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The University of San Francisco

PILIPINX RADICAL IMAGINATION:
Healing and Visioning in our Process of Becoming

A Dissertation Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
Department of International and Multicultural Education

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

By

Anthony Santa Ana, M.Ed.
San José, CA
December 2021

ABSTRACT

There are estimated 10.4 million Filipinos living or working abroad primarily in the Middle East, Europe, Canada, and the United States searching for a better life for themselves and their families (Commission on Filipino Overseas, 2013). Due to economic motivation, assimilating to the host country's culture, values, and traditions is an act of survival. While much of the research has focused on the domestic workers' experience, rarely has there been a study focusing on Filipinos in the diaspora positive contributions to the host country and their Pilipinx Radical Imagination. As a result, the purpose of this qualitative study is to explore diasporic Filipinos' current lived experiences and visioning for their communities. This study focuses on eight self-identified Filipino/a/x/@, Pilipino/a/x/@ or Pin@y contributors from The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018). This study utilizes Transcendent Resistance, a newly introduced framework, and FilCrit pedagogy and to examine their lived experiences and interview them with a culturally humble data collection methodology, *kuwentuhan*, sharing stories, (Jocson, 2008). Analysis of the data demonstrated three themes: (1) identity is culturally fluid; (2) transcendent love is at the heart of their love for themselves and their communities; (3) and healing and visioning. Further research is needed to document the positive contributions of Filipinos in the diaspora, complexities and multiplicities of Filipinos in the diaspora, community *kuwentuhans* as space for healing and visioning, and further development of the Pilipinx Radical Imagination.

SIGNATURE PAGE

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Anthony Abulencia Santa Ana
Candidate

December 2021

Dissertation Committee

Emma Fuentes, Ph.D
Chairperson, Dissertation Committee

December 2021

Shabnam Koirala-Azad, Ph.D.

December 2021

Patrick Camangian, Ph.D.

December 2021

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to five people that have walked this path with me even before I imagined taking on this endeavor: Dr. Emma Fuentes, Alicia Abulencia Santa Ana, Jose Celetaria Santa Ana, Hiroko Hasegawa Santa Ana, and Namilyn Abulencia Santa Ana. Because of all of you, I am me.

Emma, the indescribable support and deep belief in my abilities is an unexplainable feeling that I have experienced from the Center for Teaching Excellence and Social Justice days. I still remember when you observed my student teaching and the emotional and supportive feedback was instrumental in my growth to my love for teaching. In so many ways, I wanted to give up because I doubted myself and impostor syndrome kicked in. But your relentless belief in me carried me through and for that I thank you. Thank you for believing in me when I did not believe in myself. I could not have done this without you! This degree is for you.

Jose (Pa), you always share the story that your father died when you were 8 years old and because you were the eldest of your siblings you had to take care of all of them as a father. One of your dreams was to immigrate to America to create a better life for yourself and your future family, this was your Pilipinx Radical Imagination. Another one of your dreams was to become a medical doctor but life was dealt different cards and you were instead a successful machinist and business owner. I'm thankful for all the sacrifices that you have made for the family working two full time jobs for over 30 years. One way I can repay you and fulfill your dream is to become that doctor you were never able to become. I may not be the medical doctor you dreamed of although an educational doctor is close enough. This degree is for you.

Alicia (Ma), you told me the story when you were attending the University of San Francisco striving to complete your Master's degree in Education but the challenges of raising two children and also being pregnant with your third child, me, made it difficult for you to complete and ultimately you dropped out of the program. That unborn child decades later continued where you left off and fulfilled your dream of graduating from the University of San Francisco with a master's degree and now also a doctorate degree in Education. The path you chose to educate and love children carried through in my life as my life mission. This degree is for you.

Hiroko, it is our destiny to be together forever and enjoy this journey called life. As I've been in the doctoral program we were dating in Tokyo, you moved to San Francisco, we unsuspectedly got engaged, committed our lives together by the beach and in Yugawara, traveled around the world for our honeymoon, and now we have a beautiful, healthy, and intelligent child together, Namilyn Abulencia Santa Ana. Your patience, intelligence, and master's experience have pushed me through these doctoral years. You have seen me at my worst of times and continued to believe in me and the process to complete this degree. My pre-writing conversations with you helped organize and methodically shape the streams of consciousness as I wrote on the page. This degree is not my degree but OUR degree.

Nami *chan*, at this moment you are sixteen months young embodying the ancestral spirit of strong womyn. We already have daily conversations at the dinner table and most of the time you win our staring contests. You are running, climbing, dancing to Bob Marley, and exploring the world with curiosity. As I reflected while you were in the womb, I adamantly tried to complete my dissertation before you entered into this world

but that did not happen because the Covid-19 pandemic shocked and paused the world. I had to quickly pivot and have a heart-wrenching conversation with Emma and tell her that in order for me to take care of myself and my family, I had to pause the dissertation writing and care for my emotional well-being. Although, I said to Emma that my dream is to be hooded with you dressed in your cap and gown carrying you in my arms. You will be the youngest ever doctor to walk that stage. I hope this will be one of your inspirations to follow your dreams, aspire to live your life to the fullest, and be the best version of yourself. This degree is for you, my *Japinay*.

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CHAPTER I: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Researcher's Profile

As I inhaled my first breath outside my mother's womb, the world was being turned inside out. The people were hungry for change and did so "by any means necessary." Because of the political climate of this generation, this meant storming down the streets chanting what they believed was just and the cries for social justice meant protests for equality and fighting for a new America. With a new way of thinking came a new way of being-values, fashion, art, music, etc. In the South Bronx, Black and Brown people being impacted by the political climate of the time had to make sense of it all. They were living in impoverished neighborhoods and needed to find an outlet to proclaim their existence and thus began the birth of Hip Hop culture (Chang, 2005). Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Caribbean used their artistic talents to beautify subway trains with vibrant colors and styles, combined their historical knowledge and acrobatic training to breakdance on street corners and at underground parties, channeled their aggression and poetical skills to communicate their experiences of the world to the masses and the DJ's played an innovative style of music for the people to shake off their anger and frustration. And that was just my first breath.

As many more breaths oxygenated my body to prepare me for this lifetime, my close connection to Spirit was preparing me to lead a life of resistance in this Hip Hop generation. Ten years later, with a skateboard in hand and fresh ears listening to Yo!

MTV raps, my Native American/Pilipino¹ American cousins were rolling down the streets of Milpitas, California (CA) blasting their Sony walkmans to sounds of Hip Hop. Our bodies were exhausted and the sunlight dimmed, but our musical souls were still awake to watch my cousin practice his DJing skills in the garage and later his Native American cultural dances in the living room. The intertwining of my ethnic culture and Hip Hop culture was just the beginning, a glimpse, a taste, a foreshadowing of what my life would look like in the future (de Leon, 2004).

Many years later and consistent breaths of life, my Pilipino American identity became the forefront of my existence and Hip Hop culture trail blazed across international borders. The intersection of these two cultural identifications made me understand the meaning of my life. It gave me a sense of meaning, livelihood, and existence in the chaotic world that I was born into when I inhaled my first breath.

After high school graduation, I worked for a San José based non-profit organization, Filipino Youth Coalition (FYC) in a variety of roles as a mentor, job development coordinator, and a community school founder. FYC was creating positive spaces for young Pin@ys to honor their culture and develop their leadership skills in the community. It was during those times, I would conduct workshops and speak nationally at Pilipin@ conferences about community organizing and youth leadership. I was part of a Pilipino American movement and a Pilipino American Cultural Renaissance that had a

¹ Throughout this dissertation, I interchangeably use the terms Filipin/a/o/x American, Pilipina/o/x American, and Pin@y to embrace the complexities of varied identifications of the experiences of Filipinos in the diasporas, political consciousness, and generational time periods, especially in America.

national Pilipino American consciousness representing, advocating, and fighting for our communities (Mabalon, 2001).

As my identity politics involvement expanded, I began to question the relationship and solidarity amongst the larger national and international movements for social justice. In 2004, I completed my Master's in Education at the University of San Francisco and set off into the unknown world with only my backpack and drum as companions. I traveled for over 10 months meeting Filipinos in the diaspora from Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and Asia. It was during these moments of interactions with other Filipinos in the diaspora that I experienced a familiarity of culture through immediate connection and invitation over food. In 2005, I decided to teach English on the Peace Boat, a Japanese non-governmental organization that traveled around the world, for three months discussing and experiencing peacebuilding. It was in the bowels of the ship that I bonded with the Filipino seafarers creating a strong connection which led to a Filipino Cultural night for the 1,000 passengers on the boat. After six months working on the boat, I decided to move to Tokyo, Japan to teach at the universities and international schools. During my vacation times and time off, I could travel around Asia, meeting other Filipinos in the diaspora making connections again through breaking bread and *kuwentuhans* (soulful Filipino dialogic). My continued interest in Filipinos in the diaspora and their different yet similar migration stories constantly reminded me of my parents' migration story.

Fast forward to 2018, I traveled around the world with my partner, Hiroko, and met more Filipinos in the diaspora in New Zealand, Spain, Australia, UAE, and on cruise ships. Again, I felt an immediate connection to my Filipino people because of familiarity

in cultural mannerisms and breaking bread over a Filipino meal. The deep interest of Filipinos in the diaspora, not only comes from my extensive Pilipino American movement-building of the 1990s but also from meeting the multitude of Filipinos in the diaspora as I traveled the world. In each interaction across the globe, Filipinos invited me to experience their lives over food and *bayanihan* (community). With over 10 million Filipinos working and living abroad, the varied experiences of Filipinos in the diaspora are of familiarity and assimilation seeking a better life for themselves and their families (Commission on Filipino Overseas, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

In the 1990s, a cultural awakening of the Pilipino American identity was being questioned and critically analyzed to make sense and decolonize ourselves from our colonial traumatic past. Pilipino Americans across the country synergistically came together across the nation to organize, create, and not be forgotten (Cordova, 1983). Organizations across the nation such as Filipino Youth Coalition (San José, CA), Filipinos for Affirmative Action (Oakland, CA), Filipino Youth Association (Seattle, WA), Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (Los Angeles, CA), Filipino American Cultural Society (Virginia Beach, VA), Northern California Pilipino American Student Organization, Southern California Pilipino American Student Association, Midwest Association of Filipino Americans, Filipino Intercollegiate Networking Dialogue, Filipino American National Historical Society, National Filipino American Youth Association, National Federation of Filipino American Associations were just some of the various organizations that organized nationally contributing to the national cultural renaissance (Mabalon, 2001). Our national movement was a culmination of cultural

producers redefining what it meant to be Filipino American in the 90s-2000s. One of our major rallying points of solidarity was the overdue recognition of the WWII Filipino veterans whose rights were rescinded in 1949 by US President Truman (Nakano, 2004). We were reacting to the injustice of the brave Filipino men and women who fought for the US. This was our national Filipino American movement issue that we organized to overturn. Although we did not radically vision what our future might hold, we progressively reacted to the injustice that was in front of us.

Fast forward to the 2010s, the new rallying cry for the Filipino American movement was memorializing and honoring the contributions of the Filipino *manong* generation of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee and the United Farm Workers (UFW) Delano strike of 1965 (Mabalon, 2013). Again, the national Filipino American movement was reacting to the forgotten progressive contributions of the Filipino *manong* generation. Rightfully so, the national Filipino American movement was reacting to the injustices of the past but it did not intentionally include public spaces for visioning of their national communities and the Filipino diaspora.

The contributions of the Filipino diaspora are of human labor and export meeting the economic demands of locations around the world. Because the Filipino people in the Philippines suffer daily from extreme poverty, the necessity to leave their homeland for economic and aspirational reasons is a direct correlation to why the Philippines' number one export is human labor. Filipinos in the diaspora not only need to react to the injustices of our colonial past but also work together to envision what our communities can contribute to future generations of the Filipino diaspora. In these moments of collective visioning, we can create legacies of economic, artistic, cultural, and political

contributions for Filipinos in the diaspora and disrupt the narrative of human labor export to essential contributing members of national and international society. Filipinos in the diaspora are radically imagining the potential possibilities of what has not yet existed, instead of only reacting to their economic situation. Thus, the Pilipinx Radical Imagination was born embodying a holistic mindset, behavior, and visioning of love, liberation, and justice. Moreover, they were manifesting the impossible to be possible and the unseen to be seen. As radical love and bayanihan (community) are at the center, Filipinos in the diaspora create more intentional cultural contributions in the places that they settle. It is this Pilipinx Radical Imagination that becomes a ray of hope to deconstruct and reconstruct the dark past of our colonial history as economic exports of labor to progressive contributors of cultural production and knowledge in their mainstream society.

