino/a/x studies (Choy, 2003; Diaz, 2016; Le Espiritu, 2003; Manalansan, 2012; Parreñas, 2001; San Juan, 2001) in order to trace the varied and complex ways diasporic Filipino/a/x re-/dis-/connect with Philippine waters. Third, archipelagic performance crafts a dialogue between performance studies literature on body, space, and time (Conquergood, 2002; LeMaster, 2018a; Hastings, 2009; Pelias, 2014) and Filipino/a/x performance tradition (Barrios, 2013; Burns, 2013; See, 2009) in order to contour a decolonial and relational mode of performance.

The rest of this introduction provides a historical backdrop for theorizing agos or moving relations and its iterations. It moves from contextualizing anti-imperialism in the

Philippines, to tracing the Filipino/a/x American Left, and to identifying the land-water entanglements between anti-imperialism and decolonization as two distinct liberatory movements. This chapter concludes with the outline of the dissertation.

Anti-imperialism and the Philippines

The National Democratic (ND) movement in the Philippines emerged in the 1960s to respond to the three basic problems of the Filipino people: imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism. The *Philippine Society and Revolution* (1971) by Amado Guerrero is the people-centered account of Philippine history that details these three basic problems. Imperialism refers to the U.S. and other foreign military, economic, legal, and cultural encroachments into the Philippines to serve their own capitalist interests. Distinguishing old colonialism from imperialism, founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, Sison (1987) states:

> US monopoly capitalism or imperialism did away with the system of sheer colonial plunder run by an old type of colonialism, that of Spain, and exported surplus capital to the Philippines to expand agricultural production for export as well as mineral ore production for the same purpose. (p. 313)

The U.S. enveloped the Philippines into its imperial frontiers without necessarily having to settle formally on the islands. This external hegemonic power is coupled with an internal hegemonic power with the second basic problem being feudalism, where "the process of land accumulation by landlords, government officials and agricorporations overtook the poor settlers and dispossessed them of tillable public land" (Sison, 1987, p. 313). Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines, peasants, and farmers continue to suffer from the brunt of this historic and ongoing land grab. The Philippines is rich in resources,

but the people are poor. That is, the people do not get to enjoy the riches of their land. Instead, they are displaced from their homelands, and their person and their labor are exported abroad, while imperialists and feudalists swoop in to extract from their land and labor. As Sison (1987) claims, “Two monsters, foreign monopoly capitalism and domestic feudalism continue to suck the blood of the working people” (p. 313).

The third and final structure in place to maintain this political arrangement is bureaucrat capitalism (Guerrero, 1971). The current Philippine government is but a remnant of old colonial systems and a political puppet of the U.S. government. Historically, Spanish colonizers enlisted the help of the principalia (local Filipino elite), who were loyal to them, to manage the lands, lead the people, and repress any dissent. When the U.S. colonizers replaced the Spanish, these principalia became the pensionados, who now became the big compradors who currently and complicitly work with foreign corporations to exploit and extract from the land. These big compradors are the government officials themselves, who use “power and control of the government bureaucracy and enterprises, access to public funds, and the use of the country’s resources as capital” (National Democratic Front of the Philippines, 2020, par. 1) in the process of enriching themselves.

The Filipino people find themselves where they are now, confronting these three basic problems, which resulted as ongoing legacies of Spanish and American colonization, Japanese occupation, and now, China and U.S.’ imperialism. Ileto (1993) points out that Marcos Sr. and Constantino, his arch critic, both agreed that “Filipino identity, would be found, not in an illusory precolonial past, but in the people’s struggle for liberation” (p. 63). It was the 1896 Revolution led by the Katipunan, a secret

organization of peasants and revolutionaries, against Spanish rule that created the conditions for the Philippine nation to emerge. Indeed, this is a Philippine nation that is "constructed upon a history of opposition to a colonial and alien 'other'" (Ileto, 1993, p. 78). Present-day ND activists refer back to the 1896 Revolution to legitimize calls for Philippine revolution that has been protracted, never really truly being free yet from the foreign and local colonial masters. Ileto (1993) mentions that the civil rights movement in the U.S., the Vietnam war, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, and the French student revolt can be considered as factors that reignited Philippine radical nationalism and the start of the ND movement in the 1960s.

The Filipino/a/x American Left and Coalition Building

Toribio (1998) reflected on the history of the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP) (Union of Democratic Filipinos). The KDP started in 1973 in the U.S. as the counterpart of the ND movement in the Philippines. They tackled, not just the three basic problems in the Philippines, but also the issues of racism and capitalism in the U.S. The KDP was one of the many organizations that then formed the Filipino/a/x American Left. Hanna (2017) traces that most of who composed and clashed within these organizations were the anti-Marcos activists in the Philippines who were politically exiled from the homeland, and the descendants of cannery-workers and farmers, the "Manongs," who organized for labor union and civil rights in the U.S. The KDP had two goals: (1) to expose how the U.S. backed Marcos Sr.'s dictatorship, and (2) to build socialism and support antiracism in the U.S. The KDP is now considered as one of the predecessors of currently existing ND organizations in the U.S.

Guided by Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideologies, the radicality of the Filipino/a/x American Left stemmed from their organizing for "systemic social change, building alliance with other groups in the U.S., Philippines, Canada, Hong Kong, and elsewhere" (Hanna, 2017, p. 700). Filipino/a/x youth activists in the contemporary moment blend social media and on-the-ground movement building to "transform history into a site of mobilization" (Sales, 2020, p. 1), to counter U.S.-induced colonial amnesia and the Marcos' project of historical revisionism. Living in the U.S. and realizing the extent of anti-imperialism that exceeds just the Philippines, they connect with Latinx, Black, and Palestinian activists and organize in solidarity with historically marginalized communities. Like Ileto's (1993) observation of the Filipino identity, Sales (2020) asserts that Filipino/a/x American activists view their identities as borne out of resistance for their homeland and in internationalist solidarity with other anti-imperialists.

Land-Water Entanglements

I took time to review the histories of both my homeland and the land on which I have arrived and settled to map the backdrop of this dissertation. There emerges two incommensurabilities in juxtaposing the Philippine archipelago and Turtle Island. First, there are necessary differences between decolonization and anti-imperialism. The Native American call for decolonization is *land and oceans back, no more, no less*. Decolonization requires Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, the fostering of life of kith and kin, human and more-than-human. Decolonization entails the resurgence of Native lifeways and languages. Anti-imperialism, at least in the Philippine context, encompasses the material confrontation of the three basic problems of the Filipino people: imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism. Implicit and subsumed within

anti-imperialism are the calls for decolonization, the land and ocean back, sovereignty, and self-determination, of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines.

I also go back to Ileto's (1993) distinction of the Filipino identity as created out of opposition. On the other hand, Indigenous Peoples have always already had a sense of who they are prior to colonialism. Colonialism foreclosed this possibility for the Filipinos. Moreover, decolonization is a critical response to settler colonialism, and it is also a reclamation and repatriation of Indigeneity. The Filipino people's anti-imperialist spirit continues to reckon with the old and new colonial structures, and the connection to Indigeneity is tenuous. In the view of ND activists, one needs decolonization for anti-imperialism, and one needs anti-imperialism for decolonization. However, a dialectic exists. On one hand, the anti-imperialism of ND activists in the U.S. necessitates an unsettling on stolen land. On the other hand, the decolonization of Native activists is urged to have a transnational perspective of being in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples everywhere else, beyond the U.S., and of creating anti-capitalist systems that do not replicate colonial and imperial structures.

I started thinking about the waters of my homeland in 2021, the very same year that I wrote my Saan Ako Galing (Where I Am From) poem. My earliest memories of water are eating by the streams in Bangar, La Union, my paternal grandparents' place, and swimming and watching the sunset at Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte, with my maternal grandparents' family. Then, throughout the years, while we lived in Manila, it has been my maternal grandmother's tradition to pray and go to the San Fabian Beach at Manaoag, Pangasinan. All of these places are in the northern part of the Philippines. The year of 2021, I had not been home for three years. And in this year of 2023, I have not been

home for five years. My oceanic turn is out of a desire to go home, out of the migratory and diasporic experience, and out of the resistance and moves for sovereignty in the Philippine Sea, an area of increasing geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and China. Yet I also recognize the privileges (access to higher education in the U.S.; social, cultural, and financial capital; and being able-bodied) that afforded me to write this dissertation. The three chapters of this dissertation are the islands around which a Filipino/a/x sea turn traverse, around which moving relations flow.

Outline of Dissertation

Whirlpool Organizing

In Chapter 2, "Whirlpool Organizing," I intertwine the interdisciplinary connections between critical/cultural studies and organizational communication to theorize anti-imperial activist processes. Specifically, in utilizing Filipino sea-based thinking to reconceptualize organizational knowledge, dialectics, and liquidities, I propose the concept of whirlpool organizing, which is the nonlinear process of deepening relational currents, animating dialectical flows, and spiraling of coalitional movements. I draw from 22 in-depth qualitative interviews with social justice activists and organizers across Texas and Arizona, sites within which I have organized with community in the past three years. Some of the organizers are Filipino/a/x and/or part of the ND movement, while others are non-Filipinos and/or allies and accomplices to the ND movement and are thus part of their respective anti-imperial organizations. The interviews are complemented with my own experiences being an organizer.

Then, from the data, I elicit three nonlinear processes within whirlpool organizing: deepening of relational currents, animating of dialectical flows, and spiraling

of coalitional movements. The first part references the deepening of self-and-other knowledge to build relational currents across spatial and temporal scales; the second part animates dialectical flows across individual, relational, and organizational registers; and the third part engages the spiraling of coalitional movements towards emancipatory ends. From these processes, this chapter offers three theoretical contributions. First, it revisits the epistemological practice of difference by foregrounding affective and embedded knowing. Second, it nuances dialectics by emphasizing the role of scales and space. Third and finally, it builds on the theorizing of liquid organizing beyond capitalist organizing and towards emancipatory ends.

Anchored Relationality

In Chapter 3, "Anchored Relationality," I weave Indigenous and Filipino/a/x studies and critical intercultural communication to propose "anchored relationality," which maps Filipino/a/x' complicated reconnections with water as a mode of resistance and agency across historical trauma, diasporic longing, and sovereignty struggles. To develop this concept, I conducted a virtual art-based workshop with Filipino/a/x American organizers, who are part of the ND movement, in Texas. I offered them the prompt, "What is water for you, or your family, culture, or history?" and they offered drawings and poems in response. They paired up to share their artworks, then we convened as a larger group to draw out their connections and parallels. It was an emotional experience, sitting with diasporic grief and longing. My experience facilitating the workshop with them and my own orientations towards water augmented the collage or patchwork of their artworks as a meditation on Filipino/a/x relations with water.

By enacting “pagtatagpi-tagpi” (patchwork) as a method, I stitch together drawings, interviews, poems, and film to illustrate three tagpi (patches). The first tagpi tackles Filipino/a/x resilience given ancestral trauma and the impending ecological crises. The second tagpi deliberates the duality of water as dis/connection, perplexed by Filipino/a/x diasporic experiences of grief and healing. The third tagpi examines organizing for Philippine waters and Indigenous sovereignty as routes of alternative return to the homeland. From these three tagpi, this chapter offers three theoretical contributions. First, it asserts the importance of relations and dreams in decolonial remembering. Second, it affirms transnational organizing as a material practice of cultural reconnection and manifestation of liberatory hopes. Finally, it highlights the transcendence of water, the relation to water as kin and ally.

Archipelagic Performance

In Chapter 4, “Archipelagic Performance,” I engage with the decolonial and collaborative sensitivities of what I refer to as archipelagic performance, hailing from the Filipino sea-based epistemologies and tradition of performance. I conceptualize archipelagic performance from the staged production of “What sounds do turtles make?” which is a meditation on movements and relationalities that constitute Filipino/a/x and allies’ experiences, in complicity with and in resistance to empire. I wrote the script from the transcripts of interviews with anti-imperial organizers in Chapter 2, reflecting on the images and themes they shared and braiding their words into found poetry that engaged topics of conflict, community, anti-imperialism, settler colonialism, and solidarity. Community comrades joined me in staging the performance, animating the movements of

turtles and octopus, voicing the poetry, and enacting the reversals of gaze and collectivization of grief.

From this staged production, the chapter extends ongoing theorizations about performance of the body, space, and time by explicating how archipelagic performance facilitates sailing via memory and the senses, navigating spatio-temporalities, and maneuvering fluidities. Particularly, it contributes to performance literature by foregrounding the importance of *listening*, *interiority*, and *slowness* in embodied performance. The chapter argues for the interiority of self as resistance to colonial gazes, for anger and grief as legitimate decolonial responses, and for the criticality of breathing and resting as ways to sustain performance and liberation movements in general. Overall, the chapter reclaims the metaphor of the "archipelago" away from colonial and neoliberal capitalist iterations of it, as a place to visit for tourism and discovery, and moves the "archipelago" towards a conceptualization of performance as relational, decolonial, community-based, and embodied.

Hopes and Horizons

In this first chapter of the dissertation, I trace where I have come from, where I arrived and settled, where I have come from historically (the history of the Filipino people), their/our land-water entanglements with Natives, how I came to the oceanic turn via the Philippine Sea, and how I developed moving relations via its three enactments: whirlpool organizing, anchored relationality, and archipelagic performance. Though seemingly linear, moving to the position where I could write this first chapter was anything but. Like the movements of the sea and the relationalities she generates, this

chapter shows the complexities of histories, relations, and positionalities out of which this dissertation emerges.

In Chapter 5, "Hopes & Horizons," I close with a reflection on the affect and dialectics that animate liberation, its accompanying responsibilities even after the end of a dissertation, and the teetering balance and cultivation of spirit between hope and hopelessness. I draw the parallels between Filipina poet Mila D. Aguilar and Caribbean poet Audre Lorde. I honor the community and mentors (Lore, Heewon, Karen, Doc, and Dan) who made this work possible. I tease out the currents that ran through each island/chapter, ranging from centering the body, to accentuating relationalities, to attuning to space-time. Finally, forever inspired by Muñoz' (2009) queer theorization of the horizon, I gaze towards horizons, as I—with community, always—perpetually sail towards the sun.

Towards home.

Padayon.

CHAPTER 2

WHIRLPOOL ORGANIZING

The sea teaches us and offers us a theory of change. Yet the emphasis is often on control, on controlling the sea, on controlling change, on framing the sea as static and subject to human rules and methods, when the sea is so much more expansive and beyond anyone's control. The sea is agential. Filipino sea-based epistemologies hail from the lived experiences and ancestral knowledges of fisher folk who had a relationship with the sea, of migrants who navigated the seas to get to other islands. Their experiences navigating the sea taught them that the more you fight the sea, the more the sea will fight back. That you have to be attuned, not just to the sea, but to the sea's kin – the stars, the wind, the sun, the fish, the sand – and how they dance around each other, so that you may also pass through the delicate oceanic dance. That when you let yourself be carried by the sea's waves, if you let the change move through you, if you let go, if you hold each other's hand through it, if you remember to breathe, you may find yourself on the other side, or on your back, floating, basking in the warmth.

But alas, I find myself, not as a fisher folk, but as a migrant-turned-scholar-turned-organizer navigating a different kind of change. I ally myself with anti-imperial organizers, who are activists seeking to resist empire, which refers to the U.S. empire at this particular moment, and its violent manifestations within the U.S., in the Philippines, in Palestine, and all over the globe. Anti-imperial resistance looks different for every organizer and movement, and it may include lobbying to stop U.S. weapons manufacturing and military aid to imperial territories, organizing for housing unions in

the U.S., mobilizing for Black liberation, creating anti-capitalist systems, cultivating the sovereignty of oppressed communities, and inducing a revolution.

I study with anti-imperial organizers in Texas and Arizona being that these are the sites where I have organized and built relationships with comrades. Texas and Arizona are difficult sites in which to politically organize provided the deep conservativism organizing both states' political terrains. Particularly, this essay foregrounds the anti-imperial organizing that occurs in the Arizona cities of Phoenix and Tempe in addition to the Texas cities of Dallas, Houston, and Austin. Throughout this chapter, I will use the terms "activists" and "organizers" interchangeably, and while there may be arguable differences between the two. For instance, Hayes (2016) notes that activists show up during protests, but it is organizers who orchestrate protests and build movement. Yet, in this chapter, I use both "activists" and "organizers" to refer broadly to organizational actors who are involved with movements for liberation. I bring the Filipino sea-based concept of agos, of whirlpool organizing, to understand the processes of their involvement, as they navigate the chaotic changes that come with building relationships, navigating dialectics, and crafting coalitions all amidst destroying empire.

Agos, in Tagalog, means to flow, or the slow movement of a people. Agos, as a Filipino sea-based epistemology, combines Fajardo's (2014) notion of "crosscurrents," which refers to identity changes via migration, and Cuevas-Hewitt's (2020) concept of "archipelagic poetics," which refers to the sea as a relational analytic. Agos, or moving relations, integrates the movements and relationalities emerging from these conceptual impulses. Specifically, in this chapter, I develop the concept of "whirlpool organizing," which I define as the nonlinear process of deepening relational currents, animating of

dialectical flows, and spiraling of coalitional movements. These processes involve the deepening of self-and-other knowledge across spatial and temporal scales; the centripetal movements on the individual, relational, and organizational registers; and the dialectics that drive the spiraling of coalitions. Whirlpool organizing resists the imperial framing of whirlpools as stagnant and destructive and instead, reframes them as the generative movement of seas that can engage against and transcend hegemonic structures.

Whirlpool organizing reconceptualizes organizational knowing (Ashcraft et al., 2009; Daskalaki, 2018; Kuhn, 2014; Harris, 2017), dialectics (Daskalaki & Kokkinidis, 2017; Mumby, 2005; Putnam et al., 2016), and liquidities (Costas, 2013; Schreyögg & Sydow, 2010; Steele & Dredge, 2017). Whirlpool organizing also borrows from critical/cultural studies theorizing on difference as episteme (Hong, 2015; Lorde, 1984), coalitional dialectics (Chávez, 2011; Cohen, 1997; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Hong, 2018; Reagon, 1998; Sandoval, 2000), and liquid organizing (Cruz & Sodeke, 2021). In so doing, this chapter offers three theoretical contributions. First, it reengages difference as a practice of knowing and incorporates emotional and embedded knowing. Second, it highlights the role of space and advances scalar dialectics. Third, it builds on liquid organizing, theorizing beyond corporatism and towards emancipation. Indeed, this aligns with how critical organizational communication scholars have been tasked to theorize the symbolic and material dimensions of collective resistance (Ganesh et al., 2005), to honor Indigenous epistemologies (Broadfoot & Munshi, 2007; Na'puti, 2020), to respond to de-whitening communication (Chakravartty et al., 2018), and to challenge Western and normative cultural assumptions underlying organizational processes (Cruz, 2017).

This chapter unfolds as follows. First, I weave organizational communication literature with critical/cultural studies' engagements of knowing, dialectics, and liquidities. In doing so, I set the stage for proposing the concept of whirlpool organizing and the theoretical threads that animate its movements. Second, I delineate the methodological trajectory that possibilized my arrival at whirlpool organizing and its contours. Third, I showcase the three themes that emerged, the experiential processes that help us understand anti-imperial organizers' navigations of relations, dialectics, and coalitions. Finally, I offer a discussion that teases out this chapter's theoretical contributions as well as limitations and directions for future study.

On Differences, Dialectics, and Liquidities

Organizational Knowledge and Difference as Episteme

Organizational communication literature on organizational knowing has started to account for practice, intersectionality, resistance, and heterogeneity. Kuhn (2014) reviews the practice model of organizational knowing, which entails addressing problems, participating in relationships, and situating in contexts and communities. Kuhn viewed knowing as constitutive and focused on its ongoing and provisional nature. Harris (2017) integrates intersectionality into analyzing how a U.S. university practiced white, heteronormative organizational knowing in addressing sexual violence. Daskalaki (2018) maps how social learning played a role in forming resistance assemblages and socio-spatial solidarity in Greece. Ashcraft et al. (2009) proposes heterogeneous knowing to foreground difference as a resource for knowing. These show the space in organizational communication, not only to extend praxis-based and critical organizational knowing, but to accentuate difference as an episteme in itself.

To be clear, one of the views of organizational knowing is the practice model, which argues that "*to know* implies competent participation in a complex web of relationships among people, artifacts, discourses, and (often-conflicting) streams of action" (Kuhn, 2014, p. 483). Here, Orlikowski (2002) suggests that knowing is neither static nor stable but is an ongoing social practice. In addition, Kuhn (2014) identifies that one of the themes in organizational knowing scholarship is the study of communication networks, where knowledge is seen as an emergent collective capacity "to identify expertise and its locations, the skill to collaborate with others, and the links between nodes that become instrumentally important when activated in subsequent situations" (p. 487). Combining these views of organizational knowing presents a picture of knowing as ongoing and networked. Another theme of organizational knowing scholarship is the communities of practice, where Lave and Wenger (1991) advance the sociality and situatedness of learning. That is, learning happens on the boundaries or peripheries as actors constantly and communicatively renegotiate them. Given this review, Kuhn (2014) proposes to focus on the body in practice-based organizational knowing to emphasize how embodied knowledge materially shapes organizing.

This is where critical/cultural communication studies come in with their theories of knowing as embodied, processual, and relational. Queer and women of color scholars conceptualized difference as the creative and dialectical practice through which one comes to *know*. Hong (2015) defines difference as "a cultural and epistemological practice that holds in suspension (without requiring resolution) contradictory, mutually exclusive, and negating impulses" (p. 7). To sit in this tension, to sit in the in-between, is the space through which two bodies in contact generate knowledge. Lorde (1984)

famously stated that “Difference must not be merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening” (p. 54). Lorde, whose parents immigrated from the Caribbean, combined intersectional feminism with her Caribbean feminist politic, resulting to an always fluid intersectional praxis (Bowen, 1997). That is, oceanic movement animates Lorde’s theorization of difference and flow. Lorde conceptualizes difference in generative terms that suggest *connection across difference* provides the ontological condition that possibilizes creativity. Her thinking emerged in direct response to the multiple exclusions she experienced as a Black lesbian feminist poet – encountering anti-Blackness organizing white feminist spaces and reckoning with misogynist organizing in Black radical spaces. For Lorde, difference was neither static nor fixed, as it always morphs and shifts based on the space, body, and time. Moreover, difference becomes the interdependent and relational space, that which emerges at the approach of one to another. In Lorde’s intersectional framework, difference is alive and animated through a dialectic, through the struggle.

Dialectical Flows and Coalitional Struggles

In organizational communication, some scholars view dialectics, not only as discursive and dynamic, but also as operating according to centripetal flows. Mumby (2005) proposes the dialectical approach to highlight discourse as that which shapes and fixes meaning in organizational life. Following Bakhtin’s (1981) tradition on language as play and as source of creativity and difference, Putnam et al. (2016) refines the notion of dialectics and defined it as “interdependent opposites aligned with forces that push-pull on each other like a rubber band and exist in an ongoing dynamic interplay as the poles

implicate each other" (p. 27). Yet dialectics also do not always operate on a 180-degree opposition and can move across multiple scales without resolution. Daskalaki and Kokkinidis (2017) argue that resistant flows are not always directly oppositional and can rather run in a centripetal fashion. While dynamic and oppositional discourse can animate dialectics, this chapter will make the case for how dialectics move in a nonlinear, scalar, and centripetal way.

In transnational feminism, queer politics, and women of color movements, dialectics – as scattered, intersectional, material, and differential – also offer a way to reconceptualize coalition building. Grewal and Kaplan (1994) enrich the concept of "scattered hegemonies," emphasizing how multiple localities challenge the master idea of global-local. Cohen (1997) advances a queer intersectional analysis of coalitions and prefigured how people – straight and queer alike – share a marginal relationship to dominant power. Reagon (1998) anchors coalitions as material, stating that "The only reason you would consider trying to team up with somebody who could possibly kill you, is because that's the only way you can figure you can stay alive" (p. 242). To this, Hong (2018) points out that it is difference, not commonality, that forms the basis of communities. These scholars gestured to dialectics across spatialities, power relations, material conditions, and communities. Having weaved organizational communication and critical/cultural communication on differences and dialectics, I pose the first research question:

RQ$_1$: How do anti-imperial organizers navigate differences and dialectics in building relationships and coalitions to achieve emancipatory ends?

From Liquid Organizing to Whirlpool Organizing

Organizational communication scholarship on fluidities initially focused on balancing flexibility with organizational efficiency, highlighting the mobility of transnational elite workers, and the shifting nature of volunteer tourism. Schreyögg and Sydow (2010) assert organizational fluidity as that which can account for environmental complexity yet not lose the essence of the organization. Costas (2013) centers the experiences of powerful mobile workers and how they navigated mobilities, stickiness, ambiguities, and frictions. Steele and Dredge (2017) focus on the liquid organization of volunteer tourism, marking how identities, responsibilities, partnerships, and goals shifted. So, organizational communication has taken up liquid organizing albeit through Western and normative lenses and experiences.

Only recently has organizational communication started to engage non-Western and marginal experiences of fluidities. Cruz and Sodeke (2021) demonstrate how organizational actors in postcolonial contexts such as Nigeria and Liberia deployed liquid organizing as constitutive of their cultural logics and as a move for survival. In this specific context, they proposed three properties of liquid organizing: "motion," "solvency," and "permeability." Motion refers to the movement of postcolonial organizational actors through various spaces and time. Solvency refers to their ability to dissolve into their environment. And permeability refers to the porousness between their personal lives and organizing. Cruz and Sodeke's (2021) conceptualization of liquid organizing engages with power structures such as colonialism, capitalism, and neoliberalism, making it critical and distinct from previous iterations of liquid organizing. They focused on marginal contexts in order to decolonize organizational understandings and to provide a nuanced picture of organizational liquidities.

Whirlpool organizing situates itself in relation to Cruz and Sodeke's (2021) theorizing of liquid organizing in three ways. First, whirlpool organizing dislodges Eurocentric biases in organizational communication theory. Second, whirlpool organizing provides complex accounts of liquidities beyond corporate organizing. And third, whirlpool organizing also implicates a power structure such as imperialism in order to strive for more livable lives. Yet, whirlpool organizing also departs from liquid organizing in three ways. First, it anchors itself in Filipino sea-based thinking. Second, it focuses on the experiences of Filipino/a/x anti-imperial organizers and allies. And third, it highlights organizers' processes of navigating differences and dialectics in building relationships and coalitions for emancipatory ends.

Specifically, whirlpool organizing is defined as the nonlinear process of deepening relational currents, animating dialectical flows, and spiraling of coalitional movements. This cyclical process is not necessarily conscious or intentional and may very well be beyond the agency of organizational actors, akin to how humans are at mercy of the sea yet can enact a form of agency in navigating it. I defer to Filipino sea-based thinking as it is informed through ontologies of oceanic movements and relations, two elements that have constituted Filipinos' experience with the seas. First, in working with Filipino seamen and trans masculinities, Fajardo (2014) advances the notion of "crosscurrents" to delineate "alternative maritime or water-based borders where coconstitutive axes of identity (race, class, gender, sexuality) potentially or regularly get reconfigured through movement, travel, and migration" (p. 117). Crosscurrents foreground movement. Second, in redefining postcolonial belonging, Cuevas-Hewitt (2020) argues for "archipelagic poetics," which highlight "the *sea between* – a site of a

multiple series of relations that are never fixed but constantly in flux" (p. 29). Archipelagic poetics feature the relationality of/in/across the sea. Together, I propose to call the combination of movements and relationalities as "agos," which to recall in Tagalog means to flow, to be carried by the currents, or to refer to the slow movement of a people. Agos inspires whirlpool organizing.

First, marking movement, whirlpool organizing can illuminate how organizational actors dance across spatial and temporal scales, and how their relations across these scales constitute difference that animate a dialectic. For instance, Chávez's (2011) rhetorical analysis of coalition-building between queer and migrant activists reveal that they interpret external legislative and media messages within their internal movements, which then moves them towards building a coalitional subjectivity and intersectional politics. This shows that the movement across external and internal realms becomes a way to put two different messages together and create a whole new message that can work for the cause of those involved. This resonates with Lorde's (1984) notion of difference, such that the "whole new message" emerged as an effect, not only of the difference across the external and internal communicative channels in connection, but also of the difference between queer and migrant activists.

Second, emphasizing relationality, whirlpool organizing can reframe relational dialectics as that which can generate a larger oppositional force. Put differently, when resistant and centripetal flows run alongside and against each other, they can move in a circular collision, and in the process, create a greater force to be used against existing institutional structures. As my findings will show, whirlpool organizing does not always generate intended outcomes, as it may either spiral down or up, lose traction, or

constantly swirl without inducing a significant enough force to change structures. But whirlpool organizing enables the *potential* to create a new layer of order, similar to what Sandoval (2000) calls the "differential" mode of social movements. Sandoval (2000) theorizes oppositional ideology as providing "an effective oppositional consciousness" used to "ignit[e] dialectical engagement between varying ideological formations" (p. 43). Oppositional ideology offers insights as to how whirlpool organizing can lead to either *engagement*, a continuous shifting or undermining of structures, or *transcendence*, the flight or rise above structures. This leads to the question of how whirlpool organizing specifically takes place, putting forward the second research question:

> RQ_2: How do anti-imperial organizers' experiences with relationalities, dialectics, and coalitions inform whirlpool organizing?

Interviewing Anti-imperial Organizers

In theorizing decolonial mapping for the Mvskoke community, Harjo (2019) turns to personal narratives to trace their methodological trajectory, of how they have been led to focus on futurity and build their repertoire of tools for community work. Following the methodological example offered by Harjo (2019), I will depart from traditional explications of methods and instead personally narrate how I have come into this project, honor those who have joined me in the knowing process, and describe how the themes I engage emerged. This matters because if this dissertation theorizes agos, or moving relations, then it makes sense that I methodologically lay out the movements and relationalities that possibilized for this knowledge to emerge.

I started as an organizer during the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter and abolitionist movements in 2020, with the murder of George Floyd. Within my academic

department, critical comrades and I began having conversations on how we can contribute to the movement, which led to the creation of an abolition reading group, an antiracist manifesto, and a deep reckoning with the incommensurable coalitional and ecological possibilities in the process of worldmaking (Cacophiliacs, 2021). Around the same time, the Anti-Terror Law was passed in the Philippines, which further institutionalized the gross harassment, discrimination, and assassination of government critics, dissenters, human rights defenders, Indigenous activists, and peasant leaders in the archipelago (Esguerra, December 2021). It was a tipping point; the tides were turning.

My being folded into the movement also came at a time when I was becoming increasingly and deeply frustrated with the stagnancy within the ivory tower. My maternal grandmother used to say, "Kapag umaagos ang tubig, malinis 'yun" (A flowing water is clean). I cannot keep reading critical theory and not find a way to relate it back to community, to apply it into praxis. I did not see the point of doing critical theory for the purposes of garnering more publications and accolades, when critical theory is benefitting off of harm when used *only* to analyze how power structures oppress marginalized communities. Indeed, the most frustrating part is how *often* it just ends there, without offering the analysis back to the community so that they may use it and add it to their already existing knowledge of how to navigate and transcend their conditions.

So, I see my task as a scholar in continually bridging theory with praxis, in being an intellectual worker for the people. This is why when I started becoming an organizer, I found myself gravitating towards doing educational work, of having conversations within the Filipino diaspora in the U.S. about Philippine politics and history, about Indigenous struggles there, and about the role of faith-based organizing and art in social change,

among others. Yet, it was also a learning process for me. I knew more about the National Democratic (ND) movement in the Philippines, which traces its roots back to the 1896 Philippine revolution of the peasants and the masses that overthrew Spanish colonialism (Sison & Teodoro, 1967). The ND movement has ebbed and flowed throughout Philippine history, from the confrontation of U.S. colonialism then to the resistance against U.S. empire now, in the form of U.S.-backed Philippine presidents, a semi-feudal and semi-colonial Philippine government, U.S. military and multinational corporations exploiting off of the archipelago, and the forced migration of Filipinos to labor anywhere else but their homes. Involvement with Filipino organizing led me to know more about anti-imperialism, and how Filipinos are not the only ones suffering at the hands of U.S. empire, but that Filipino struggles are connected with Black, Palestinian, and Indigenous struggles, with the struggles of the working-class, migrants, peasants, and farmers globally, with the struggles of queer, trans, and disabled communities, as everyone – the masses – clash against late-stage capitalism. This is something bigger than what I can do in this chapter let alone a dissertation, but I hope it contributes to the larger and interconnected movement towards liberation and more radical futurities in meaningful ways.