Background and Need for Study

According to the Commission on Filipino Overseas (2013), there are an estimated 10.2 million Filipinos working and/or living abroad outside of the Philippines. Historically, Filipinos migrated to the Middle East, Europe, Canada, and the United States leaving their homeland for better economic opportunities for themselves and their families. This sacrificial decision has many impacts on their emotional well-being leaving immediate family members behind to look after entire families hoping that their remittances sent home will be enough to provide financially for them. The majority of diasporic Filipinos have a longing to come back and reunite with their family or petition loved ones to build a community in countries where they work. Depending on the success of their new lives in the foreign countries they reside in, often they integrate into society

assimilating to the foreign host country adapting culture, language, and social norms. Ultimately, oftentimes, intermarrying into society and having children of mixed heritage. Thus, this leads to generations of diasporic Filipinos with unique and distinct experiences.

There have been books written and studies conducted about Overseas Contract Workers (OCW) and/or Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) (Abesamis, 1998-99; Aguilar, 2002; Alcid, 1998; Anderson, 2000; Azizah Kassim, 1998; Carino, 1995; Chang, 2000; Constable, 1997; Gonzalez, 1996; Parrenas, 2001) especially about Filipina OCW's and/or OFW's primarily in residing in Asia and their negative and traumatic experiences working/living abroad. Although, very few of the studies have documented their experiences in the current political climate of our world and vision for their local communities they reside in.

Background Context of The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader

In the beginning stages of my doctoral studies, I was fortunate to take Dr. Emma Fuentes's Social Movements class. It was a mind-blowing class that opened my eyes to the various social movements nationally and internationally and how each of the movements intersected and interwoven in the nexus of the conception and development of the movements identifying theories and theorists that helped shape the framework of the consciousness of movements. Particularly, Robin D.G. Kelley author of *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (2003). The title alone inspired me to ask, "What is our [Pilipinx American] radical imagination?" I pondered on this question and wanted to dialogue with Pilipinx Americans community leaders from the South Bay.

On a summer evening of 2014, I met with Melissa-Ann Nievera-Lozano and her family at a Korean restaurant inside the newly opened Vietnam Town on the east side of San Jose. Over dinner and midway through our *kuwentuhan*, I proposed editing a book together called Pin@y Radical Imagination inspired by Dr. Kelly's Black Radical Imagination. Initially, she had a look of hesitation but after a few seconds of questioning, she agreed to collaborate on the project. I was nervous yet excited because I never put together an anthology although I knew something deep in my heart that this project was going to be monumental for our community. As we met, we decided that this was going to be a labor of love and let spirit guide our work. We did not have any timelines, deadlines, and stress of putting it out to the world. It would be ready when the time was perfect. We met mostly in her living room with our partners taking care of Dante and Mateo (Melissa-Ann's two boys) talking about seminal books that impacted our consciousness. For me, it was *Teaching to Transgress* by bell hooks. For the both of us, it was *The Bridge Called My Back* edited by Cherie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua and *Empire of Funk* by Roderick N. Labrador. It was these three inspirational pieces of brilliant work that we modeled our book after. We met periodically to meet our obligations, especially because I was in the beginning stages of my doctoral studies and she was at the final stages of her doctoral candidacy. We accomplished milestones throughout the 4 years although we had to pause in one particular moment when Melissa-Ann's younger sister, Pinay, suddenly passed away. I still remember that vivid conversation when I felt sorrow in her voice sharing with me that Pinay passed and how this deeply affected her. This was a turning point in our journey to continue with the book and we both decided that we would pause on the momentum to grieve and honor her life.

We did just that and also dedicated the book to Pinay since what we were doing was practicing healing and our collective radical imagination together.

After some time, spirit brought us back together to finish the book. We gathered all of the submissions and sat in her living room discussing all the beautiful stories that were shared with us. Everyone's submission was unique and was interwoven into the Filipinx diasporic story. During this time, Melissa-Ann brought up a thought-provoking point, "If we are going to be radical, I think we should consider changing the title of our book from Pin@y to F/Pilipinx because that was the most recent identification the younger generation is using to identify themselves." We agreed to change the title to Pilipinx to be more inclusive of all genders and use "P" instead of "F" to honor the legacy and activism of Uncle Roy Morales.

As we were finalizing the manuscript, we were thinking about what type of publication we wanted to pursue. We knew that we wanted full creative control of the look and feel of the book. It was a discussion between self-publishing, small publishing companies, or larger and more distinguished academic publishing houses. We decided upon approaching two San Francisco publishers that specialized in publishing Filipinx literary works. Edwin Lozada from Philippine American Writers and Artists (PAWA) looked over our manuscript and happily agreed to publish the book in 2018. We were ecstatic and overjoyed with emotions to share the beautiful contributions to our community and the world. When the book finally was published, I saw the futuristic book cover design by Trinidad Escobar and the backside of the book explaining the spirit of the book.

What you hold here is a collection of a multiplicity of beautiful voices from the Philippine diaspora exploring visions we carry for our dynamic,

intersectional communities in this historical moment. The blessings for our communities are expressed through essay, poetry, short story, living theory, photography, and illustration around themes of diaspora and memory; health and well-being; intersectionality; coalitional consciousness; family and radical parenting. With different people situated at different times and places, we shine a light on a journey of healing by naming our existence. It is our prayer that this book's embodiment of a conscious radical love lives on through critical conversations that will shape our realities as Pilipinxs, as we continue to do the heartfelt work in our homes, classrooms, and growth spaces. May this spiritual offering be received as a living time capsule for Pilipinxs and beloved ones, in our process of becoming.

Awards and recognitions

On December 14, 2018, Veronica Montes of the Halo-Halo Review, author of *Benedicta Takes Wing & Other Stories* (Philippine American Literary House, 2018), reviewed *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* to her wide range literary audience. She ended her extensive review with, “The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader is a rich, ambitious collection. As I worked my way through the book, it occurred to me that this project could easily have taken an awkward turn and ended up much like an overcrowded elevator where no one wants to make eye contact. Instead, it feels expansive and welcoming. Yes, there are many, many writers included here, but the options make it easy for the reader to find a space in which to situate their own narrative, their own radical imagination.”

In 2018, the San Francisco Asian Art Museum created a Pilipinx American Library exhibition that showcased a multitude of books and materials from the Pilipinx American community. *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* was one of the many literary materials that was presented in the exhibition for the audience to read and interact with the literature.

On January 2, 2019, the CNN Philippines Life Staff posted on their website “The best books of 2018” which featured *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* as one of the best books of 2018. CNN Philippines Life Staff that chose these books were eight writers, authors, and publishers declared what they considered the best books of the year. On their website they stated, “This year’s best books reflect our history, our constant grappling with our collective identity and the forces that shape the way we live, and our attempts to mold a better future.”

On April 28, 2019, the City of Cerritos and two councilmembers, Mark Pulido and Frank Aurelio Yokoyama, formally acknowledged and celebrated the publication of *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader*. Anthony Santa Ana and Melissa-Ann Nievera-Lozano were presented with a Certificate of Recognition from the City of Cerritos.

On September 13, 2020, the Center for Babaylan Studies podcast hosted by Jana Lynne Umipig interviewed the co-editor of *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader*, Melissa-Ann Nievera-Lozano. The title of the podcast was *Kultivating Kapwa: Conversations with Community, Episode 6: The Pilipinx Radical Imagination in Activism, Academia, Education, and Life*.

In between the book events, seven higher education institutions used *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* as part of the primary or supplemental texts in their Ethnic Studies classes to learn about diasporic Filipinos current lived experiences.

More recently, the Japanese American Museum of San Jose, displayed *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* as part of their *Hidden Histories* project exhibition.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the experiences of diasporic Filipinos to better understand their current circumstances and visioning for their communities. This study will focus on the contributors of The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018). By digging deeper into the participant's experiences, I hope to create space for validation and agency for contributing to their communities. Given the limited existing literature on this topic, I hope my findings can be used as a text for further research of diasporic Filipinos documenting their current reality and visioning for their communities.

Theoretical Frameworks

As discussed in the introduction, the purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the current experiences of the Filipinos in the diaspora and their vision for their communities. When analyzing the contributors' submissions to The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader, the dissertation utilizes two theories in its theoretical framework: Transcendent Resistance will serve as the primary theoretical lens and FilCrit pedagogy will be the secondary theoretical lens. Applying these theories allows multiple perspectives to be used to interpret the data collected through submissions (collected documents and artifacts), participant interviews, and participant and audience observations. More importantly, these two theoretical lenses will create a clearer picture of the current experiences of Filipinos in the diaspora and their visioning for their communities.

Transcendent Resistance

Transcendent Resistance is a newly created theoretical framework inspired by Eric Mann's (2010) social movement theoretical framework, transformative organizing. It transforms the system itself and is in revolutionary opposition to the power structures of colonialism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism in its current form, imperialism. There are seven components of Transformative organizing: (1) radical social change through the strategy of building an international united front to challenge the U.S. empire; (2) transformative organizer is a conscious agent of change a revolutionary educator with a plan to intervene in and make history; (3) leadership of society's most exploited, oppressed, and strategically placed classes and races; (4) produced by transformative organizations; (5) truly transformative in the course of battle; (6) transforms the organizers; and (7) transformative political program (Mann, 2010). These seven components can be used to critique the current political system as a base model of transformative organizing to ground and guide our work. Transcendent resistance expands on this theoretical model that speaks to the current social movement building happening in this current political climate. The three main components are (1) nurturing of the heart; (2) radical imagination; and (3) fighting for a liberatory and emancipatory new world. I will further explain in depth each component of transcendent resistance and use a recent example of the "Water is Life" Dakota Access Pipeline social movement.

Nurturing of the heart

Spirituality is at the core of the Dakota Access Pipeline social movement, naturally incorporating their ontology and epistemology to steward and care for their land. Their unconditional and radical love for the earth embodied core values such as in *Lak'ech* (Mayan word: you are my other me), *kapwa* (Filipino word: you are my other

me), and empathy to radically heal mother earth against the negative effects of a pipeline being built in their waters. The practice of self and community care ensured that the water protectors were eating, sleeping, and deeply reflecting on what was happening. In turn, their care for themselves is not seen as selfish or individualistic but a radical love for the collective and community. The combination of in *Lak'ech* and *kapwa* with selfcare, transforms into collective and community care. Their individual acts of caring for themselves result in nurturing and love for their communities. They are taking care of themselves; therefore, the collective is also taken care of.

Fighting for a liberatory and emancipatory new world

As the “Water is Life” movement progressed and gained international attention, so did international solidarity develop. People from different walks of life and places around the world supported the movement in various ways by sending supplies, donating money, offering professional services, etc... This international solidarity movement organically became an intersectional movement for collective liberation; the idea that an individual’s liberation connects to another person’s liberation and that we are not all free unless everyone is free.

Radical Imagination

The radical imagination of the Water is Life protectors’ dedication to protect the water for future generations. They fight for Mother Earth so that children can be born into a world where she is protected against capitalistic money-hungry countries and large corporations. Understanding that water and this path are sacred, they radically imagine generations that respect the indigenous ontologies and epistemologies and Mother Earth's natural order.

Art became central to the Water is Life movement as the drumming became a release of emotions calling in the transcendent spirits for strength and guidance and the ceremonial dance in the cold winter days to invoke spirit honoring of the land to continually and radically heal. It is the reciprocity of in *Lak'ech* and *kapwa* honoring, fighting, and visioning for their ancestral lands for future generations.

This collective consciousness of transcendent resistance moves beyond validating our experiences in academia with radical healing and radical love at the center and moving towards a transformational spiritual collective shift of a liberatory and emancipatory world. Furthermore, it pushes our humanity to collective spiritual consciousness to stand up against oppression and inequalities on a global scale to a spiritual transcendence of a new world. Grace Lee Boggs (2013) coined the term solutionaires (solutions + visionaries) to envision a new world. These demands to stand up against economic development and the maintenance of economic power to shift the global collective consciousness into action and reality; this is our critical hope, that transcendence of our world can happen (Duncan-Andrade, 2009). Transcendent resistance is both an individual and a collective identity, that is not solid but liquescent, an -ing; a continual radical process of love, healing, and becoming that interweaves a deep self-reflection of internal and external prevalent sensibilities to enhance a collective humanity visioning for a liberatory and emancipatory new world.

Filipino/a critical pedagogy

Filipino/a critical (FilCrit) pedagogy is inspired by “AAS [Asian American Studies] and critical pedagogy, two frameworks born of and in dialogue with Third World social movements” (Viola, 2014, p. 21). Asian American Studies, more

specifically, Filipino/a American studies, shapes FilCrit pedagogy that centers the lives of Filipino/a American experiences and strongly engages the advancement and advocacy of the communities that they live and reside in (Baldoz, 2011; Choy, 2003; Delmendo, 2004; Fujita-Rony, 2003; Posadas, 1999; Strobel; 2001). “Thus, the principal attention for FilCrit pedagogy is building upon Filipino/a experiences in the advancement of culturally relevant and transformative sites of knowledge production” (Viola, 2012, p. 194).

FilCrit pedagogy is also shaped by critical pedagogy and the seminal Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire (1970), that centers dialogue, self-reflection, and critical consciousness, *conscientização*, at the core of its educational praxis. With the FilCrit pedagogical framework, the participants in the study will undertake a self-reflective process of their lived experiences

takes into account the culturally relevant tools mobilized by Filipino/as dispersed in the United States and throughout a global diaspora as they reflect upon their own unique experiences, historicize their circumstances, and collectively act to transform the conditions of possibility for an alternative future. (Viola, 2012, p. 192)

Moreover, Viola (2012) asserts the “creativity of cultural production” as an alternative narrative of diasporic Filipinos' colonial past (p. 6). This results in creative expressions such as song, dance, musicianship, spoken word, and in any expressive form to release their intergenerational trauma as a response to their colonial influences of the past. Viola describes diasporic counter-consciousness as Filipinos in the diaspora continually developing and reflecting on their intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1989)

dependent on “(1) the fate of a population dispersed throughout the globe and; (2) the eradication of neocolonial conditions in the Philippines” (Viola, 2012, p. 192-193).

In addition, FilCrit pedagogy critically analyzes global capitalism and how intersecting oppressions affect people throughout the globe. “FilCrit pedagogy is also committed in theorizing and building solidarities across gender, race, sexuality, and other forms of difference” (Viola, 2012, p. 195). Analyzing diasporic Filipinos' lived experiences are an effect of their colonial past and the systems of global capitalism. Thus, non-Filipinos who also have experienced the effects of global capitalism will have similar experiences that cut across racial and ethnic lineage.

Hence, FilCrit pedagogy will contextualize the lived experiences of diasporic Filipinos and give greater meaning to their diasporic counter consciousness.

Educational Significance of Study

This study focuses on the experiences of diasporic Filipinos and provides a glimpse of the multiplicity of beautiful voices from the Philippine diaspora exploring visions that they carry for their dynamic and intersectional communities in this historical moment. These collections of voices are surviving, coping, and striving in this political moment as the global trend of fascism becomes more apparent and normalized in the rhetoric and behaviors of elected political officials, which has a ripple effect emboldening fascists to commit racial, religious and xenophobic acts of hate. Moreover, as these different people are situated at different times and places, they shine a light on a journey of healing by naming the Filipino diasporic existence, especially in the current generational identification of Pilipinx.

As the OFW's and OCW's experiences have been documented, very few studies have centered around their experiences and their visioning for their communities they reside in (Abesamis, 1998-99; Aguilar, 2002; Alcid, 1998; Anderson, 2000; Azizah Kassim, 1998; Carino, 1995; Chang, 2000; Constable, 1997; Gonzalez, 1996; Parrenas, 2001). It is in this Pilipinx Radical Imagination, where we honor their livelihood and struggles to center their Pilipinx Radical Imagination as major contributors to their communities they live and work in.

This study aims to offer contributions to the research on the Philippine diaspora, Asian American studies, Ethnic Studies, and the emerging scholarship of Filipino American studies. Furthermore, the complex and multiplicity of voices speak to the intersectionality of their lived experiences (Crenshaw, 1989) not only centering their ethnic and cultural identities. By shedding a light on their multifaceted identities, this can open up space in academia and expand diasporic Filipino consciousness to explore the vastness of experiences of Filipinos in the diaspora.

The findings for this study may allude to further research on Filipinos in the diaspora in this current political time of human history. The study findings may suggest the need for continued research about their experiences and centering their vision for their communities to understand the direction of Pilipinos living and working abroad for future generations to come.

By utilizing the framework of transcendent resistance, this contemporary theoretical framework can be used as a model for current and future progressive educators, activists, social justice warriors, and human rights advocates to sustain their life's work by focusing on the inner to outer and centering radical love as the core of their

work. This framework can open new possibilities of intellectual space for the next generation so that they can incorporate their spirituality and collective solidarity amongst all social justice struggles they face. The world is evolving and creating new models of change frameworks are essential in the development of our ever-changing world.

Transcendent resistance can add to the discussion.

Limitations of Study

As a co-editor of *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018), this can be advantageous considering a personal intimate relationship with the contributors which can provide deep and more authentic answers. On the other hand, this can be disadvantageous because there is already an established personal relationship, which possibly can compromise the authenticity of the participants' answers due to preconceived notions from our interactions. Another limitation of the study is that the majority of the contributors live in the United States of America, and the study will be more reflective towards the Filipino American 2nd generation experience. Although, within the confines of the Filipino American 2nd generation experience, there are multitude of layers depending on locale, gender and sexual identity, economics, and other characteristics which contribute to the richness and diverse cultural mosaic of the Filipino American experience. Six out of eight interviewees reside in the United States of America. While very few contributors reside in different countries (Australia, Canada, Philippines), their Filipino diasporic experience is solely their own experience and not representative of the entire Filipino diasporic experience of that country. Out of the eight interviewees, one resides in Australia and the other resides bi-nationally between the United States of America and the Philippines. Lastly, many of the *kuwentuhans* (soulful

Filipino dialogic) will be conducted virtually or over the phone, making it difficult to observe and assess mannerisms and body language while they are being interviewed through a computer screen or telephone (McKenna & Bargh, 2000).

Definition of Terms

The following definitions clarify the terms used in this research.

Filipino/a/@/x, Pilipino/a/@/x: Nievera-Lozano (2018) defines these cultural identifications for diasporic Filipinos, as:

“The F and P (for the term Filipino/Pilipino) are interchangeable...A recent movement during academic school year 2015-2016 called for the use of the x -as in, Pinxy, Filipinx, or Pilipinx-to be inclusive of people who identify as transgender, genderqueer, or non-binary. Stretching this to a/o/x (as in Pilipina/o/x) expresses a sort of bridging of these multiple and inclusive gender expressions” (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, p. 1).

Pin@y: Another cultural identification of Filipino Americans from the 90s to denote gender neutrality and of a technological influenced generation. Nievera-Lozano (2018) points out that:

Pin@y was a term first created to make the geopolitical distinction between Filipina/os in the United States and their counterparts in the Philippines, though now used to refer to Filipina/os throughout the diaspora. The @ symbol came about in the 90s on college campuses to denote gender neutrality. (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, p. 1)

Radical Imagination: Kelley (2003) asserts “is a collective imagination engaged in an actual movement for liberation. It is fundamentally a product of struggle, of victories and losses, crises and openings, and endless conversations circulating in a shared environment (p. 150).

Filipino Diaspora: San Juan Jr. (2001) theorizes the complexities of the Filipino diaspora in six interconnected theses:

- (1) Filipinos are dispersed from family or kinship webs in villages, towns or provincial regions first, and loosely from a neo-colonized (some say "refeudalized") nation-state.
- (2) They [myths and memories of the homeland] derive from assorted childhood memories and folklore together with customary practices of folk and religious celebrations.
- (3) Alienation in the host country is what unites Filipinos; a shared history of colonial and racial subordination, marginalization, and struggles for cultural survival through hybrid forms of resistance and political rebellion.
- (4) Some Filipinos in their old age may desire eventual return only when they are economically secure.
- (5) Ongoing support for nationalist struggles at home is sporadic and intermittent.
- (6) The Filipino diasporic consciousness is an odd species, a singular genre: it is not obsessed with a physical return to roots or to land where common sacrifices are remembered and celebrated. It is tied more to a symbolic homeland indexed

by kinship or particularistic traditions which it tries to reconstitute in diverse localities (San Juan, Jr., 2001, p. 261-263).

Pilipinx Radical Imagination: The Pilipinx Radical Imagination is the hybridity of the contemporary cultural identifications of the -x (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018), embedded theorized complexities of the Filipino diaspora (San Juan Jr., 2001), and radical collective imagination towards liberation (Kelley, 2003).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to contextualize and understand the depth and breadth of the Pilipinx Radical Imagination, the following review of the literature is organized into three main areas: (1) Pilipinx identity formation, (2) radical imagination, (3) cultural production and knowledge.

Pilipinx Identity Formation

Spanish colonization

During Spanish colonization, the Spaniards created a colonial caste system that identified the different ethnic populations and ensured that rebellions would not happen to overthrow the Spanish rule. People were categorized as indio (indigenous person of purely Austronesian ancestry), Sangley or Chino (person of purely Chinese ancestry), Tornatras (person of mixed Spanish, Austronesian and Chinese ancestry), Americanos (person of Criollo [either pure Spanish blood, or mostly]; Castizo [$\frac{1}{4}$ Native American, $\frac{3}{4}$ Spanish]; or Mestizo [$\frac{1}{2}$ Spanish, $\frac{1}{2}$ Native American] descent born in Spanish America (from the Americas), Peninsulares (person of purely Spanish descent born in Spain), Negrito (indigenous person of purely Negrito ancestry), Moros (indigenous person of Islamic faith living in the Archipelago of the Philippines, Mestizo de Sangley or Chino” (person of mixed Chinese and Austronesian ancestry), and Insulares, Blancos, Filipino (person of purely Spanish descent born in the Philippines). Ultimately, the term Filipino included Spanish and Chinese mestizos, or those born of mixed Chinese-Indio or Spanish-Indio descent (Constantino, 1969). This caste system delineated the racial hierarchy of the Spaniards at the top of the caste system and the indios (indigenous people of the native land) at the bottom of the caste system. This caste system created a

clear divide amongst the various categorized groups and oftentimes the darker the skin color, the lower on the racial hierarchy they would be (Constantino, 1969).

During the Philippines independence movement against Spain, Jose Rizal, a national hero of the Philippines, reclaimed the identification of Filipinos to include the entire population of the Philippines regardless of racial ancestry (Guerrero, 2010; Ocampo, 2012). This Filipino identification became a rallying cry to unify the nation-state that all people living in the Philippines, were proudly claimed to be Filipino and thus abolishing the Spanish caste system after the Philippines independence from Spain in 1898.

1920s (Pinoys and Pinays)

In the early 1900s, primarily Filipino males under the age of 30 from Ilocos, immigrated to the United States to do back breaking agricultural labor along the West Coast, Hawaii, and the canneries of Alaska. This generation is often referred to the invisible generation, bridge generation or *Manong* generation created ethnic enclaves in areas such as El Dorado Street in the Historic Little Manila of Stockton, Temple Street in Historic Filipinotown in Los Angeles, Kearny Street in San Francisco, and 6th street in San José's Japantown (Cordova, 1983; Fabros, Gonzales, & Begonia, 1995; Jamero, 2011; Mabalon, 2013; Morales, 1998; Ragsac, 2018). It was in these areas that the community flourished and the vibrancy of pool halls, barbershops, community centers, grocery stores, and restaurants created what some call Pinoytowns. The term Pinoy referred to Filipinos living or born in the United States (Cordova, 1983; Fabros, Gonzales, & Begonia, 1995; Jamero, 2011; Mabalon, 2013; Morales, 1998; Ragsac, 2018; Stern, 1989; Tintiangco-Cubales, 2007 & 2009). The earliest documented

appearance of the term Pinay was in the 1926 Filipino Student Bulletin (as cited in Mabalon, 2013, p. 20). When they would write letters to their relatives in the Philippines, they would refer to the other *pinoy*s and *pinay*s to distinguish themselves from living abroad in the United States.