A critical moment for me was when Kulas, who identified as a Filipino cis man organizer, said that "Organizing is not just event organizing. It is also relationship building." If I were to be asked on the spot what is the meaning of life, it is relations. Relations are all there is. Relations are the people. This ongoing realization provided the critical spice to what has been marinating in my mind as a topic worth exploring and that I am genuinely curious about as I become more deeply invested in organizing work. I was

curious about how organizers build relationships, and at the same time, I was also being called forth by the oceans and seas. It is probably an effect of living in the desert after having grown up in an archipelago. As an educational worker, I want to contribute to the rejuvenation of the sea-based epistemological tradition in the Philippines and its diaspora, especially given the colonial epistemicide against our ancestral and communal knowledges. I am an intellectual and cultural worker, and I want to create as much as I want to critique.

Fast forward to Summer of 2022, I have come to know some of the organizers I interviewed, and they have come to know me. I am indebted to them for linking me with other organizers beyond my network, and so far, I have conducted 22 interviews, with 3 more to go. The organizers identified with different ethnicities and genders, had varying levels of formal education, and were part of differently aligned causes. That is, not all organizers are part of the ND movement necessarily, but all organizers that I interviewed are allied and aligned in the sense of working for anti-imperial causes: housing unions, Black and Palestinian liberation movements, socialist organizations, faith-based organizing, and decolonial movements. Per the ask of one organizer that their organization not to be named, I heeded their ask and decided against naming any of the organizers' affiliated organizations so as to protect their identities, especially with the increased risk of red-tagging and state surveillance. For instance, Docot (2021) shows how the Philippine government red-tagged community pantry organizers in the Philippines, and Tugade (2022) notes how the Philippine state's persistent act of naming left-leaning civilians as communists and combatants violates international humanitarian

law. Given these security risks, the organizers are my comrades before they are research participants.

Indeed, leaning into my activist relations for the data collection filled me with both hesitancy and responsibility. These tensions prompt me to be self-reflexive, accountable to, and respectful of the sacredness and intimacy of my relations with organizers. These tensions entailed a collaborative decision-making regarding disclosures of what would and would not make it to print, and how some things should remain unintelligible, sometimes written through codes. Things that do not make it to print are no less real, true, or valid, just kept beyond the purview of academe's gaze. Michelle Pidgeon (2019), in discussing the tenets of Indigenous research paradigm (respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility), articulates reverence as the fifth tenet, an understanding of "one's own cultural protocols and teachings as to what is appropriate to share publicly and what is meant to stay private" (p. 432). Ultimately, the question for the researcher is: "What part of reality is worth finding out more about and what is ethical for me to do to gain this knowledge?" (p. 432)

While I have offered a token of appreciation for their time interviewing with me for 45-60 minutes, I continue to pay back and pay forward by sustaining my involvement with organizers and with the movements we help organize. Included in the findings are direct quotations from organizers during the interviews, but the brunt of my analytic insight is derived off-the-record and in community. I sat with the data for six months (and am still continuing to sit with it) and tried out various analytic techniques such as first-level and second-level coding (Tracy, 2020), arts-based analysis (Bhattacharya, 2013), and found poetry (Butler-Kisber, 2002). The audio transcript was automatically generated

by an online service. I listened to the interviews and reviewed, revised, and finalized the transcripts for accuracy. For primary-cycle coding, I generated 81 first-level codes, which evidence the rich complexity of the organizers' experiences in response to 10-15 interview questions (see Appendix A). From there, I created a codebook, which then helped code subsequent interviews and refine the codes for second-cycle coding. After identifying the three emergent processes, I looked for exemplars, which Tracy (2020) identifies as "*embodiments* of an inductive construct or claim" (p. 245, emphasis in the original). Finally, after sifting through the data with multiple analytic techniques, I turned to agos, or moving relations, to frame the findings of this chapter.

In the next section, I provide context into the conditions of organizing in Texas and Arizona, and how the organizers started getting involved. While brief, it is with hope that this may contextualize and humanize the participants a little bit more, that despite the difficulties, challenges, and sometimes hopelessness, there is a shared commitment to struggle.

Organizing in Arizona and Texas

Activists find themselves in spaces where it is particularly challenging to organize for social change. In Arizona, organizers marked the lack of organizing infrastructure, pervasive individualism and conservativism, and rejection of political education; yet they also found it meaningful to organize in these conditions. Xavier (they/them), a Black and African nonbinary person, came from Seattle, and observed that when they participated in a protest in Phoenix, "There is no legal observers. There is no jail support, there is no bail team, there was no nothing." Tony (he/him), a cis white man, supported Xavier's observation, and described that "Phoenix wasn't really built for organizing. It's frontier

settler colonialism." He gestured to how Phoenix is "so spread out" with the few shared social spaces that can facilitate the collective work. Indika (any), a Lankan person, also noted the individualism, and mentioned the performativity of the Women's March, stating that, "There's no mistaking that all these white women won't ever do anything to threaten the state or inconvenience themselves."

Moreover, there is a particular rejection of political education and navigation of conservativism in Arizona. Andree (he/any), an African person, noticed that, "The rejection of political education is oftentimes part of the challenges… there is definitely a strong tendency of Western chauvinism within these white anarchist circles formations." This is also apparent in the Filipino community, as Howl (any), a mixed German and Filipino nonbinary person, stated, "It's kind of like they don't really know what's happening, so it feels like in Arizona specifically you have to do a lot of educating versus 'Oh we're ready to like mobilize against.'" The conservative lack of critical education in Arizona exacerbates this. Pink (she/her), a Latino female, observed, "Not only is the state against you, but also half of the community is against you, because you know you have Trump supporters." Nevertheless, Pink marked how there is this "sense of student community here, we have a sense of the youth that come together." As such, all hope is not lost, as Loree (she/her), a white person, affirmed that, "It's hard, but it's also more meaningful to get something going."

Texas is similar to Arizona in many ways. Organizers recognized similar impulses of settler colonialism, conservativism, lack of organizing infrastructure, as well as racial and class segregation; yet they also tried to remember the legacy of organizing in the

South. For example, V (he/they), a Filipino American person, noted the silo effect in Texas, articulating that:

> It does originate from settler colonialism, the idea that when you come to America, I'm free to be who I want, because there's so much land. or there's so much opportunity, there's so much, etc. etc. Like I can be my own, you know, I can be my own person.

What was concerning to many of the organizers is how conservative Christian Filipinos likewise identify with a libertarian mentality of "to each their own" and lose sight of the collective as a result. Kulas (he/they), a Filipino cis man, regarded, they "find affinity with the conservative Christian culture of Texas in the South."

In addition to this community vibe, the lack of organizing infrastructure posed another challenge. Abdullah (they/them), an Arab nonbinary person, marked that, "There isn't an expectation that things will just happen. There's a necessity to be the ones to initiate… it's really like if it's not us, it's no one." The other layer of challenge is the living conditions in Texas, as Kulas witnessed, "Wages are very much lower than on the west coast and there's less protections both economic, in terms of workplace, and in terms of civil rights like mask mandate ban, abortion rights, and CRT or ethnic studies." Moreover, Blue Bonnet (they/them), a white American nonbinary person, discerned the "extreme class and racial segregation. Across this metroplex, you can see neighborhoods that this is the rich Asian neighborhood. This is the poor Asian neighborhood. This is the rich Black neighborhood. This is the poor Black neighborhood." Overall, they gestured to how spread-out Texas is and the need for organizing coordination across the cities and communities as the difficulty of living conditions intensify.

F (they/she), a brown – Filipino and white – femme, also acknowledged the South's notoriety for being an "incubator for these super conservative politics, so all these anti-people laws that are being passed are starting in the South and then spreading to other places across the United States." But in a hopeful response, F declared that:

> To be in that and to be like pushing up against that, there's just a very unique struggle that you're up against. But then to remember that this is also the birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement and the Labor Movement. A lot of radical movements were started by people in the South and the South has a very strong legacy of organizing. And so that's something that I always try to keep in mind when I feel stuck in the political conditions down here and feel jealous of how good it is up North.

F's declaration attests to the importance of political education and history, as a reminder that contemporary organizers are not inventing the wheel again, that there is a strong legacy of activism, a movement for social change. To be connected to that collective history makes the fight sustainable, that they are not alone, that others have done this before, and more others will continue the fight. Indeed, for most of the organizers, it is a collective impulse, or an impulse toward collectivity, that folded them into the movement and struggle. Particularly, the organizers got involved via (1) critical study of political history animating the contemporary culture, (2) a desire to belong with a community, (3) socialization within an activist family, (4) frustration with living conditions that affect the community, and/or (5) the agitation in response to a political turning point, such as what happened Summer of 2020. There is a crisscrossing of paths, a chaotic movement of

people, as everyone enacts change in their own and connected way, as whirlpool organizing takes place.

The Processes of Whirlpool Organizing

Here, I feature the nonlinear processes of whirlpool organizing in activist contexts. In delineating each nonlinear process, I weave narratives of organizers from various positionalities, who are working towards differently aligned causes. Beyond mere findings, this section serves as a complex mapping of the work that is social justice organizing. Moreover, it offers organizers guidance on and documentation of their principles in deepening of relational currents, animating of dialectical flows, and spiraling of coalitional movements.

Deepening Relational Currents

The first part of whirlpool organizing is the deepening of self-and-other knowledge to build relational currents across spatial and temporal scales. The spatial scale spans the knowledge gathered and relationships built between comrade to comrade and between comrade to masses. The spatial scale also captures the local-transnational insights and connections that organizers forge. Meanwhile, the temporal scale traces the need for historical continuities in the organizing tradition and conversations about intergenerational activism in the U.S.

In the process of building relational currents, the participants emphasized the importance of learning about each other's histories, empathizing with each other's lived experiences, consistently showing up, responding to mutual needs, and collaborating for social change. For instance, Pink (she/her), a Latino female, stated that building solidarity is an ongoing and active process, where:

> You attempt to read books from things that usually wouldn't concern your own circumstances… If I'm reading a book on the Black liberation struggle, while I am not Black myself, I still read it because I want to understand the experiences of this person who wrote about their struggle and their experience, and… actually talking with them and becoming comrades with people who have had similar experiences.

Pink followed up this learning process with empathizing. She recounted asking someone how they got into organizing, to which this person answered with, "Oh, you know, I just read a couple of books, and I'm interested." Pink perceived that as a red flag, especially when they did not follow up with something personal, that invoked some empathy or care. V (he/they), a Filipino American, concurred and noted the importance of "emotional and empathetic connection," that solidarity is "something that's not just purely ideological or textual."

The emotionality of learning about each other in solidarity is complemented with building trust by consistently showing up. Indika (any), a Lankan person, marked that "the more you show up, the more people trust you." Further, she stated that, "If you show up once and try to get a lot of information out of people, you're going to seem like a cop, so don't do that." Indika's statement differentiates between extractive knowing, which may lead to state surveillance, and embedded knowing, which may lead to situating oneself in relation to others. Embedded knowing, as part of the process of building relationships, takes time and entails reciprocity. AV (she/they), a Filipino woman, recommended asking the following questions in building relationships with allied organizations:

> What are the things that they're doing? What are the things that's taking up their time or their concerns? So, it's really about them, too, and what's important to them… Being able to show up when they need you, and also when you need them.

Consistently showing up and reciprocating can create the conditions for collaborating towards change. Isaac (he/him), a Filipino Asian male, suggested the process of "working together side-by-side," not only as a way to build trust, but "to show people that change is possible, and that they played an active role in making that change." In this praxis, the learning by doing something together, comrades deepen their knowledge about their own and each other's organizing styles, histories, tendencies, and goals.

In addition to the praxis-based knowing it takes to build comrade-to-comrade relationships, the participants also discussed how they built relationships with the masses by directly responding to communities' material conditions, utilizing creative language, and honoring the time it takes for people to build capacity. For example, AV shared a time when they helped respond to the labor trafficking of Filipino teachers in Texas. AV recounted, "A group of teachers called us, may (there is an) issue around their immigration status. They are being told to go home to the Philippines after teaching in the Garland district for almost a decade." AV and her partner went to Texas, met the teachers, and figured out how to support them. They pulled organizations together to pool resources and conducted educational workshops with the teachers and their friends and family on the issue of labor trafficking, to counter the shame and empower the victims. Not only were they able to raise the migrant community's critical consciousness, but they were also able to plant the seed for Filipino organizing scene in Texas to bloom.

The participants also had to learn how to switch codes and create new codes to appeal to and reach the masses in particularly conservative states. Howl (any), a nonbinary mixed German and Filipino, mentioned the tendency of organizers to talk in an academic way and "not meet people where they are at." Similarly, Kulas (he/they), a Filipino cis man, observed that:

> Titos and Titas may be allergic to some socialist messaging, so we have to be creative in talking about these issues, especially for ND activists who are adept at [the] lingo but it's not necessarily the ones that appeal to the target audience.

This marks the tension between the radicality of the goal and the form of the message, which Kulas put as "delivering the essence, while being flexible in the language." Moreover, it is only in talking directly with communities that an organizer can learn how to speak their language and adapt. For instance, Kulas pressed the necessity of going where the traditional Filipino people are at in Texas (e.g., Bible studies), of using language that accommodates to their way of life, and of harnessing the talents of artists to get the masses into the fold. To do these things, they conducted an educational workshop on the People Power Revolution of 1986 in the Philippines, where Kulas and fellow organizers focused on the role faith played in that social change to be able to reach and speak to the Filipino communities.

Such creativity is needed, especially in countering the vilification of activism in the Philippines, which seeps into how the Filipino diaspora perceive activists. Howl (any), a nonbinary mixed German and Filipino, noted that this stems from Martial Law and the Anti-Terror Law in the Philippines. They shared that, "Whenever I told my mom about things and mentioned the word 'activism,' she gets super scared, but she doesn't

realize she's been doing activism by doing food drives." Yet the Philippine government had also already red-tagged organizers of community pantries in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic (Magsambol, 2022). The government denigrated the communal sharing of food as communist, when at the root of the praxis is mutual response to people's needs without necessarily any attachment to a particular political ideology.

As the conditions tighten with intensifying neoliberal capitalism, V (he/they), a Filipino American, remarked that it will be increasingly harder for people not to be involved in movements for change. But V also stated that "the movement, and how to engage in it, it comes to people at different points," thereby accentuating how organizers must honor where people currently are at and the time it takes for people to build capacity and be ready to change things. This circles back to mutual aid as a way to organize in direct response to conditions.

After covering the spatial distance between that of comrade to comrade, and that of comrades to masses, scalar awareness also spans the macro level, that is, the local-transnational insights and connections that organizers garner. Abdullah (they/them), an Arab nonbinary person, described at length what local work with transnational implications entails:

> We try to do national work that allows us to build transnational relationships with Palestinians and Arabs in other countries, across the United States, as well as in Palestine… ranging from things like delegations to solidarity work to reaching out to organizers on the ground in flashpoint moments and making sure that we're able to amplify their demands and address the needs that they have, based on our position in the diaspora… But also making sure that we're not neglecting our

> local context. We're building partnerships with joint struggle partners… wherever we're based we're addressing injustice, however it manifests, wherever we find ourselves… The local has an impact on the transnational scene. When we're in the belly of the beast, in the belly of empire, in the United States and we're fighting to weaken it, that does have a tangible impact on the conditions of Palestinians at home.

The differential knowing involved here are the knowledge of the demands and needs on the ground in the homeland, as well as the various forms of injustice locally. Organizers learn these things through the transnational and local relationships that they build. Finally, organizers exercise transnational thinking in highlighting how the "elsewhere" is connected to the "here."

Deepening relational currents also involves knowledge of intergenerational activism, an awareness of the past and future of organizing. V (he/they), a Filipino American, perceived that there are historical discontinuities in organizing in the U.S., at least when compared with the multi-generational tradition and collective memory of organizing in the Philippines. V shared:

> It feels like every three to five years, or even less… the vast majority of activists or new orgs think they're doing something new, and they do that because there is no tradition-keeping… Histories are a kind of collective process, collective memory gathering, collective record keeping, but we don't have that to a strong extent in the United States, especially in the aftermath of the 50s, 60s, 70s, when radical anti-war and labor movements were just eviscerated. Those histories and those traditions were kind of fragmented and lost.

With this account, V spoke to the tendency of younger organizers in the U.S. to feel like they are doing something new for the first time, when there was already another organization doing the exact same work. Not only does this speak to the need for conversations on intergenerational activism, but it also gestures to the importance of lateral conversations across contemporary organizations. Furthermore, V shared that the fragmented histories become the ground on which disagreements on the histories of coalitions emerge. V talked to elder organizers and recounted how people had different accounts as to what happened to some organizations, with some mentioning occurrences of abuse, scandals, allegations, and multiple narratives for "how coalitions come together, fall apart, come together, fall apart again." V mentioned that given this lack of unity on organizational histories, it affected the work of newer organizers, particularly as they come to learn about the existing tensions within and across organizations.

Throughout this process of deepening knowledge and building relationships between comrade to comrade, between comrade to masses, as well as on the larger scales of the transnational and the intergenerational, organizers engage in embodied and situated knowing in relation to the people around them across space and time. From empathizing with lived experiences, to doing the work together, to adapting to a new language, to accounting for spatial and temporal connections, these relational currents begin to pave the way for the animating of dialectical flows necessary for whirlpool organizing to take place.

Animating of Dialectical Flows

The second part of whirlpool organizing is the animating of dialectical flows across individual, relational, and organizational registers. Within an individual, the dance

happens as the recursive movements between ego and humility. Across relations, the dance happens as the recursive movements between self and other. Within organizations, the dance happens as the recursive movements between unity and struggle. All these dances happen within social movement organizing.

Internal work is one type of dialectical flow animation, and this work looks like working through ego as a movement towards humility. Grace (siya/she), a Fil-Am cis female, shared the experience of feeling defensive when talking to others who were not part of the movement yet. She mentioned having to "not get offended so much that the conversation couldn't continue" and having to "redirect my emotions and build a relationship with someone who has an opposing view from me." Grace said it was difficult. Yet Grace affirmed that "my position is not to win you over… [but] I just had this fear in me… [that] I didn't do my job… I didn't have a good enough conversation with you… [so] I was humbled a lot through it."

The difference between fascist messages and social justice messages is that there is a certain openness for the latter to be changed, always attuning to the people's conditions. This is not to say, however, that social justice messages are already excused from the tendency to be hegemonic in their own way. But as Grace's account shows, organizers emphasized detaching from oneself and leaning towards the other. F (they/she), a brown – Filipino and white – femme, demonstrated this further, stating having the self-awareness to recognize that, "Okay, do I feel conflicted with what this person is saying because I have internal biases or internal belief systems that I need to go back and check out?" For F, struggling it out with another person is a process of struggling it out with their own held beliefs and ideologies. It is not just a matter of

changing the other person's mind about something; it is a process of changing their own mind, too. As an aftermath, for F, "You start to build true and authentic belief systems that feel more in line with you as a person, morally, but also politically, and ideologically, you start to build strength in your personal beliefs." Organizers may be working for change, but that very process changes them, too, and what they know about themselves and how they relate to other people.

Indeed, animation of dialectical flows entail the relational dance between self and other, with the knowledge of self and other coming into play. Abdullah (they/them), an Arab nonbinary person, stated that relationships are the currents on which this dialectical movement can happen. Abdullah said:

> By building that meaningful, genuine relationship and friendship, we are able to have deeper political conversations about the limits and edges of our knowledge, where political contradictions come up that we otherwise wouldn't be able to have with other people in a more formal organization-to-organization kind of meeting.

Abdullah recounted having difficult conversations with comrades about the prison-industrial complex, how to address harm within oppressed communities, and how to handle accusations of abuse in those spaces. They were able to talk about it with trusted comrades, with whom they already have a strong foundation with that can withstand the difficulty of the conversation.

These talks also did not end with just one conversation, as it was an ongoing dialogue. AV (she/they), a Filipino woman, discussed the experience of talking with Filipino American immigrants who harbored anti-immigrant sentiments. The immigrants pointed out that, "Sila, they crossed the border. But us, we waited in line for our visas.

We went here legally. We went here the right way… We did the right way, so they should also do it the right way." AV responded by explaining to them that:

> Hindi naman po ganun (It's not like that po). They are also trying to leave their country because of survival reasons. They were also forced to cross. They may be here without papers, but all that doesn't mean that they don't deserve to live with dignity, that they should be criminalized.

AV noted that this did not end with just one discussion, as many came thereafter. Of note is AV's use of the word "po," which is a Tagalog word used to signal deference or politeness to elder Filipinos. AV's tone in delivering the message also played a role in lowering defensiveness and indicating a more suggestive rather than aggressive way of pushing back.

On that note, some of the participants touched on the masses' stereotypical perception of revolutionary organizations as particularly aggressive, which can intimidate or prevent some from getting to know more about the organizations. To this point, Loree (she/her), a white woman, spoke about the importance of sustaining spaces for dialogue after protests. Loree said:

> If I want to change your perception of something, I have to understand who you are. You have to understand me, and that doesn't happen by standing on the opposite side of the street yelling at you. I realize that it is important to increase awareness. So, I see that having protests and marches are good because it gets the adrenaline going… but it can't just stop there. It has to go into the conversations.

Engaging in dialogue speaks to the abolitionist ethic that some of the participants espoused. Malunggay (she/they), a nonbinary Asian Filipino, implicated the tendency to

cut off people immediately, marking that it does not make sense to do that "if, especially in a revolutionary org, there's not good or bad, then you write people out as bad." Part of this centripetal discernment is the balancing act of giving people space. For instance, Malunggay shared a time when they struggled with relating to a friend in a Filipino American organization on the topic of ATL. In the process, Malunggay realized:

> There's no point of being so defensive, especially if you wanted more people to learn and give them time to grow and be comfortable. Because yeah, it's a lot of information for someone who doesn't know anything and now you're telling them "You don't really care about your own family" … It comes off aggressive to someone who has genuinely never thought about this before… I would take the time to write out long paragraphs like, "I know you don't know much about it, but this is why it's important to me."

There was a time when Malunggay and said friend did not speak to each other. But the friend came around after listening to an Asian American podcast. Malunggay recalled that the friend told them about it, saying, "Oh, this actually contextualizes it a lot more, like I didn't think about it, and it wasn't even a Filipino American. It was a Korean American in that podcast." It is interesting, the way that it has to come from someone else, or the way that there has to be some distance or space for the message to click. Malunggay marked that "giving people space and giving them resources is so much more beneficial… than cutting someone off and obviously there's points where it's more safe to do that."

Here, Pink (she/her), a Latino female, parsed out working through differences into categories of reconcilable and irreconcilable. For instance, if someone has a different

view on a specific country, Pink would say that, “I understand that we have different views, and I know that at the base level you have that opinion because of something that’s important to you.” There is an impulse to understand where the other person is coming from. Another thing that is reconcilable for Pink is if “you’re starting out in your political journey, your struggle journey, your organizing journey, and it’s clear to see that you’re bouncing back and forth between a few different things.” Similar to Malunggay’s ethic, Pink noted not wanting to be “hostile towards people who are just barely figuring out what they’re thinking.” Ultimately, the organizers spoke about figuring out the goals and boundaries of the conversation. For F (they/she), a brown – Filipino and white – femme, it boils down to who to engage. F stated, “Part of it is recognizing what is worth struggling through. There are always going to be fascists… Maybe those aren’t the people that I’m going to focus my time on because that’s just not sustainable and it’s dangerous.”

After spanning the individual and relational levels, animation of dialectical flows also occurs at the organizational register, in the recursive movements between unity and struggle within organizations. Some of the participants discussed how they enact this through the Philippines’ National Democratic (ND) tradition of unite-struggle-unite. Kulas (he/they), a Filipino cis man, outlined the process:

> So, uniting first on what you know. A common ground. Part of that is ground rules. Then, struggling it out. And so, whether that’s reconciling different points of views or sharing criticisms. Then, coming back towards unity, and help process what just happened, what have we united on so far. Sometimes, it’s an unfinished conversation, which is fine… not everything can be. Everything is fluid,

> everything is a process. You cannot force unity or resolutions from a single meeting. What's important is at the end of the day, your unity is higher than it was before.

Unite-struggle-unite is the framework for making sense of the dialectical flows that can lead to whirlpool organizing. Focusing on the part where organizers struggle it out, a lot of internal work has to happen within an organization before it can be at a place where it can struggle it out with other organizations. "Higher unity" also looks different for every organization. Hammer (she/her), a Vietnamese woman, underscored the importance of building unity with comrades through political debates. For instance, Hammer had discussions with comrades, stating:

> Some people may see like 'Oh, affordable housing is a good thing.' And then there's folks who, 'Oh, well actually affordable housing isn't a good thing, because it's the capitalist mode of production.' And so, you have debates, and then you gain some kind of cohesion understanding through that.

Comrades attain political unity by struggling it out with each other. Yet, it is also crucial to cultivate that space intentionally within an organization. Continuing the abolitionist ethic, AV (she/they), a Filipino woman, highlighted the necessity of cultivating spaces within an organization "where people feel comfortable sharing that they disagree with something." AV explained, "That's the healthiest space that you can be in is, if you can disagree with someone and not feel like you will be punished for it." Moreover, the struggling process also entails including as many people as possible in the conversation. As AV claimed, "I would rather have more people in a meeting than less, because I want

to hear from more people… If there's more people, then there's a question. And then hopefully, you know more unity, and stronger unity."

However, this process of inclusion is also balanced out with whom to exclude from the conversation, especially given the security concerns of revolutionary organizations. Pink (she/her), a Latino female, emphasized the practice of keeping criticisms and disagreements internal to the organization. Pink elaborated:

> It shouldn't be something that is done on social media… If you genuinely want the people around you to grow in your groups, you have to be able to tell them in a space where it is safe and where enemies of you cannot feed off of it. As someone who is in social movements, people are constantly looking to exploit those weak spots that your organization has. If you guys are tearing each other down, they will use that to divide and conquer, something that has been in use for hundreds and hundreds of years with colonialism, which continues to this day, with C*INTL/PR* and F.B* and C*/A. So, we try our best to keep that as internal as possible when we can.

Navigating animated dialectical flows applies to determining who is considered a comrade and who is not, which is integral to maintaining the dialectical constitution of the movement. As Kulas said, "Remember or find that common ground… but also not open that up too much, that it dissolves or compromises the spirit of the coalition." As will be demonstrated in the next section, the participants' navigation of the animated dialectical flows, how they danced and cyclically garnered insights on the individual, relational, and organizational levels, creates conditions for the movement into the third part of whirlpool organizing: spiraling of coalitional movements.

Spiraling of Coalitional Movements

The third part of whirlpool organizing is the spiraling of coalitional movements towards emancipatory ends. These span instances of when coalitions worked out and when they did not. Spirals happen in the clashing or expansion of organizational momentums. The differential knowing cultivated through deepening relational currents and animating dialectical flows influence how organizational frictions – between each other and against hegemonic structures – can evolve into a whirlpool, into a larger momentum of change.

Some coalitions do not work out due to differences in politics and values in organizing. Other times, it was when an organization posed a threat or sense of danger to another. Mars (any), a Chinese-Filipino genderqueer person, narrated a time when their organization was involved with another group who provided security during protests. Mars recounted:

> At times it would get very volatile, and people would fight each other, and then they would throw chairs. They got very aggressive… But yeah, that became dangerous for us. As an organization, "It's like, okay, we probably need to cut ties with them."

Mars stated that this particular organization knew a lot about guns, and it is a tension, because revolutionary organizations do need to have self-defense and security training, especially during times when they visibly clash with the state (e.g., interactions with c*ps). But at that point, it was not worth it to compromise the very feeling of security or safety within the organization.

In terms of differences in politics in organizing, some participants gestured to distancing their organization from groups who do not align with their values. Pink (she/her), a Latino female, mentioned experiencing irreconcilability with "people who just outwardly are anti-working class… They're… very, very much like white, and they don't want to ever consider what it's like to be non-white, or they kind of pretend to understand." Furthermore, Pink shared, "I've had a lot of issue with specifically white anarchists in Phoenix, who have been just very outwardly hostile… you know they put someone down. They alienate people." Pink's organization distances themselves from this group, as there was no point to building a relationship with them anymore, when the values do not align.

Yet it also happens the other way, when an organization is perceived to be too political or radical that other groups do not want to work with them. Grace (siya/she), a Fil-Am cis female, discussed a time when their organization was attempting to build a coalition among the Asian communities in Dallas during the protests against Asian hate. In a protest, she described:

> We're speaking up against hate crimes, but we're also tying in reasons why we believe hate crimes exist in the first place. So, we've talked about imperialism, and we've talked about capitalism and um, you know, maybe some folks aren't really ready to hear that… And I think at that time it did feel like there were some spaces that were completely closing the door on us.

Grace talked about the tension between wanting to show the organization's politics and trying to meet people where they are at, which is especially tricky during a protest where there can be no dialogue, unless there is a follow up conversation.

Grace's organization continues to build relationships with these organizations, who may not want to align with a particular politic but may still have common ground and investment in Filipino issues. For instance, Maria (she/they), a biracial – white and Filipino – nonbinary person, brought up the necessity of building broad alliances. They referred to cultivating relationships with Filipino organizations, who many not necessarily be political, but "the issues that we organized around do affect a lot of them… and those organizations have their own issues that they care about so naturally we also care about those issues so… you don't have to duplicate efforts." This speaks to how there is a lane for everyone to plug in, and not everyone has to align with a particular politic, but that is how you can make space for everyone in organizing, while being mindful of people's readiness and capacity, and paving the way to build a mass movement.

While common ground is essential to coalitions, so too is common enemy. Kulas (he/him), a Filipino cis man, marked how "similar formations were formed during martial law," during the era of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr. in the Philippines. Kulas noted, "I think this is a trend. Whenever fascism rises… people of different strands, communities, people who have different political stances coalesce for the common issue." Additionally, Xavier (they/them), a Black African nonbinary person, alluded to instances when "someone is so repulsive… that it causes us to band with other groups we wouldn't necessarily work with." However, Xavier's organization experienced a lack of strong relationships as a hindrance to building the coalition needed. Xavier stated:

> The D*/J is in town investigating the police because of us, because of all the work that all of the abolitionist organizations in Phoenix did, sounding the alarm that

> there's harm happening here. But the problem is not all the abolitionist organizations work together. So, this lack of relationship actually affected our ability to organize strategically around the D/*J… How are we going to even fight the police if we are not on the same page?

Here, a coalition may rally around resisting a common enemy, but the rallying itself entails the building of connections and forming the broader organization. Thus, in addition to the baseline of aligned politics, coalitional judgments necessitate strong relationships and deep knowledge as foundations. It will be difficult to coalesce without trust. Hammer (she/her), a Vietnamese woman, spoke of a time when a coalition had difficulty getting any work done because of the skepticism among those involved. She remarked, "Although, we didn't… disagree too much politically, I think that we were over cautious about everything working together." Hammer gestured to this sense of defensiveness among them, stating, "We shouldn't have put too much walls up with each other." Trust was needed, not just in the work, but also in each other.

A coalition is as good as the relationships that people have within that coalition. Abdullah (they/them), an Arab nonbinary person, affirmed the liberatory potential of embedding friendship into organizing. They cited how the "seeds of relationships" between Filipino and Palestinian organizers "translated into more tangible ways that we show up for one another… in the Block the Boat campaign, the Stop Urban Shield campaign." Abdullah explained that these are campaigns "to block ships transporting goods to and from Israel… and to stop the weapons exposition and military exchange in the Bay Area." At the core of the Filipinos' and Palestinians' anti-imperial work is seeing

how their oppressions are interconnected and how they mobilize in response as an act of caring for each other's welfare.

Ultimately, the spiraling of coalitional movements hold deep knowledge and trusting relationships in tension with the desired outcomes of an alliance. Blue Bonnet (they/them), a white American nonbinary person, tackled this tension. They stated:

> Even if you unite on the label of "We are all anti-imperialists" … you're going to have different ideas around what that means and what that entails. And I think that it's important to have that humility to listen to other people's perspectives… And you know, you can be united and recognize that you have to see that there are still contradictions present… How broad does the front get? How united are we, really? And you have to really be thinking about that regularly. We can widen the field all we want and say, any org whatsoever is welcome into this coalition and water down the politics. Sometimes that might or might not be helpful for the specific goal you need.