1960s (F/Pilipino/ Filipina/o, Pilipina/o)

The 1960s & 1970s F/Pilipino Americans were at the center and the height of the civil rights movement. It was one of the first Pilipino professors, Uncle Roy Morales, who taught the Pilipino American studies course at UCLA and is the founder of Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA) in Los Angeles, who is credited with using the identity of Pilipino instead of Filipino on a national level (Morales, 1998). He changed the lettering because there is no “F” in the Philippines alphabet, and he took pride in his ethnic identity and critical consciousness in America. In 1967, the Pilipino student activists from San Francisco State University created a Pilipino American club called the Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE) which became an integral voice unifying the students of color organizations and creating the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) that took direct action to demand ethnic studies. In 1968-69, this historical and monumental student strike established the first and only College of Ethnic Studies in the nation. Jovina Navarro’s, first Pilipino instructor at San Francisco State University, writings, *Diwang Pilipino: Pilipino Consciousness* (1974) was one of the first literary anthologies that labeled themselves as Pilipinos as part of the rebellion against American colonization and part of their decolonization process. Although, in the Northwest, the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS), did not take on the Pilipino

identification marker but instead continued using Filipino American to express their place in American history (Cordova, 1983).

1990s (Pin@y/Filipin@/Pilipin@)

In the 1990s, the Pilipino consciousness developed and college students from the San Francisco Bay area wanted to create their own label for their generation and themselves. The term Pin@y is attributed to the Pilipino American UC Berkeley students identifying with a binary gender-neutral term, thus the term Pin@y was created. In 2001, the Pin@y Youth Organizers Summit publicly used the term Pin@y defining “The symbol “@” represents the combination of “a” from “Pinay” or female Pilipina, and “o” from “Pinoy” or male Pilipino. As a symbol of technology and progress, this Pin@y Generation inspires collective action for personal growth and social transformation” (“Pin@y Youth Organizers Summit”, 2001). Furthermore, since the Pin@ys were living in the San Francisco Bay area and a technological startup boom was occurring, they wanted to identify the Pin@y generation to include in their identification a binary gender-neutral term and name the time and place of a technological boom. In addition, Dr. Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales along with her San Francisco State University students, created the Pin@y Educational Partnerships with the goals, (1) Retain both Filipino high school and college students; (2) Recruit high school students to pursue college and to recruit college students to pursue careers in education;(3) Reflect on historical and contemporary experiences of Filipino Americans; and (4) Provide research, training, and service-learning opportunities for students (“Pin@y Educational Partnerships”, 2001).

2010s (F/Pilipinx or Pinxy)

In the early 2010s, the current generation of F/Pilipino Americans challenged the identification marker to be even more inclusive of various identities in their community. According to Nievera-Lozano and Santa Ana (2018), “A recent movement during academic school year 2015-2016 called for the use of the x -as in, Pinxy, Filipinx, or Pilipinx-to be inclusive of people who identify as transgender, genderqueer, or non-binary. Stretching this to a/o/x (as in Pilipina/o/x) expresses a sort of bridging of these multiple and inclusive gender expressions” (p. 1). Moreover, UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC Davis, and San Francisco State University Pilipinx American clubs changed their club names to include the Pilipinx identity. In addition, Pilipinx- UCLA’s residential living learning community states on their website,

Pilipinx is the gender-neutral alternative to Pilipino, Pilipina and even Pilipin@. Used by scholars, activists and an increasing number of journalists, Pilipinx is quickly gaining popularity among the general public. It’s part of a “linguistic revolution” that aims to move beyond gender binaries and is inclusive of the intersecting identities of Filipino American descendants. In addition to men and women from all racial backgrounds, Pilipinx also makes room for people who are trans, queer, agender, non-binary, gender non-conforming or gender fluid. Switching the F to the P celebrates identity, as we learn about the larger frame of decolonization. (“Pilipinx-UCLA Residential Life”, n.d. para. 3)

Lastly in 2016, the Pilipinx American Library started in Queens, NY and temporarily landed a home in 2018 at the San Francisco Asian Art Museum. Their mission states, “P A L / Pilipinx American Library is a mobile, non-circulating library

that celebrates print histories and collects narratives by writers, poets, artists, and scholars across the diaspora. P A L centers the Filipinx experience through the reading and sharing of texts, other printed works and ephemera in public as pop-up libraries, performances, and readings” (Pilipinx American Library, 2016, para. 1).

Radical Imagination

Radical imagination is the stretching of the mind to imagine the world not as it is but how it might otherwise be filled with love, justice, and freedom. According to James Baldwin as cited by Craven, Dow, and Nakamura (2017), it is the courage and critical reflection to recognize that the world can and should radically change. However, radical imagination is not just about dreaming about the possibilities of varied futures. It has much thought-provoking meaning bringing those possible futures back to work in the present, to inspire action and deeper connections of solidarity today (Khasnabish & Haiven, 2012). Khasnabish and Haiven (2014), sought to study, analyze, amplify, and promote the radical ideas that emerge from social movements to understand the radical imagination that inspired activists. Such radical imagination is what guides the practices of transformative movements around the globe (Movement Strategy Center, 2016).

To further social movements, Kelley (2002), traced historical movements on Black, communist, nationalist, liberalist, and feminist movements. He drew upon famous political leaders such as Marcus Garvey to describe the task of redefining and reimagining freedom and community without exploitation of oppressed peoples. He traces the effects of the Chinese Revolution and Mao Tse-Tung on radical Black movements. For example, he established that the transnational influences gave hope to Black radical movements, which began to view the racial epidemic in the United States.

Because of the negative impacts of colonialism, these social movements sought to improve the personal well-being and social morale of the society. For Kelley (2002), reparation is essential as it demands social justice, and it has the hope to change the systems of the society to benefit all. He honored the work for Black feminist activist, sharing that radical black feminism was crucial to any truly revolutionary ideology. In particular, Black feminism demands and visions the liberation of all people, especially for black women.

In his book, Robinson (2000) attempts to comprehend black people's history of resistance through the lens of Marxist theory but concludes that they are incomplete and inaccurate. Moreover, Marxist posits that European models of history look down upon the importance of Black people and communities as agents of resistance and change. To support his argument, Robinson (2000) studied the emergence of the Marxist doctrine in Europe, the resistance of Black people and the effect of both of these traditions on seminal 20th century Black radical thinkers such as James Baldwin, Richard Wright, and C.L.R. James. Finally, he argued that Black radicalism must be aligned with the culture and traditions of Africa.

In comparison to Kelley (2002), Boggs and Kurashige (2012) critiqued the current political, economic, and environmental crisis, and formulated various ways to inspire radical change to inspire new ways of being and transformative societies. Boggs coined the term solutionaires, which is a beautiful combination of solutions and visionaries. This forward-thinking exemplary word pushes the imagination past the boundaries of what is not known to ideas that must be imagined and become tangible. This book is a retrospective of Boggs decades of participation in some of the 20th century's social

movements, such as the anti-capitalist labor movements of the 1940s and 1950s, the Black Power Movement, and contemporary women's rights movements. The authors analyzed seven decades of activist participation and provided a critical analysis to redefine and reinvent what revolution may look and feel like in these current times.

Boggs and Kurashige (2012) explore alternative movement strategies of vocation, human interaction, and politics that will altogether comprise what the next American Revolution will look like.

This movement strategy involves the participation of both social change agents, activists, and the broader public. In connection to this, Ginwright (2008) examines the role of participatory action research (PAR) in fostering civic engagement and community change among youth of color. Examining youth PAR projects from six cities by those who had participated in the Research Collaborative on Youth Activism (RCYA), Ginwright (2008) illustrated how the participatory process combines the intersection of art, science, and imagination. Specifically, building a collective radical imagination among youth through participatory research needs the researcher to embrace both art and science. Moreover, PAR facilitates a collective radical imagination among youth of color through expressive art forms such as poetry, that provides space for people to transcend the immediate everyday realities that confine their experiences to dream, imagine, and hope. Ginwright (2008) argued that equal importance to the analytical skills developed through PAR, youth develop a collective radical imagination that is crucial for community and social change.

Research is most useful in changing society when young people develop skills both to explain systemic causes of issues that shape their lives and then intentionally act

to transform their societal conditions. This research will demand that people move beyond the universities and professional associations to build new infrastructure that can promote the free exchange of ideas, tools, and individuals required for the greater democratization of knowledge (Ginwright, 2008). Just like Ginwright (2008), in collaboration with the activists they were researching, Khasnabish and Haiven (2014) organized film sessions, public talks, and workshops to go beyond mere academic ethnographic research. Moreover, creative ways of conducting research ensure that the individuals being studied are transformed during the process while transforming their communities. Thus, Khasnabish and Haven's legacy is an alternative model of critical education and critical research they referred to as solidarity research.

Rickford (2016) explores the intellectual lives of Black institutions that have been established and dedicated to following the self-determination and sovereignty of Black society. He was influenced by Third World scholars and anti-colonial campaigns; activists were devoted to the struggle and liberation for Black political sovereignty across the globe. This was a similar approach to participatory action research used by Ginwright (2008). In support of the findings in Ginwright's study, the narratives that Rickford (2016) uses reveal Pan Africanism as a social and intellectual movement as an integral part of Black nationalism. Moreover, Rickford (2016) examines this movement to explore a significant period of political, social, and cultural awakening that greatly impacted African American life to reimagine an alternative liberated and just society.

Similarly, Muzio (2017) focused on structural and historical aspects such as colonialism, economic marginalization, racial discrimination, and the Black and Brown power movements of the 1960s. She analyzed how these factors shaped young Puerto

Ricans to reject mainstream ideologies of oppressive political systems and join in solidarity struggles against injustices. Muzio participated in the social movement, El Comité-Movimiento de Izquierda Nacional Puertorriqueño. Because of her involvement in the movement and her inside knowledge, she conducted in-depth interviews with activists and created a picture of how a radical and counterhegemonic political viewpoint evolved organically amongst the people.

Frazier (2014) explores people's understanding of the activities of Black radical activists in Cold War politics by centering on the role of African American intellectuals in projecting China as an emerging global power at the height of the Cold War in the 1960s and 1970s. Frazier's (2014) themes of radical imagining which he defines as a process of ideology that heightens intellectual consciousness and social life for the process of reimagining the world people experience so that they can make and shape anew. This relationship between radical Black leaders and the Chinese resulted from their shared interest in dismantling the Western hegemony. Moreover, this offered the Black radical leaders support for their struggle against the USA, greed capitalism, and white supremacy.

Olson, Worsham, and Giroux (2015) sum up the ideologies of the previous authors by recognizing that democracy relies on political imagination and collective hope to enable one to move from the personal to the political and back. Additionally, it is about public responsibility and the significance of critical education in a democratic society. According to Hage (2015), the masses should focus on creating more spaces for critical thought and dialogue to reimagine their political futures instead of spending their energy in reactionary movement building. Hage attempts to reimagine the world beyond the

confines of oppositional politics and challenges people to move beyond politics of the emotional reaction to the visionary solutionaires Boggs (2013) suggests us to build upon.

Pilipino Americans were heavily influenced by Black radical thought and ideology, especially in the 1960s and 1970s created the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) at San Francisco State University. This solidarity movement-building of radically imagining public institutions representative of Third World people changed the public educational landscape of the 20th century. Fast forward, the next generation of Pin@y activists of the late 1990s and early 2000s, was mentored and guided by the activists of the 1960s and 1970s to push and challenge the boundaries of Filipino American visibility in the mainstream through political, educational, and popular culture. This Cultural Renaissance of activists, educators, and agents of social change radically imagined a more inclusive and broader representation of Filipino America that included their narratives in the fabric and facets of the American experience.