As shown by this statement, the spiraling of coalitional movements are complex processes that account for the relationships, the knowledge, the politics, the goals, the landscape, and the coalition itself. While there may be discursive alignments, for instance under the banner of "anti-imperialism," how that politic manifests in praxis for each organizer, organization, and coalition is different. These differential praxes induce particular frictions, not only with each other, but against the ever-changing hegemonic structures as well. This is whirlpool organizing.

Embedded Knowing and Scalar Dialectics

I have centered anti-imperial organizers and how they move through whirlpool organizing. This centering is necessary for three reasons. First, it can reconceptualize difference as a practice of knowing and consider emotional and embedded knowing. Second, it can build on the notion of scalar dialectics and accentuate the role of space in the animation of those. Finally, it can extend liquid organizing beyond corporatism and in service of emancipation.

A first contribution reengages organizational knowing and revisits difference as an episteme. By consistently working with comrades and learning about their comrades through practice, the organizers demonstrated a practice-based model of organizational knowing (Kuhn, 2014). Moreover, they accounted for their positionalities (Harris, 2017) as they built knowledge about each other, between comrade to comrade, between comrade and masses, and mindful of their local-transnational and intergenerational locations. In building movements of resistance, they engaged in social learning (Daskalaki, 2018), where they cultivated their knowledge through their relationships with each other. Learning the language and needs of different communities showcased how heterogeneity becomes a knowledge resource (Ashcraft et al., 2009) that they can use to mobilize a community. Additionally, the organizers' experiences highlighted the emotional component of learning, that is, the empathizing with lived experiences as a way to learn about and build solidarity. Such emotionality is also component in the creativity necessary in defusing vilifying language against activists.

The organizers' narratives also affirm and revisit difference as an episteme. Clearly, they exemplified the interdependence necessary in knowing through difference (Lorde, 1984), particularly in how they differentiated between extractive and embedded

knowing. The former gestures to an exit from the community and a cut in how the knowledge benefits the community, while the latter espouses a continual relationship with the community and a rippling effect of how the knowledge gets taken up within the community. Moreover, as they navigated their differences with each other, such differences have become the creative and suspended space (Hong, 2015) wherein they were able to develop new codes of language and rework their ideologies in response to frictions between theory and praxis, and in their very difference with each other and with the masses.

A second contribution extends scalar dialectics and emphasizes space in the animation of those. The organizers have shown how they navigate dialectics by using discourse to shape meaning (Mumby, 2005), sustain ongoing dialogues about issues (Putnam et al., 2016), and move from ego to humility, from self to other, and from unity to struggle in a centripetal fashion (Daskalaki & Kokkinidis, 2017). What is critical in their navigation of dialectics is how these dialectics are animated on the individual, relational, and organizational registers, and whirlpool organizing suggests how all of these can happen at the same time in a nonlinear process. This speaks to the chaotic flows of social change and resists the imperial framing of dialectics as always just static and contained within an environment.

Women of color theorizing has always already confirmed the differential, material, intersectional, and scattered nature of dialectics. The presence of dialectics across registers gestures to its scattered multiplicities (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994), and the ways that organizers deepen relational currents at the intersections of their relationships with others move us from identity to relationalities (Cohen, 1997). Moreover, this study

leads us to the necessity of building coalitions across difference to address structures larger than any one collective (Reagon, 1998). The spiraling of coalitional movements hinges on the animation of dialectical flows, which is not founded on commonality, but rather on the move towards difference, on the importance of struggling it out (Hong, 2018). In addition, the organizers offered the insights that coalition building prompts the difficult internal work of moving from ego to humility, of remaining open to having one's beliefs and ideologies challenged, and of discerning when to give space to another and to protect the space of the collective or coalition.

A third contribution extends liquid organizing beyond corporate organizing and towards emancipatory ends. While attention has been given to transnational elites' mobility across space (Costas, 2013), whirlpool organizing shows organizers' mobility in building relations, not just locally, but also in cultivating relations across transnational and intergenerational divides. There has also been research on the fluid organizational nature of volunteer tourism (Steele & Dredge, 2017), but fluidity within the context of organizers manifests in how they learn how to switch and create codes to speak to a particular community and frame political issues in a way that is materially relevant to them. Meanwhile, there have been corporate engagements with incorporating fluidity to account for environmental turbulence (Schreyögg & Sydow, 2010), yet how liquid organizing shows in activism resides not in wrestling for control, but in braving the seas and trusting who you are with as you navigate the currents, waves, and spirals of change.

Indeed, in service of emancipation, this work aligns with the sea-based thinking and social movement theorizing. While the concept of crosscurrents teaches us how identities change through migration (Fajardo, 2014), whirlpool organizing shifts our

focus to the centripetal movements that animate individual, relational, and organizational changes. Archipelagic poetics offered us a way to frame the sea as a relational analytic (Cuevas-Hewitt, 2020), and whirlpool organizing extends that by introducing movement and tracking the ebbs and flows of relations, as well as mapping spatially (transnationally) and temporally (intergenerationally) how did we get here from one point of the sea to another. Coalition building entails external and internal work (Chávez, 2011), and what whirlpool organizing shows is that such work is ongoing, dynamic, and occurring across scales. However, this study is limited in the sense that it has not clearly shown how a particular coalition changed an oppressive structure per se. Nevertheless, what it offers is a demonstration of oppositional ideology in action, the dialectical engagement across and against structures (Sandoval, 2000). The thing is, it may be hard to see the aftermath when you are in the middle of a whirlpool, in the eye of a storm. It may also be beyond any one organizer or scholar embedded in the struggle, navigating the seas, to give a bird's eye view. But when you are at sea, you can feel it, when the tides will turn. And the prompt is to hold each other's hands through it.

This study has limitations that can offer future directions. While this essay focused on the nonlinear processes of relationship building, working through conflict, and crafting coalitions, this essay also generates ripples of currents to follow thereafter: that is, a deeper dive into intersectionality, context, coalitions, and care. First, this study attempted to go beyond engaging Filipino/a/x anti-imperial organizers, and while it did, it was still limited and failed to engage more Black, Palestinian, and Indigenous activists, as well as more queer, trans, working-class, and disabled organizers. Furthermore, it needed more depth in discussing the local-transnational and intergenerational relationalities.

Second, the essay briefly addressed the geographical and political context of the anti-imperial organizers in Texas and Arizona, and yet, mapping and engaging these spaces require more qualitatively rich ethnographic and embodied field work, as well as tracing the networks of connections in both physical and digital spaces. Third, this essay discussed the relations and knowledges necessary to build coalitions, and it still warrants an analysis of the various definitions and manifestations of anti-imperialism according to organizers, and how they addressed and navigated whiteness when it showed up in organizing spaces. Finally, this study engaged the deepening of relational currents on the levels of knowledge and praxis, but so much more goes into it as the organizers also gestured to slowness, intimacies, and care that goes into building these relationships with comrades and communities.

Overall, in this chapter, I mapped the intersections between organizational communication and critical/cultural studies as they engaged with knowing, dialectics, and liquidities. I threaded Filipino sea-based thinking, specifically agos or moving relations, through the literature and advanced the concept of whirlpool organizing. Then, I contoured the methodological approaches that facilitated the emergence of whirlpool organizing's processes. I moved through how anti-imperial organizers navigate relations, dialectics, and coalitions. Finally, I teased out this chapter's theoretical contributions, limitations, and future directions.

The sea teaches us and offers us a theory of change. The sea teaches us when to let go and when to hold on, how important it is to pay attention and build relations with whom you are on the boat, as you navigate the sea's complexities, contradictions, and changes. We may never fully understand the sea and their intricacies, but the longer we

spend time with them, the more that maybe we will grasp their depths. But grasping is not the point. Control is not the point. The point is the navigation, and who you are with as you navigate and breathe. Indeed, the point is agos, the flow, the slow movement of a people, as the tides turn, as everything changes.

CHAPTER 3

ANCHORED RELATIONALITY

Mingling with the holiday crowd
at Union Square is like being a fish.
I tell this to my wife just now,
though it's been on my mind for a long time.
How shoppers seem to fin forward
in a kind of weird submarine logic
to the same stores we're going
and to the same bargains we want.
We jostle at toys, house wares, perfume.
Salvation Army Santas grab at our change.
Dante has a scene in the *Commedia*
describing exactly this, the converging
of fish at a ripple on the pond. A lot
of the fish look Filipino, notes my wife.
And this was what took so long to form
and to surface: that fish scatter
as easily as they converge; that many
of our fish have scattered to this place
as nannies and nurses, and store clerks
for Woolworth's and Emporium—
so many here in Union Square,
in fact, that we could claim it as ours.
Let there be jeepneys instead of cable cars!
Let there be haggling at Macy's!
Let there be *parol* and *puto bungbong*!
And let the Santas ho-ho-ho
like Filipinos, as in "Merry Christmas *ho*!
Merry Christmas *din*." Or to go back
to the fishy, "Merry Christmas *tuyo*!"
And to you, too.
—Fidelito Cortez, "Fish 2"

In "Fish 2," Filipino poet Fidelito Cortez likens the Filipino diaspora to fish: fish scattering and converging as they go to similar stores and haggle, and how the Union Square could just as easily be Divisoria, a low-cost marketplace in the Philippines, if only it was not actually located in the U.S. The poet found the flow of the fish familiar before he was even able to recognize it. He had to reference Western literature to make sense of

it, and this is significant in that it parallels Filipinos' colonial miseducation in how they have made sense of their lives (Constantino, 1970). Then, his wife tapped for recognition. Cortez found the movement of fish uncanny, like it resembled something, but Cortez cannot yet pinpoint it until his memories of the Philippines got reactivated. But the movement of fish is also a migration, and the mere presence of the collective of fish in a place away from home, yearning for and bringing their cultural artifacts with them – jeepney, *parol*, *puto bungbong* – almost transforms the place to home. *Almost*. Cortez' stating, "in fact, that we could claim it as ours," gestures to the convergence of Filipino/a/x in the space as a claiming of that space. Moreover, Cortez appends (tinagpian) the English greeting with Tagalog words, shifting the meaning, and Cortez plays with how "to you" could be pronounced with a Tagalog accent, thereby mentioning *tuyo*, a dried fish eaten for breakfast with eggs, tomatoes, spiced coconut vinegar, and fried rice.

Migration has characterized the Filipino experience, from the precolonial movement from islands to islands for trade and settlement, to the neo/colonial and state inducement of migration for labor export. According to the International Organization on Migration (2021), there have been 2,061,178 Filipino migrants in the U.S. Worldwide, there have been 12 million overseas Filipinos, accounting for 10% of the Filipino population, who sends billions of dollars in remittances back home (Xinhua, 2019). But as Alburo (2007) notes, "despite earning wages that they could never have dreamt of at home, Filipino emigrants suffer a dislocation that is at once geographical, cultural and spiritual" (p. 140). Indeed, displacement from their ancestral lands have influenced Filipinos' lives. In this chapter, I argue that their connections with the waters that

surround, immerse, and hold the Philippine archipelago persist amidst the displacement, and their navigation of seas and migration – like a fish, in Cortez' view – could facilitate survival. I enact the method of pagtatagpi-tagpi, where I draw together artworks, interviews, and media to suture the personal and the structural, to revitalize the archive, and to reclaim embodiments and relations as epistemological sites that challenge the universality of empire. I advance *anchored* relationality, which locates Filipino/a/x' complex and contradictory re-/dis-/connections with Philippine waters as a form of agency and resistance amidst historical trauma, diasporic longing, and sovereignty struggles. Further, anchored relationality identifies the Pacific as a site of solidarity between Filipino/a/x and Native Pacific Islanders.

This chapter extends liquid and oceanic orientations in communication (Cruz & Sodeke, 2021; Na'puti, 2020) by lending a particular focus on the diasporic Filipino/a/x experience of seas, oceans, and waters, and how that can be wielded in service of anti-imperialism. Hardt and Negri (2000) defined Empire as a "*decentered* and *deterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers" (p. xii). This chapter particularly implicates the imperialism of China and the U.S., with the former's infringement on Philippine waters, and the latter's military, economic, and cultural power over the Philippines, not the least of which manifests in the form of the Filipino labor exports. Indigenous Peoples' experiences and kinships in the Pacific are key sites of struggle against militarism and empire, which oceanic orientations in communication aim to foreground (Na'puti, 2020). Filipino/a/x embody specific orientations from the Philippine archipelago, as migration and movement reconfigure the identities (Fajardo, 2014), and the waters that traverse

through the Philippine islands offer an alternative space for postcolonial belonging (Cuevas-Hewitt, 2020). Working with and learning from the lived experiences of group of diasporic Filipino/a/x in the U.S. offer another conceptualization of and from Philippine waters: agos (moving relations), which theorizes the movements of relations and the relations of movements.

To offer the contours through which this conceptualization takes place, I pull together the interdisciplinary strands from critical/cultural communication studies, Indigenous studies, and critical Filipino/a/x studies. I conceptualize anchored relationality across historical trauma (Brave Heart et al., 2011; Leavitt et al., 2015; Peña, 2011; Sheffield, 2011) and Filipino/a/x diaspora (Manalansan, 2012; Juan, 2001) and migration studies (Choy, 2003; Le Espiritu, 2003; Parreñas, 2001). I also situate anchored relationality in communication by way of reviewing literature on ecological communication (de la Garza, 2020; Mendoza & Kinefuchi, 2016) and border rhetorics (Chávez, 2010; Cisneros, 2021; DeChaine, 2012).

In so doing, anchored relationality offers three theoretical contributions that this chapter will later develop. First, despite dis/placement and dis/connection with Indigeneity, anchored relationality contends that diasporic Filipino/a/x' reconnections with community, memory, and place persist. Here, sleep dreams and relations – historically determined in academia as illegitimate sources of knowledge – become important epistemes in the process of decolonial remembering. Second, anchored relationality locates community organizing as a mode of alternative return and belonging. Filipino/a/x reconnections with water do not just operate on the cultural register; they are political by participating in Indigenous sovereignty movements, in the Philippine

archipelago, in the Americas, and everywhere else. Third, anchored relationality foregrounds Filipino/a/x' navigations of borders, migration, and dis/placement as an important site of sovereignty struggle and anti-imperialism. From their experiences emerges the recognition that water is ally, water is kin. Moreover, water – as material – plays a role in the struggle against anti-Indigeneity, late-stage capitalism, and border imperialism.

This chapter also advances pagtatagpi-tagpi, a method of threading together experiences to resist colonial epistemicide, to honor embodied and relational truths, and to connect the personal with the political. Pagtatagpi-tagpi is inspired by weaving as an Indigenous method (Patel, 2022; Tachine & Nicolazzo, 2022) and collective storying (kwentuhan) (Francisco-Menchavez, 2022). Pagtatagpi-tagpi also aligns itself with the rhetorical (Calafell, 2010; Lechuga, 2020; Ono & Sloop, 1995), critical qualitative (de la Garza, 2020; Mendoza & Kinefuchi, 2016), and critical performance (Kilgard, 2009; LeMaster & Terminel Iberri, 2021; Tristano & Terminel Iberri, 2022) traditions in communication. In enacting pagtatagpi-tagpi, this chapter unfurls as follows. First, I conceptualize anchored relationality out of Indigenous, Filipino, and communication literature. Second, I feature the pagtatagpi-tagpi of artworks, interviews, and media to demonstrate Filipino/a/x' reconnections with water. Finally, I close with discussion and future trajectories.

Situating Diasporic Filipino/a/x in the U.S.

Historical Trauma among Indigenous Peoples and Filipinos

Indigenous historical trauma engages Indigenous Peoples' experiences of loss and recovery of community, memory, and place. Historical trauma is defined as "a

cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma" (Brave Heart et al., 2011, p. 283). This collective and temporal sense of trauma becomes more damaging when it dissociates individuals from resources such as community and memory (Sheffield, 2011), and when there are no alternative messages of possibilities beyond the trauma (Leavitt et al., 2015). Historical trauma materially affects Indigenous Peoples' wellbeing, as for instance, the Māori of Aotearoa has struggled with negative health disparities (Pihama et al., 2014). Furthermore, addressing historical trauma requires a reconnection with place, yet this process is also increasingly hindered by climate change. As a case in point, environmental deterioration has disrupted Inuits' attachment to sea ice; but their continued presence on their ancestral homelands in the community of Nain in northern Labrador, Canada helps heal the emotional wounds (Durkalec et al., 2015).

Communities of color adapted the analytic of historical trauma to map its effect on them in the United States. For one, intergenerational trauma among Latinx people implicates "structural vulnerability and historical and political violence" (Cerdeña et al., 2021, p. 1). In the case of Filipino/a/x' colonial trauma, included in this violence is the denigration of native languages and epistemologies (Desai, 2016). Such devaluation of Indigenous lifeways and concurrent imposition of foreign lifestyles unto Filipino/a/x has disconnected them from life-giving senses of self, community, and history. It has also induced them to internalize a colonial and Othered view of self (Mendoza & Kinefuchi, 2016).

Moreover, in response to historical trauma, communities of color made similar moves of reconnecting with place. For instance, place-based knowledges are critical to

Chicano/a environmental justice struggles (Peña, 2011). When so much of livelihood, tradition, culture, and memory are tied to place, to destroy and displace from place would entail a break, not just in physical embodiment, but also in emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of a peoples. In the diasporic experiences of Filipino/a/x, a spiritual and cultural dislocation occurs (Alburo, 2007), where pamamahay happens, as "the mind is in the homeland while the body is in the foreign land" (Tome, 2017, p. 39; also see Manalansan, 2006). The severance of ties with Indigeneity via colonial assimilation contributes to this disconnection, not just among the Filipino/a/x diaspora in the U.S., but also among Filipinos and Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the three basic problems of the Filipino people are imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism (Guerrero, 1971). The Philippine government has played an active and complicit role in perpetuating colonial and capitalist rule over the islands in lieu of the former colonial oppressors. The state has aggravatingly displaced and dispossessed Indigenous Peoples from their ancestral homelands to facilitate foreign and multinational corporations' access to mining and farming locations (Alpasan, 2023; Umil, 2022). Casumbal-Salazar (2015) implicates how the Philippine government has subjugated the Indigenous Peoples of the archipelago, asserting:

> As a practice of cultural governance, this celebration of the indigenous subject's symbolic role in the project of national culture works in tandem with techniques of indigenous dispossession, such as extractive sovereign power, to put under erasure indigenous political claims. (p. 76)

For example, critics denounced how Philippine vice president Sara Duterte wore a Bagobo Tagabawa traditional dress to Marcos Jr.'s first State of the Nation Address

(GMA News, 2022), not the least of which because Sara Duterte has historically red-tagged Lumad schools in Mindanao, linking them to communist and terrorist groups (Lacorte, 2019; Ombay, 2022). While Lumad is a broader term for Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao, the Bagobo Tagabawa is a specific Indigenous tribe in Davao, Southern Mindanao, and they have resisted against non-tribal members who illegally sell their ancestral lands (Colina IV, 2023). This evidences how the state simultaneously celebrates and dispossesses Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines. A particular form of extractive colonial violence, Indigenous Peoples witness some non-Indigenous Filipinos concurrently honor their culture and yet play a role in stealing their lands.

There is no unity yet on a lexicon that regards the nuances "between the Philippine indigenous subject under colonialism and the Philippine indigenous subject today" (Casumbal-Salazar, 2015, p. 78), but as Sara Duterte's case shows, not all Filipinos are Indigenous. Further, some Indigenous Peoples in the Philippine archipelago do not identify as Filipino. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to fully flesh out the historicities and complexities of the label "Filipino," Casumbal-Salazar (2015) argues that it is important to make a distinction between Filipinos as an already assimilated and Christianized group of people, homogenized, affiliated with, and recognized by the Philippine nation-state, on one hand, and Indigenous Peoples of the Philippine archipelago, on the other hand, who have maintained their ancestral ties to land and their traditions in spite of colonization. Umali (2020) asserts that before American colonization, there is no Indigenous person who identified as "Filipino," as the term was only reserved for Spaniards who have been born in the islands, to make a distinction from Spaniards born in the mainland of Spain. Spanish colonialism violently converted the

natives to Catholicism and presumed control of the lands for the benefit of Spanish royalty (Guerrero, 1971). With the 1898 Philippine Revolution against Spain, ilustrados (or the Enlightened ones) – or natives who had access to capital and education abroad – mobilized the idea of nation-state and identified as "Filipino" as part of anti-colonial resistance (de Leon, 2021). But then, Rodríguez (2010) points out that the "Filipino" figure did not really fully emerge until after the Philippine-American War, where the United States' genocide against the "few hundred thousand to two million" native peoples of the Philippine archipelago, made "intimacy with genocide as [the Filipino's] condition of possibility" (p. 106). Such is the historical complexity of identifying as Filipino/a/x that continues to animate and complicate identifications today (Labador & Zhang, 2021).

U.S. colonialism took the imperial reins from Spain and instituted education as the main technique of colonizing and assimilating natives (Constantino, 1970; Guerrero, 1971). In addition to utilizing cultural imperialism via mass media to promote its Western values, the U.S. started working with the Philippine government to target and eradicate Filipino insurgency. The U.S. empire began taking its shape as it exploited raw materials from the Philippine archipelago then sold back the imports to the Filipino people at a much higher price. The U.S. also identified the Filipino people as a resource, complicitly facilitating their export abroad to work with less pay than their domestic counterparts. At the onset of World War II (WWII), the Japanese imperial army occupied the Philippines, bombing Manila and exacting violence against some Filipino women, counting as one of the many "comfort women" in Southeast Asia and East Asia who bore the brunt of military sexual violence (Galang, 2017). With the U.S. retreating from the archipelago,

Filipino insurgents organized and rebelled against the Japanese imperial army. After WWII, the U.S. came back to the Philippines to take credit for ousting the Japanese imperial forces and to reinstall its colonial rule, but now with the explicit intent to "train" Filipino government officials under commonwealth and fully lock in Filipino officials' imperial complicity. To this day, with the help of the Philippine state, U.S. neocolonial control, across the legal, political, cultural, and economic realms, persists in the islands.

This is the specific historical and material context within which Filipino/a/x have survived and struggled to reconnect with their Indigenous roots. For Filipino/a/x who have been displaced and assimilated into various diasporas across the globe, there results this "yearning for knowledge about the ancestors" (La Torre, 2016, p. 72). Filipinos have turned to education (Constantino, 1970), psychology (David & Okazaki, 2006), mental health (Tuliao, 2014), history (Macansantos, 2019), activism (Hanna, 2017; Sales, 2020; Toribio, 1998), stories and myths (Maxwell, 2009; Pratt et al., 2017), community advocacy (Chan & Litam, 2021), collective healing (Desai, 2016), among others, to subvert colonial processes and to recreate archives as a way to reconnect with ancestry and Indigeneity.

The Filipino/a/x American Diaspora

Filipino/a/x scholars have examined the different dimensions of the Filipino migration experience. Parreñas (2001) argues that while Filipino migrant mothers achieved financial security for their families by migrating and working abroad, it also came at the cost of emotional insecurity on the mothers who left and on the families who were left behind. Le Espiritu (2003) describes Filipino migrants as "leading lives stretched across borders" (p. 2), with memories and emotions tying them to the

homeland, and with U.S. politics shaping their movement across borders. Choy (2003) demonstrates the role that the U.S. empire played in creating the international labor force of Filipino nurses. This created the neocolonial and poverty-stricken conditions under which Filipino nurses developed the desire to migrate to find success outside of the archipelago. Diaz (2018) writes how Marcos Sr. galvanized the identity of "balikbayan" to encourage overseas Filipino workers to come back home for vacation, thereby horribly designating the homeland as a tourist spot for displaced Filipinos and simultaneously romanticizing the labor export processes. The balikbayan then becomes "a medium for moving capital across geographic space" (Diaz, 2018, p. 7).

The similar and different struggles of displacement among Filipinos and Indigenous Peoples provide a vantage point from which to start alliances. Rizarri (2022) shows the role of food sovereignty in how settler Filipino farmers have built relationships with Indigenous Peoples in Toronto and "with the land as diasporic people" (p. 2). In the Philippine archipelago, Indigenous groups are constantly threatened with displacement. San Juan (2006) expresses solidarity with Moro sovereignty in the Philippines, as the Moros (Indigenous Peoples living in the southern part of the archipelago) experience domination and control from elite Filipino bureaucrats. Filipino migrants experience a similar yet different type of displacement in how they are politically, culturally, economically, and socially stretched in embodying the "balikbayan" figure, especially when they encounter discursive and material borders within their host countries. Rodriguez and Balce (2004) documents how American insecurity intensified after 9/11, when Filipino migrants who primarily worked in airports were laid off, as "these border sites are viewed as being inadequately policed by non-citizens who themselves require

policing" (p. 134). There is no place to be for the Filipino, not in the U.S., not in the Philippines. When Filipinos are in the Philippines, they are subject to being exported elsewhere to work. When Filipinos are in the U.S. or abroad, they are subject to immigration laws that police the conditions of their labor and stay. Recognizing how the state deploys belonging as an affective tool (Reddy, 2011), solidarity towards emancipation in this context is not about belonging to and with the state, but about freedom from being interpellated into the state.

While export of Filipino labor has occurred well before Marcos Sr.'s dictatorship (Choy, 2003), it further intensified under Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s dictatorship, in complicity with U.S. neocolonialism (San Juan, 2001). Filipino/a/x American communities and scholars in the diaspora have wrestled with their being uprooted from the homeland, and what it meant and looked like to find themselves within the belly of the beast, the U.S. empire, the very entity that contributed to their displacement. The impulse for Filipino/a/x Americans was to carve a space for themselves amidst their historical exclusion in the U.S. (Toribio, 2005). Displaced Filipinos turned to Indigeneity to heal "the trauma of removal;" they reunified with family to "resolve the psychic damage of loss of status or alienation;" and they politically resisted against colonial and racial subordination within the U.S. (San Juan, 2001, p. 262).

Yet the diasporic experience is complicated, particularly for queer and non-normative Filipino/a/x Americans, as they depart from normative modes of belonging (familial, biological, and/or ethnic) and as they complicate national, sexual, and gendered affinities. Manalansan (2012) conceptualizes "wayward erotics" to denote the refusal or deflection from "being anchored to linear, romantic directionality and simplistic filial

links to homelands" (p. 37). For Manalansan (2012), queer diasporic Filipino/a/x unsettle sexual and gender identifications via migratory routes, residing instead in the "messy, crisscrossing traffic of erotic acts, bodies, desires, identities, and fantasies" (p. 37) and moving through the nonlinearity of homemaking.

Diaz (2016) extends Manalansan's (2012) "wayward erotics" and theorizes "redressive nationalisms." Diaz (2016) examines the figure of the "balikbayan" ("balik" means return, "bayan" means town; and thus, a transnational returnee to the Philippines from abroad) to show how the state encourages "returning" and/or "homecoming" to the country as a national responsibility to bring capital and become tourists on their own land. The government then hails these Filipino migrant workers-turned-tourists as "bagong bayani" (new heroes). The balikbayan figure functions as part of "redressive nationalisms," which "reproduce and espouse normative kinship structures and ultimately delineate which subjects are worthy of inclusion in the wholesale attempt to 'repair' the broken nation-state" (Diaz, 2016, p. 336). In their failure to return respectably or normatively, queer Filipino/a/x fail the project of redressive nationalisms. This failure lends itself to creating new epistemologies. As Diaz (2016) states, "For queer racialized subjects, returns require that we imagine alternative routes to belonging" (p. 349).

Transnational activism has been one space where queer Filipino/a/x Americans found an alternative form of return. Hanna (2017) contends that queer Filipino/a/x activists have resisted romanticizing the diaspora as they grappled with historical trauma, particularly in organizing spaces. For instance, queer Filipino/a/x activists speak against how "logics of emergency" (Naber, 2012) marginalize and silence their experiences with homophobia and transphobia, where some cis-straight Filipino elder organizers deem

murder and crises in the homeland as more important issues to deal with. Queer Filipino/a/x activists intergenerationally struggled with cisheterosexism and feudalism, which colonialism has fused with hegemonic Filipino nationalism (see Chapter 1). Filipino/a/x activists have mobilized history to demystify these colonial legacies and to resist against the current authoritarianism in the Philippines (Sales, 2020). In addition to history, queer, and feminist studies, the field of communication offers tools to make sense of these processes of identity and migration.

Ecological Communication and Border(ing) Rhetorics

Critical intercultural communication and Indigenous scholars have theorized Indigeneity and historical trauma through ecological methodologies and analytics. Mendoza (2013) critiques the liberal ideology that underpins identity struggles and argued instead for learning from "deep past and deep ecology" (p. 18). For Mendoza and Kinefuchi (2016), modernity posits binary separations (nature vs. culture, human vs. animal), which alienates human beings from their memories, places, and communities. To suture this disconnection, Mendoza and Kinefuchi (2016) urge for retheorizing intercultural communication to account for humans' embeddedness with the environment, which includes a reckoning with impending ecological crises.

Similarly, de la Garza (2020) stated that "the ecology of our relations is miniaturized by the authority of our modernist routines" (p. 75). Honing in on marginalized subjectivities, de la Garza (2020) proposes an ecological and methodological praxis that centers movement, art, and poiesis (MAP) to re-suture relational experiences amidst hegemonic histories. This entails slow and conscious bodily movements, running against the grain of automatic and rapid impulses. This also prompts

a cultivation of the body to be psycho-emotionally ready to receive and process silenced narratives and memories. MAP's goal is to repair disconnections and to locate the self as ecological and always already in relation, to others, histories, cultures, and self; to process relational wounds; and to unlearn hegemonic tendencies.

Still, on the topic of reconnections, Stanley (2022) animated Indigenous eroticisms to sustain life-giving relations with humans and other-humans in service of decolonization and reclamation. Stanley (2022) narrates two place-based Mvskoke stories that illustrate erotic relationalities between humans and other-humans. The stories run against the grain of modernity and colonial binarism that pit humans against nonhumans, culture against nature. Instead, the stories offer a different vision of how to be in good relations with the land and with people.

Indeed, critical communication scholars deploy ecological analytics, as inspired by Muñoz (2013) and Harjo (2019), towards emancipatory futurities. Ecological analytics, as inspired by Indigenous ontologies, situate the supposedly autonomous and rational self as always already in relation with other life forces, the environment, cultures, histories, and cosmologies. The Cacophiliacs (2021), a fluid group of radical academic/worldmakers in the field of communication, advances Muñozian thought on the "communism of incommensurable singularities" (pp. 131-132) to facilitate an insurgent worldmaking that grapples with anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity. That is, they reckon with intersectional differences across their various locations and recognize their differences to be "non-equivalent yet nonetheless relational dynamic" (Muñoz, 2013, p. 106). In other words, though different from each other, they neither flattened nor glossed

over their differences, and instead radically accounted for them, to build relationalities with each other, to be together, and to create a more just world together.

Such relational mode also manifests in space-time scaling to analyze ecological formations of power (Rife, 2020), or in mapping geographies of kin and kith across multiple Mvskoke spaces (Harjo, 2019). Examining the urban desert of Phoenix, Arizona, Rife (2020) argues that "scaling can expose unexpected linkages across space and time that help to denaturalize particular ecological formations as entangled, rather than separate" (p. 77). Ecological thinking also identifies spatial and temporal through-lines, particularly in galvanizing for Indigenous sovereignty. Centering Mvskoke community space- and place-making, Harjo (2019) articulates that, "Metaphysical geographies are simultaneously heady and sobering because within them we connect to more-than-human entities, instantiating a scale that eclipses human social relations but places us in connection with ancestors, stars, and the stories and instructions they hold" (p. 187). Running counter to late capitalist, Western, colonial, and modernist ideas of the self and the human, ecological analytics instead situate humans as deeply related and situated, what Indigenous Peoples have been conceptualizing all along, thereby invoking human responsibility and accountability to the environment and relations with others.

Learning from and alongside communities, critical communication scholars rhetorically analyzed borders and migration in response to the ongoing aftermath of formal colonialism and the increasing transnational flow of people and capital across nation-state borders. Shome and Hegde (2002) map the intersections between postcolonialism and communication studies to politicize nation-states, their histories, and their power-laden relations with each other. In retheorizing agency, hybridity, identity,

and representation, Shome and Hegde (2002) problematize who can and cannot speak, what is cultural authenticity, and what happens with particular global circulations of media. In likewise interrogating nation-states' borders, queer and migrant activists have built coalitions near the U.S.-Mexico border, in their resistance of nation-states' perceptions of them as strangers and threats (Chávez, 2010). Post-9/11, the affect of brownness and embodied privileges have also complicated building transnational feminist alliances (Ghabra & Calafell, 2018). Overall, flows of destructive and constructive power continuously reify and resist borders, highlighting the process of border(ing) (DeChaine, 2012) as a materialization of nation-state in/security.

Resistance against empire and its deployment of power across nation-states (Hardt & Negri, 2000) have prompted critical communication scholars to utilize relational and coalitional analytics. Settler occupation and resistance in Palestine shows how the U.S.-Israeli military industrial complex reproduces violence across neocolonized nations, thereby punctuating that "border imperialism requires relational analysis" (Masri, 2021, p. 91). Border abolition is thus necessary, a struggle for freedom to stay (against human displacement in the name of capital), freedom to move (against prisons and cages), and freedom to return (the return of stolen land and its peoples) (Cisneros, 2021). Additionally, oceanic performance can animate coalitional grief against U.S. militarism that contributes to trans dispossession in the Global South (LeMaster & Labador, accepted). Indeed, oceanic thinking lends itself to anti-imperial resistance, and within the Filipino/a/x context, it can manifest in the form of anchored relationality.

Anchored Relationality

Indigenous and Black communication scholars have turned to oceanic humanities to make sense of the historical flows of power and the nonlinear forms of resistance. The Pacific and its Indigenous Peoples have resisted colonialism and militarism and they have sustained kinships and belongingness with water (Na'puti, 2021). Marginalized organizational actors in Nigeria and Liberia have also survived against colonialism by enacting liquid forms of organizing (Cruz & Sodeke, 2021). Filipino/a/x scholars outside communication have made similar oceanic moves in theorizing identities and relationalities. On one hand, Filipino seamen's identities demonstrated crosscurrents, a reconfiguration of identities due to migration (Fajardo, 2014). On the other hand, the Philippine islands point to archipelagic poetics that foreground the sea as a site of relationality (Cuevas-Hewitt, 2020). Lived experiences of being part of the Filipino/a/x diaspora in the U.S. embody crosscurrents, while building relationships across movements and change with anti-imperial organizers foregrounds the essence of archipelagic poetics. Their combination led to the notion of "agos" (or moving relations), which attunes to the sea as an analytic in theorizing processes of relationality. From agos emerges what is called anchored relationality.

Anchored relationality traces Filipino/a/x' complex reconnections with water as a form of agency and resistance amidst historical trauma, diasporic longing, and sovereignty struggles. It extends oceanic orientations in communication (Cruz & Sodeke, 2021; Na'puti, 2020) and hails from Filipino/a/x sea-based epistemologies (Cuevas-Hewitt, 2020; Fajardo, 2014). Anchored relationality achieves three things. First, inspired by Indigenous theorizing of historical trauma (Brave Heart et al., 2011), anchored relationality highlights diasporic Filipino/a/x' reconnections with community, memory,

and place despite dis/connection with Indigeneity. It builds on ecological thinking in critical intercultural communication (Mendoza & Kinefuchi, 2016) by locating the individual amidst their space-time connections and histories, as well as across their relations with different-others. Second, anchored relationality develops from Filipino/a/x queer theorizing of diasporic return (Manalansan, 2012), positioning community organizing as that which can facilitate alternative belonging. Third, anchored relationality locates Filipino/a/x' navigations of migration, borders, and seas as critical sites of sovereignty struggles. It augments critical border(ing) rhetorics in communication (DeChaine, 2012) as Filipino/a/x anti-colonial struggles participate in the larger movement towards abolition of empire (Cisneros, 2012).

Pagtatagpi-tagpi: A Method

After situating the study in the literature, this section will briefly iterate the details of the data collection, then unravel pagtatagpi-tagpi as a method. After IRB approval, I asked the political organization that I am working with if I can conduct an artmaking workshop with them. The group is primarily composed of Filipino/a/x organizers working for human rights in the Philippines. We discussed the role of art in social change, then moved into artmaking in response to the prompt, "What is water for you, your culture, your family, or your history?" After 30 minutes of artmaking, we shared in pairs, then we discussed what we created as a collective. I prompted the participants to identify the similarities and dissimilarities across their artworks. The artmaking prompt was broad enough that some of them did drawings, and there was one who offered a poem. Then, I asked for their demographic information, their consent to share the artworks, and what pseudonym they would like to use for the study. Given our various

physical locations, the workshop was done virtually and recorded using an online service. There were nine participants, including myself, and the workshop lasted for two hours. The point of the workshop was to map diasporic Filipino/a/x' connections with water and what it means for them, to instantiate anchored relationality.

In making sense of their artworks, I enacted a method called pagtatagpi-tagpi, which is a reclamation of embodied and relational knowledges that creatively responds to colonial epistemicide. That is, I sewed together the drawings, poetries, and narratives gifted to me by anti-imperial organizers. I responded with my own personal experiences and other media artifacts and connected them with structural issues affecting our various communities in the U.S. and in the Philippine archipelago. I enacted pagtatagpi-tagpi out of the strands of scholarship offered by scholars who came before me, leading to an articulation of pagtatagpi-tagpi at the intersections of performance, rhetoric, and qualitative methods.

First, pagtatagpi-tagpi is an embodied method, inspired by critical communication rhetoricians' moves to center historically marginalized communities and their contexts in rhetorical analyses. Calafell (2010) challenges the textual bias in rhetoric and makes space for lived experiences, prompting, "How could my voice not matter when the texts I was the most drawn to were so closely tied to my cultural experiences as a Chicana?" (p. 109). Likewise, my own cultural framework as a Pinay guided how I threaded the artifacts together in this study, and my voice emerged throughout as I sutured pieces within myself and in relation to others. As Johnson (2014) articulates for rhetorical autoethnography, "To engage your own narrative as a rhetorical artifact is to negotiate your identity" (p. 369). Part of the rhetorical text in this study were my own reflections

and experiences in relation to the participants' artworks, the interviewees' narratives, and a variety of Filipino media that I encountered outside of research. I derived the narratives from when I interviewed 22 anti-imperial organizers in the previous chapter, as we moved through questions of relationship, conflict, solidarity, and liberation.

Furthermore, it was the relationships I have with anti-imperial organizers in the field that possibilized the construction of this study's rhetorical text, which is the collage of drawings, poems, media artifacts, and my personal responses. This is an enactment of what McHendry Jr et al. (2014) theorize as "immanent participation," where the critical rhetor/icians are "potential actors in emancipatory practice, not simply critics of interventions already performed" (p. 295). Indeed, I co-created the text with my participants, and as we continue to organize, we also continue to co-build relations with each other and with water. What I did not anticipate from the 2-hour workshop was the emotional weight that all of us felt as we explored our melancholic dis/connections with water, influenced by being in the Filipino/a/x diaspora, dis/placed and dis/connected, and struggling with historical trauma. It is also a melancholic dis/connection with the Philippine Sea, the material and metaphorical site of our sovereignty struggles. Relations with water became the site for feeling grief and trauma. Relating with water allowed us to approximate senses of loss. But there was strength, and comradeship, as we made space for each other and what we were feeling.

Indeed, as an embodied method, pagtatagpi-tagpi makes space for emotions and experiences. It responds to colonial epistemicide, foregrounding how peoples experienced neo/colonialism; that is, what Million (2009) articulated as "colonialism as it is *felt* by those whose experience it is" (p. 272). Moreover, pagtatagpi-tagpi aspires to be

a humanizing and relational qualitative method, where "ways of knowing are not a collection of ideas but sets of practices and relations" (Patel, 2022, p. ix). In other words, it was important that I and my fellow organizers were able to co-produce knowledge about water, but what was equally important was our relationship with each other and how we recognized each other feeling and moving through it. In addition, how we lived and organized outside the art workshop oriented us towards water differently than, for instance, some people who only see the Philippine waters and the archipelago as sites of tourism, colonial exploration, and capitalist extraction, where there is neither kinship nor connection.

Second, pagtatagpi-tagpi is a relational method, aligning with critical intercultural communication scholars' use of ecological analytics to account for histories and the environment to resist modernist interpellations of identity. Modernity presumes a singularly autonomous individual, but ecological analytics press us to think of individuals as always already related, implicated, and situated in history and the environment. Advancing MAP (movement, art, and poiesis) cartography as an ecological methodology, de la Garza (2020) writes:

> Something needs to break, not because we are hurting as individuals who have suffered, but because the pain is a sign that the socius is wounded, and that our minds are not well as long as we consider ourselves separate from the environmental contexts of our histories and lives. (p. 79)

Similarly, in doing pagtatagpi-tagpi, I am not separated from my environment and circumstances, as those are the very places where the break happened, where the need to create arose, and where I pulled the materials which I used to assemble the configuration

needed to make sense of the wound, what caused the wound, and what would be needed to heal the wound. Additionally, to resist how modernity dissociates and abjects individuals from their "thickly storied self," Mendoza and Kinefuchi (2016) utilize the method of ethnoautobiography, which narrates individuals in relation to their "past (ancestry/history), place (land/nature), memory and imagination (dreams/instinct/unconscious parts of self), mythic origins (collective storytelling), [and] rites of passage/ceremony (embodied communal celebrations)" (p. 4). Pagtatagpi-tagpi follows ethnoautobiography's stead in that it accounts for all of these things as data, too, and pulls them together. Yet, pagtatagpi-tagpi departs from ethnoautobiography in that instead of just thickly storying the self, pagtatagpi-tagpi generates a thick story about a collective; but the self does not necessarily get lost and is rather critical to the constitution of the thick story.

Beyond the critical methods used in communication, pagtatagpi-tagpi anchors itself in how Filipino/a/x scholars have methodologically responded to the question of historical trauma. For example, Maxwell (2009) examines the figure of the Filipina heroine, Urduja, and how she was taken up among Filipinos as a way to tap into the collective unconscious, negotiate colonial trauma, and facilitate alternative worldmaking. Additionally, Torres (2019) emphasizes the on-going process of healing that begins with conversing about one's life histories, complemented by "rituals, offerings, and taking herbs" for strength (p. 73). Literature on Filipino migrants' mental health also shows the importance of relationality in healing; that is, the necessity of having support systems (Estanislao, 2001; Fernandez et al., 2018; Maneze et al., 2016) and sharing stories with each other via kwentuhan (Francisco-Menchavez, 2022; Pratt et al., 2015). Nonetheless,

given that I am not formally trained as a counselor, I was limited in terms of the emotional and mental health care that I could provide my participants during the workshop. This calls for more humanizing and care-based ways of doing methods, particularly as we hold each other in reflecting upon and moving through oppressive structures.

Here, pagtatagpi-tagpi is committed to the ethics of critical performance. Pagtatagpi-tagpi recognizes that "our bodies are always already on the line of someone else's intersectional design" (LeMaster & Terminel Iberri, 2021, p. 329), thereby requiring an attunement to the embodiments of the participants and the historical materiality of their locations. Furthermore, pagtatagpi-tagpi aims to heed the suggestion that "scholars continue to dialog and theorize about the potentialities of liberatory scholarship, that they turn back to communities where we see this work being done in everyday, mundane communication encounters" (Tristano & Terminel Iberri, 2022, p. 12). This suggestion requires understanding the mundane and complex flows of power within and beyond academia; reflexivity about one's positionality and orientations to research; and deep care for the communities involved by honoring the intimacies shared as knowledge and being continuously accountable to the communities' ongoing material realities.

Third, and along with this, pagtatagpi-tagpi is a political method, hailing from critical communication scholars' use of methods to make sense and respond to historical and material conditions. In performance, pagtatagpi-tagpi can be akin to Kilgard's (2009) conceptualization of collage, defined as an unsettling composition of elements in space and time, where "the thesis is in the gaps, in the juxtapositions, and in the (perhaps

miraculous) possibilities of the meaning-making process" (p. 2). Mindful of how collages can be harmful, pagtatagpi-tagpi aligns with this sense of the collage, but also departs in that pagtatagpi-tagpi is neither a modernist nor postmodernist project; pagtatagpi-tagpi is the braiding together of artifacts as a way to reclaim and honor epistemes amidst colonial epistemicide. It parallels what Cushman et al. (2019) articulated in decolonizing rhetoric as the recognition of "stories as strategic sites of decolonial practice" (p. 2). Differing from postmodernism, decolonial projects critically recognize colonial matrices of power that order the world. In doing so, decolonial projects open up for onto-epistemological possibilities elsewhere and otherwise to emerge. Meanwhile, postmodernism critiques modernity, while still remaining embedded within the Western canon, whereas "decolonial critical theory is a critique of modernity from without" (Marzagora, 2016, p. 175).

In a quite different but similarly aligned vein, I see anti-colonialism as an explicitly political project of resisting colonialism. Pagtatagpi-tagpi situates itself in relation to what Lechuga (2020) argues as anti-colonial rhetoric, where rhetoricians "start by observing and working with activists who are developing an on-the-ground-theory for meeting violent power where it occurs" (p. 384). Academics have a lot to learn from activists, especially in terms of developing theories and strategies of resistance. In this study, activists started tapping their emotions and lived experiences around water to feel grief and to envision more radical futurities.

Finally, pagtatagpi-tagpi associates itself with the critique of vernacular discourse, where Ono and Sloop (1995) suggest that "members of vernacular communities often use fragments or 'scraps' from hegemonic discourse to construct subjectivities" (p. 23). This

ongoing process of reusing and recreating culture allows for a sense of constructedness that resists essentialisms. Likewise, the pagtatagpi-tagpi of the rhetorical text here is but one iteration of how a particular diasporic Filipino/a/x community relates to water. Yet as González (2000) notes, "Each and every experience within the culture is an example of the *whole* culture. And the essence, therefore, is tentative and paradoxical" (p. 642). So, what this means is that while pagtatagpi-tagpi can yield many possible configurations, all of them could represent and/or challenge a culture, and in doing so, this process tentatively and paradoxically constructs that culture. Indeed, as Hong (2015) argues about communities as coalitions found on difference, pagtatagpi-tagpi allows for incoherencies to manifest, resisting the impulse to stabilize or to homogenize.

After having defined and contextualized pagtatagpi-tagpi as a method, the next section features the rhetorical text that emerged: the artworks, narratives, personal reflections, and media weaved together to show a particular iteration of how Filipino/a/x in the U.S. diaspora complicatedly connect with Philippine waters and the Philippine Sea, as situated within and across the contexts of historical trauma, diasporic longing, and sovereignty struggles.

The Dimensions of Anchored Relationality

Washes of Trauma, Developing Gills

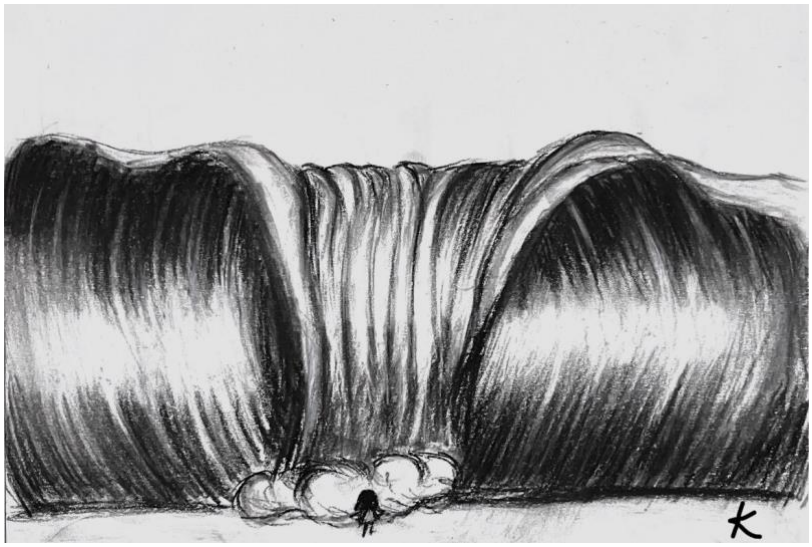

Figure 1. What Water Is for K.

> When you first gave the prompts, I immediately thought of destruction and hurricanes. You know, being in Houston, I've had my car flooded, my house destroyed from hurricanes. And then I have this recurring dream ever since I was young. Nightmare, where there's this huge wave, this huge tsunami that's coming and it's, it's a little bit different every time. But there's always this aspect of my family is there, and I'm trying to save them, like there's my little cousin, and I'm holding her to stop her from drowning. I told my friends that. He was like, 'Oh, this is your ancestral trauma.' But like, yeah when I think about the water, I think about the Philippines being, you know, comprised of a bunch of different islands, and the impending climate change and ecological doom. But then, also, our role as activists trying to, you know, keep our families, and keep our communities and our motherland from drowning, and the work that we're doing.

K (she/her), a Filipina female, offered these in response to the prompt of what is water for her, her family, culture, and history. I responded with surprise, as initially, I did not see

the water as a wall. After being away from the Philippines for so long, I realized I have romanticized water, the islands, the archipelago. I forgot about the typhoons, about being stranded, walking through the flood infested with rats, the destruction. *Now I remember*. While I loved the rain growing up, it also meant being woken up from your sleep, and having to pay attention to where the roof leaks, putting basins on the floor to catch the water that will drip. *Now I remember*. The rain meant having to worry about how to go home, with everyone commuting and fighting over the same jampacked bus, wet and haggard, spending two to three hours with your feet soaking wet in your shoes, when all you are wishing for is to be dry, at home, and warm. *Now I remember*. The farmers, their crops being destroyed, the rising costs of fruits and vegetables, and fisherfolk not being able to go out and gather fish in the raging storm. *Now I remember*. My remembering is evidence of how privilege can make you forget. I have been holding on to some semblance of connection to heritage, being away for so long, and sometimes even at the expense of exoticizing myself for the white gaze.

But K was reminded through dreams. Her location in Houston, of being devastated by hurricanes every now and then, has also been a constant reminder. The water morphs into a huge wall, destroying everything in its path, hauling loved ones away. With Manila having been predicted to be underwater in 30 years (Cabico, 2019), the ecological doom that K spoke of is not far off. K turned to activism as a way to salvage "our families, our communities, and our motherland from drowning." This is not unlike what Xavier (they/them), a Black African nonbinary person, gestured to when talking about the hope/lessness of activism, that all we are doing at this point is harm reduction. They said:

> Can we win? No, we can't win, but we can reduce harm, and we could try to keep as many communities safe as we prepare for the end of the world, and that makes you move differently. Because I think when I was younger, I thought we could win, and I no longer think we can win, and I don't think that we should, because what does winning look like? Because at this point, certain things need to collapse, like the American Empire needs to collapse. So, what are we doing by helping it become a better place?

Xavier is speaking to the context of the U.S. empire collapsing, whereas K was speaking of doom with the Philippine archipelago in mind. Certain things need to be destroyed, like the human construction that is the U.S. empire, while other things need to be reconstructed and kept safe, like a land mass surrounded by water that is the Philippine archipelago. The abolition of the death and capitalist machine that is empire is necessary for life and land to survive and thrive. The active ecological stewardship of and relations with lands and oceans is a dynamic resistance against forces that extract, capitalize, and kill. The precarious balance between hope and hopelessness, between trauma and healing, manifested again and again in the organizers' sentiments. When I prompted the art workshop participants to pinpoint a common thread across their artworks, Scruggs (she/her), a mixed (German and Filipino) female, stated that the works "convey a sense of despair… It's as if like, in order to be hopeful, you need to come to terms with your despair. You need to direct your anger and frustration and build despair into power." This is what happened among Filipino/a/x organizers, especially when Ferdinand Marcos Jr. was elected as the Philippine president in 2022. Despite months of organizing, the Marcos's succeeded in returning to power. There was a tumultuous tremor of shock,

anger, frustration, and despair that rippled across Filipino/a/x spaces. I was tuning in and listening to what friends and family were saying in the Philippines, and the joke often went that it was now time to leave the Philippines for good.

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> In the interviews, V (he/they), a Filipino American person, asserted that:
>
> Before you feel optimism, you feel that desperation… It is kind of a form of adventurism or disconnection from the masses if you assume that people should just be automatically motivated, or inspired, angered to mobilize… No, there should be recognition of tragedy. There should be recognition of despair.

Anti-imperial organizers have historically sought to transform their grief into revolutionary optimism. Perhaps the technique is not to fight it head on, but to go under, undermine it, and survive it.

Case in point: At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines, Alfonso Manalastas, a Filipino poet, wrote a piece entitled, “Facts About the Philippines,” and shared it on Twitter. With their permission, the poem proceeded as follows:

Figure 2. "Facts About the Philippines" by Alfonso Manalastas

The Philippines is made up of 7,641 islands. Only 2,000 of these islands are inhabited. Of these 7,000 islands, there are 24 active volcanoes, including the world's most perfectly cone-shaped. The country is also home to one of the deepest ocean trenches in the world, one of the longest subterranean rivers in the world, and one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world. None of these things is able to afford us healthcare. In 2020, super typhoon Rolly surpassed super typhoon Yolanda as the world's strongest land-falling tropical cyclone in

recorded history. Both typhoons made landfall in the Philippines. There are approximately 500 species of corals in the coastal waters of the Philippine Sea. Of the eight known species of giant clams in the world, seven are found in the Philippines. The pearl of Lao Tsu was discovered in the Palawan Sea. It is said to weigh 6.4 kilograms. It was discovered by an unnamed Filipino diver and was owned by an affluent American whose name appears in all of the pearl's official records. It does not appear in this poem. In 1944, a large naval battle between Japan and the United States occurred in our very oceans. This happened at the height of the second world war. A tectonic plate covering an area of 5.5 million kilometers sits beneath the country. This is the reason why earthquakes are common in the region. The Philippine Sea is inhabited by several territories including the Philippines, Taiwan, Palau, The Mariana Islands, Japan, Indonesia, Guam, and Micronesia. Like the country, it was named in honor of the Spanish king Philip who has never set foot in any of our 7,641 islands. In 2021, the Philippines saw a second wave of infections amidst the global pandemic. At the rate of things, it is likely that we will experience a third wave. A fourth wave. A fifth. We are a country underwater, people walking around with gills. The very act of drowning encoded in our DNA. When the local surfers of Siargao taught me many years ago that the secret to surviving a wave is to dive under its current instead of against it, I learned to do this in one try. This is a fact. I have been holding my breath all my life. I do not know how else to move but swim.

Manalastas' poem speaks to the adage that, "The Philippines is rich, but the people are poor." As Manalastas mentioned in the poem, the Filipino people do not enjoy the riches

of their archipelago's natural resources. It cannot afford them healthcare, and this despite producing thousands of nurses each year (Choy, 2003). Manalastas' poem also spoke to Spanish and American colonialism, as well as the geopolitics and sovereignty of the Philippine Sea. Most of all, Manalastas' poem punctuates and ends with the resilience of the Filipino people, but it is a resilience that is more like a no-choice-but-to-survive kind of resilience, a resilience that prompts one to dive under water, to hold breath, to adapt, and to swim. Within the context of drowning, and with the development of gills, you definitely move differently. Indeed, "I have been holding my breath all my life. I do not know how else to move but to swim" (Manalastas, 2021).

Undulating Borders, Wading into Medicinal Waves

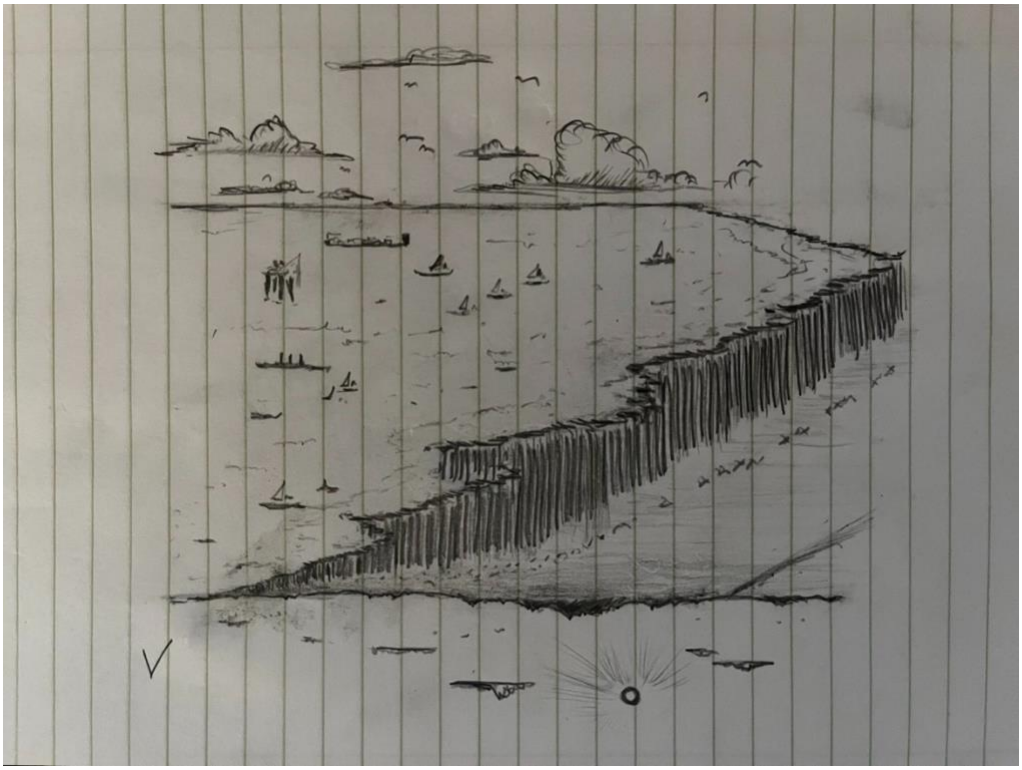

Figure 3. What Water Is for V.

> When I first thought of water, my historically educated mind is like, 'Oh, water typically represents freedom, freedom of passage, opportunities, etc.' But for me, water represents a boundary, actually both in my personal history and the history of my family. So, namely, because my family, we don't have a history, much history of going regularly back and forth between the Philippines. Like it's more of being stuck here, or one side of the family being stuck over there, and so it's like you have to make do with where you are at permanently. And so, for me, water is a boundary. Whether you're in the ocean or you're on land, like you are there, you cannot necessarily freely traverse between both.

V's narrative varies from K's understanding of water, and it is a variation that points to a different relationality with water. What V said struck me. Initially, I have associated water with freedom, with passage, as that which connects us to the homeland, but it did not occur to me to see the water as a border. V considered water as something that they or their family has never traversed before, *cannot* traverse. The water is this wall, akin to K's figuration of water as a huge wall. The water makes V and their family stuck, as opposed to the water allowing and enabling flow. Yet for me, I just thought that we have to cross the Pacific Ocean in order to get to the other side, but it is also a Pacific Ocean that holds too big and too much and too wide to traverse, especially for those who do not have the resources to do so.

I remember the first and last time I came back from the Philippines. I was on the plane, and on the little monitor in front of me, I was watching the plane inch its way across the Pacific. From the moment the plane took off, to halfway in the middle of the Pacific, to finally reaching the United States. I watched *Coco* (2017) for the first time. I

did not expect the song to speak. *Remember me / Though I have to say goodbye / Remember me.* Getting to the United States is unlike coming back home. People on the plane clap upon landing on Philippine soil. *For even if I'm far away I hold you in my heart / I sing a secret song to you each night we are apart.* I did not realize that a second-generation Filipino American person would also feel the same longing as me for the homeland, but they would perceive the water as a barrier, as something that distances. It is a different type of longing. *Though I have to travel far / Remember me.* The silence from my grandmother sitting beside me was palpable. Her little monitor was off; she was not watching the plane cross the Pacific like I did. *Know that I'm with you the only way that I can be.* She finally got to go home after 3 years; I'm still here. Our different relations with water animate crosscurrents (Fajardo, 2014), as they dialectically constitute our subjectivities. Melancholically and differentially relating to water foreground archipelagic poetics (Cuevas-Hewitt, 2020), the sea as a site of postcolonial and alternative belonging.

V also shared the reverse image.

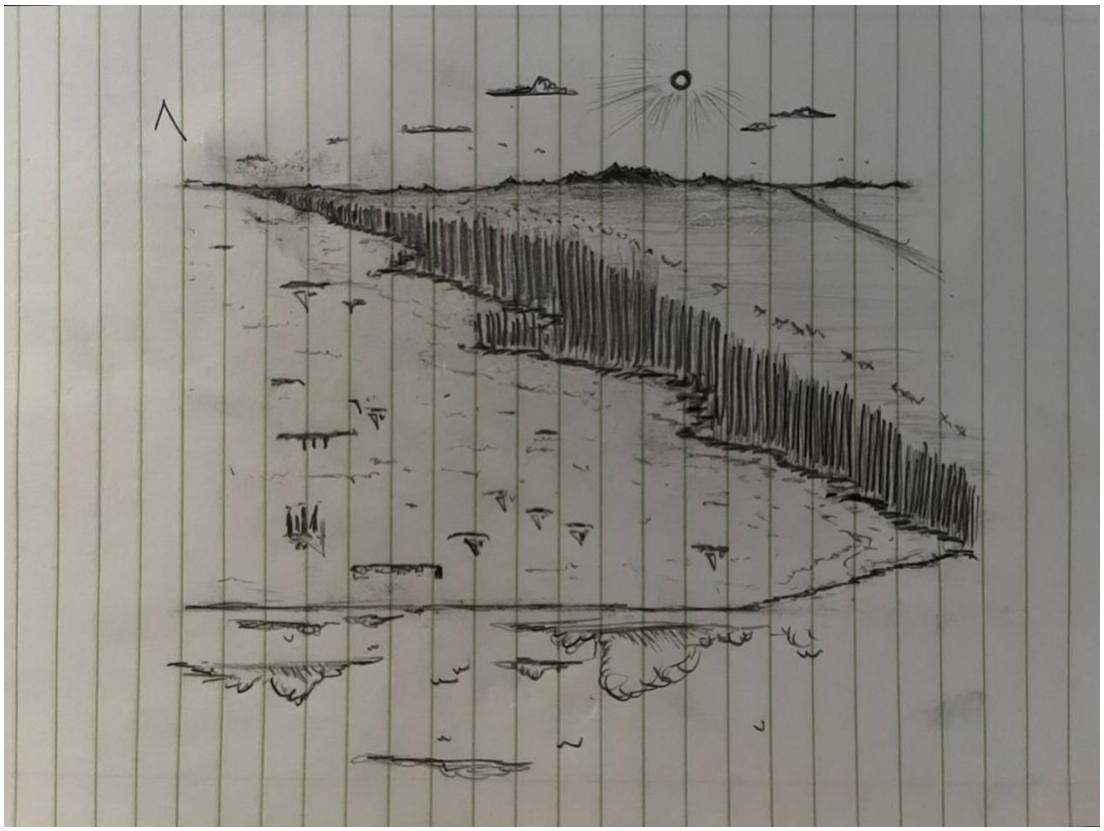

Figure 4. What Water Is for V (Reversed).

V commented:

> I actually meant this to feel like a wall. Specifically, the wall that is at the U.S. and Mexico border. It’s kind of that same kind of barred design, right? And that's also a barrier that rises up against the ocean. If you are from an overseas country, which is coming from overseas, you cannot freely enter, right? So, it's the whole thing of, you are either one or the other, and you are not free to just like treat both as your home.

The diasporic experience of never having a home to return to anymore. Never really being at home anywhere, anymore. Never being able to feel at home. But there seems to

be this duality of water as both border and connection. One of the artmaking participants, Tianyi (she/her), a Chinese American female, mentioned how:

> The flow of natural systems, like water and like the air, and the movement of living beings, not just humans, like fish and birds that migrate across boundaries are sort of like the clearest examples of the falsity of borders.

So, to make sense of water's duality, during the collective sensemaking with the workshop group, V and I agreed that power *over* water leads to a disconnection with water, while power *with* water can facilitate a sense of connection. What led to this is V's claim that:

> Water is indifferent to us as humans… Water is autonomous, its own kind of entity… It's even kind of wriggling its way outside of human control… The suffering that is inflicted upon humans as a result of water is not because of water, right? It's because of other humans trying to impose control on it, right? Whether it is setting nation-state boundaries on the basis of water, you know, using them, militarizing them to control the flow of labor and control the flow of materials and resources and weapons, etc., or trying to manage the resources in a way where it's not actually like a public good, a free resource that we should live harmoniously with.