Cultural Production and Knowledge

Bourdieu (1994) addresses multiple issues about the literary arts and cultural criticism in the last 20th century. Some issues include the institutional frameworks of cultural practice, the social role of intellectuals and artists, and aesthetic value. He elaborates a model of the cultural fields that situates artistic works within the social conditions of their production, circulation, and consumption.

According to Bourdieu (1994), to understand a work of art, one must look at both the art itself and the social conditions of its production and perceived reception. This lens characterizes the field of cultural production and the way it relates to the broader fields of class and power relations. Bourdieu's views on cultural production came about from the

principles of habitus, capital, and the field to the artistic world (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). This refers to the set systems that inform the way to behave in various contexts, especially during childhood experiences. Bourdieu (1994) defines capital as the specific qualities that a person possesses that enable him or her to be successful in any field. Moreover, the position that a person occupies within the field of cultural production relies on his or her class habitus and degree of capital. However, although Bourdieu (1994) states that the field of cultural production has increased over the years, the field is not completely autonomous since it remains rooted within the field of power.

Globally, educational institutions are central to the social and cultural shaping of their society. These sites of cultural production are the socialization process of the production and consumption of the cultural forms and systems. However, these sites are another form of hegemonic control and dutiful citizens. Levinson, Foley, and Holland (1996) explored the conflicts and contradictions that modern schools provide to students who might benefit from their teachings and credentials, and for those who would fit the young to a particular vision of society. Their study consisted of eleven original case studies that addressed social and cultural projects of educational institutions. Levinson, Foley, and Holland (1996) argue that the concept of cultural production enables people to better understand the resources for, and constraints upon, social action in a variety of educational institutions. They also argue culturally specific content and knowledge allows people to appreciate the historical and cultural knowledge of those that experience the educational system. Despite the different meanings that the concept of cultural production has, Levinson, Foley, and Holland (1996) use it to show how people creatively occupy the space of education and schooling. School knowledge can be

empowering for marginalized groups as long as it respects the cultural knowledge and wisdom of those groups. The school should serve as a site for the cultural production that develops positive identities that extend beyond the school but into the personal lives of their communities.

By focusing on pedagogical and political dimensions of culture, educators and cultural-studies advocates can interrogate tests as a form of ethnography, broadening the range of ideological critique and pedagogical encounters to symbols, images, myths, narratives, and diverse systems of belief. Pedagogy as a form of cultural production takes on the goal of challenging and interrogating the forms of inclusion and exclusion in the production, distribution, and circulation of knowledge (Giroux & Shannon, 2013). For example, critical pedagogy joins cultural studies in raising questions concerning the relationship of culture to power.

Similar to Giroux and Shannon (2013) and Levinson, Foley, and Holland (1996), Freire (1985) championed a theory of cultural power and production that begins with the notion of popular education. He argued for pedagogical principles to arise and shift into concrete practices in which ways people live out their hopes, problems, and everyday experiences. He specifically suggests that the cultural capital of the oppressed be taken seriously, creating essential and analytical tools to critique it and understand the definitions of knowledge. Moreover, according to Freire (1985), culture is a form of production whose processes are connected intimately with the structuring of diverse social formations, mainly those that are related to race, gender, and class.

In his article, Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) explores that people need to embrace a certain complexity and an understanding of the arts in education. This is to comprehend

the actual experiences they have with processes of cultural production through their education. Just like Bourdieu (1994), Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) uses the term arts to refer to those ways in which cultural production and symbolic creativity are developed with education. Moreover, he shapes the idea of the arts to the way people think and talk concerning these practices to provoke a different way of thinking. Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) thinking mirrors that of Levinson, Foley, and Holland (1996) that the ways in which people process arts as education are also shaped by the dominant systems in schooling.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of diasporic Filipinos to better understand their current experiences and vision for their communities. This study focused on the contributors of *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018). By digging deep into the participant's experiences, I created space for validation and agency for contributing to their communities. Given the limited existing literature on this topic, my findings can be used as a text for further research of diasporic Filipinos documenting their current reality and visioning for their communities.

Research Questions

The overarching research question for this study was: "How do the experiences of diasporic Filipinos inform their *Pilipinx Radical Imagination*?" The following four related sub-research questions guided the inquiry of this study:

1. What is your *Pilipinx Radical Imagination*?
2. What does it mean to be *Pilipinx* now in this moment?
3. How are *Pilipinx* actively making sense of their stories?
4. How are the *Pilipinx* documenting their stories?

Research Design

This study utilized critical ethnography as its methodology to gather and collect the current research data from December 2018 to December 2019. Critical ethnography is inherently political in its approach and the researcher and participants are closely interlinked creating a magnified view of what is being studied (Carspecken, 1996; Soyini

Madison, 2005, Walford, 2009) This emancipatory methodology not only gives voice to the participants but also organically develops agency from the lived experiences. Since Filipinos in the diaspora have been hugely impacted by a colonial traumatic past, this methodology centers their experiences as becoming agents of change. By conducting one-on-one interviews, collecting documents and artifacts, and participant and audience observations, I examined the complexity of their intersectional identities and their vision for their communities. My study dived deeper into the understanding of diasporic Filipinos in this current political climate. This study explored the vast experiences of diasporic Filipinos in the context of agents of social change rather than victims of traumatic colonial history. Critical ethnography methodology was a highly effective approach for data collection and analysis considering that their lived experiences combined with their radical imaginings will provide space for change in the cultural production of their living context. Expanding on this established methodology, I used a culturally responsive and culturally humble data collection methodology, *kuwentuhan*, as a methodological tool that elicited a richer and more genuine response from the participants. This methodology honored and respected the cultural norms and ways of being that are familiar to the diasporic Filipino cultural experience. It provided an intimate, comforting space that was not direct or abrasive but respectful, thoughtful, intentionally poised, and lovingly methodical.

Research Sites

The research sites for this study were primarily in Northern California, and specifically the Bay Area (including, but not limited to the surrounding areas Sacramento, San Francisco, Oakland, and San José) as well as Southern California. Although some

participants lived in other countries such as Australia, Canada, and the Philippines. At the time of this research, I lived in San José, CA and Northern California made in-person conversations more accessible. I chose to focus on these regions because of my connections to the community and my rootedness in these areas. Selection of participants and data collection was an organic and much easier process. For those participants that were unable to have in-person conversations or lived outside the San Francisco Bay Area or San Diego, the interviews were conducted over the phone, Skype, Facetime, or Google hangout between San José, CA and their living location (Australia, Canada, USA, Philippines).

Selection of Participants

There were 37 contributors in The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader that resided in the U.S., Canada, Philippines, and Australia. In order to get a cross-section of voices, I specifically selected varied gender and generational identities and geographical locations in my study. Ultimately, I invited, over email, eight contributors from the book to participate in the study. We communicated over email to discuss the study and provide the pertinent information for the preparation of the *kuwentuhan*. Additionally, in selecting the participants for this research, each person met the following criteria:

- Self-identified as Filipino/a/x/@, Pilipino/a/x/@ or Pinx/@/y
- Contributed to The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018)
- Was willing to allow the researcher to record and transcribe the interviews

· Was willing to participate in this study, that may eventually be published in an academic publication such as a journal, monograph, white paper, or book.

Since the publication of *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018) has been published, the communication between the co-editors and contributors have remained constant via email. The participants in the study were chosen because they were specific contributors to *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018). I sent an email message that included my email address, telephone number, and a request to participate. Once potential participants responded, I provided a more detailed description of the study, information about the confidentiality of the data they would provide if they chose to participate, and a timeline for interviews. Once they agreed to participate, they were sent an informed consent form through email and were asked to read, sign, scan, and send it back to the researcher. This helped ensure the authenticity of the participant's signature. Individuals were contacted within two weeks of receipt of the informed consent form via email with a list of interview questions.

Role of the Researcher

Ethical Considerations

This research followed the Human Subjects regulations of the University of San Francisco. The research conducted in the field required the format of the research protocol and began with the consented participants. After gaining approval from University of San Francisco's Institutional Review Board, participants were recruited through targeted invitations. Moreover, the researcher did share the identities of the participants with anyone, including his dissertation committee, nor any individuals

affiliated with the research site. Interviewees could select a pseudonym, which was used by the researcher when referring to specific information shared during their interview. Interviews were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed. The researcher also documented notes during the interview into paper journals. All of the participants agreed to be audio recorded. Data was logged and stored on a password-protected laptop computer. Digital and hard copy data files were kept in a secure location and will be kept for three years. After three years they will be securely deleted or otherwise destroyed.

Involvement in the research study could be a highly emotional experience. Participants were free to end their participation or omit any part of their interview at any time. Participants had the opportunity to read the transcripts from their interviews. Participant identities were confidential, and participants had the opportunity to choose a pseudonym. Documents related to the observations and their interviews were secured and accessible only to Anthony Santa Ana. I understand that it is my responsibility to make every effort to protect the identity of the participants.

Data Collection

This study utilized three types of data collection: *kuwentuhan*, deep dialogue in Filipino language, participant and audience observation, and the collection of artifacts. I used a culturally responsive interview tool, *kuwentuhan*, that derives from Freire's (1970) dialogic model. In this model (1) each person has the right to speak their truth; (2) dialogue cannot be the act of one person's depositing ideas in another; (3) dialogue is not a hostile and virulent argument; (4) dialogue is democratic; (5) dialogue contains elements of love, humility, hope, humor, silence, critical thinking, and humanizing of each other and Jocson's (2008) work that uses *kuwento* in high school ethnic studies

classes. Moreover, since Chicana/o & Latina/o communities also have a painful shared colonial history due to Spanish colonization, diasporic Filipinos shared past experiences that mirror similarities of our lived experiences to the reaction of our colonial past (Ocampo, 2016). Thus, testimonio as a methodology “makes sense” in the usage of the data collection for the Pilipinx communities (Burciaga & Tavares, 2006; Delgado Bernal, 2008; Flores Carmona, 2010; Hurtado, Hurtado, & Hurtado, 2008; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Russel y Rodriquez, 2007; Turner, 2008; Bernal, Burciaga, & Carmona, 2012). Chicana/Latina scholarship expanded testimonio to reciprocally include the researcher and participant as giving and receiving the testimonio through collective story and community to deeply understand their experiences in Chicana/o and Latina/o communities that speak truth to power and oppression to foster transformation and social change.

Kuwentuhan as a dialogic interview tool derives from dialogical and testimonios although culturally specific to Filipinos in the diaspora adding a deep intrinsic cultural element of immediate comfort. In, “Kuwento as Multicultural Pedagogy in High School Ethnic Studies” Jocson (2008) defines *kuwento* as a “communicative tool drawn from Philippine folk and oral traditions, which continues to be a cultural and sociolinguistic practice among Filipina/o Americans...kuwento is not simply about sharing stories but also about the nature in which the stories take place” (p. 242). In Francisco's participatory action research with migrant Filipino workers, she defines a *kuwentuhan* as talk story in Tagalog (Francisco, 2014). Jocson's and Francisco's description of a *kuwentuhan* identifies partially to the depth of a *kuwentuhan* although I want to further include more depth and soul of what a *kuwentuhan* encapsulates. When participating in a *kuwentuhan*,

stories are flowing, laughter is present, and there is a deep acknowledgment of pain, struggles, and emotions. It is a time that is filled with reciprocity of love, joy, and pain wrapped in dialogue that humanizes each other's collective experiences. Topics vary from painful family matters, romantic relationship woes, financial hardships, joys and celebration of family events, gossiping about current family matters to speaking to the oppression and hardships of *buhay*, life. In Gonzalves book foreword (2007), Ricardo D. Trimillos describes *kuwentuhan* as "the Filipino genre for socializing in which raconteurs tell stories and create narratives. Often there is no apparent cohesiveness or point to a *kuwento* until the end, when everything becomes clear(er). Thus, the Filipino focus upon the process, the "getting there," makes kuwentu-kuwentuhan simultaneously engaging, social, delightful, and enlightening" (pp2 2-3). *Kuwentuhan* initially massages the conversation with surface-level interaction and as the *kuwentuhan* develops, deeper dialogue and heart-to-heart exchanges occur to understand the true meaning of the *kuwentuhan*. Since food is the center of Filipino culture, oftentimes as Pilipinx engage in *kuwentuhan*, it immediately comforts synergistic dialogue with smiles and nourishment for the body and soul.