I responded with what AV (she/her), a Filipino woman, shared with me before. When I asked her, "What is the future of the Philippines beyond imperialism?" and by the Philippines, I mean the Filipino people. AV answered that the key seems to be "power with, instead of power over, people." Additionally, Karen, a member of my doctoral committee, pointed out that this perception of water as indifferent is not an Indigenous

perspective at all, since from the Indigenous perspective, water is kin, there is a relationship with water beyond commodification and indifference. This struck me and reminded me yet again of the loss, of the severance of ties to Indigeneity, of the complicated relationship with water. It is a relationality to water that is different from how the Onk Akimel O'odham and the Xalychidom Piipash relate to water (Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, 2022), building intricate life-giving canal systems amidst the sweltering desert. It is different from the Navajo Nation's struggles for water rights as critical to their homeland (Sullivan, 2023). It is different from the Lakota's Indigenous onto-epistemology that water is life, being water protectors in the Standing Rock protesting against the Dakota pipeline (Jewett & Garavan, 2018).

Nonetheless, there emerge moves to reconnect with water – as a living entity, as the waters that surround the Philippine archipelago – among Filipino/a/x. F (they/she), who identified as a brown – Filipino and white – femme, shared with me that one of the ways that they take care of themselves amidst organizing is by being in water. F described:

> Water is very renewing and rejuvenating for me. Like it always has been. Like I could be having the worst day and you can drop me in a body of water, and I'll just float on my back. And there's just something like, it's like, for lack of a better word, it's like baptism, it's like a rebirth.

I wholeheartedly agreed. I shared with the artmaking participants that in my experiences with family, my maternal grandmother would always say that *water is medicine*. Your muscles and joints could be aching, your lungs might have trouble breathing, your skin would be scarring, and my grandmother would prompt you to go and bathe in the sea,

especially during sunrise, and the water would heal and soothe your limbs and senses. Apostol (2010) documented that for Filipino Indigenous elders and folk healers, the salt of water is medicine. I also remember my father narrating a story of how he lost his soul and found it by the beach. Every time I encounter a body of water in the United States, I reflect on how all water is connected to all water everywhere, and how this wave coming towards me was once a wave I saw when riding a boat in the Philippines. As Diaz (2020) quotes Toni Morrison to beautifully and poignantly articulated:

> Toni Morrison writes, *All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was*. Back to the body of the earth, of flesh, back to the mouth, the throat, back to the womb, back to the heart, to its blood, back to our grief, back back back. (p. 52)

We grieve with water; water grieves with us. And what is it with water, and its permutations across loss, change, and renewal? Because Lily (she/her), who identified as a biracial Filipina-American cisgender woman, shared the following spoken word as her artwork:

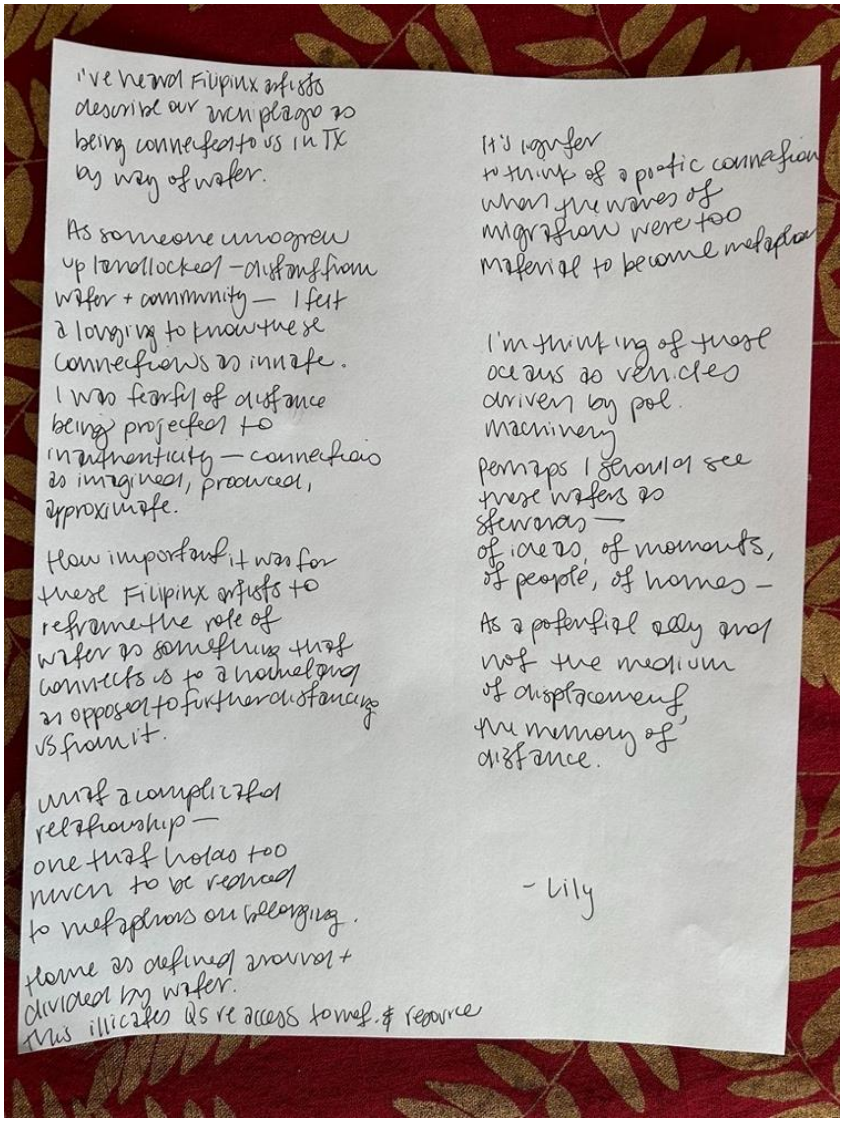

Figure 5. What Water Is for Lily.

I've heard Filipinx artists describe our archipelago as being connected to us in Texas by way of water

As someone who grew up landlocked – distant from water and community – I felt a longing to know these connections as innate.

I was fearful of distance

being projected to inauthenticity –
connections
as imagined, produced,
approximate.

How important it was for
these Filipinx artists to
reframe the role of
water as something that
connects us to a homeland
as opposed to further distancing
us from it.

What a complicated
relationship –
one that holds too
much to be reduced
to metaphors on belonging.
Home as defined around and
divided by water.
This elicits questions regarding access to
metaphor and resource

It's lighter
to think of a poetic connection
when the waves of
migration were too
material to become metaphor

I'm thinking of these
oceans as vehicles
driven by political
machinery
perhaps I should see
these waters as
stewards –
of ideas, of movements,
of people, of homes –
as a potential ally and
not the medium
of displacement,
the memory of
distance. –Lily

Lily's poem fleets between the overflow of too much, and the emptiness of not enough. How a foot tentatively dips in water, like when you are not sure you want to wade in, but you are sensing the temperature, you are unsure, but you want to dive in. There is a guarded eagerness, a longing after a heart break, a want to try again. Like meeting water again for the first time, and getting to know water again, even after the loss of colonialism, even after the historical trauma, even amidst the ongoing displacement. A shy desire to be recognized by water in return, to be reciprocated with home, with community, with kinship, in and through water.

During the workshop, we were feeling the weight of Lily's spoken words. I was not prepared, did not anticipate for this to be emotional, but it was. We were feeling *it.* I wish we could have held each other then, shared food, shared space. But alas, we were little screens to each other, voices over air waves, muted silence of feeling through the poem, and the poem feeling through us. In my experience organizing, we do not talk about this often, the historical and ongoing trauma that our and Filipino/a/x communities experience. I think we are still trying to map that structure of feeling, still trying to put it into words and art, still trying to direct and convert the grief into action. When your community continuously experiences trauma, when do you get to pause, when do you get to process, when do you get to stop, and just take a breath? Water, for the Filipino/a/x organizers, signified home and healing, and perceived lack of them.

Maybe it happens when we get to pause like this, when we allow the feelings to arise, even when we do not know what to do with it. Maybe it happens when we *see* each other, and recognize the feeling in the other, because that is what we are feeling, too. And

maybe it happens when we sense, when we feel it in our body, and when we honor the truth, here, between us.

Lily also marks the anxieties around authenticity. Not only does this gesture yet again to the complicated relationship with water, but it also conjures the toxic cultural gatekeeping in some Filipino/a/x spaces as a result of the disconnection and loss. It reminded me of a time when two people on Twitter corrected my usage of Ilokano, my paternal grandmother's native language. Based on their Twitter profiles, I perceived and assumed them to be a second-generation Filipino/a/x Americans. I was inviting folks to attend a Pinay academic mentoring event, where I called senior Pinays "ate" (which in Tagalog is how you address an older sister) and junior Pinays "ading" (which in Ilokano is how you address a younger sibling). They expressed a problem with how I combined the usage of both. They pointed out that the combination of languages as incorrect and called out Filipino/a/x Americans who incorrectly use Indigenous languages.

I was enraged. Both my paternal and maternal grandmothers combined Tagalog and Ilokano all the time. Not only that, but I have also seen time and again how Filipino/a/x Americans have been chastised for not knowing Tagalog and/or Ilokano, how language has been used to determine who is more "authentic" than whom, furthering the divide. This chasm tellingly manifests itself in the contentious debates from both sides of the Pacific even on the very use of the terms, "Filipino," "Filipina," and "Filipinx" (Barrett et al., 2021). Some queer and trans Filipinos in the homeland reject "Filipinx," perceiving it as westernized, and insist on "Filipino," while other queer and trans Filipino/a/x in the U.S. reclaim "Filipinx" and critique the dismissal of their diasporic position. Having been on both sides of the Pacific, I often find myself pushed and pulled

within these transnational entanglements. I will not pretend to know Lily's or other Filipino/a/x Americans' experiences growing up in the United States. My distance from them now approximates my distance from friends and family whom I have left in the Philippines. Caught in the webs of the diaspora, caught in the waters in between. I have distanced myself from Filipino/a/x Americans, perceived myself to be more "authentic" than them, but I am also no more or less authentic, having been assimilated and uprooted from the homeland. It is like what Grace (siya/she), who identified as a Fil-Am cis female, said in the interview:

> You're not more Filipino than someone… If you know all these things, or if you've spoken the language for so long… I think we're all just trying to help one another embrace what has been lost throughout generations, or even within our cultural upbringing… like how do I still honor what's been lost?

We are all just trying to come home, fish in and out of water. Our different relations with water, near and far to the Philippine archipelago, put us in various positionalities that are neither better nor worse than the other. Resisting deeming who is more "Filipino" or "cultural," we are all together implicated and politically responsible to the liberation of who we call our communities. The various relations, entanglements, and positions – the crosscurrents, the archipelagic poetics – open up the space for solidarity to gain currents, dialectically animate, and spiral into coalitions.

Reconnecting with Water, Returning Home

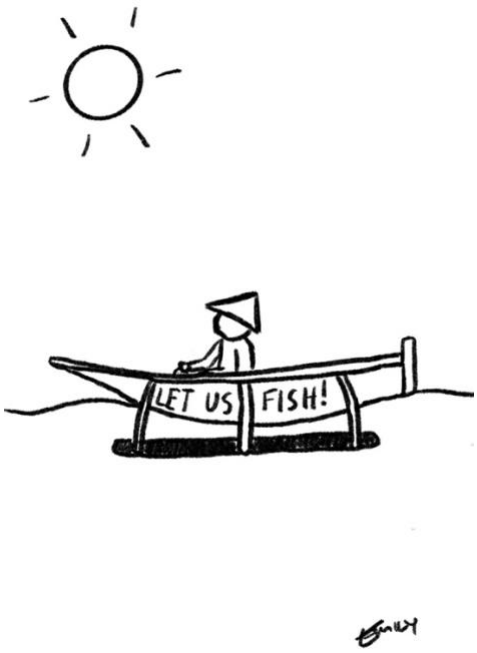

Figure 6. What Water Is for Emily.

> I think I have a lot of happy memories revolving around eating fish with family members or you know, with my mom and that type of stuff. So, for me, from there, that turned into thinking about what it is like to fish in the Philippines, and the people there, and it made me think about the dispute going on about territory and water over there, and how there are people that use water as a source of their livelihood. And they, you know, live near the water, or some people even live on the water, and this is how they survive.

Emily's drawing and statement spoke to the criticality of water to sovereignty struggles. Fish is eaten and is associated with happy memories, and yet it is also the basis of livelihood. Moreover, the territory dispute that Emily mentioned is the one on politically claiming the waters west to the Philippines. The Philippines calls it the West Philippine Sea, while China calls it the South China Sea. Mangosing (2023) wrote about how the

Philippines has recently established coastal defense in the area. China lays historical claims to the waters, which nearby countries, like the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam, have disputed. According to the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal in The Hague, certain islands and waters are within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Philippines, but China has been intimidating fisherfolk in the area with their military occupation and aggression, such as when a Chinese coast guard ship pointed a military grade laser at a Philippine Coast Guard vessel (Lee-Brago, 2023). Emily wrote "Let us fish!" in the drawing to gesture to the fisherfolk's daily survival as tied to the water yet they are caught up in the geopolitical tensions over occupied waters. The demand to fish may seem mundane, but it is, at its core, a call for Philippine sovereignty over the waters surrounding their islands.

Additionally, Emily mentioned the people who live on the water. Emily was referring to the Badjao (also known as Bajau), an Indigenous group living in Mindanao, the southern part of the Philippines, and on waters near Indonesia and Malaysia. The Badjao have lived on houseboats and off of the water since time immemorial. Yong (2018) featured the study of Ilardo et al. (2018) on how the Badjao has physically and genetically adapted to diving underwater, with no special equipment, being trained from a young age, to gather fish and other sea creatures for a living. They have larger spleens, which is the organ that houses oxygen-carrying red blood cells, relative to other groups who do not interact with the sea.

However, the Badjao continuously experience displacement from the waters. Yong (2018) stated that the Badjao's traditional lifestyles are disappearing, as government programs compel them to live on the land. The light wood trees that they

used to build their houseboats have become endangered, due to no fault of their own. In addition, Conde (2016) described the Badjao's forced relocation and evacuation, without consultation with them, due to the 2013 siege and armed confrontation between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Mindanao. Like other Indigenous groups in the archipelago, the Badjao have experienced being harassed and neglected by the government, living below the poverty line, and finding themselves unsheltered and diving "for coins thrown by boat passengers" (Conde, 2016, par. 3). Alipala (2023) wrote that some of the Badjao who relocated from the 2013 siege lost their homes to a fire. The media and police presented that the cause of fire was domestic violence and dispute, yet it is also no secret how gentrification happens by fire in the Philippines.

Emily's drawing and statement are rich and crucial to demonstrating the cultural and material significance of water. Her artwork greatly resonated with my own take on water.

Figure 5. What Water Is for Gelay.

> [I was thinking of] Philippine sovereignty in terms of the South China Sea and the West Philippine Sea. And then my father sells fish for a living. And so, growing up, I would help him gut the fish and clean the fish, and it's just as Emily said, a lot of Filipinos live off of the water. It's also making me think of what another Filipino said, that the ideal condition for the Filipino is that you know, you don't have to migrate in order to survive, and so drawing this is made me think of the homeland… Maybe we'll never ever reach the horizon. But the horizon is what stands for us as hope, and so that constant movement towards the sun is something that I've been thinking of in terms of organizing.

I want to find hope in the aspiration for return, in the seeking of water, and in just being by the water as already liberation on its own. It reminds me of a scene from *Liway* (2018), a film about the experiences of Dakip, a boy who grew up in prison during Martial Law, as his mother, Liway, was an imprisoned anti-Marcos rebel. Dakip cannot go out of prison, so Liway helped him climb up a tree a to see beyond the barbed wires. She asked him what he was seeing. He said, "Tumatakbo ang mga bata" (The kids are running). Liway asked, "Saan?" (Where?). But Dakip said he does not know, so instead, she asked him what color it was, and he said, "Blue."

Figure 6. Dakip Looking over the Prison Borders (Oebanda, 2018).

The sea was never actually shown during this scene. Yet one could hear the waves crashing against the shore. It is that almost but never quite getting there. The aspiration. The hope. The blueness of hope. Seeing through the barbed wires. Hearing the waves. Throughout the film, the audience finds out that Liway used to live close to the shore. By the end of the film, Dakip finally came home to the same shore of Liway's home. Dakip tentatively touched the water with his foot, then looked over his shoulder and smiled at his mother.

Figure 7. Dakip Coming Home (Oebanda, 2018).

This yearning to be with water, with the sea, transcends borders, whether that be of prison or borne out of migration. The workshop participants discussed how the water cannot be dictated by geopolitical borders and routes, that it is an entity that connects, that gives life, that gives hope. *Liway* (2018) was ultimately a story about hope, about Liway keeping Dakip's hope alive through stories, and Dakip giving Liway hope through his own aspirations, all within prison.

So, maybe, it is that looking towards the horizon, the will to keep going, the revolutionary optimism, the constant movement towards the sun. I see organizing as that movement towards the sun, where it rises and blooms in the east, a movement towards home. Organizing as struggling and keeping home sovereign, keeping home from drowning, despite having to cross oceans to survive. I keep going, because like in Emily's memory, I want to spend time by the water with family again. I want my father to sell fish sustainably again. I want to eat fish and rice with my hands again.

In this movement towards liberation, we rebuild our connection with water.

Dreaming and Organizing with the Philippine Sea

I have centered Filipino/a/x' complex and contradictory reconnections with water, and thus, how they enacted anchored relationality. This centering is important for three reasons. First, it can assert the relevance of dreams and relations as modes of decolonial remembering. Second, it can highlight community organizing as simultaneously a cultural revitalization and a political materialization of hope. Finally, it can accentuate the materiality of water, the waters that surround the Philippine archipelago, the Pacific, and the waters that connect us home. It can remind us that water is kin, and water is ally.

A first contribution affirms the importance of dreams and relations in decolonial remembering. In responding to historical trauma (Brave Heart et al., 2011), it is necessary to connect with community and memory (Sheffield, 2011), and K continuously got reminded of both through her dreams or visions in her sleep, reminders of her ancestry. K's is a dream that sees past, present, and future ecological doom, an actualization of what Peña (2011) stated as "place-breaking makes heart-breaking possible" (p. 209). The remembering of place and people is a critical antidote to forgetting, especially forgetting that has been induced and insulated by privilege. Realizing futurities beyond historical trauma is crucial (Leavitt et al., 2015), yet Scruggs recognized the urgency of first coming to terms with despair, of honoring past and present loss, and of being held in community when we paused and felt the weight of grief. There was also an impulse to transmute this grief into revolutionary optimism, to carry on and move forward, but also backward into the past, in the pursuit of reconnection with roots. V saw water as indifferent, which is unlike the Indigenous relation with water as kin, while Lily poetically expressed a shy desire to reconnect, an almost asking for forgiveness, even when disconnection was not her or any displaced Filipino/a/x' fault. Being in a space

where both views were expressed was a testament, not only to the complex and tension-filled desire to reconnect with water, but also to the significance of being reminded of our kin through and by our relations.

A second contribution emphasizes community organizing as both a cultural reconnection and a political actualization of aspirations. As a condition of solidarity, it is exigent to note that diasporic Filipino/a/x reconnections with water can wield the cultural in service of the political and participate in the sovereignty struggles of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines, in the Americas, and everywhere else (Casumbal-Salazar, 2015). Moreover, ecological conceptualizations of identity (Mendoza & Kinefuchi, 2016) press a locating of diasporic Filipino/a/x in the Americas to be settling on stolen land, thereby urging an unsettling and being in solidarity with Native Peoples (Rizarri, 2022). This unsettling requires the centering of Indigenous Peoples while utilizing a relational and contextual approach to settler colonialism (Snelgrove et al., 2014).

That is, the positions and histories of Filipino/a/x Americans and Native Americans are incommensurable yet also intertwined, necessitating a reckoning of communion amidst non-equivalence (Muñoz, 2013). This can only be realized in relation, in reminding each other of what each other went through and is going through under the auspices of empire, and in scheming and organizing together how to bring demise to empire from within. For one, the U.S. empire utilized the violent colonial education of Native Americans as precedent and justification for imperial expansion into the Philippine archipelago (Paulet, 2007). U.S. imperialists viewed the Indigenous Peoples of both places as in need of education to train them for self-government, which then reinforced the U.S.' perception of itself as benevolent and different from its European

colonial counterparts. To this day, seeing itself as a "protector" of the Asia-Pacific region, the U.S. empire detrimentally affects the Pacific Islands and the Philippine archipelago through military occupation and environmental degradation. At the same time, it is prevalent among Filipinos, Chamoru, and Micronesians to feel a sense of indebtedness to the U.S. and to be enlisted by the U.S. military, thereby prompting "a turn to Indigenous resurgence to recenter relationalities that allow us to exist outside of imperialist capitalist debt" (Caligtan-Tran, 2022, p. 354). Relations call, neither for flattening nor erasing differences between Filipinos and Indigenous Peoples, but for acknowledging them and mapping where they intersect and depart. For instance, Filipino settlers on Native Pacific islands can turn to the oceanic as "a method to consider how lessons and relationships they formed in growing up on this ʻāina (land/that which feeds) shaped their understanding of potentiality of trans-Indigenous relationalities" (Achacoso, 2022, p. 395). The waters of the Pacific can thus become a site of relationality, a materialization of space-time through-line, connecting homelands, and connecting past, present, and future generations, in the ongoing movement to protect and cultivate water for the sustenance of life for both human and more-than-human kin (Stanley, 2022).

Anchored relationality also prompts a necessary alignment with what Byrd et al. (2018) call as grounded relationality, where land is conceptualized from being a source of oppression to being a source of relation between Indigenous and Black communities. Grounded relationality tackles the incommensurability of decolonization by moving beyond epistemologies of commensurabilities and reimagines land, not as a boundary, but as a place-based and movement-based source for building relationalities. While grounded relationality similarly accounts for movement and multidirectionality (Byrd et

al., 2018), anchored relationality departs by decentering the U.S. as the locus of solidarity conundrums. It moves us to consider the waters of the Philippines and the Pacific as the complex sites of solidarity, between Filipino/a/x and Native Pacific Islanders, and to reaffirm such waters as relational spaces.

Furthermore, K saw activism as the boat to use to save family, to keep communities from drowning, while Lily desired to see water as ally despite the displacement and the disconnections. Pagtatagpi-tagpi highlights such disparate and conflicting interpretation of water by juxtaposing them, similar to the onto-epistemic practice of difference, of suspending polarities and utilizing friction to create new connections (Hong, 2015; Lorde, 1984). With anti-imperial organizers, I see organizing as this movement towards the sun, the activism of rowing our boats, the water propelling with her waves. Yet we also recognize how water can be a site of disconnection and barrier in activism, thereby prompting a relationality with water that honors its forces, that cultivates a sense of humility and commitment to "power with" water instead of "power over" water. Moreover, through our relations, *we see us* – Filipinos and Filipino/a/x Americans – that in spite of the forces that made us similar and different from each other, that created the disconnections, we meet again at the crosscurrents (Fajardo, 2014) and traverse aligning routes towards the liberatory horizon. Our identities, as with other Asian Americans, are political (Ono & Nakayama, 2004), and the diasporic and alternative return (Diaz, 2016) to homeland becomes possible through community organizing.

A third contribution underscores the materiality of water, that water is kin, water is ally. In the Filipino context, sovereignty means the freedom to stay – not having to

migrate in order to survive, and especially recognizing the gendered nature of migration where Filipino women are interpellated to work abroad to support their families back home. For the Badjao, sovereignty entails securing the freedom to live and work on water. Concurrent with this sovereignty is the freedom to move and the freedom to return (Cisneros, 2021). Abolition is a requirement, a destruction of the structural forces that violently displace, move, and detain peoples according to neoliberal capitalist whims and gross accumulation of annihilative power. Hawaii, Guam, and the Philippines have historically shared an entrenched dependency on U.S. militarization for development, proving demilitarization to be a difficult task. At least for diasporic Filipino/a/x activists in the U.S., one of the main goals is to lobby to pass the Philippine Human Rights Act to "suspend the provision of security assistance to the Philippines until the Government of the Philippines has made certain reforms to the military and police forces" ("Philippine Human Rights Act," n.d.). While this does not yet directly target the U.S. military, it is one of the tangible ways that Filipino/a/x diasporic activists in the U.S. can support demilitarization. Furthermore, given how "the U.S. military has been using stolen Native Hawaiian lands to engage in warfare in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao" (Cachola, 2022, p. 252), Filipino/a/x activists recognize their linked struggles with Native Hawaiians for the movement towards mutual sovereignty and emancipation in the Pacific.

Upon reflecting on the flows of power and water, V gestured to the objectification and deployment of water as border, while Tianyi saw nation-state borders as fleeting compared to the movement of water. This duality of water, the difference between power *over* versus power *with* water, incites the centrality of water – surrounding the Philippine

archipelago, of the Pacific – in struggles against border imperialism, late-stage capitalism, and anti-Indigeneity. Within the Indigenous worldview of water as kin, water is alive and agential, and is reconnecting and moving towards us as much as we are reconnecting and moving towards her.

These theoretical contributions actualize anchored relationality, a nuanced mapping of Filipino/a/x' complex and contradictory reconnections with water as a mode of resistance amidst ancestral trauma, diasporic desires for return, and sovereignty struggles against empire. Anchored relationality extends oceanic orientations in communication (Na'puti, 2020) as it locates, via water, Filipino/a/x transnational relationalities, dis/connections with Indigeneity, and anti-colonial resistance. While Fajardo's (2014) crosscurrents offered an attunement to how movements change identities, anchored relationality likewise destabilize notions of "Filipino/a/x" and Indigeneity especially amidst displacement struggles in the Philippine context. The destabilization occurs in some diasporic Filipino/a/x access to sleep dreams of water as reminders of their ancestral memories; in their experience with water as borders that disconnect as opposed to water as kin and connection; in relating to water as a space of feeling grief and loss, and perhaps healing; and in their recognition of water as a site of sovereignty struggle and horizon of hope. Like anchors, these relationalities move in varied and complex ways, depending on one's changing positionality, and through relating to multiple peoples and locations. Moreover, as Cuevas-Hewitt (2020) propose archipelagic poetics to proffer the sea as relational, so, too, does anchored relationality identify enduring connections via water amidst migration and dislocation, and augment community organizing as an alternative mode of return and belonging.

This study has limitations that can offer future directions for research. First, it would be interesting to see how Filipino/a/x across various axes of identities take up and respond to the prompt of what is water for them, their culture, their family, or their history. This can include elder Filipino/a/x, Filipino/a/x of various genders, Filipinos in the homeland, across the many different regions, Indigenous Peoples of the Philippine archipelago, and Filipinos who struggle with poverty. They could relate to water in a lot of different ways, as this study only speaks to how a particular group of diasporic Filipino/a/x in the U.S. connect with water. This opportunity could also further resist essentializing and stereotyping and could provide more complexity to Filipino/a/x' engagements with water. Given that anchored relationality accounts for particular positionalities, other Filipino/a/x' contingent locations might offer distinct meanings of what water would be for them. After all, despite the Philippine islands being surrounded by, immersed, and held up by water, its peoples are of different proximities to water.

Second, it would also be interesting to see how other historically minoritized groups – Black, Indigenous, and people of color; queer, trans, and disabled folks – at the intersections of these positionalities, relate to the water of their homelands, or to the waters of the place that they have arrived at or settled on. Given that this study addresses historical trauma, diasporic longing, and sovereignty struggles, there are overlaps between how other groups experience these structural forces, too, and could provide moments to build coalitions around movements for water. Third, this alliance ties in as well with the fight for environmental justice. This study is limited in focusing on the ecological crises, which presses for more material encounters with water. For instance, academics and activists alike need to figure out how to support the Navajo Nation's battle

with the Supreme Court over water rights and access to the Colorado River (Sullivan, 2023). Heather Tanana, a citizen of the Navajo Nation and law professor at the University of Utah, stated, “You can't have a homeland of any kind without water” (Sullivan, 2023, par. 10).

Fourth and finally, while I have implemented pagtatagpi-tagpi in this chapter, I also mentioned the limits of this method when it comes to enacting a more humanizing and care-based approach to co-generating knowledge with people, given our emotions, relations, and histories. Considering the precariousness in addressing historical trauma, I recommend partnering with a culturally sensitive counselor, and better if they are someone already in the community, when moving through what colonialism has done, is doing, and where do we go from here. This recommendation is for two reasons. First, Tuliao (2014) points out that for Filipinos to be able to fully disclose their problems and emotions, “the mental health professional needs to be considered as *Hindi Ibang Tao*” (not a stranger or other). That is, there needs to be a relationship built between the healer and the patient, and enough closeness and rapport to provide psychological safety for disclosure. Torres (2019) concurs that for the Aeta, an Indigenous group in the Philippines, there must be trust and respect between healers and patients in the relationship. Second, culturally responsive care is needed in that mental health professionals need to be mindful of Filipino folk and psycho-spiritual resources that can facilitate healing (Hechanova, 2018). Moreover, raising critical consciousness can be infused into the mental health care by helping patients see structural forces such as “history of colonization, endorsement of colonial mentality, and systemic factors that

continue to marginalize Filipinos" in addressing mental health problems in the community (Chan & Litam, 2021).

Overall, in this chapter, I traced anchored relationality across the literatures in Indigenous, Filipino, and communication studies. I demonstrated the pagtatagpi-tagpi of artworks, interviews, and media to contour Filipino/a/x' reconnections with water. Finally, I completed with the study's theoretical contributions, limitations, and future directions.

When I looked over the boat
I saw silver
Glimmering, fleeting
But 4am's time to gut
Kaliskis, bituka
Pula mata, puti mata
Intsik buying with P500, mahal
The Lapu-lapu and its healing saliva
My barkada took French in college
And somehow, we called ourselves – Poisson
Puson, as in needing warmth
Isda, isla, isda, isla
Scatters, swims
Converges
Comes
home.

—gelay, "Fish 3"

CHAPTER 4

ARCHIPELAGIC PERFORMANCE

I was curious what sounds do turtles make. Apparently, humans thought they did not make any sounds, but eventually found out that humans were just not able to register or decipher the sounds that turtles make (Wamsley, 2022). Likewise, colonizers thought that the colonized did not speak, that they did not have agency or the power to fight back, or maybe the colonizers just ignored and denied their agency and power and instead repressed voice and resistance. But the colonized have been speaking all along. Have been fighting all along. Slow but steady.

I shared with my advisor a dream where turtles were swimming. The turtles found a U.S. navy submarine underwater, and they encircled the imposing brute. The turtles saw men inside, and the turtles stared the men down. The turtles seemed to say, "You will never stand a chance against us." On the other hand, my maternal grandmother does not like turtles. She thinks they live long and hard lives, always carrying their homes on their backs.

This chapter writes about the production entitled, "What sounds do turtles make?"—a performance weaving of personal experiences, dissertation data, and found poetry. It proffers a meditation on movements and relationalities that constitute our experiences, in complicity with and in resistance to empire. It is a de/colonial gazing back, a play on affect, a homecoming.

The script emerged out of weaving threads of interview data (Chapter 2) with various media artifacts and coupled with reflections upon archipelagic performance and its three functions: facilitates sailing via memory and the senses, navigating spatio-

temporalities, and maneuvering fluidity for anti-imperial ends. This chapter conceptualizes archipelagic performance as a decolonial mode of imagination, inquiry, and intervention (Conquergood, 2002) as situated within the Filipino tradition of performance (Barrios, 2013; Burns, 2013; See, 2009) and performance studies in communication (LeMaster, 2018a; Hastings, 2009; Pelias, 2014). Archipelagic performance rises out of the juncture between Filipino theorizing of sea-based movements (Fajardo, 2014) and relationalities (Cuevas-Hewitt, 2020). It is an iteration of agos, or moving relations, which attunes to the sea as an analytic in theorizing performance.

"What sounds do turtles make?" responds to the forced migration of Filipinos, induced by U.S. imperialism, which has made itself unabashedly present in the archipelago. The Philippine government recently approved the establishment of four new U.S. military bases in the islands – in addition to the already existing five under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) between the two countries – despite China's opposition (Gomez, 2023). In addition to the historical record of U.S. military bases as violent sites for cis and trans women (Westerman, 2023) and for the islands' ecosystems with their toxic wastes (Palatino, 2023), this increasingly puts the islands at the line of fire between the two imperial powers, which will be to the further detriment of the Filipino people if a war escalates. Additionally, "What sounds do turtles make?" interrogates the objectification of Filipinos as part of the labor export policy and as artifacts in a colonial exhibit, and through the performance, it inverts that objectification by reclaiming agency and building relationalities with other historically marginalized communities. The performance featured found poetry from the interview transcripts of

anti-imperial organizers, where the co-performers voiced their sentiments on finding a political home, working through conflict, being in solidarity, settling on Native land, and organizing locally and transnationally to sustain the movement for anti-imperialism.

This chapter gifts the theoretical contributions of learning from turtles, their slowness, and their interiority of self. The softness inside the hardness. The softness that can never be taken away. The capacity to bring home wherever you go, wherever you are. This chapter on performance reminds us of the importance of breath to performing, organizing, resting, and living. It reminds us that imperial time is but one dimension of space-time, and that we can retreat to sacred and decolonial time, to realize radical futurities and replenish ourselves and our movements with radical rest. That empire is but a blip in humanity's time, and yet we also temper this historical patience with the urgency of organizing against ecological doom. Moreover, this chapter puts forward and affirms anger and grief as decolonial responses, as reasonable and legitimate responses to centuries of colonization, as responses that need no recognition, as responses that enact self-determination, that fuel movements for liberation. This chapter thus unfolds as follows. I map the literature on the Filipino tradition of performance and performance studies in communication and situate archipelagic performance. Then, I explicate Filipino performance studies in communication as a method. Finally, I analyze the staged performance – weaving in the co-performers' and attendees' insights with the interviews of anti-imperial organizers from Chapter 2 – and offer theoretical contributions.

On Performance Studies and Filipino/a/x Performance

Drifting Away from the Performance Canon

Though a contested concept throughout disciplines, performance can be defined in communication as how human beings "fundamentally make culture, affect power, and reinvent their ways of being in the world" (Madison & Hamera, 2006, p. 2). Performance contributes, not to a single, capital T truth, but rather to a multiplicity and contradiction of social truths (Gómez-Peña, 1997). That is, the goal for performance is not to win an argument, impose a logic, or colonize (Pelias, 2014); the goal for performance is to create and open space for difference. Given the various trajectories of performance studies in communication, performance is brought beyond land and likened to a sea that brings the "unwary adrift" to "far lonely beaches" (Simmons & Brisini, 2020, p. 2), where suggested future directions include the posthumanist turn and embracing an archipelagic relation for productive exchanges of culture and knowledges.

This paper drifts away and reclaims the archipelagic metaphor for decolonial ends. Speaking from the Filipino tradition, performance has always already included the more-than-human kin and environment (Barrios, 2013). Accordingly, this chapter argues archipelagic performance is less about discovery and diversity (that are productive for whom?) and more about modes of being and performing that enable survival in and against empire. Archipelagic performance anchors itself similar to how Conquergood (2002) describes performance: "Through the power of reframing, social performances reclaim, short-circuit, and resignify the citational force of the signed imperatives" (p. 151). Indeed, for historically oppressed folks, performance has been a means of mimicking and playing with the imperial language to survive, as "subordinate people do not have the privilege of explicitness" (Conquergood, 2002, p. 146). While empire sees islands of far away as disconnected and disembodied, archipelagic performance moors

itself in Conquergood's tradition of performance, which has embraced embodied and situated knowledge in order to survive violence, epistemic and otherwise.

Archipelagic Performance within the Filipino Tradition

The Filipino tradition of performance has navigated the circuits of colonialism and empire. To survive imperial violence, Filipinos have turned to shapeshifting, evasion, and indirection (Ileto, 2002). See (2009) theorizes that the fluidity of Filipino performances complicate memorialization, and yet their mimicry of elements from the dominant culture can "survive the onslaught of the illegality of remembering" (p. 140). Burns (2013) articulates *puro arte*, the epistemic practice of interrogating "how the Filipino/a performing body is made visible in its multiple colonial contexts and what the affective and material politics of that presence entail" (p. 4). Notably, the Filipino/a performing body cannot be separated from its context, in all their complicity and resistance. Said differently, it is a Filipino/a performing body that is always already implicated within the circuits of imperial power, and yet simultaneously offers a point of departure from the chains of empire.

Furthermore, Filipinos performatively navigate their (in)assimilability and (in)visibility by oscillating between self-tokenizing and resisting the white gaze (Labador & Zhang, 2021). Indeed, affectively exceeding colonial determinations, Filipino performances implicate spectators in the politics of colonial gaze (Chow, 2018). Using performance as a tool for popular education and yet ever mindful of state surveillance, Filipino activist performers utilize masks (Barrios, 2013), spectacles (Lai, 2021), and veiled political viewpoints (Looker, 2019). Archipelagic performance is situated within this Filipino tradition of performance. Anchored in Conquergood (2002) and Philippine

sea-based epistemologies that emphasize movement and relations (Cuevas-Hewitt, 2020; Fajardo, 2014), archipelagic performance is a decolonial mode of imagination, inquiry, and intervention that facilitates sailing via memory and the senses, navigating spatio-temporalities, and maneuvering fluidity for anti-imperial ends.

Sailing via Memory and the Senses

Through performance, the body becomes an instrument for destabilizing meaning. Pelias (2018) declares that the body is "ready to function as a methodological tool" (p. 22), that is, it is through the body that generative insights about culture, identity, and community are (re)worked in reification, resistance, and/or recreation of socio-cultural scripts. Performing cultures generates "a felt flow of enabling energies swirling around an axis" (Conquergood, 2013, p. 17), where performance sustains the tension between a culture's cosmological center and its marginal forms of expression. Moreover, performance allows for oscillating between performative condition – the historical and power structures that bind performers – and performative action – the creative release of such binds (Hastings, 2009).

Extending performance's capacity to destabilize meaning and reside in tension, archipelagic performance is a decolonial mode of imagination that facilitates sailing via memory and the senses. Remembering is complicated and urgent for Filipinos, given the imperial erasure and colonial education (Constantino, 1970). Yet, archipelagic performance lends insights into negotiating what has been forgotten and what can be remembered, what has been internalized and what can be unlearned. Moving from island to island, different places generate different memories, as archipelagic performance weaves together the lost water rituals, cultures, and resistance underneath the rubble of

sedimented histories of colonialism and elicits the whispers and surges of water that surround the islands. Bodily senses and intuitions guide this process, leaning into what is felt when something has been remembered or unlearned in movement, as "kinetic memories sink the deepest and endure the longest" (See, 2009, p. xxvii). Furthermore, emotions become the basis for (un)forming relationalities, with some staying on the boat, while others choosing to remain behind in the island, as the performative journey continues.

Maneuvering Fluidities

Performance also plays with codes, scripts, languages, and voices. It tactically decenters the textualism of imperial languages and dominant epistemologies, leaning into the "refusal to be spelled out" (Conquergood, 2002, p. 146), thereby activating the subversive potential in unintelligibility to resist co-optation (Hastings, 2009). For instance, performance recodes failure into improvisation, channeling fluidity in resisting hegemonic interpellations and dissolving "the sedimentation of cultural scripts" (LeMaster, 2018a, p. 1). Furthermore, performance provides a veneer for "subversive meanings and utopian yearnings" (Conquergood, 2002, p. 148) and a technique for unapologetically reassembling postcolonial subjectivities (Olaniyan, 1992). As such, performance functions like a submarine space through which the subaltern speaks *yet* "remains opaque, resisting closure" (Tinsley, 2008, p. 194).

Similarly, archipelagic performance is a decolonial mode of intervention that maneuvers fluidity for anti-imperial ends. It flows from the Filipino communication theory of *pahiwatig* (intimation), the communicative cultural frame within which Filipinos complexly navigate verbal and nonverbal interactions (Maggay, 2002).

Pahiwatig relies on tacit and implicit communication, informed by centuries of histories and relations, providing the precondition for insider, illegible, and coded meanings, which run like an undetected current underneath the "official" gloss of state messages (Mendoza & Perkinson, 2003). Archipelagic performance emphasizes flexibility, like the lightness of costumes and props to stay on the boat and/or to escape cops and the versatility of masks and personas embodied as a tactic of indirection against state surveillance (Barrios, 2013). Archipelagic performance resists essentialism, pausing at islands and stopping for dialogue, discussing the performative journey it has already undertaken while imagining where to go next, before embarking again on another archipelagic performance.

Navigating Spatio-Temporalities

Performance allows for playing with space and time. When polymorphic voices constitute a performance, it creates an aural space "of constant crossings, passages, and metamorphoses" (Fischter-Lichte, 2008, p. 36). Performance possibilizes spatial discursive overlaps between performer and audience. In addition to being an object of study, performance as a method can map for "location as an itinerary as opposed to a prescribed place" (Johnson, 2013, p. 7). Performance opens multiple trajectories, often different from the established directions. Moreover, performance troubles timestamps, sustaining ephemerality more so than documentation (Conquergood, 2002). That is, performance allows for deviations from the linear, imperial progression of time (Ferguson, 2015), for past-present-future overlaps or palimpsestic time (Kim, 2020), and for channeling oceans and seas as "a presence that is history, a history that is present" (Tinsley, 2008, p. 195).

Punctuating this last point, archipelagic performance is a decolonial mode of inquiry that relies on navigating spatio-temporalities. As a method, it requires immersion in the movement of the sea, "a site of multiple series of relations that are never fixed but constantly in flux" (Cuevas-Hewitt, 2020, p. 29). Swimming through past and present relations, archipelagic performance bridges sacred time and profane time, where sacred time is mythic time, transporting one to the origin and timelessness of creation, and profane time is colonial and reified historical time (Gonzalez, 1983). Archipelagic performance prompts movement through crosscurrents of multiple spatio-temporalities, necessitating an intimate and experiential knowledge of the environment and a cultivation of the deep knowledge and heightened orientation that the body is not really an individual, autonomous, and separate entity, but one that is always already imbricated in the processes, flux, and creativity of cosmologies and life.

A Collaborative Performance Method

I invited co-performers to join me in staging the performance during Spring 2023. Archipelagic performance has served as an object of imagination, inquiry, and intervention (Conquergood, 2002), which means that the performance itself simultaneously functioned as an outcome, method, and praxis of knowing, yet also recognizing their overlaps and synergy in more ways than one.

Archipelagic Performance as Work of Imagination

I staged and weaved the interviews from the previous data collection with anti-imperial organizers (see Chapter 2) into a performance using performance ethnography. I placed cultural understandings on stage by scripting the findings (Pelias, 2018), and in doing so, expressed the multiplicity of voices and experiences in the interviews (Howard,

2004). The resulting script became a research artifact (Hamzehee, 2021; see Appendix C), to which I turned to again and again in this chapter. Then, the staged performance itself was recorded as a way of archiving research and memory. The performance reiterated itself through conversations in the hallways, citations during seminars, and digital circulation of its images and poetics by an anti-imperial activist organization. The performance served as "a site of advocacy, an opportunity to intervene on behalf of cultural others" (Pelias, 2018, p. 26). Through archipelagic performance as a work of imagination, the experiences of anti-imperial activists were showcased in tension with the audience, activating their memories and senses. Thus, here, performance ethnography as a method becomes a way to grapple with the linkages between materiality and discourse (Johnson, 2013), especially where empire and solidarity are concerned. As Pérez & Goltz (2010) articulate, reckoning with coalition building through collaborative personal narratives allows a "listening to one another's stories" (p. 249) to facilitate understanding across differences.

Archipelagic Performance as Pragmatics of Inquiry

Inspired by Boal's (2013) notion of theatre as rehearsal for the revolution, the performance was designed to be interactive, aiming to transform the audience from spectators into actors. Indeed, participation is performance's methodology, an inquiry demanding "physical, sensuous involvement" (Pelias & VanOosting, 1987, pp. 221-222), as it is also through performance that we know and deeply sense the other (Conquergood, 2002). The audience was informed of the 30-minute post-performance talkback to cultivate deliberation, which was recorded and later analyzed. There was a break between the performance proper and the talkback to allow free movements and exits for those who

decide to leave the space. I worked with a local Filipino restaurant to offer food to the attendees. A member of the audience noted how the smells of home-cooked meals added to the affective understanding of home in the performance.

For the talkback, I prepared prompts (see Appendix D) to help steer the conversation, which facilitated a navigation of spatio-temporalities and directed "our attention on the ways our histories and experiences cross over, against, and through the politics of our relations" (Pérez & Goltz, 2010, p. 262). For instance, I asked the audience, How are you compelled to move by the performance? Where does it prompt you to go? Where does it prompt you to return? The prompts teased out a heightened sense that performers and audience alike are always already imbricated, in the multiplicity of their locations and relations – past, present, and future. The performance was dialogical, a way of staging intervention and expressing solidarity with the different individuals and communities involved with the research (Conquergood, 2002). After watching the recording, I personally reached out to the people who shared notable responses in the talkback to ask for their consent to weave their insights into this chapter. I also asked whether they would like to be named (pseudonym or otherwise) or remain anonymous.

Additionally, there are two distinct features of archipelagic performance as pragmatics of inquiry. First, archipelagic performance is a collaborative and relational method of doing performance. After scripting the interview data, I sent out a call to my friends, comrades, and colleagues, asking who wants to be part of a performance as a component of my dissertation. I offered a small honorarium, made possible by a graduate student research grant. I was looking for five co-performers, and five co-performers

heeded my call. They responded in the spirit of community and reciprocity, and for which, I am eternally grateful for their support.

We started the rehearsals, reading the script, getting situated. Lore, the director, prompted me to explain the context of the script, walk the co-performers through the anti-imperial organizers' characters, and tease out the affective movements of the turtles and an imperialist octopus. We set up the stage in such a way that it allowed for fluidity of movements. The final, resulting script also changed a lot from the original script. What was on paper looked very differently when translated into material time, space, and movement. Some of the co-performers also expressed being new to performance, and Lore helped them start to become attuned to it. However, in the middle of the rehearsals, I became sick with COVID-19, so we had to pause them altogether and reschedule the performance. It was a turbulent time, and I am thankful for my co-performers for sticking with me, still riding the boat through the storms with me, to realize and see the performance through the end. The performance may have been a component of my dissertation, but at the end of it all, it is what Nda (2007) calls as the "communal ownership of the communication medium" (p. 165), as it resulted from community-based processes, from the anti-imperial organizers to the co-performers to the community attendees.

Second, archipelagic performance hails from the Filipino tradition of palabas (show or theatre). For Burns (2013), palabas is a performance contextually enacted within and by a community, which "provides a vernacular and material contrast to colonial understandings of performance as exotic cultural practices produced by colonized bodies for consumption by the colonizer" (p. 8). Mindful of this hegemonic tendency, I was very

intentional with whom I invited to witness the performance. Even if I did not personally know an attendee, I knew the person who invited them. So, Ana, an attendee, noted during the talkback that the reception of the performance with the community was very different from how it would have been received in a predominantly white space at a national conference. I was clear that the latter was not and never have been my intended audience. Indeed, by turning to palabas, archipelagic performance critiques the appropriation and exoticization that "reinforces racial and cultural forms of otherness" (Burns, 2013, p. 8), which happens when outsiders come into a performance without context, knowledge, or history of the performance, or even relations with the performers.

Knowing the attendees allowed me to contact them directly after the performance, to check in and ask for their consent to include their insights in the research. Furthermore, the importance of this relational method precedes the staged performance itself. During the talkback, Lore asked me how I have come into performance, despite not expecting to during my first year in the program let alone staging a performance in my very last year. Perhaps it was the impostor syndrome that is unfortunately prevalent among women of color in academia, but I did not necessarily see myself as a performance scholar. It was really only in leaning into the work that I realized that: "Oh, I am doing this. I am doing performance." I wanted to emphasize the relational aspect in this process of coming into performance, as it was after being surrounded by brilliant performance scholars (Lore, Doc, Ana, Pablo, Jen, Amira, and Pavi), their showing and modeling of what performance is and could be, and being inspired and supported by them, that I was encouraged to find my own voice in performance.

Archipelagic Performance as Tactic of Intervention

Performance intervenes through cultural organizing and performative writing. As a liminal space of struggle, the performance showcase itself becomes a site of advocacy (Pelias, 2008), enabling the research to be shared with the broader public (Hamzehee, 2021). Additionally, performance provides "a cultural dimension to community organizing" (Cohen-Cruz, 2010, p. 90), which has the potential to humanize actors of anti-imperial movements and build in revolutionary messages into cultural vehicles. That is, through the dialectic interaction between performance and activism, the embodied experience is infused with "cultural symbols and racial icons appropriated and subverted" (Alexander, 2011, p. 99) to facilitate social change. Moreover, the community- and process-oriented approach to archipelagic performance carves a space for the community to interact with the messages that allows for "the development of ideas that will grow beyond the art moment or product" (Robertson, 2007, p. 120).

Finally, performance provides a space for the non-discursive findings of the research to emerge (Conquergood, 2013), especially as traditional academic knowledge production does not easily lend itself to sharing and circulating community-generated knowledge (Cohen-Cruz, 2010). After the showcase, and in this chapter, I collaged the script, talkback, and my reflections on the entire experience (Kilgard, 2009). I collaged with the spirit of performative writing, aiming "to poeticize the theoretical and locate it in the personal" (Pelias, 1999, p. xii). Performative writing challenges what is considered as academic knowledge (Pelias, 2014), and it does so by maneuvering fluidity, appearing in the legible code of theory yet enacting necessary interventions. Though normative text reifies, performative writing resists against its reification (Pollock, 1998), aligning itself

with performative interventions into the citationality and representation (Madison & Hamera, 2006) of Filipino/a/x culture and archipelagic performance.

The Two Personas

Conquergood (2013) states: "Performance, both for the fieldwork and stage actor, requires a special doubling of consciousness, an ironic awareness. One must take oneself simultaneously as both subject and object" (p. 21). In my performance, I am both the subject and the object. Performance became the space where my researcher-self and performer-self collided, if there was ever a distinction between the two, and where my intra-Self and intra-Other danced and teased each other out to flesh out my intersubjective experience. (Angela) the researcher and (gelay) the persona took turns coming to the fore and rowing the subsequent analysis. Angela and gelay have the same lived experiences, but where gelay enacted them in the performance, Angela scrutinized them with a critical eye. Johnson (2013) termed this as "'studying up,' allowing the on-the-ground embodied practices of subaltern groups to generate their own theories of selfhood and resistance" (p. 10). Indeed, gelay offered the embodiments, Angela theorized from them. For Conquergood (2013), performance is the space of "deconstruction and reconstruction, crisis and re-dress, the breaking down and the building up of the workshop-rehearsal process, the Not Me and the Not Not Me" (p. 57). The doubling of personas facilitated a simultaneous intimacy and distance with emotions, with theory, and with co-performers. There may be no hard boundaries between Angela and gelay, but their enmeshed interactions, the edges between them, in the tradition of Lorde (1987), sparked a dialectical force animating the theorization of performance from lived experiences. Alexander (1999) calls this as "a way of reading between the lines of

my own experience" (p. 310), recognizing "how Blacks and other minority students negotiate the chasm that sometimes exists between racial and cultural knowing and the sometimes sanitizing space of academia" (p. 319). Distinguishing between the two personas allowed for an analytic maneuver in the performance, to locate the specificity of the negotiations and to "place the ache back in scholars' abstractions" (Pelias, 2014, p. 12). Now, with Angela and gelay at the helm, we begin.

The Flows of "What Sounds do Turtles Make?"

"What sounds do turtles make?" moves through six scenes.

"Homecoming" was the first scene. Here, gelay the performer and Jihyun the co-performer packed grocery items into a balikbayan box, while Jihyun asked gelay questions on why she has not been back home for so long. This scene explored memory, the ways Angela/gelay had the kinetic memory of packing balikbayan boxes with her grandmother, a deep memory that functions as a tether, grappling with longing. gelay called a friend to rehearse the movement with her, a sensitive request, an empathic plea: "Do you see, feel, what it's like?"

"Lost at Sea" was the second scene. Here, the audience savored quotes that gestured to yearning for home, interspersed with audio recordings from Angela/gelay's friends and family in the Philippines. They asked her "Kailan ka uuwi?" (When will you come home?), to which gelay always had the response of, "'Di ko pa alam eh." (I don't know yet eh.) This scene meditated on the affect of grief, the repetitions that punctuate the crest and trough of ongoing loss, an evolving honoring of the presence-absence that constitutes diasporic and decolonial lives.

"Turtles vs. Octopus" was the third scene. Here, the audience witnessed the dance of three sea turtles against an imperial octopus, cloaked in white sheet, with its eight black canvasses-turned-tentacles contracting and expanding. The octopus defeated the turtles at first. The turtles retreated, breathed together, and transcended to another space-time. The turtles came back to defeat the octopus, collaboratively confronting its imperial tentacles. Playing with space and time, this scene actualized Angela's dreams about sea turtles who carried their homes on their backs, the sea turtles who vanquished the U.S. navy.

"Found Poetry" was the fourth scene. Here, gelay and the co-performers voiced the poems found from the interviews with anti-imperial organizers. Pablo vocalized the humility of learning how to work through conflict. Jihyun conveyed the longing for a political community and finding avenues to be involved. gelay clamored for the necessity of anti-imperialism and the interconnectedness of local and transnational work. Caleb called out settler colonialism and the marginalization of Native organizers. Blake interrogated what "solidarity" means and called for learning how to listen and show up. This scene animated the anti-imperial organizers' sentiments in Chapter 2 and showcased their current orientations to liberatory work, so that the community may engage with them.

"Overflowing Rage" was the fifth scene. Here, gelay stood on top of a balikbayan box. Draped in white gauze, she acted like a statue, an object in a museum, while the co-performers gazed and exoticized her, spouting racist and gendered microaggressions typically directed against Pinays. gelay twitched, squirmed, and writhed, until the lights shifted, then gelay shrieked, screamed, and wailed. Jihyun and Caleb cried, shouted, and

joined her in the agony, while the rest of the co-performers grieved, howled, and moaned from behind the giant black curtains. This scene moved along with the affective drive of rage, the excess of gaze and erasure, the impulse of unintelligibility, and the undoing of identity.

"Waves Lapping at the Shore" was the sixth and final scene. Here, sea green lights turned on, as araw, a co-performer, strummed the guitar with the rhythm of a kundiman, a traditional genre of Filipino song known for its gentle and flowing melody. gelay delivered a final love letter to the audience, a wish for hope amidst the violence, and an invitation to eat despite the horrors of a world ending. This scene clinched the performance in the tradition of a palabas, where the performance closed by opening a space for the community to celebrate together in food, dialogue, and presence.

These six scenes provide the context for contouring archipelagic performance.

The Contours of Archipelagic Performance

The Whispers and Screams You Hear from The Sea

This goes way back.

The murder of my ancestors.

The military disappearances and assassinations.

The gross and inhumane violence suffered at the hands of colonizers.

The grief the grief the grief the grief the grief the grief the grief the grief the grief the grie

The rage.

Lavinnia, an attendee of the performance asked during the talkback, "From where and how do you channel all that rage?" This happened in the fifth scene "Overflowing

Rage," where I screamed and pulled anger and grief—drawing it from somewhere deep inside me. I answered Lavinnia, "I actually don't do it enough." I had less of an answer and more of a remembrance—in more ways than one—remembering Lorde (1997) writing about anger as a crucial political force, a creative energy that must be harnessed between us and directed at the violent designs of our oppressions. Lorde, as a "black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet," theorized the anger she felt at the anti-Blackness of white women in feminist spaces, at the misogyny in Black radical spaces, and at the larger political structures that pit people against each other (Bowen, 1997). Lorde (1997) states, "We must be quite serious about the choice of this topic and the angers entwined within it, because, rest assured, our opponents are quite serious about their hatred of us and of what we are trying to do here" (p. 281). LeMaster and Labador (in press) provide an example of channeling this deep rage coalitionally, intertwining it with currents of grief, and forcefully directing it at the imperial and fascistic arrangements that contribute to trans dispossession in the Global South and elsewhere. For LeMaster (2018b), trans rage possibilizes queer worldmaking by imploding cisheteronormative structures and "reconfiguring dystopia as a queer utopia all along" (p. 97). Anger thus becomes a rallying and worldmaking force.

The anger that manifested in my performance could be captured necessarily by the script. It was an affective moment in time. In reflecting back, I did not follow the script toward an affective end. Rather, it evaded the script. I stood on top of the balikbayan box, attempting to maintain my balance, even as my body twitched, glitched, and squirmed at the hurled microaggressions (e.g., "I once had a nurse who's Filipina, too. Not to mention, beautiful country!" "They spoke really good English."), and amidst

the intensity of the gaze (punctuated by camera flashes). Blue and red lighting shown through the white gauze of cloth that draped over gelay's body, the scene was inspired by a piece of performance art entitled "DAGAT: A woman drowning in sorrow and pain" by the Black Cat Gallery (2008). In both DAGAT and gelay's performance, the undercurrent of rage was mourning. gelay responded to what Grace (siya/she), a Fil-Am cis female, said in the interviews with anti-imperial organizers in Chapter 2: "I think we're all just trying to help one another embrace what has been lost throughout generations, or even within our cultural upbringing… How do I still honor what's been lost?" To unpack what Grace said, I translated it: "Sa tingin ko sinisikap lang nating lahat tulungan ang isa't isa na yakapin kung anong nawala sa mga henerasyon, o kahit sa pagpapalaki sa atin sa kultura… Paano ko kikilalanin kung anong nawala?"

Two words jumped at me: yakapin (to embrace) and kikilalanin (to honor, which also means to recognize). So, after eliciting deep sorrow and fury from somewhere within me, from my belly to my chest to my throat, to the audience and to the space, two performers came up to me, too, crying, recognizing the moment, offering an embrace. The other performers cried and whimpered and mourned from behind the giant black show curtains, too. We performed a collective haunting, a collective mourning. It was a process akin to what Rakena (2019) narrates, when they wrote about the power of musical community arts in healing historical trauma in Aotearoa: "We cried, we grieved, we screamed, we looked with horror at these public representations of colonial history and we filled the space with a soundscape rarely heard in a temple of western art" (p. 135). Such is what Lorde (1997) would describe as a "symphony," where she explains, "I say 'symphony' rather than 'cacophony' because we have had to learn to orchestrate

those furies so that they do not tear us apart" (p. 282). It is a sound that haunts, that is the simultaneously silenced yet exceeding frequency across official declarations and speeches, the sound that cannot be drowned, converted instead into reverberations across waters, across lands, across centuries.

Notably, Lorde's (1997) use of symphony and orchestration showed her conceptualization of difference and flow, a fluid and queer intersectional theorizing, anchored in her Caribbean feminist politic. Bowen (1997) maps the work of Lorde across various liberation movements and described her as "not as fixed and immutable, but always fluid, precluded the very arguments raised by postmodernists" (p. 253). The daughter of Caribbean immigrants, Lorde has always already espoused and embodied an oceanic impulse that influenced how she oriented towards coalitions and harnessed emotions in service of liberation.

Indeed, Lorde's work is affective. Conquergood (2002) talks about how enslaved and dispossessed people have created countercultures through performances that "register and radiate dynamic 'structures of feeling' and pull us into alternative ways of knowing that exceed cognitive control" (p. 149). In spite of empire and academia's historical control of dominant narratives, the archives, and official documents, affect, emotions, and lived experiences – as animated by performances – cannot be contained. The body comes back to the mind. Ghosts haunt the ivory tower. Here, Gordon (2008) defines haunting as:

> One way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when they are supposedly over and done with (slavery, for instance) or when their oppressive nature is denied (as in free labor or national security). (p. xvi)

What is repressed will continue to come back again and again and again, until confronted. A confrontation. Of the ink of official documents and their bloodied underside. Of the dominant narratives and the whispers from underground. Of the archives and their spirits waiting to be unleashed. Of the halls and the howls from behind the walls (Prasad et al., 2022). Eng (2010) explores "how affect might come to supplement history as the way-it-really-was by providing another language for loss" (p. 172). And the screams that currently stand-in for that language. The cries. And the dreams.

Attendees of the performance noted two distinct receptions of the screaming and crying scene of the fifth scene, "Overflowing Rage." During the first night, some of the attendees said that the ensuing scene after that ("Waves Lapping at the Shore"), in which my monologue ending with the sea green lights, provided the reprieve, a release, an end to the agony, mercifully. araw, a co-performer who played the guitar accompaniment for the ending scene, also stated that they started playing the instrument when the vicarious pain already became too much. Izzy, an attendee, said that the guitar strums helped them ease emotionally into the next scene. Contrarily, during the second night, Ame, an attendee, noted that the guitaring offered an abrupt transition. Rather, Ame wanted to immerse more in the screaming and crying of the preceding scene. The difference between the two nights is that the attendees during the first night personally knew me while the second night included members of the general public.

This brings us back to the question of what do we do with affect, when it is already there, laid bare? When it is impinging, begging for relief? Rodríguez (2014) calls this moment viscous, sticky, jamming "the gears of signification, those moments that are too personal or too painful to allow the uninterrupted flow of argument or disinterested

analysis" (p. 101). So, maybe the point is to avoid looking away. To stare the grief and the rage and the monster in the eye. To not look away. Then, maybe then, can we confront our context. When we stop to prod what is jamming the gears. What is sticky. As Gordon (2008) articulates, "A solution, a something to be done, emerges from haunting and the *very edge of semantic availability* to manifest its inexorability for us" (p. 202, emphasis in the original). I am still trying to find that edge. I am still trying to touch, tentatively, the texture. I am still reflecting upon what Sedgwick (2003) prompted, "To perceive texture is never only to ask or know What is it like? nor even just How does *it* impinge on *me*? Textural perception always explores two other questions as well: How did it get that way? and What could I do with it?" (p. 13). Everything that is stuck. The knots of history. Untangling, unweaving, releasing tension. The crumpled-up pieces of fabric, now exposed to the sun to dry, to iron out. But sometimes I find that I am still here. In the middle of the texture. In the middle of the pool of rage and grief. Sometimes the waters are low, and I can keep my head above water. Other times the moon pulls, and the tide rises, and I am drowning. Yet still undrowned and keeping on breathing (Gumbs, 2020).

But what is it like to drown when there is no water? During the first night, attendees in the talk back noted the absence of water in the performance, and the structures that made it so. From the government hindering water supply to a rural farm in Mexico, to the ongoing water crisis in Arizona, where settler modes of relating position water as extractive resources, and the Navajo Nation struggling for their water rights (Sullivan, 2023), the absence is palpable, just as the violence that carved it. Furthermore, Bao, an attendee, noted how the lack of water creates a reliance on the state, such as

having to use airlines to cross waters. This is reminiscent of the artmaking participants' (see Chapter 3) lamentation of water as border, where access to resources dictate one's ability to cross. Still, Pauline, a co-performer, gestured to the video shown at the beginning of the performance: *Liwanag* by the Filipino Migrant Center (2022), where it said, "The number one export in the Philippines, is not mangoes, is not coconut, is not rice, but our very own people themselves." Pauline declared that despite the displacement, when we return, we find that the land and the water are still a part of us, that they help us navigate, go from island-to-island, trade amongst people, and build a sense of community.

This is archipelagic performance.

The Fluidity That Can Never Be Contained

Staying within the same scene ("Overflowing Rage") where gelay, the performer, stood on top of the balikbayan box, draped with the white gauze, illuminated with blue and red lights, a projector flashed "United Stages of Empire." The scene opened and Jihyun, a co-performer, asked, "Which way to the Philippines?" Burns' (2013) book chapter was entitled exactly that: "'Which Way to the Philippines?' United Stages of Empire," where she said, "Through spectacular acts of performance, through *puro arte*, Filipino/a bodies instantiate and exceed the totalizing script of colonialism, inviting forms of critical engagement that emphasize more the incompleteness of and the possibilities of inherited histories" (p. 22). As a performance episteme, *puro arte* locates the Filipino/a body in moments of Philippine-U.S. relations (Burns, 2013). It haunts empire, like the shadow behind a sandcastle amidst an impending monstrous wave, or like the way the

ocean will pull everything to her, with the help of the moon, little by little, eventually eroding the foundations of empire.

Keiji, an attendee, noted the function of gaze in the scene of "Overflowing Rage." To stand on top of the balikbayan box was uncomfortable, especially as the co-performers rehashed paper-cut microaggressions against Filipino/a/x. Yet what was interesting is that even as the gaze on my body intensified during that time, Ari, an attendee, stated that they felt hyperaware, reflexive, like there was a mirror reflected back to them. That is, Ari became aware of all of the times when they became complicit in those microaggressions. Balce (2016) wrote:

> By visualizing abject bodies, white American imperial identities are reframed, romanticized, and memorialized: these abject bodies of savagery and sexuality then become negative markers of the American imperial self-image, but only after they have served as catalysts of empire and then discarded. (p. 9)

The performance served to expose the sutures, where the "American imperial self-image" ended and where the construction of the abject bodies began. In staging the racist and sexist microaggressions to the point of excess, the performance repeats the papercut violence of microaggressions to the point of absurdity. For See (2009), the politics of this performative move is where "the empire falls apart – it is in fact cannibalized by its radical interior" (p. xviii). The disarticulated Filipino/a/x objects/subjects deployed the same tactic of disarticulation towards the very empire that objectified them in the process of imperial constitution. The Filipino/a/x exceeds, from the belly of the beast, breaks the empire from within.