Each one-on-one *kuwentuhan* was scheduled between 45-75 minutes in length with each participant after they had agreed to be a part of the study. At the start of the *kuwentuhan*, the participant was given a consent form to review and sign (Appendix ##). The consent form asked the participant to approve or disapprove with the researcher's options to audio record the *kuwentuhan*. I asked open-ended questions for elaboration and to gather more in-depth details of their stories. Here is a sample of the questions that were asked:

1. Please share how you culturally identify yourself?
2. What does it mean to be a Filipino in the diaspora in this current moment in time?
3. Why did you contribute to The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader?
4. What comes to mind when you think of the Pilipinx Radical Imagination?
5. Please discuss your submission to The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader?
6. What did you want readers to take away from your submission?
7. What is your vision for the communities you are a part of?
8. Is there anything else that you would like to add to this research about Filipinos in the diaspora and visioning for your communities?

After each *kuwentuhan* was completed, the audio-recording was transcribed by the researcher. The researcher added their own personal observation notes as well as notes from listening to the recordings. These notes were then used for the data analysis. While thoroughly reading through the transcription, the researcher used highlighters to categorize recurring themes noting specific quotes from the transcription to add more depth to the recurring theme. After the researcher themed each participant's transcription log, then the researcher analyzed all the transcription themes and quotes in its entirety.

A *kuwentuhan* protocol was created and included *kuwentuhan* instructions and questions (Appendix A). After the *kuwentuhan*, I sent a follow-up message thanking the participant for their participation and explaining the next steps of the study. These next steps provided participants the opportunity to review the researcher's transcription of the

kuwentuhan. Lastly, I reviewed with them the option to use pseudonyms to ensure the protection of their identities.

Participant/Audience Observation

DeWALT and DeWALT (2002) believes that participant observation refines the quality of data collection and interpretation and creates spaces for underlying research questions. This means that the researcher is able to experience the participants in their natural setting, which can lead to a more authentic experience for the researcher. Over 21 public presentations were coordinated by the organization that hosted the book talk. Many of the book talks were either networks of the co-editors or they heard about the release of the book via social media. Since the book had a website and social media presence, the interested person contacted the co-editors by direct message. In this context, I attended public presentations in community settings in which the participants talk about their experiences and vision for their communities. The format of the book event was (1) welcoming and honoring community leaders that passed (2) background context of how the book was born (3) invited book contributor's brief talk about their submission and their Pilipinx Radical Imagination (4) community *kuwentuhan*, community conversation, with the audience members. Furthermore, the attendees of this public presentation, mostly college students to working professionals, will ask questions, comments, feedback, and thoughts which can lead into clarifying discussions of the participant's thoughts. In turn, give more depth into the participant's interviews.

Book Events

Our first book event was on October 18, 2018 at Mission College. This is a significant date in Filipino American history because it was the first recorded landing of

Filipinos from Luzon that set foot on the continental United States on October 18, 1587 and we were also making history with our first ever book launching. What we thought was going to be only two book events turned into over 20 book events across the nation. We were sponsored by various community organizations and held our book events at local businesses, college campuses, academic conferences, libraries, bookstores, and book festivals reaching over 1000 attendees. In each one of the book events, we followed this format and flow:

1. Honoring our ancestors (Dr. Dawn Mabalon & Uncle Steve Arevalo)
2. Background context of the creation of the book
3. Contributor's submission and sharing of their Pilipinx radical imagination
4. Community *kuwentuhan*

List of Book Events

From July 10, 2018 to May 9, 2020 there were 23 book launches and events with over 1100 people in attendance across the United States. Below is a list of the dates, places, and sponsoring organizations that supported and produced the events.

Table 1: The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader Book Events

| DATE | PLACE | SPONSORING ORGS |
|--------------------|--|--|
| July 10, 2018 | Snoice Snow & Ice Desserts Shop (San Diego, CA) | Snoice, Barangay Arts & Culture Movement, FilAm Fest, APICA, and UCSD SPACES |
| October 18, 2018 | Mission College (Santa Clara, CA) | AANAPISI, Office of Student Equity and Success |
| October 19, 2018 | Crema Coffee (San Jose, CA) | FANHS SCV and LEAD Filipino |
| October 24, 2018 | City College of San Francisco (San Francisco, CA) | CCSF Philippine Studies Department |
| October 25, 2018 | DePaul University (Chicago, Illinois) | DePaul Office of Multicultural Student Success and DePaul Women's Center |
| October 27, 2018 | Google (Mountain View, CA) | LEAD Filipino |
| October 28, 2018 | San Francisco Public Library (San Francisco, CA) | SF Public Library "Filipino American Center" |
| October 30, 2018 | De Anza College (Cupertino, CA) | IIS/ICS Department, Asian American Studies Department, Euphrat Museum, California History Center, and Office of Equity, Social Justice and Multicultural Education |
| November 10, 2018) | Eastwinds Bookstore (Berkeley, CA) | Eastwinds Book |
| November 15, 2018 | University of California Santa Cruz (Santa Cruz, CA) | UCSC Critical Race & Ethnic Studies, Asian American Pacific Islander Resource Center and Anakbayan Santa Cruz |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| November 26, 2018 | San Francisco State University (San Francisco, CA) | SFSU Waves, Asian American & Pacific Islander Student Services |
| February 12, 2019 | University of San Francisco South Bay Campus (San Jose, CA) | USF Teacher Education Department |
| March 7, 2019 | De Anza College (Cupertino, CA) | Latinx Studies Department and First Year Experience |
| March 12, 2019 | De Anza College (Cupertino, CA) | Latinx Studies Department and First Year Experience |
| April 18, 2019 | McGill University (Montreal, Canada) | McGill University |
| April 20, 2019 | Mountain Province Cafe (Brooklyn, NY) | Mountain Province Cafe |
| April 28, 2019 | Cerritos Library (Cerritos, CA) | City of Cerritos and Cerritos Public Library |
| May 10, 2019 | University of California Davis (Davis, CA) | UC Davis Bulosan Center |
| July 27, 2019 | Yolo Brewing Company (Sacramento, CA) | Kumare Culture and Kumarehood Co-operative |
| August 9, 2019 | Art Haus Life Drawing at Milepost 5 (Portland, Oregon) | APANO Arts & Media Project Summer Series, Whitenoise Project and Pacific Underground |
| October 12, 2019 | Filipino American International Book Festival (San Francisco, CA) | Philippine American Writers and Artists |
| October 30, 2019 | Chabot College (Hayward, CA) | Ethnic Studies Department, Office of Equity, and Barangay Chabot |
| May 9, 2020 | Virtual (Worldwide) | Philippine American Writers and Artists |

Collection of Documents and Artifacts

The researcher collected documentation from the participants' submissions from The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018). The participant's submissions were in the form of a poem, prose, short story, academic writing, letter, photograph, essay, living theory, or illustration. Materials acquired were included in the formal data analysis as another aspect of participants' experiences.

Data Analysis

This study used the following approach for analyzing and interpreting the collected data during fieldwork:

1. Transcription of *kuwentuhan* and any recordings during participant or audience observation activities.
2. Analysis of the collection of participant's submissions using the theoretical frameworks: Transcendent Resistance and FilCrit Pedagogy.
3. Creation of a detailed profile of participants and coding and recognition of common and salient themes.

From the preliminary results of the data, the researcher developed a narrative for each participant. The interpretation of the study's results ensured that the research questions were addressed, highlighted limitations to the study, and provided opportunities for further contribution to the literature. Suggestions for further study and recommendations were also gathered from the results.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter shares the research findings by first presenting brief glimpses into the eight participants' *kuwentuhan*. *Kuwento* is a communicative practice originating in Philippine folk and oral traditions, which is still in use culturally and sociolinguistically today. It is described by Jocson (2008) as “a noun (story) and a verb (telling/listening to/participating in a story). To be clear, *kuwento* is not simply about sharing stories but also about the nature in which the stories take place” (p. 242).

In the cultural context, *kuwentuhans* bring a nourishing peace offering to soothe our spirits, preparing us to dig deep into our stories. Since food is at the center and essence of Filipino culture, these offerings are the food that is brought, shared, and eaten together. Those gathered sit surrounded by food, waiting for the *kuwentuhan* to unfold. I came into the *kuwentuhan* understanding by respecting this context, which helped me get in the mindset. As I approached each *kuwentuhan*, I allotted time at the beginning to ease into the conversation, to pull out the vulnerabilities and depths of their humanity. For example, I would consider the context of each individual *kuwentuhan* and ask questions such as, “How has your day been? How is your family doing? What has been going on in your life?” We were able to gain an understanding of what is currently going on in each other’s lives and ask how the family is doing. As the dialogue evolved, so did the flow and the feeling of us being both ready to go deeper into the *kuwentuhan*. Following this preparation, they felt comfortable to pour their heart out without hesitation, revealing their pains, desires, growth, and humanity.

In addition to engaging in *kuwento*, I also asked each participant to share basic demographic information such as name, place of birth, religion, etc. They were also

asked an open-ended question about how they self-identified, outside of the demographic questions that I asked. This provided an opportunity for each participant to share what is important to them in terms of their intersectional identities.

I present the research findings as a dialogic conversation or a written *kuwentuhan*, as the participants' voices interweave with and thread in and out of the dialogue. I will present the five major themes that emerged from this research as a *kuwentuhan* in a written play format in order to provide the reader with a holistic, experiential learning experience. This creative format for sharing my findings is important in expanding the understanding of the cultural context and intricacies of a *kuwentuhan*. To honor and uplift the participants' voices and bring their spirits into this research study, it is my hope that the reader can grasp the idea that food is at the center of our connection, the ebb and flow of the dialogue is important, and the timing of who is speaking depends on who is speaking. To provide more cultural commentary, I have added my thoughts and perspectives throughout each *kuwentuhan* to provide analysis. Moreover, in each of these scenes, I am stitching together quotes from the participant's *kuwentuhans* as well as their submissions from the book, creating scenes in the entire *kuwentuhan*.

I will present the *kuwentuhan* according to the three major themes that emerged from my analysis:

- (1) Identity & Cultural Fluidity
- (2) Transcendent Love
- (3) Healing & Visioning

Each theme is portrayed as a scene and each scene acts as a mini *kuwentuhan*, a part within the larger *kuwentuhan*. The mini *kuwentuhans* are pieces of the puzzle linking

and connecting interdependently with each other to create the organic synergy and beauty of the entire *kuwentuhan*.

Research Participant Profiles

The following is a brief background of each of the interview participants in this study. All participants were born either in the Philippines or the United States, with the majority of them being from the United States. All the interview participants gave full permission for their real names to be used in the study. In *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader*, the interview participants felt that their contribution piece gave a glimpse into their current lived experience, and the research study provided a more in-depth sharing of their contribution and further explanation of their *Pilipinx Radical Imagination*.

Allyson Tintiango-Cubales

Allyson Tintiango-Cubales' mother is from Batangas, Philippines and her father is from Tarlac, Philippines. She was born in Alameda, California, raised in Fremont, California, and grew up in a working-class family with a large extended family on both sides. Allyson is a professor in the College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University and is also the founder and director of teacher development at Pin@y Educational Partnerships. She strongly identifies as a mother, partner, *Ate* (big sister), as she makes sense of these relationships inside and outside of her home. "When people call me *Ate*, I think there's a relationship to how I understand mothering" (Allyson, personal communication, October 17, 2019).

Trinidad Escobar

Trinidad Escobar's birth and first family is from the Philippines. Escobar identifies herself as a Visayan, cis-gendered, queer *pinay* born in Balanga, Philippines, and raised in Milpitas, California. She is a full-time artist, writer, mother, educator, and radical anarchist. Her work explores the spirit and its manifestations as connective tissue between sisterhood, queer relationships, and nature.