There is resonance with how trans, Black, and disabled scholars have theorized embodiment and performance. LeMaster (2018b) articulates that "the performance of trans rage is not about liberating trans monsters. Rather, the performance of trans rage is about externalizing the internalization of becoming monstrous" (p. 114). It is an abjection not directed *within* anymore, but *outward* towards the structure that interpellated the abjection in the first place. In a similar yet different vein, Powell (2011) engages with Jena Six and demonstrated how "contemporary performances of black identity in the United States are grounded in a thick history of the 'terrible spectacle' in which blackness is inextricably bound to a state of spectacular suffering" (p. 69). Powell implicated the particular sensationalism that suffuse racialized peoples' performances, especially of suffering, gesturing to historical iterations of the violence. Meanwhile, from the experiences of disabled performers, Scott (2012) advances hyperembodiment, an "acute awareness of how their bodies are inescapably responsible," subjected to a "constant state of re-experience and re-interpretation" (p. 101). Historically oppressed peoples' bodies had not been theirs, but through performance, they reclaim their bodies. Whether through disarticulation, monstrosity, spectacularism, or hyperembodiment, the body exceeds the frame, where the excess is a result of how the frame impinged on the body. Historically oppressed peoples transmute the excess, the affective energy of their bodies that can never be contained, in mirroring the abjection back to empire.

Circling back to gaze, when the co-performers were gazing at and taking pictures of gelay's body, Ame, an attendee of the performance observed that there was this tension of seeing and not seeing. The co-performers were not seeing the effect that they were having on the gazed-upon body, and they were oblivious to what has been going on

in the interior of the body. People see what they want to see, and rarely is it an affirmation of the way people want to be seen. For instance, Asante and LeMaster (2022) examine how gender is sensorially constituted in (post)colonial Ghana through the experiences of trans women. They argue that the senses become a mode through which trans women constitute their gender amidst and in spite of the colonial optics of gender. Likewise, Bao, an attendee, perceived the use of Tagalog in the performance as a way to resist the white gaze, a leaning into the auditory and the sensorial to perform un/intelligibility. In another context, Labador and Zhang (2021) observe the phenomenon of self-tokenism or hyperracialization of oneself among Filipino/a/x Americans and found how it simultaneously reifies and resists the white gaze. It is reification, in that it reinforces the structure, and it is resistance, in that it becomes a mode of survival. Muñoz (1999) termed this as disidentification, "a strategy that tries to transform a cultural logic from within, always laboring to enact permanent structural change while at the same time valuing the importance of local or everyday struggles of resistance" (pp. 11-12). Here, the emphasis is on quotidian forms of resistance, and on the interiority of oneself that creatively responds to and reworks hegemonic structures to survive and live a livable life.

In addition to playing with gaze and embodiment, the symbolism and utility of the balikbayan box is another way that maneuvering fluidities manifested in the performance. In the opening scene of the performance "Homecoming," gelay the performer and Jihyun, a co-performer, were packing grocery items into a balikbayan box. Jihyun asked, "Don't they have these products in the Philippines? Like Spam, really?" to which gelay responded:

> Well, if it's coming from the United States, it's automatically perceived as better. When my grandmother used to send us balikbayan boxes from the States, my sister and I would often joke that the U.S. has a particular smell when we open the box. Cleaner, crisper, fresher, almost floral. (GELAY picks up a perfume) But it's probably the perfumes my grandmother packed.

My character's response resonated with an attendee, who shared a similar experience of orienting to the U.S. during the talkback session, as they also came from a U.S. colony, thereby gesturing to the unevenness of relations between the U.S. and its former and current colonies. Another attendee shared how they were also packing balikbayan boxes in preparation for returning to and visiting the Philippine archipelago.

Filipino/a/x scholars have engaged and documented the balikbayan box as a metaphor for Filipino American (dis)location (Alburo, 2005), as Filipino migrant women's performance of intimacy (Camposano, 2012), and as a Filipino practice of worldmaking and pasalubong (gifting upon return home) (de Mata, 2022). When I was living in Texas, I used to help my grandmother pack a balikbayan box. When we would shop for groceries, every now and then she would buy chocolates, clothes, vitamins, etc. to put in the balikbayan box. I would challenge her and say that we have those goods in the Philippines, why buy them, and she would chastise me and say, "Mas okay 'to. Gusto nila 'to. Hayaan mo na." (This is better. They like this. Let it go). By "they," she meant my mom, siblings, uncle, aunt, and cousins. I realized that putting goods in the balikbayan box has been a way for her to manage the yearning and survive the period of the pandemic during which she cannot go back home to the islands. Notwithstanding my skepticism, I still relished in the quiet comfort of helping her reinforce the box with

packing tape. It was a mundane act, but it meant the world to her, and I hesitate to admit that maybe, to me, too. Maybe it was also my way of managing the yearning and surviving.

The balikbayan box scene ended with gelay asking, “Hmm, can I go inside the box, too?” This sentiment was inspired by another Filipino migrant woman’s experience. Francisco-Menchavez (2022) works with Filipino migrant women via kwentuhan (storytelling) and participatory action research, where they discussed and staged their experiences to stitch their individual stories together as part of the collective and ultimately raise consciousness about the Filipino migratory experience. They staged a monologue where Maria, a Filipino migrant woman, talked about the products that she was packing into the balikbayan box. Describing this scene, Francisco-Menchavez (2022) states, “But as she packs the box, Maria grows frustrated with the process because the only thing she wants to pack but cannot is herself” (p. 1538).

Now I am realizing that maybe that is what I was feeling. Why I was skeptical. I am realizing yet again how I just want to go home, rather than send a balikbayan box with goods to stand in for myself. The balikbayan box contains everything and yet nothing at the same time. Importantly, as the performance progressed, the balikbayan box transformed into turtle shells, home on one’s back (“Turtles vs. Octopus”); into a collective process of packing and sending care packages (“Homecoming,” “Found Poetry”); into a stage, the exoticized pedestal on which my character was gazed and microaggressed (“Overflowing Rage”); and into a seat, where I momentarily found rest (“Waves Lapping at the Shore”). The balikbayan box was the throughline of the

performance, connecting the Philippine archipelago to the imperial core, connecting the here and there, connecting the beginning to the end.

Finally, from playing with gazes to deploying the balikbayan box, shifting roles and resources was another way maneuvering fluidities methodologically manifested in the performance. I was fortunate enough to secure some funding for staging the performance, and still, I, together with the co-performers, had to exercise some creativity and flexibility in making do with what we have and pulling them all together. This evoked the Filipino performance tradition, as Barrios (2013) documents the adaptability of Philippine street performers, who used tin cans and bamboo sticks for sound, and the community collaborations that possibilized performances despite the lack of resources. For instance, with Lore's guidance, we used white sheets from thrift stores to produce a mirroring effect for the projectors. But up until the last few days before the performance, we did not have tech support. Pablo, a co-performer, volunteered to run our tech, while a close friend, Pauline, agreed to stand in for Pablo's original role. Pablo voiced the lines from the tech booth while Pauline enacted the choreographed movements. It was a relational and collaborative moment. It was a fluid and flexible maneuver. It was a reminder of what Barrios (2013) describes: "When only one microphone was available, a play had a double cast: a set of actors read the lines, another provided movements" (p. 261). Indeed, this was not just "my" performance; the community stepped up and made it happen.

The Space-Time Logic of Octopus and Turtles

An anti-imperial organizer, Isaac (he/him), a Filipino Asian male, said in the interviews:

> We also practice our international solidarity. That means that we have, you know, unconditional support for people, struggles fighting against imperialism, because we know that at the end of the day, if, not just if, *when* Indigenous Peoples here win their fight, it'll be a victory also for the Filipino people, and vice versa. And so, we always like to think of imperialism, it's like an octopus. And so, wherever you cut off the tentacles, it affects the mother brain. And so, all these fights are so important to wage, contribute to, and really understand and build with.

Isaac offered the metaphor of the octopus to connote the intertwining power structures of empire, which then requires a coalition, an active struggle on multiple fronts, the building of material forces (and sometimes in the form of balikbayan boxes turned into turtle shells) to confront the octopus' tentacles. Under Lore's direction, the co-performers and I used black light paint to draw on the black canvasses eight of the many tentacles of empire: settler colonialism, anti-Blackness, cisheteronormativity, ableism, neoliberal capitalism, allonormativity, English hegemony, and Eurocentrism. We painted symbols of guns, white colonial attires, the gender binary, blocked access, dollar signs, kiss marks, the Roman alphabet, and the flags of the colonizing nations to represent these structures (dis)respectively (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Eight Black Canvasses Representing Imperialist Tentacles.

During the talkback on the first night, an attendee asked what the kiss marks represented. She thought it alluded to the mail-order bride industry in the Philippines. Though the kiss marks were initially intended to signify allonormativity – the hegemonic structure hinged with white supremacy that discriminates against asexual folks (Brown, 2022) – the attendee was not far off in her interpretation as there needs to be further examination of the intersections between allonormativity and the mail-order bride phenomenon as either human trafficking or empowering for Pinays (Magee, 2023), especially asexual Pinays.

Furthermore, as explicated in Chapter 2, anti-imperialism references a broad banner of different movements that entails the specificity and locality of activisms and their coordination to address the connections and intersections of struggles. Empire wields settler colonialism (Byrd, 2011), anti-Blackness (Agathangelou, 2013), cisheteronormativity (LeMaster & Labador, in press; Liu, 2019), ableism (Jaffee, 2018), neoliberal capitalism (Hardt & Negri, 2000), allonormativity (Brandley & Labador, 2022), English hegemony (Phillipson, 2008), and Eurocentrism (Castro-Gómez, 2007) among others, to sustain itself and extend its dominion through every lands and waters and every aspect of life. I have only chosen eight particular structures to stand for the eight tentacles of the octopus in the performance, but in reality, there are many, many more imperial tentacles, reaching across transnational borders and extending to localities. Kat, an attendee and fellow kasama (comrade), mentioned during the talk back that fighting empire requires fighting it on the local end. Abdullah (they/them), an Arab nonbinary person, articulated this as well in the interviews: “We're addressing injustice, however, it manifests wherever we find ourselves.” Moreover, to stand out in the black

light, Pauline, who embodied the body of the octopus, wore a drape of white sheet. DC, another co-performer, observed during the rehearsals how it resembled the Ku Klux Klan. It was an uncanny coincidence that ironically resonated with the performance's critique.

As the scene progressed, and the octopus unfurled its tentacles, the turtles eventually confronted the octopus. An ethereal track guided the underwater choreography between the octopus and the turtles. At first, the octopus defeated the turtles, who regrouped in the corner of the performance space, catching their breath as they transcended to another space-time. Upon their return, the turtles defeated the octopus. As stated in the script: "The turtles look at the octopus for a moment, staring at the octopus as if it never stood a chance, then the turtles' faces turn to rage and revenge as they slammed against the rest of the tentacles."

The turtles also represented the slowness and historical patience that the anti-imperial organizers emphasized in the interviews. Indeed, they may initially lose, but through their patient and collective efforts, they eventually prevail together and against the octopus. For instance, Xavier (they/them), a Black African nonbinary person, accentuated the importance of slowness and consistency in building trust in organizing, especially during times of stress. They explained:

> All of us are in a different stage in the process of decolonizing. Urgency culture, which is a tenet of white supremacy, causes us when we move fast to move back into our defaults. So, when people have to make a split-second reaction, when they're reacting, it's more likely you're going to see their true stage of development. It's one thing to be able to put up a front about who you say you are. But when shit hits the fan, then what values really come out? That's a good

> indicator showing where you really are in terms of your stage of development, and the process of decolonization which I feel is never done. It's an everyday practice. But that's one way that I see or build trust.

Here, slowness manifests in being more mindful and intentional with actions; resisting a colonial sense of urgency; going against the grain and the onslaught of capitalist and imperial time; trusting the process and the historical patience that things will change; and giving people enough time to build and replenish their capacities to become involved with movements. Slowness also manifests in the intimacies that cultivate organizing relationships. F (they/she), a Filipino and white, brown femme, reflected, "I've realized the importance of relationship building on a slower scale." F dreamed of transcending the optics of relationship building and prioritizing its more intimate aspects, like resting together. F importantly noted that "the whole idea of radical rest was brought about by Black liberation movements."

Gumbs (2020) poeticizes rest. Her words and phrases inspired me to lay down her sensibilities on the page like this:

> the
>
> depth
>
> rest reveals and allows
>
> gratitude
>
> for all the depth
>
> it takes for you to do the
>
> (private work)
>
> just *snuggling* like a full-time job

for now all there is to do is to

sleep off

who

we were

One month of summer

I'll be home,

becoming something

iridescent,

vulnerable,

older and new.

the sacredness of rest expansive

sprawling r e s t

uninterrupted

You deserve to rest

long enough

to let whatever go.

(pp. 147-150)

And I am letting go. Over and over again. I am letting go, of everything, however long it takes, to let go. In Tagalog, rest is pahinga. The root word, "hinga," means breath. And I will continue to breathe, even when it remains the only sure anchor I cling to amidst these turbulent seas. And I will continue to breathe with you, as in, "When I can't see the shore, I'm here timing my breathing to yours" (Gumbs, 2020, p. 53). The turtles breathed together and won.

Yet we simmer in this slowness that is dialectically held in tension and tempered with exigency. Carey (2020) demonstrates Black women's rhetorical impatience, "or performances used to manage time within adverse conditions, to expand conceptions of kairos and self-care" (p. 269). For instance, "Ain't Nobody Got Time for That" invokes the prioritization of Black women's wellness. In addition, Carey (2020) articulates "temporal hegemony" as the convergence of ideological and material structures "into a culture of hostility that pushes equity for a group further out of reach" (p. 270). Rhetorical impatience thus means very urgent calls for reparations, justice, and land and ocean back, calls that are very well past their due date and that must be attended to NOW! Indeed, for Black women and people amidst intersecting and continuing oppressions, there is always already something pressing that demands action.

I see a dialectic of im/patience manifesting here. Towards comrades (turtles) and with the masses, we exercise patience. But towards hegemonic structures (octopus) and enemies of the movement, we exercise impatience.

Liahnna, an attendee, reflected on the movement in the performance, and the ways the movement demonstrated the spatiality of empire as a structure, as a "*decentered* and *deterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. xii, emphasis in the original). Liahnna saw so much movement between the U.S. and the Philippines, between academia and community, and between being subject and object. Sarah, another attendee, also noted the guttural and visceral scream that emanated from being displaced, echoes of pain as one labors in the academy, holds tension with and for community, while still participating in such a violent structure, while being displaced from home and people.

The conversation on displacement was further fleshed out during the talk back session after the second performance. One of the questions I asked in the talkback was, "How are you compelled to move by the performance? Where does it prompt you to go? Where does it prompt you to return?" Chandler, an attendee, who was white and whose great grandfather left the Mormon church, shared the difficulty of reconnecting with one's roots. This led to a generative discussion among the attendees on how to reckon with being a settler, and how to navigate being forced out of one's land and being part of a diaspora who struggles with reconnecting with the land. Here, Kat, an attendee and fellow kasama (comrade), proposed the importance of finding a political home, of finding people you organize with and feel belonging and respect, beyond just biological or ethnic lineages. Another attendee shared an insight from a panel of Native Hawaiian activists, that we all have a connection, and the invitation to settlers is to join in the fight and be part of the stewardship of the land. That is, to stop exploiting it and instead work together to nurture it. Still, Domingo, an attendee, remarked "how whiteness inherently erases all the differences between the unique cultures and ethnicities included under the umbrella of 'white,' which is a disservice to those groups." Further, Domingo clarified that, "whiteness requires anti-blackness and orientalism to sustain itself as the opposite, so buying into whiteness also hurts the groups who can't become 'white.' In other words, there is an upper limit [as] to who can be white." Indeed, another attendee stated the importance of not flattening the contradictions, and instead interrogating the structures of displacement that creates diasporas and to generate comparative analyses of colonialisms and forces of assimilation. Archipelagic performance, in the space-time logic of the turtles and the octopus, prompted us to meditate upon our various positionalities and the

relationalities that tie us to each other, the histories that led us here, and the impulses that move us to realize particular futurities.

Overall, the attendees emerged as spect-actors. In discussing Boal's (2013) *Theatre of the Oppressed,* Cohen-Cruz (2012) marks spect-actors as "enacting alternatives themselves" (p. 45) through the performance. That is, attendees shift to being spect-actors when they move from mere gazing to actual intervention by participating in the talkback. They related the performance back to their lives and posed questions that challenged and complicated the performance and what it meant for them. The talkback created an opportunity for the co-performers and attendees alike to discuss the performance's implications and to be in conversation with the anti-imperial organizers. It provided a culmination to the research generated so far and laid the groundwork for future directions and actions that will further offer contours of archipelagic performance.

Performance as Decolonial Resistance

> I dream with you, and I write this love letter to you, where your hopes are my hopes, and in this little time and space we have together, I had a glimpse of what liberation looks and feels like. We may never actually achieve that in our lifetimes, but maybe I can dream with you a time when the fish can fly again. The world is violent and terrible and I'm scared, but will you accept this mango? Will you eat with me?

I/we ended the performance with an invitation to eat ("Waves Lapping at the Shore"). This was inspired by Harjo's (1994) poem, where she said, "Perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing and crying, eating of the last sweet bite" (par. 11). There was a simultaneous acknowledgement of the violence and hopelessness of the

world, and yet, still, a grasping on to hope in the mundane, in the enjoyment of the here and now with the people you love and care about. In my experience of Filipino culture, we express our love to strangers and kin alike by asking, “Kumain ka na ba?” (Have you eaten yet?), because if not, let’s go eat together. And this, even if I still feel full, I will accompany you while you eat. gelay delivered these last lines of the performance with araw who provided the guitar accompaniment, similar to how Filipino poets deliver spoken word, like Cantillano (2016) when she recited “Sa Pagitan Kita Natagpuan” (I Found You in the Space in Between), with the strums of a guitar.

In this chapter, I theorized archipelagic performance and analyzed the staged production of “What sounds do turtles make?” This is important for three reasons. First, with archipelagic performance as sailing via memory and the senses, this chapter recognizes the affects of anger and grief as decolonial forces. Second, with archipelagic performance as maneuvering fluidities, this chapter affirms the interiority of oneself in engaging with gazes and dis/articulations. Third, with archipelagic performance as navigating spatio-temporalities, this chapter foregrounds spatiality and slowness as critical analytics in organizing and performance.

The first contribution honors a colonized body’s anger and grief as decolonial responses. The screaming of anger and grief is a performance of a Filipino/a/x body that responds to centuries of colonial and racist oppression. A Filipino/a/x body can become a methodological tool (Pelias, 2018) that can locate where the imperial structures impinge and offer blueprints on how to unhinge from its interlocking grips. A Filipino/a/x body can rework hegemonic scripts, leveraging anger as a political energy (Lorde, 1997) and as a coalitional force (LeMaster & Labador, in press). In performing a Filipino/a/x body,

the performance foregrounded a collective haunting and grief, which summons an undercurrent of mourning that complicates superficial representations of Filipino/a/x culture, beyond than just halo-halo or lumpia.

Moreover, archipelagic performance activates sea-based ways of performing, a way of leaning into fluidities to respond to what Hastings (2009) calls as performative conditions (accounting for history and power) and to facilitate performative actions (creative transcendence of conditions). In the performance, the screaming is a release, a reckoning with the legacies of colonialism, and an externalization of its violence. The screams counter colonial records and provide a form of remembering amidst colonial erasure (Constantino, 1970). The screams offer a somatic release, a clearing space to appraise what can be done and where can we go from here; and it can transmute the affects of anger and grief into coalitional and liberatory forces.

The second contribution accentuates the interiority of oneself amidst external gazes and articulations. Ari's experience of being hyperaware and reflexive about the rehearsed Filipino/a/x microaggressions evidenced what LeMaster (2018a) calls as dissolution of the sedimented cultural scripts via failure and performance. The performing Filipino/a/x body pointed to an excess of the scripts of colonialism (Burns, 2013), embodying and transmuting the excess to mirror the abject nature of the imperial frame, a parallel of the trans externalization of monstrosity (LeMaster, 2018b). The disarticulated Filipino/a/x body disassembles empire in the process of reassembling one's postcolonial subjectivity (Olaniyan, 1992).

The performers, who circled and gazed upon my body, demonstrated the act of seeing and not seeing that attendee Ame pointed out, how essentially, they saw the

exterior but not the interiority of the body. The interiority of oneself offers a resource for unintelligibility to counter co-optation (Hastings, 2009), like how a subaltern speaks opaquely (Tinsley, 2008), or like how a performer can refuse interpretation (Conquergood, 2002). The sensorial evades colonial optics (Asante & LeMaster, 2022), similar to how in the performance the use of Tagalog functions as a code, as an indication of interiority that is not intended to be intelligible to outsiders.

The third contribution highlights the function of slowness and spatiality in organizing and performance. The turtles stood for the importance of slowness, resting, and breathing in sustaining oneself and a movement. Breath is critical, particularly for a performer who strives to stay attuned to their body, to their co-performers, and to the performance space. Breathing also moves one from profane time and into the space of sacred time (Gonzalez, 1983), a decolonial orientation to time, where urgency as a characteristic of colonialism and whiteness fades away. Yet this is also tempered with rhetorical impatience (Carey, 2020), where the oscillation between patience towards comrades and impatience towards structures drives the movement for change. Further, archipelagic performance as navigating spatio-temporalities gestures to the criticality of spatiality in performance. There had been generative talkbacks about the spatiality of empire, the confrontations of empire locally, the displacements, the settling, the relationalities, and the diasporas. This demonstrates how a performance space can facilitate the spatial discursive overlaps between the performers and the audience (Fischter-Lichte, 2008) and show how a body is always already imbricated and related with other bodies.

These theoretical contributions develop archipelagic performance, a decolonial mode of imagination, inquiry, and intervention that facilitates sailing via memory and the senses, maneuvering fluidities, and navigating spatio-temporalities for anti-imperial ends. Archipelagic performance critically responds to the use of the sea as a diversity metaphor (Simmons & Brisini, 2020) and reclaims the sea to stand for performance as a decolonial mode of survival, as leaning into the fluid performance of hegemonic scripts (Conquergood, 2002). Particularly, in the Filipino tradition, archipelagic performance extends the complication of remembering (See, 2009), the gaze (Chow, 2018), and the use of performance for activism (Barrios, 2013), while attuning to movements (Fajardo, 2014) and relationalities (Cuevas-Hewitt, 2020).

This study has limitations, of which when teased, can possibilize future performances. During the first night of the performance talkback, Sarah, an attendee, asked, "What would be different in this performance if you had more time, energy, and resources?" I answered that I would have incorporated the data from the artmaking workshops, such as more engagements with Filipino/a/x reconnections with water and fleshing out their complexities (see Chapter 3). Another attendee asked for more turtles in a next iteration of the performance. I expressed that preparing for the performance and conducting the artmaking workshops happened coincidingly, so there was no opportunity to weave in the data from the latter into the former. Ame, an attendee, also suggested foregrounding food more next time. While there was the presence of the grocery items being packed into the balikbayan box in the beginning, and the mango offered and home-cooked meals shared at the end, making food more salient could be a way to play with homecoming and further the enactment of a decolonial and sensorial performance.

Another limitation and opportunity for growth is the sharpening of performance as a tool for activist and anti-imperial ends. I was able to stitch together the anti-imperial organizers' narratives into found poetry, utilize them in explicating the themes of this chapter, and actualize their ideas in the performance itself (such as the octopus). I was also able to showcase Filipino/a/x cultural critiques throughout the performance as a way to raise consciousness. Now, while we staged the performance within an intentional space, there could be value in producing a street performance in the form of rally or protest, such as in the Philippine tradition (Barrios, 2013), so as to bring the message to a broader public and to various communities that could have different engagements with the performance. Moreover, there is potential in looping in more local issues so as to speak directly to the immediate demands and needs ongoing in the community, such as issues of displacement, abortion, and banning of drag shows.

The last limitation is methodological. I was the writer of the script, being that I was the researcher who animated the interview data into a performance. I called on co-performers, and they graciously helped and supported in staging the performance. They voiced the lines and performed their parts, but if there was more time and space, we could have sat with the script longer and fully involved them with the scripting process. That is, it could have been more collaborative in that we could intertwine with the script their own experiences with homecoming, displacement, and movement towards a cause that they are passionate about. This would entail more time and labor, so a bigger honorarium for compensation would also be in order. Beyond this chapter, I would also prompt them for their own reflections on the process to further flesh out and articulate the collaborative and relational method that undergirded the performance.

In sum, in this chapter, I conceptualized archipelagic performance as situated within performance studies in communication and the Filipino tradition of performance. I treated archipelagic performance as a work of imagination, as pragmatics of inquiry, and as a tactic of intervention. Theorizing from the staged production of "What sounds do turtles make?" I demonstrated archipelagic performance as a decolonial mode of sailing via memory and the senses, maneuvering fluidities, and navigating spatio-temporalities for anti-imperial ends. I threaded it through engagements with affect, abjection, gaze, spatiality, and time. Lastly, I closed with the theoretical contributions and future possibilities of the performance.

Finally, the balikbayan box tumbles down and opens. The turtles come out and come home. The waves beckon them to come to the shore, to the sunset, to the horizon.

CHAPTER 5

HOPE & HORIZONS

To a foreigner
You accuse me of sloganeering
And being unpoetic
My writing lines like
"Damn the US-Marcos Dictatorship."

Friend, my reply is
You do not understand
The weight, the ocean depth
Of our class hatred.

Yesterday I heard
A comrade has been ambushed.
One of five bullets
Had smashed through his young heart.

When my ears caught
The uttered syllables of his name
The muscles of my jaw tightened
To the hardness of a gun butt.

My fingers curled up
To a firm trigger squeeze
And the heat of anger exploded
Like bullets out of my eyes.

Have you not heard
What the people do to the traitors
Who betray their precious ones?
They cut them up

Into pieces so small
You could hardly tell
They once had the force
To murder a Red fighter.

You are a foreigner indeed,
Foreign to the rhythm of our struggle.
In the face of class murder,
How can we be lyrical?
—Mila D. Aguilar, "To a Foreigner" (pp. 3-4)

I am closing this dissertation with a poem by Mila D. Aguilar, a Filipina poet, college teacher, journalist, columnist, video documentarist, photographer, and web designer, who was once an underground cadre and political prisoner during Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s dictatorship. This poem is found in her collection of poems entitled, *A Comrade is as Precious as a Rice Seedling* (1984), smuggled to the U.S. when she was imprisoned for it, and which found its way to the Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. No other poet than Audre Lorde wrote the introduction to it, stating, "For it is Change, and her belief in Change, and the awareness of those reassessments that are bringing about Change, which move Aguilar through pain to a powerful and shared knowledge" (p. xi). This was followed by Aguilar's poem on dialectics, where she declared:

Dialectics is
Cherishing the work
That has yet to be done
Prizing each and every
Comrade's life

The point is
To transform the world
Not to escape it.

Let dialectics gush out
Not only from your brain
But your arms, your legs, your face

Your whole being.

—Mila D. Aguilar, "Dialectics" (p. 1)

Not only did both Aguilar and Lorde had an awareness of dialectics; they had an embodied and experiential knowledge of it. Caught up in liberation movements, they themselves were forces that induced change. They had the capacity to both affect and be

affected by change. Their works both spoke to emotional undercurrents, being carried away by streams of affect – of rage, grief, passion – and navigating these streams on the way to hope, on the way to horizons of change.

I chose the "To a Foreigner" poem by Aguilar because as this was written 39 years ago, I, we in the Filipino diaspora, find ourselves in a same yet different position of battling and ousting the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship. Recently, Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos Jr. granted access to the U.S. military to four additional bases in the Philippine archipelago, on top of the already existing five bases (Strangio, 2023). This was executed under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) of 2014, one of the many institutions of U.S. neocolonialism in the archipelago that presumes equal relations and mutual aid between the two countries. China opposed this strengthening of U.S. forces in Southeast Asia. After the balikatan (shoulder-to-shoulder exercises) between the Philippine troops and U.S. troops, Marcos Jr. visited U.S. president Biden "to send a message to China that the Filipino leader planned to deepen his country's relationship with the United States" (Rogers, 2023, par. 1). Yet Marcos Jr. will still sit down with China to negotiate fishing rights in the West Philippine Sea (Romero, 2023).

This escalating geopolitical context demonstrates the political moment during which I am writing this conclusion to the dissertation, during which I am finding resonance with Aguilar's poem. I am finishing with a freedom and a responsibility. Freedom, from writing in such a way that it only appeases the "foreigner," the academic masters, from doing scholarship in such a way that it only serves and props up the academic industrial complex. My work has never been for the academy; it has always been for the people, the Filipino people, and all historically marginalized peoples fighting

for their lives and liberation against empire. Nevertheless, this is also why I am finishing with a responsibility, of taking up the task of studying liberatory theories, putting them into motion through praxis, then dialectically refining theory and praxis, to ride Change, and be Change in communal struggle. This is a heavy responsibility, but I do not carry it alone. I carry it with the collective, with the freedom fighters and change makers who have come before me, and those who will come after.

As I feel fear, worry, and anxiety ruminating on how the Philippine archipelago is caught up in these imperial geopolitical tensions, I try to find comfort in the words of anti-imperial organizers. When I asked Grace (siya/she), who identified as a Fil-Am cis female, about hopelessness and hope, she said, "I do believe that we're up against so many, you know, bigger, greater monsters. And then I also know what people power can do. So, I hold both of those truths together." Radical women of color demonstrated the capacity to hold two contradictory truths together, to suspend those truths and generate creative energy from those contradictions. 7,000 Cagayanos held a prayer rally to protest the two EDCA facilities that will be constructed in the Cagayan province in the Philippines (Bacud, 2023). People on the ground are always already resisting; it is the task of the scholar to press their ear to the ground and be part of the movement.

Another anti-imperial organizer, Hammer (she/her), also responded to this question about hope. Hammer, who identified as a Vietnamese woman, declared, "There's work that needs to be done… Building relationships… Being part of building this alternative future together." She said that it is really easy to feel hopeless when one is isolated and alienated, and thus, this is where the importance of community cannot be stressed any further, the sense that one is not carrying the responsibility alone. Unlike the

western narratives of superheroes saving the day, that reinforced the white man's burden and colonial narrative, there is no one who will save us. We only have ourselves. *We* will save *us*. As LeMaster and Labador (in press) claim, "There is only liberation. There is only abolition. There is only us" (p. 19).

It is difficult to write a punctuation to a work that is ongoing, that has started even before the dissertation, and that will continue even after the dissertation. If anything, this work is an iteration to how I began meditating about oceans and waters as performance in Lore's performance survey class, and how I began reflecting about social movements and activism in Dan's public sphere class. It is an iteration to how I began thinking about liquid organizing in Heewon's organizational communication class, and how I began ruminating about empire and transnationalism in Karen's gender and sexuality class. It is an iteration to how I began realizing the extent of colonialism and the Filipino diaspora, and how I began contemplating about the power of home, culture, and community in Doc's initially anonymous research article feedback. It is a culmination to a PhD's worth of work, and it offers a map for navigating movement.

Perhaps it will help to look back. It has always helped to look back.

In Chapter 2, "Whirlpool Organizing," I weaved the interdisciplinary connections between organizational communication and critical/cultural studies to theorize anti-imperial activist processes. Particularly, in reconceptualizing organizational knowing, dialectics, and liquidities through Filipino sea-based thinking, I advanced the concept of whirlpool organizing, which is the nonlinear process of deepening relational currents, animating dialectical flows, and spiraling of coalitional movements. I drew from 22 in-depth qualitative interviews with social justice activists and organizers to explain three

nonlinear processes within whirlpool organizing: deepening of relational currents, animating of dialectical flows, and spiraling of coalitional movements. The first part is the deepening of self-and-other knowledge to build relational currents across spatial and temporal scales; the second part is the animating of dialectical flows across individual, relational, and organizational registers; and the third part is the spiraling of coalitional movements towards emancipatory ends. The chapter offered three theoretical contributions. First, it reengaged difference as a practice of knowing and accounts for affective and embedded knowing. Second, it built on the notion of dialectics across scales and emphasizes the role of space. Finally, it extended the theorizing of liquid organizing beyond corporate organizing and towards liberatory futurities.