Keith Rayos Lara

Keith Rayos Lara's parents were both born and raised in the Philippines. Keith also was born there, although he immigrated to Northern California when he was nine years old. He grew up speaking both English and Tagalog in his household. Born into Roman Catholicism, he practices his faith by praying and attending mass. He graduated from UCSB and his future career goals are to become a lawyer and help his Pilipinx community. A huge part of his personality, values, and traits are that he analyzes everything "through a philosophical and critical lens" (Keith, personal communication, October 14, 2019).

Melissa-Ann Nievera-Lozano

Melissa-Ann Nievera-Lozano's parents were both born and raised in the Philippines, her mother was Waray and her father is Igorot (Indigenous tribe in the Philippines). She was born and raised in San Diego and is a queer-identified, cis-gendered, femme woman. The languages spoken in her household were Ilocano and English. Melissa-Ann believes in storytelling as healing. As an Ethnic Studies professor at Evergreen Valley College, and the co-editor of *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* (2018), her teaching and research sources are from women-of-color radical

thought, which guides her community surrounding the intersectional struggles of racism, classism, and heteropatriarchy impacting our lives across families and generations.

Melissa-Ann currently resides in San Jose, CA, raising two little boys, Mateo and Dante, with her partner Dennis.

Oscar Peñaranda

Oscar Peñaranda was born in Barugo, Leyte, Philippines, then moved to Manila at five years of age, then to North America (Canada and then United States) at 12 years old. He grew up speaking Waray, Visayan, and English and strongly identifies with his Waray heritage. As an educator, teacher, writer, one of the founders of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University, and as a young person who fought for the rights of the International Hotel tenants in the 1960s, Oscar (“Mr. P”) is a living legend in the Philippine diaspora. Currently, he resides in San Francisco in the International Hotel, coming full circle to live in the place he was fighting for. He is the recipient of the most prestigious *Gawad ng Alagad ni Balagtas* award for lifetime achievements, from the Writers Union of the Philippines (UMPIL). He comes from a long lineage and “family legacy of social justice” (Oscar, personal communication, August 6, 2019).

Joseph Allen Ruanto-Ramirez

Joseph Allen Ruanto-Ramirez is a Katutubo American (his father is Yloko and Ipugoo, and his mother, Hambali, Ita, and Iranun) and refugee from the Philippines who came to the United States in 1991 because of the eruption of Mount Pinatubo (Apu Namalyari). They are a PhD student in Cultural Studies at Claremont Graduate University focusing on Katutubo diasporic identities in Philippine-America.

Leah Sicat

Leah Sicat's parents are both from Pampanga, Philippines. Leah Sicat is a second-generation Kapampangan Filipina American woman living in the diaspora, specifically residing in the Bay Area. Born and raised in Sacramento speaking English, Tagalog, and Kapampangan in her household, her extended family shaped the person she is today. She is influenced by her experiences living and teaching in New York City, Santa Cruz, and South Korea, and her writing revolves around transnational feminism, Philippine diaspora, education, and food stories. She creates flash auto-fiction, poetry, and expository writing to explore how womxn of color understand individual experiences, collective memory, historical events, and colonial and imperial legacies.

Rovielle Escalano Yamaki

Rovielle Escalano Yamaki's parents were both born and raised in the Philippines. Rovielle was born in Pandacan, Philippines, moved to Brunei, and then finally settled and grew up in Australia. Her worldview was shaped by growing up in a Methodist household and speaking English and Tagalog. As a self-identified Australian Filo, she also identifies as a human being in power collaborating and co-creating with other human beings to enhance awareness and empathy. As an Asian woman, she has a mindset that understands both the Asian and the Western points of view. Rovielle's life choices have redefined that sometimes 'home' could just really be where the grass grows greener. Today, with her husband Kentaro and their beautiful daughter Cocomi Elle, Rovielle is living in Australia where they thrive in a chosen reality where diversity is celebrated.

Kuwentuhan: Three Major Themes

(BACKGROUND SETTING)

A foot-long wooden fork and spoon hang on the wall next to a large Last Supper painting staring down at the old, shiny, black piano. Next to the painting is a black and white Filipino Youth Coalition “Know History Know Self” poster with Philippine and Filipino American s/heroes. On the coffee table is Carlos Bulosan’s classic novel, *America is in the Heart*. LEAH (30s), mid-length hair with glasses, stands next to the food with a full plate in her right hand. In the center of the living room is a large tray of steaming white rice, two plates of fried golden brown lumpia with the sweet and tangy red sauce, two medium trays of vermicelli *pancit* noodles mixed with cooked shrimp, sliced carrots, and cabbage. Two huge pots of chicken adobo, marinated chicken with soy sauce and vinegar with black peppercorns and bay leaves, fill the room with the aromas of staple Filipino comfort food.

OSCAR PEÑARANDA (late 60s), tall, white hair, cool demeanor, is sitting on the single sofa with his legs crossed. On the other single sofa is ALLYSON (mid 40s), long, black, wavy hair wearing a “Pinayism” shirt, softly smiling. Directly across the living room is KEITH (20s), skinny, lanky, millennial, confident Pilipinx, sitting on the plastic-covered, long couch, eager to speak but humbly waiting. Sitting next to KEITH is MELISSA-ANN (early 40s), long, black hair, fiercely listening to the vibration of the room. At the end of the couch is TRINIDAD (30s), tattoos on both arms, wearing a long black dress with a sketchbook in her hand. Sitting on the floor is ROVIELLE (late 30s), wearing handmade, natural-colored clothes, surrounded by a glowing aura. Next to her,

laying on the ground, is JOSEPH (30s), wearing glasses, with Indigenous tattoos covering the lengths of his arms.

They have been sitting together, enjoying each other's company, for about 30 minutes. Some of them have just finished eating, others are about to finish their second plate. Then, OSCAR PEÑARANDA asks the group, in a joking yet serious tone, "What are we going to *kuwento-kuwento* tonight about?" The depths of the *kuwentuhan* start to unfold...

Scene 1: Identity & Cultural Fluidity

TONY (40s), short and stocky build, with a bamboo Kangol hat, will provide *kuwentuhan* scholarly commentary and cultural interpretation of the intricacies that are happening. He will be inserting his thoughts throughout the *kuwentuhans*.

TONY: At this point of the gathering, everyone is feeling nourished and connected. In Filipino culture, respect for elders is an important value. Since OSCAR PEÑARANDA is the elder, his asking the group what we are going to *kuwento-kuwento* about is a social cue that our *kuwentuhan* is about to get much deeper. As the elder in the room, after he starts sharing about where he grew up in the Philippines, everybody else follows, sharing how their geographic and linguistic identifications and their experiences have further shaped their fluid cultural identifications.

OSCAR PEÑARANDA

I identify with my Waray heritage. One is like that, like I was saying, if they left it too soon. You know, I, of course, went back to it every time.

Every summer, we would go back to the place where I was born so I never really lost that language and the culture so I always felt like I was a Waray person. (Oscar, personal communication, August 6, 2019)

MELISSA-ANN

I am a queer-identified, cisgender, femme woman who is the child of Filipino immigrant parents from where we have ethnic or cultural heritage in Waray and Igorot [Kalinga], and I am born and raised in San Diego. I'm a mom and a professor in Ethnic Studies. So, when I think about growing up, my papa was never like, we're Filipino. He'd be, like, a mountain man. And he was always talking about this idea of being Igorot and he really had all of the Igorot, like, cultural pieces, stuff that really spoke to him that our tribe, I guess, practices. In Waray, my grandparents spoke Waray to each other and my mother's parents spoke Waray to my mom sometimes and mostly to each other. My mama and papa spoke Ilocano when they divorced, and when my mom remarried it was Tagalog. (Melissa-Ann, personal communication, August 16, 2019)

LEAH

I identify as Kapampangan; both my parents are from Pampanga in the Philippines. And that has definitely influenced not just how I see myself, but also my experience. (Leah, personal interview, August 13, 2019)

KEITH

I am Pilipinx American, actually my age is 23, coming from Manila, Philippines, currently living in UCSB, Santa Barbara. (Keith, personal interview, October 14, 2019)

ROVIELLE

I am originally from the Philippines. And then I grew up in Australia as an Australian. But today, culturally, I identify as a human being in power of collaborating and co-creating with other human beings to enhance awareness and empathy. I am Asian with a mindset that understands the Asian and the Western points of view...my mom is from Pandacan and my dad is from Muntinlupa. (Rovielle, personal communication, August 21, 2019)

TRINIDAD

I have my first family and my birth family that lives in Bataan still and that's my parents and my nine siblings. And then I'm the only one here in the States. I was adopted by my mom and dad who were also Filipino, but Ilocano and Tagalog. My family is Visayan. My adopted family is Tagalog and Ilocano. (Trinidad, personal communication, October 13, 2019)

ALLYSON

I'm a mother and a partner, those things are really very important to my identity and I often operate in that way, as a mother and partner, not just at home. So, it's important for me to identify those, I'm also like Ate, I think,

it's a different way. I think I've become, like Ate and mother, very close in the way I approach my relationships outside of the house or outside at home. So, when people call me Ate, I think there's a relationship to how I understand mothering. My mom is Tagalog but she was from Batangas and my dad is Ilocano from Tarlac. (Allyson, personal communication, October 17, 2019)

JOSEPH

My dad is Ilocano, Ifugao so Igorot, and my mom so Zambal Aeta and Moro Irunun. I was born [and lived] in Iba, Zambales, until I was five years old, and I am a refugee here in the United States. So, we were evacuated by the US military in 1991. (Joseph, personal communication, August 21, 2019)

TONY: The importance of identifying themselves and where their parents grew up is essential to their identities and the identities of their parents. Since there are over 7,000 islands in the Philippines, each geographic locale's culture has unique characteristics. Also, there are over 120 languages that represent distinct cultural characteristics within that language group. For Filipinos in the diaspora, the mentioning of the place their family is from and the Filipino language they speak is a cultural marker of the identity that they carry as a Filipino in the diaspora.

TONY

Did all of you grow up Catholic?

ROVIELLE

I grew up in a Methodist, Christian church, and my great grandfather actually was a pastor. He was the founder of this church.... in Pandacan, it's still there today, and people still go there. Christianity is quite the norm in the religion of my family. And we would go there, even up until I left the Philippines, that was our church, a Methodist Church. They would sing songs. Everyone's kind of got like a hymn book that you would think. But it's all very orderly. And I'm still a Christian, I still believe in God. I still believe in the mentoring and example of Jesus. But I just don't go to church anymore... [I believe that] everyone is allowed to be who they are, without judgment from other people. And also to allow others to create what they hope for themselves and for others that support unity, community, collaboration, creativity, and also support children, support the younger generation that actually do not have a physical voice in the political arena. But I follow the notion that there actually are the ones that we should put our heart and soul into creating a solid foundation for, whether [with] emotional support, spiritual support, because they'll be the ones who will be looking after us. (Rovielle, personal communication, August 21, 2019)

KEITH

I am a practicing Catholic, and I try to go to church as often as I can before my meals. That's about the extent of my actual physical practice when it comes to my faith in Roman Catholicism. In terms of my actual beliefs in the doctrines and the scriptures, it is a little bit more flexible now after what I've learned throughout my college years, particularly, but ultimately, I still believe in the Holy Trinity. (Keith, personal interview, October 14, 2019)

LEAH

I was raised Roman Catholic, I went to CCD classes on the weekend, I did confession and communion confirmation. And then when I got to college, around that time, I was 19 or so, I started becoming more spiritual rather than religious. So, I acknowledge the connection with the ancestors and spirits. And that definitely guides me through a lot. (Leah, personal interview, August 13, 2019)