In Chapter 3, "Anchored Relationality," I entwined critical intercultural communication and Indigenous and Filipino/a/x studies to advance anchored relationality, which traces Filipino/a/x' complex reconnections with water as a form of agency and resistance amidst historical trauma, diasporic longing, and sovereignty struggles. Through the method of "pagtatagpi-tagpi" (patchwork), I threaded together drawings, poems, interviews, and film to illustrate three tagpi (patches). The first tagpi talked about Filipino/a/x resilience amidst ancestral trauma and ecological crises. The second tagpi discussed the duality of water as border and connection, complicated by diasporic experiences of grief and healing. The third tagpi tackled organizing for Philippine waters and Indigenous sovereignty as an alternative return. This chapter offered three theoretical contributions. First, it affirmed the importance of dreams and relations in decolonial remembering. Second, it emphasized community organizing as

cultural reconnection and political actualization of aspirations. Finally, it underscored the materiality of water, that water is kin, water is ally.

In Chapter 4, "Archipelagic Performance," I engaged the collaborative and decolonial sensibilities of what I refer to as archipelagic performance, hailing from the Filipino tradition of performance and sea-based epistemologies. I theorized archipelagic performance from the staged production of "What sounds do turtles make?" which is a meditation on movements and relationalities that constitute Filipino/a/x and allies' experiences, in complicity with and in resistance to empire. The chapter contributed to current theorizations about performance of the body, space, and time by demonstrating how archipelagic performance facilitates sailing via memory and the senses, navigating spatio-temporalities, and maneuvering fluidities and by highlighting the importance of affect, interiority, and slowness in performance.

Agos, or moving relations, manifested through these three iterations. At the core of this dissertation is the attunement to those combinations of movements and relationalities, and how those might inform and nuance organizing, communication, and performance. While Fajardo (2014) focuses on identity changes through migration, and Cuevas-Hewitt (2020) theorizes the relationality of seas in postcolonial belonging, my work in this dissertation built on theirs, combined them, and conceptualized the movements of relationalities and relationalities of movements. Across the three chapters, three currents weaved through and emerged.

First, each chapter centered the body. In "Whirlpool Organizing," anti-imperial organizers utilized affective and embedded knowing in building relationships and solidarity with fellow organizers and community. In "Anchored Relationality,"

Filipino/a/x organizers turned to dreams and addressed ancestral trauma as critical to remembering and homecoming. In "Archipelagic Performance," I, as the performer, wielded anger and grief as legitimate decolonial responses and turned gaze inside out as a form of resistance. The body is central in navigating movements and cultivating relationalities. It is a body that is neither separated nor disconnected from its environment, relationships, and cosmologies. It is a body that is attuned, internally and externally, moving at its own pace, and honoring its histories and futurities.

Aguilar felt anger. For a comrade. At the death of a comrade. Lorde felt rage. Rage at racist white feminists. Rage at Black misogynists. Rage at the overall structures that contribute to Black death, that contribute to Third World dispossession. They both found a way to archive and transmute those anger and rage and wield them in service of liberation. Thus, a horizon I see for this dissertation is a turn, a *re*-turn, to the poetic to locate the affect, to name what this is that is not making sense, what impinges in and on my body, I do not know, but maybe through words and poems and movement and performance, I can begin to know.

Second, each chapter hinged on the criticality of relationalities. From organizers building relationships and coalitions, to diasporic peoples figuring out alternative relationalities, to collaboration as a method of performance, this dissertation revolved around relationalities and encompassed my very own relationships that possibilized this dissertation. As a scholar, I have always been fraught with the tensions of doing research with community that is neither extractive nor exploitative. I am not sure if I was successful, but those are tensions that I continue to reckon with and that push me to do better by my community. However, I want to recognize the burnout that I have been

feeling, that even my kasamas (comrades) have been feeling. Some organizers have already gestured to the importance of rest and slowness in activism, and I still have a lot to unlearn in terms of what "productive" looks like in organizing. As F (they/she) asked, how do we create liberatory systems that do not replicate the same capitalist structures that burn us out?

We are still figuring this part out. The answer might have something to do with focusing on the local, on the specific, on the particular. Anti-imperialism presses me, you, us, to see the broader picture of struggles. It can get overwhelming. There can be a lot that we can be doing. But I think, at the end of the day, anti-imperialism humbles us. That we cannot do everything, that we cannot save everyone, but we can pay attention to what is here, right here, right now, and do something about it. Who knows if it will ever amount to something bigger, to something more tangible for the movement? But the trick with being part of the sea is the recognition that even if you do not see everything, everywhere, you are connected. Your action causes ripples, somewhere, somehow. You are but one drop of the sea, but you are part of what makes the sea. And the sea always wins. Both anti-imperialism and the sea locate the individual as part of the collective. No one individual can do it all, but as a collective, we can do it. As neoliberal capitalist conditions intensify, we collectively meet and respond in political struggle.

Third, each chapter traversed space and time. The chapters demonstrated an awareness of local to transnational, as well as attention to histories and slowness. Sometimes, it is okay to retreat, like the turtles did. Aguilar might have chastised the foreigner who deemed her work unpoetic, but she also found solidarity in Lorde and the women of color press. We might not know what the future holds, but we know that the

earth is warming, and the seas are rising. This presses a direction of the dissertation to figure out a horizon that further grapples with the materiality of water, with survival that is tied to water.

These are the horizons that I can see, that I can make from this vantage point. The biggest challenge for me, in writing this dissertation, was time. I wish I had more time. But alas, I cannot financially afford to extend. It has been a lot of work executing the three studies within the span of a year. It would not have been possible without the community who responded to my call and helped this dissertation get done.

As a final tribute, it was in Dan's class where I first started thinking and theorizing about activism. I asked him if he knew of any literature that engages art and social movements. Dan, I wish you could see DC writing about that now. Their queerness elicited my queerness, enveloped me in so much joy and light, laughter and sadness, grief and hope. As I meditate on hope and horizons, it would be remiss not to mention the queer of color scholars who concretely theorized what hope is, what it looked like for their lives, and beyond. Chambers-Letson (2018) writes:

> It can be as hard to survive as it is to live on in the wake of those who didn't. But you taught me that performance is imbued with a weak power of resurrection, or at least the power to sustain some fragment of lost life in the presence of a collective present. (p. xvii)

I am, I was writing in the wake of your death, Dan. Chambers-Letson (2018) was writing in the wake of José Esteban Muñoz' death. When I read the book, I dreamt about slicing broccoli and ginger for my good friend DC at a party the following night. Chambers-Letson writes about the screaming, the screaming after Muñoz' death, the parties, all the

parties. Performance as parties. Filipinos have parties all the time. What are they mourning? What are they celebrating? Is it the presence of the social, the miracle of the collective, amidst the forces that bring us apart? Is it what Muñoz' (2020) calls as brown, "the way in which they suffer and strive together but also the commonality of their ability to flourish under duress and pressure?" (p. 2).

Perhaps. Now, I face the death of this dissertation and the birth of something new. The shedding of old skin. I did not realize the coloniality of the PhD process, until after I am emerging from it. Still intact, thankfully. But definitely frayed at the edges. I am grateful for the glowing heart still flickering inside me. May baga pa. The fire can still be kindled anew and into something bright. I do not want to ever lose the light. I lost, we lost Dan. This dissertation is shaped out of his absence, presence. Dan is still, always with us. There is always a party.

Muñoz (2009) ponders, "We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality" (p. 1). I do not know yet where to go from here, but I do know that I want to rest. I look towards the horizon, I savor in the warmth of community surrounding me, and I know I will have to dive deep soon and disappear from view momentarily. Gumbs (2020) advises, that in going deep, "let your practice facilitate depth" (p. 128). And I will continue to practice, perform, and organize. I will save my energy, nourish myself, listen to my body, and come back anew. Like the turtles, I will retreat, and recognize somewhere deep inside me that the streams are still flowing. I will come back again, energized, ready again to weather the storms with you, and move towards the horizon, towards the sun, towards home.

Padayon.

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APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Interviews with Filipino/a/x and Allied Movements

for Coalition Building Towards Anti-Imperialism

I, **Angela Labador**, am a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Lore/tta LeMaster (Primary Investigator, loretta.lemaster@asu.edu) in the Hugh Downs Schools of Human Communication at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to examine how Filipino/a/x and allies lean into their relationships to build coalitions to resist imperialism.

I am recruiting individuals for an interview.

Study Procedures:

To participate in this study, you must be 18 or older who believes in or works with a social movement for justice. If you take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview via a recorded online session or in person with the researcher about your experience organizing and building relationships.

- The interview is expected to last from 45 minutes to 60 minutes. Interview topics include organizing style, tensions, coalition building, and anti-imperialism.
- You may be invited to participate in a subsequent workshop and performance, but only if you choose to do so. If interested, more information will be provided.
- The researcher will follow up with participants via email to do member reflections wherein preliminary findings will be shared and participants can provide comments, feedback, and suggestions to ensure acceptable representation of the participants' experiences.
- You have the right not to answer any question, not to engage in any activity, and to stop participation and withdraw from the study at any time.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this research study, and you should only take part in it if and only if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to participate. There is no compensation or credit, financial or otherwise, to participants. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty.

Gift Card Compensation:

Consenting participants will be emailed a $20 digital gift card for participating.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions concerning the research study, please email Angela at mlabador@asu.edu.

Thank you.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How did you start getting involved with activism and organizing?
2. Given the current organization you are involved with, what are your organization's immediate goals and priorities?
3. Can you describe what it is like organizing in Texas/Phoenix?
4. How do you build relationships with the masses / the communities you are serving?
5. How do you build relationships with comrades?
6. What is the role of care in social movements?
7. What are your thoughts on the use of social media for organizing vs. in-person, on-the-ground organizing?
8. Has there been a time when you had to work on your differences with someone?
9. Has there been a time when differences have been productive in your organizing?
10. Can you tell me about a time when you became involved with the process of building a coalition?
11. Has there been a time when building a coalition did not work out?
12. Some people say that organizing is hopeless because nothing seems to be changing under imperialism, white supremacy, and capitalism. What are your thoughts on that?
13. What would an ideal solidarity look like?
14. What is your advice for organizers who want to build relationships, manage conflict, or craft coalitions?
15. Is there anything else about organizing that we did not discuss but you want to bring up?

APPENDIX C

PERFORMANCE SCRIPT

What sounds do turtles make?
written by Angela Labador
directed by Lore/tta LeMaster

CAST
GELAY
JIHYUN
CALEB
PABLO
BLAKE
LORE
BEN
DC
PAULINE

PROPS
Balikbayan boxes
Packing tape
White sheets – octopus
White sheets – projection
Black canvasses for 8 tentacles
Black light paint for tentacle design
Mango & grocery items
Bubble machine
Green threads turned seaweeds
LED lights
Glow bracelets for audience

LEGENDS
YELLOW – light directions
GREEN – video play/pause
BLUE – black light directions

Opening

LORE and PAULINE welcome people coming into The Empty Space. LORE hands them the postcards as playbill. PAULINE hands them glow sticks.

DC receives people into the space with bubbles and directs them to their seating. DC reserves the seating closest to the dressing room for the performers.

(Manila by Hotdog will be playing via the laptop as people enter.)

(PERFORMANCE BEGINS.)

(WHITE LIGHTS.)
LORE opens The Empty Space with introductions. LORE reads the postcard, tells people about exits and bathrooms, and provides an overview of tonight's event – with the performance proper, a 10-minute break, and a talkback with sharing of food.

(LIGHTS OFF.)

(LORE presses play on a video clip of the teaser of *Liwanag (2023)*, a story-documentary produced by the Filipino Migrant Center.)

(GELAY and JIHYUN enter space quietly with the grocery items, mango, balikbayan box, packing tape, and scissors.)

(LORE presses pause on video when the trailer ends.)

(YELLOW LIGHTS directed on GELAY and JIHYUN.)

Scene 1: Homecoming

GELAY, with JIHYUN, is in the corner with a balikbayan box and groceries. Manila by Hotdog is playing.

(GELAY stretches the packing tape.)

GELAY

Ahh, gusto ko na umuwi. I want to go home.

JIHYUN

If you want to go home so bad, then why don't you go home?

(GELAY starts reinforcing the balikbayan box with the packing tape, with the help of JIHYUN.)

GELAY

Can you hold that side of the box for me?

(JIHYUN helps.)

Well, I wish it was that easy. I looked up prices. It's $1500. That's more than my biweekly salary.

JIHYUN

And… you can't save up?

(GELAY shrugs.)

GELAY

I probably can… if I don't send money back home, you know?

JIHYUN

Oh.

(Silence.)

(GELAY and JIHYUN continue to reinforce the balikbayan box with packing tape.)

JIHYUN

When was the last time you were home?

GELAY

Hmm, four years ago? No, I think it is already five years this year. But you know, there are even some immigrants who have not been home for 20 years. Not to invalidate my experience… but it's all longing and facetimes (GELAY pauses movement, gestures to the box) and balikbayan boxes, and the years mercilessly pass you by…

(GELAY pauses.)

When I left home, my youngest brother was a baby. Now, he's probably already taller than me. When I Facetime with my mom, I try to tell if she already has more wrinkles than when I last saw her in person…

JIHYUN

Do you miss them?

GELAY

Hmm, sometimes, I think about the cost of me going to higher education. If I stayed in the Philippines, I don't think I would be any happier or sadder… but… don't we all entertain what-ifs? Like what if I stayed…? What if the Philippines have not been colonized? What if it was just left the fuck alone? What if colonizers just remained content where they are? And what if *I* just remained content where I was?

JIHYUN

Ah, but those what-ifs will suck you in like a whirlpool. It's never-ending.

(GELAY stares at the empty balikbayan box.)

GELAY

But there's just so much loss. I have an organizer friend tell me, that in the Filipino diaspora, "We're all just trying to help one another honor what has been lost… and how do I still honor what's been lost?"

(No one answers. They listen to the music, as they start filling the balikbayan box with grocery items.)

JIHYUN

Don't they have these products in the Philippines? Like Spam, really?

GELAY

Well, if it's coming from the United States, it's automatically perceived as better. When my grandmother used to send us balikbayan boxes from the States, my sister and I would often joke that the U.S. has a particular smell when we open the box. Cleaner, crisper, fresher, almost floral. (GELAY picks up a perfume) but it's probably the perfumes my grandmother packed.

(They continue packing the balikbayan box with grocery items.)

JIHYUN

Alright, I think we're almost done, is there anything else?

GELAY

Hmm, can I go inside the box, too?

(LIGHTS OFF.)

Scene 2: Lost at Sea

(GELAY presses play on the video to show overlapping clips of the sea. There are a series of text overlays with the following quotes. Intermittently, GELAY's dialogue with friends and family in the Philippines will play.)

(LORE, PAULINE, DC, BEN, and BLAKE will start bringing out the octopus' tentacles – white fabric, white tentacles, black canvasses – into the space.)

ALEXIS PAULINE GUMBS

"Sometimes I wonder how I got here too. How did I change to learn how to breathe here? What did I lose? What would I be like if there was never a break between me and those on the other side of the passage? And is this enough, this one deep lake, for all the life I have to live?" (p. 91)

PH FRIEND

Gelay, kailan ka uuwi? (When will you come home?)

GELAY

Aien, 'di ko pa alam eh. (I don't know yet.)

CARLOS BULOSAN

"Home is a foreign address, every step toward it is a step toward three hundred years of exile from the truth" (p. ix)

PH FRIEND

Gelay, kailan ka uuwi? (When will you come home?)

GELAY

Rheanne, ‘di ko pa alam eh. (I don’t know yet.)

MIA AGUILAR

“Manila: metropolis mushrooming / not out of any dream / but the sweat of millions on steel-hot machines / and the toil of millions-more / on placid fertile-greens” (p. 15)

PH FRIEND

Gelay, kailan ka uuwi? (When will you come home?)

GELAY

Mikel, ‘di ko pa alam eh. (I don’t know yet.)

GRACE

“I think we’re all just trying to help one another honor what has been lost… How do I still honor what’s been lost?”

PH FAMILY

Ate, kailan ka uuwi? (When will you come home?)

GELAY

Siena, ‘di ko pa alam eh. (I don’t know yet.)

PH FAMILY

Ate, kailan ka uuwi? (When will you come home?)

GELAY

Sean, ‘di ko pa alam eh. (I don’t know yet.)

PH FAMILY

Angela, kailan ka uuwi dito sa Pinas? (When will you come home here in the Philippines?)

GELAY

Mommy, ‘di ko pa alam eh. (I don’t know yet.)

Scene 3: Turtles vs. Octopus

(LIGHTS OFF.)

(LORE and BLAKE turn black lights on.)

(MP3 TIME STAMP: 00:00)

(OCTOPUS’ AFFECT: MENACE)

PAULINE – as octopus – comes alive with white fabric. LORE, BLAKE, DC, and BEN introduce moving tentacles to the audience. The eight tentacles are designed with: settler colonialism, anti-Blackness, cisheteronormativity, ableism, neoliberal capitalism, allonormativity, English hegemony, and Eurocentrism.

***

(MP3 TIME STAMP: 1:03)

(OCTOPUS' AFFECT: INSECURE RAGE)

The turtles – GELAY, JIHYUN, and CALEB – enter the space and swim around PAULINE. The tentacles – LORE, BLAKE, DC, and BEN – attempt to come after the turtles.

***

(MP3 TIME STAMP: 2:05)

(OCTOPUS' AFFECT: DISGUSTING SATISFACTION – EVIL LAUGH)

Eventually, the tentacles – LORE, BLAKE, DC, and BEN – hit the turtles – GELAY, JIHYUN, and CALEB – one by one.

***

(MP3 TIME STAMP: 3:06)

(BLUE LIGHTS focus on the turtles.)

(OCTOPUS' AFFECT: WAITING TO STRIKE AGAIN)

(TURTLES' AFFECT: BREATHING & REPRIEVE)

The turtles – GELAY, JIHYUN, and CALEB – regroup. They appear to have transcended to another space-time.

***

(MP3 TIME STAMP: 4:06)

(BLUE LIGHTS OFF.)

(OCTOPUS' AFFECT: DYING RAGE)

(TURTLES' AFFECT: JUSTIFIED REVENGE)

The turtles – GELAY, JIHYUN, and CALEB – come back to confront PAULINE. The tentacles – LORE, DC, BLAKE, and BEN – seem to be moving in slow motion now, compared to the turtles. The turtles look at the octopus for a moment, staring at the octopus as if it never stood a chance, then the turtles' faces turn to rage and revenge as they slammed against the rest of the tentacles.

(PAULINE, LORE, DC, BLAKE, and BEN fall to the ground.)

After having defeated the octopus, the turtles return to their homebase, their original location.

ALEXIS PAULINE GUMBS

"When I can't see the shore, I'm here timing my breathing to yours" (p. 53).

(GELAY presses pause on the video.)

Scene 4: Found Poetry

(LIGHTS ON.)

(PABLO starts voicing the found poetry. While doing so, PAULINE slowly comes back to life, along with the tentacles – LORE, DC, BLAKE, and BEN.)

(LORE and BLAKE turn black lights off.)

PABLO

i'm still learning
how I struggle through with others
how I recognize what is worth struggling through

no point to being defensive
for people to learn
give them time to grow
it's a lot of information for someone
who doesn't know anything
and now you're telling them
"you don't really care about your own family"
it comes off aggressive
they genuinely never thought about this before

i thought people in rev orgs are
so aggressive
not kind people

and I think it's so different when you're in it
because you just feel strongly about something
but you don't necessarily have to channel all that
into attacking someone
and that's how sometimes it can feel to someone who doesn't
really know what you're talking about
figuring out your boundaries, the other person's boundaries
it makes more sense to do that than just cut people off
and write them off as bad

take the time to write out long paragraphs
like this is what this is, this is what this
"I know you don't know much about it, but this is why it's important to me"
give people space
give them resources
than cut someone off
especially if you care about the person
or care about the potential
but obviously there's points where it's more safe to do that

(When PABLO says "fascists," PAULINE, LORE, DC, BLAKE, and BEN start gathering the octopus' remains – white fabric, white tentacles, and black canvasses – to bring to the dressing room.)

fascists
those aren't the people I'm going to focus on
that's just not sustainable
it's dangerous, it's dangerous, it's dangerous

what are the boundaries of this conversation
what is my relationship with this person
what's the goal of this
am I trying to convert them?

if you go into something thinking you're trying to convert someone
as opposed to
trying to bridge understanding between two people
that's more productive
creating growth in a person who you disagree with
or growth in yourself
challenging your own beliefs and ideologies
to strengthen your beliefs or
change them into something you believe in more strongly

(JIHYUN brings the balikbayan box, scissors, and tape to the center of the space and reinforces the bottom of the box with tape.)

JIHYUN

initially
i was just looking for community

something was missing
the more radical parts
things that weren't surface level
dancing tinikling and having boodle fights
we weren’t tapping into the whole of our culture
a generalization of
what it means to be Filipino

then I was exposed to progressive literature
I don't know who smuggled it in our Catholic school
then inspired by student organizations
the history of Black student organizations
who organized and protested university
for not having space for students of color
then inspired by the show of community solidarity
from the Chicano community
who really showed out in force for our events
then welcomed by people who were
informative
and warm

but before that I had always felt like
a cog in the machine
like we can't really do anything
we're powerless
to impact the systems oppressing us
but seeing solidarity inspired me
to look into coalition building

I wanted to do something more
than just tell people to vote or read all these things
I wanted to talk to people about what they can do
what you can do already

that is, you don't have to wait
‘til midterms
to make something happen

(GELAY rolls around a black box while delivering the found poetry.)

GELAY

anti-imperialism
is kind of a hard ask in amerikkka

they force you into these awful colonial structures
ransacked
ran by puppet governments

they've created constructs like the IMF
UN, EU, NATO
all these things where it's like we must listen to this, because this is some sort of
"International"

they will violate their own things
and even if they didn't have those things
they would do it anyway

the US
in the political economy of the Philippines
in the political economy of Palestine
is most apparent in the military aid

we clamor,
"Stop the weapons manufacturing in Dallas!"
"Stop Lockheed Martin!"
"Stop Urban Shield!"
"Block the boat!"

these imperialists are building coalitions
so why shouldn't the resistance?

we need to see the larger picture
we need to see
that the struggle of the maquiladoras in Mexico
is very much tied to the struggles of
workers in factories
that have lost their jobs out of Michigan

because that's one of the injustices that's been done to us
we've only been taught bits and pieces of our conditions
and we've been deprived of the bigger picture
especially in terms of history

we must do local work with transnational implications
national work that allows us to build transnational relationships
ranging from delegations to solidarity
reaching out to organizers on the ground in flashpoint moments
amplifying their demands
addressing the needs
based on our position in the diaspora

we're not neglecting our local context
we're building partnerships with joint struggle partners
we're addressing injustice
however it manifests
wherever we find ourselves

but because we're in the diaspora
we don't feel those direct threats
especially for people who are multiple generations out in the diaspora
or people who don't have close ties to any immigrants
it's harder to understand the dangers
so when we're faced with dangers that happened locally
i think that was kind of where we understood it a lot more

the local is transnational
the local has an impact on the transnational scene

when we're in the belly of the beast
in the belly of empire in the United States
we're fighting to weaken it
to impact the conditions of Palestinians and Filipinos at home

(GELAY puts black box into the balikbayan box.)

see, there's more that unites the people of the world
than divides us
there's a unifying thread of systemic oppression across the world
that when you see that thread you start to realize that
everything is connected
it doesn't matter what route you take

(CALEB takes the scissors and tape to seal off the top of the balikbayan box.)

CALEB

everybody is taught
that we have a right to be here
immigrants belong here

that we are so lucky to be living in amerikkka
“the free country”
and you better have some sort of
patriotism and nationalism
about this nonsense
and ignore all the past
all the genocide

people don't want to feel guilty so they'll ignore
That
the settling for us is a functioning part of government
and mutual aid work
can fall so easily into white saviorism
to be offering things to People on their own land

settlers are so inhospitable to Native voices
and it’s hard to see all the harm that is caused them
by everybody else, including myself
how they get talked over and disregarded

in disagreements
people start to rationalize themselves
in these weird like racist ways
there are some Native people present
and somebody said that
the responsibilities of an Indigenous person
are the same as the responsibilities of anyone else in this org

and that's messed up like
who cares like
literally Indigenous people can do whatever they want
they don't have to be doing whatever you say inside of your org

people that are being harmed
don't have to take you back in

and I try not to take up space in
a lot of orgs
I know what my own
backing and knowledge is coming from
the immense privileges I’m having
my role as a settler
my lack of rights to exist here
like I should not be talking or acting out of a place where it's like
I’m supposed to be here

because I'm literally not

(BLAKE brings out the white meshed fabric and rolls them out in preparation.)

BLAKE

“solidarity”
a word that gets thrown around a lot
losing their meaning
“community”
“mutual aid”
“organization”

people will say they're in solidarity
like what does it mean

does it mean
supportive of the movement
without taking it over or
pretending you know the experience

solidarity is showing up
and not talking
not talking over them
not having to add your opinion
which is hard for a lot of people

to be in solidarity with someone
to be an ally is
to basically be an intern
you just show up
you listen
you learn from these people who are on the ground doing the work
immersed in this with community and
you learn from them
you do what they asked of you
you be present

coming in with these perceptions of what you should do
which could slow the work that's being done or
create more work for the people that you're trying to be in solidarity with
you're new
you have nothing new to bring to the table
you are there to learn
and that's when you will be able to have things to bring to the table
but you don't assume

you think
you learn first

(LIGHTS OFF.)

Scene 5: Overflowing Rage

(LORE presses play to the video.)

PROJECTOR shows image of Aman Sinaya created by Krstn Ry. Then, text appears indicating: “Aman Sinaya is a rival of Bathala [the Creator]. She is the goddess of the sea. [Their] fighting resulted in the creation of the Philippine archipelago. She sent powerful waves to the god of heaven, which in turn was repaid by the massive slab of the earth. From here formed the islands and mountains, surrounded by oceans.” – The Philippines Today

(LORE presses pause to the video.)

(JIHYUN and CALEB turn on black light.)

(BLUE LIGHTS ON.)

GELAY stands like a statue, with white fabric, on top of a balikbayan box. PROJECTOR shows text: “United Stages of Empire.” JIHYUN, CALEB, and BLAKE enter scene.

JIHYUN
Sorry, excuse me, but which way to the Philippines?

(CALEB sees GELAY in the center.)

CALEB
Oh wow…

BLAKE
I love it! So exotic and so diverse!

(GELAY’s – the statue’s – fingers start to twitch.)

JIHYUN
You know, I know another Filipina. She took care of my cousin’s kid. She’s really caring.

CALEB
Ahh I know, they’re really good! I once had a nurse who’s Filipina, too. Not to mention, beautiful country! I love their beaches (but pronounced as bitches)!

(GELAY continues squirming, and they are oblivious.)

BLAKE

Yeah… (wistfully). I've been there last summer! They spoke really good English.

(JIHYUN looks at GELAY's outfit.)

JIHYUN

Hmm, I wonder where I can get the same outfit?

(JIHYUN and CALEB put on the white fabric.)

(BLAKE takes pictures.)

(RED LIGHTS ON.)

GELAY starts screaming and crying. For quite a while.

(Inspiration for this scene)

PERFORMERS join the screaming and crying from the surroundings.

JIHYUN – also draped in white fabric – starts screaming and crying out of nowhere. JIHYUN moves to GELAY. They face each other and mirrors each other's movements. Then, JIHYUN extends a hand to GELAY, asking GELAY to come down. JIHYUN offers a hug, and GELAY hugs in return – all while wailing, crying, and screaming.

CALEB enters scene – also covered in a white fabric – and joins the pair. CALEB shouts in rage with them.

(LIGHTS OFF.)

(JIHYUN and CALEB turn off black light.)

Scene 6: Waves Lapping at the Shore

(BLUE GREEN LIGHTS ON.)

GELAY delivers a poem, with BEN playing guitar accompaniment (inspired by this spoken poetry).

GELAY

I don't know what to say to you. I wish we can come home, someday, soon. I wish we can be together again. Not separated by work, by forced migration. Not separated by

centuries of colonization. I long for your breath, for your hug, for sharing food with you again. Half the time I don't know what I'm doing. I put the pen to paper, my fingers to keyboard, and see what flows. You teach me how to navigate this.

Last time I was home, at the airport on the way back to the States, my grandmother said, "Kapag nagsama-sama tayo, magugutom tayo." In English, that translates to, "If we stay together, we'll get hungry."

To that I say, and to the colonized and displaced peoples of the world, I want for us to stay together, to not have to be apart, and to still have bellies full of delicious food.

Let's go back to the start, where again, I don't know where to begin. Only that, to say, I love you. When to survive is an actual miracle, there should be no religion. We didn't deserve that, you know? We didn't deserve any of that.

Kumain ka na ba? Tara, kain na tayo.

I will share with you this mango. Not exported and exploited by big corporations, but savored by people on their own land. I hope you get to enjoy the fruits of your own land, your ancestors' land, and that land gets taken care of for generations to come. I hope you get to enjoy your waters, your fish, to bathe and be cradled by the waves, floating on your back, basking in how the sun caresses your body and your cheek. I hope you get to cross borders easily, without fear of never coming back, without fear of being caged. I hope you get to drive and move, day and night, without incurring violence on your body. I hope you get to dress and adorn yourself however you want, and be affirmed and loved in all your deep contradictions and complexities. I hope you get to access what you need, and you are able to find and thrive in spaces that orient themselves to you. I hope you get to be home again, and I hope you find comfort and reprieve in warm embraces, where you don't have to be anyone or do anything or be anywhere, but where you can just breathe, and where you can just be.

I dream with you, and I write this love letter to you, where your hopes are my hopes, and in this little time and space we have together, I had a glimpse of what liberation looks and feels like. We may never actually achieve that in our lifetimes, but maybe I can dream with you a time when the fish can fly again. The world is violent and terrible and I'm scared, but will you accept this mango? Will you eat with me?

(LIGHTS OFF.)

(LORE presses play on video.)

ALEXIS PAULINE GUMBS

"And I can be with the ocean of myself. And I can do the untrackable work they don't see, what it takes to come back home to you." (p. 154)

(LORE presses pause on video.)

(LIGHTS ON.)

GELAY

Nakauwi na ‘ko! I’m home!

(GELAY drags a chair and sits with everybody else.)

GELAY

Tara, kain na. Let’s eat.

APPENDIX D

PERFORMANCE TALKBACK GUIDE

Performance Talkback

GELAY: Offer context of the dissertation and archipelagic performance.

Not in the colonial, capitalist, and violent use of the "archipelago"

But in a decolonial, collective, and embodied manner

1. Filipino/a/x performance scholars have criticized the colonial and white gaze in performances. How have you seen "gaze" function in this performance?
2. What are the layers of meaning that you can tease out from the performance?
3. How are you compelled to move by the performance? Where does it prompt you to go? Where does it prompt you to return?
4. What are your observations on how space was used in the performance?
5. What are you still curious about in the performance that you want to unpack with everyone?

APPENDIX E

IRB APPROVAL

Knowledge Enterprise Development
Arizona State University

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Dear Loretta LeMaster:

On 6/20/2022 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Philippine Sea Theorizing: Activism, Communication, and Performance
Investigator:	Loretta LeMaster
IRB ID:	STUDY00016118
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• artmaking_consent_form_20-06-2022.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • artmaking_recruitment_method_17-06-2022.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • interview protocol 17-06-2022.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions/interview guides/focus group questions); • interview_consent_form_20-06-2022.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • interview_recruitment_method_17-06-2022.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Labador_06-20-2022_IRB Protocol.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • performance_consent_form_20-06-2022.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • performance_recruitment_method-17-06-2022.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • workshop outline 17-06-2022.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions)

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 6/20/2022.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

REMINDER - - Effective January 12, 2022, in-person interactions with human subjects require adherence to all current policies for ASU faculty, staff, students and visitors. Up-to-date information regarding ASU's COVID-19 Management Strategy can be found here. IRB approval is related to the research activity involving human subjects, all other protocols related to COVID-19 management including face coverings, health checks, facility access, etc. are governed by current ASU policy.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Ma Angela Labador