OSCAR PEÑARANDA

Like most Filipinos, I was raised and born Catholic, so I was an altar boy and I was a good one. I learned Latin. In fact, I fell in love with Latin for another reason. That's because of poetry, the literature, but I went ahead. Every altar boy at the time had to learn Latin and that was the answer that we prayed for with the priest. I had an easy time learning because I liked it already. So, the point is that I saw and experienced the Catholic Church from the inside. So, when I critique it, I'm critiquing from the inside as

well as the outside. That was a good altar boy. I knew what to do. And on two or three occasions the priest and Archbishops came to our house to ask me to go to the seminary, to be a priest... I got to see a critique of the Catholic religion and Christianity and then basically established religion in general, I started critiquing all of them. And now I think most of those religions, they did more harm than good. So, I don't have any religion now. I don't like those institutionalized religions. They lie to you. I know because I'm a Catholic, they told me. But if you go on nine First Fridays, just the other thing that changes are that as I was growing up in the Catholic religion, rules kept changing.... You keep contradicting themselves when you ask so I said, fuck those guys. Just gonna go for the heart, I go with the people's heart. (Oscar, personal communication, August 6, 2019)

MELISSA-ANN

I grew up hella Catholic and a Catholic that's very different from [Dennis]. He went Jesuit Catholic which is much more actually social justice based. Mine was shame, guilt, fear, Jesus is watching you, close your legs. Like, the devil, don't be the devil's child, Santo Nino this... We did a lot of prayer processions, there was a time where I felt so guilty, just because I was following my grandma by making sure I was wearing skirts up to here wearing long sleeve. Praying, we always had knee pads around the house because we were doing the rosary like all the time. Yeah, super Catholic. Because I grew up with a lot of shame, guilt and fear. From those

teachings I keep some of the practices, because there is some grounding that I believe in... But now I hold more Buddhist philosophy with my kids. So, there's a mixture, we're like, we call ourselves Catholic, Buddhist, and Buddhist Catholic, something like that. (Melissa-Ann, personal communication, August 16, 2019)

ALLYSON

Mahalaya is a Buddhist but she was baptized Catholic, but she really feels like she's more Buddhist, in her thinking and the way she sees the world. That's what she's about. She's brought that into our house. So, I feel like that, kind of, where we're somewhere in between, and there are Buddhist practices. (Allyson, personal communication, October 17, 2019)

JOSEPH

I also consider myself Buddhist. (Joseph, personal communication, August 21, 2019)

TRINIDAD

I consider myself Buddhist. But I talk a lot about cultural bearing but you also talked about a lot about the ancestors that you carry, right? Because it's in our genealogy, right? It's in our body. There's a reason why we act and feel a certain way. In moments, we don't know what it's like, you know what I mean? Like, in the moment, you're like, okay, why am I doing this? It's just doing it. That's how I feel. But that's the ancestral DNA of who we are that is making us do what we do. And I don't have answers for that but I just accept it because that's spirit, and so you're

living out, like, ancestral dreams, right? (Trinidad, personal communication, October 13, 2019)

TONY: The Spanish colonized the Philippines for over 300 years, and Roman Catholicism was forced on the country and shaped their spirituality. As one of the only countries in Asia whose primary religion is Roman Catholicism, this influences Filipinos in the diaspora. Seven out of the eight participants were born into Roman Catholicism although, after their experiences living in America, four out of the eight altered their spiritual beliefs to Buddhism. Two of the participants identify as spiritual, particularly looking to the ancestors to guide their life journeys.

TONY

How have your experiences as Filipinos in the diaspora changed how you identify yourselves?

ROVIELLE

When I left Japan and came back to Australia, I was very confident in myself. And I also realize the power of my connection and trusted relationship with God is at its new level where I know, and I trust to believe, though, in my body, that I've always been supported no matter what I've seen, I experienced miracles while I was in Japan. And so I knew when I came back to Australia, this is going to be easy. It doesn't matter. The problems here are not gonna be as intense as in Japan. [I know my] home country, and I know it like the back of my hand, like in Victoria. So, when I came back, I was very confident in myself... And I

also felt I had more confidence. I don't really feel shattered any more when people ask me where I'm from... Oh, yes. And it wasn't a one moment thing. Like, it was actually like a gradual getting to know myself through this process of sticking around in Maleny and getting to know more and more of these people who just want to connect. Kind of unlocking these compartments in me that had all these hidden treasures about me that I didn't realize I had. But I closed them all up because I was too scared to show it to people because otherwise, they would think again, "oh my gosh", this strange and different being. Through being accepted as who I am then I realized, okay, let's unlock this once again, and see how that goes. And I feel safe again. And let's unlock another part of me, I still feel safe, well, let's keep on unlocking. Wow, this is really refreshing. I can see my whole self-starting to come together. (Rovielle, personal communication, August 21, 2019)

LEAH

So that's recognizing my identity, my being and connection to other womxn of color, and connecting local events and international events to historical [ones] and to events happening outside of the U.S. border... So having, like, cross cultural or coalitional, like, community was, like, something that, like, I just knew, like, that's, that's what you have to do. You have to understand connections with say, like, Mexicans, like, Mexican Americans, like, those who live in the neighborhood, or, like, going to the *panadería* down the block, like, there's a reason why... So

that was my understanding of being Filipino, not just [a] relation to family and Filipino friends and, like, organizations, but also, like, people, other ethnicities, and other religions. My mom would deliberately make vegetable lumpia because some of my friends couldn't have pork lumpia... Like, that's like, the timeframe was, like, talking about cross-cultural and coalitional collectivity. And so, like, my essay in the book talks about the robustness of the social, political climate at the time, the context, and then zooms in [on] the kitchen, like, you have the sizzling hot oil cooking up the lumpia, and the *tostones*, but then, like, let's think beyond food, let's think about nourishment... how to make those interconnections between how we, like, see ourselves recognize each other, give ourselves legitimacy, and then alongside, like, Black Lives Matter, and how do we, like, recognize, like, what we have, like, internalized about ourselves, and how are we pushing colorism? [From her submission: "How do we build within and across collective struggles against the legacies of colonialism and imperialism?"] (Leah, personal interview, August 13, 2019)

MELISSA-ANN

We needed to capture the moment that we were in, and we were trying to be very mindful and conscious of the dialogues that were happening, particularly online and in social media, about our developing consciousness of who we are, and how we are all our intersecting analogies, of trying to lead the reader to understand the journey that they were going to go through in reading the book, but also knowing that they

could pick up anywhere in the book, you know, they didn't have to go left to right. And that also, I wanted to, there is a particular paragraph though, and I talked about, in support of Black Lives Matter, as well as understanding our anti-blackness. (Melissa-Ann, personal communication, August 16, 2019)

ALLYSON

Yeah, that's it. So, I want to be careful to say that Filipinos are experiencing the shit show differently than everyone else right now. Like, for me, it's sure that, because I'm Pinay, I experience things a certain way. And there are certain things that are harmful, that are threatening our lives. But I don't think that that has to be isolated. For I really don't think it should be isolated. I think our lives should be in solidarity. We're accomplices to all kinds of things...in February, we should be having a week for Black Lives Matter. (Allyson, personal communication, October 17, 2019)

TONY: Rovielle shares how her life experiences living in four different countries shaped her experiences of being a Filipino in the diaspora. She did not always feel confident in herself because of the feeling of being “othered”. Three out of the eight participants mentioned that different cultures, especially the Black/African American culture, influenced their identity as a Filipino in the diaspora. Furthermore, the societal and political landscape of the time of the *kuwentuhans* involved the racial reckoning of Black Lives Matter and the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. The nation was

witnessing and experiencing a racial reckoning of Black bodies that had experienced historical and structural racism for over 400 years.

JOSEPH gets up and grabs another plate filled with *pancit* and white rice.

TONY: In between each scene, someone gets up to get more food. This is purposefully written here to signify the importance of food as central to our culture. It symbolizes food that nurtures the body and soul, and a pause of reflection. Ultimately, food is the center of the diasporic Filipino life. This scene focuses on the identities and the fluidity of the intersectional identities that they all hold as Filipinos. Viola (2012) reminds us of the diasporic counter-consciousness, continually developing and reflecting on their intersectional identities. The intersectional identities of these participants center their Filipino identity and also recognizes the other identities that shape their full humanity, which critiques the dominant narrative of a homogenous society of Filipinos in the diaspora, rather reflecting a multifaceted and complex culture.

Identity and Cultural Fluidity Analysis

With over 10 million Filipinos working and/or living abroad, the essential identification with their Filipinoness in a foreign land is imperative to honoring their ancestral Philippine lineage. Many Filipinos in the diaspora assimilate to the host culture to “fit in” and more easily navigate life in the new country, although, being proud to be Filipino always remains central to their identity. Many of the Filipino American contributors in this study identified with their Filipino heritage first, before acknowledging the American part of their identity. The duality of being a Filipinx/o/a American-identified person has created a generalized experience as a Filipinx/a/o/

American that includes, yet is not defined by, joining a Filipino club, attending Filipino college conferences, taking part in a Pilipino Cultural Night, and being able to understand Tagalog, without necessarily speaking it. This normative experience of Filipinx/a/o Americans generalized, even in their own identity, the complexities and vast differences of ethnic groups in the Philippines. Comprising over 7,100 islands, each region of the Philippines has distinct cultural differences and nuances that shape the participants' identities. Melissa-Ann writes, in the introduction to *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader*:

This book offers a weaving of stories from voices today we don't often hear. It's intended to add to the dialogue and build understandings that bear out new relationships to the term Filipino America, Pin@y, Pilipina/o/x in this historical moment. We've never been a monolithic group or for that matter homogeneous. Our various ethnicities, regional backgrounds, relationships to religion, gender, politics, and class throw us into different corners.

Connecting this complex identity with the vastness of the Filipino American identity, the participants in this study all honored the geographic location of their parents' lineage in the Philippines. This was a subtle yet powerful statement that not only shaped their identities as Filipinx/a/o American, but also allowed them to dig deeper into their parents' identity in the Philippines. Joseph identifies as an indigenous person from the Philippines, and as a refugee who fled the eruption of Mount Pinatubo. He explains that, after his parents moved to the States, they wanted him not only to assimilate to "American" culture, but also to Filipino American culture, which oftentimes did not include the

indigenous tribes of the Philippines. Melissa-Ann, who is also from San Diego, identifies as Filipino and Indigenous. Despite San Diego being the geographic location where she was born and raised, she also emphasizes her indigenous heritage as Igorot, and her cultural heritage as Waray. Oscar expands on the cultural heritage of being Waray and states, “I identify with my Waray heritage... Every summer, we would go back to the place where I was born, so I never really lost that language and culture, so I always felt like I was a Waray person.” Waray is not necessarily a definitive geographic location but rather a cultural heritage of the Philippines that has a specific language and culture. Leah identifies as Filipina yet she also strongly identifies with “...Kapampangan, both my parents are from Pampanga in the Philippines. And that has definitely influenced not just how I see myself, but also my experience.” This has influenced the food that she grew up with and the language that was spoken at home. The common language of the Philippines is Tagalog or Filipino but Leah’s parents spoke other dialects in their home, which shaped what it meant for her to be Filipinx/a/o American. Allyson’s parents are from different parts of the Philippines. “My mom is Tagalog but she was from Batangas, and my dad was in Ilocano, from Tarlac.” This is important to understand because her parents are from different regions of the Philippines, yet their common language of communication was Tagalog. Trinidad was adopted, and her birth family and adopted family came from different regions of the Philippines, which influenced her identity. In her younger years, she was aware of her adopted family’s heritage, but as she became older, something inside her began to shift and she grew more curious to connect with her birth family. Learning more about her birth family instilled in her a different side of her identity as a Filipina American, a beautiful side that made her identity more fluid.

Rovielle was born in the Philippines and lived in Brunei, Japan, and Australia. This shaped how she saw herself as Asian in Australia. “I am originally from the Philippines. And then I grew up in Australia as an Australian. But today, culturally, I identify as a human being in power of collaborating and co-creating with other human beings to enhance awareness and empathy. I am Asian with a mindset that understands the Asian and the Western points of view... my mom is from Pandacan and my dad is from Muntinlupa.” She honors her parents being from different parts of the Philippines, although her progressive ecovillage community of Maleny, Australia, where she currently resides, shapes her current identity. This idea of cultural fluidity, that identity is not static but fluid depending on the societal experiences and interactions with the people around them, is continually shaping their identity as Filipinx/a/o in the diaspora. As Leah writes in her contribution to *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader*, “There will be memories and associations that just don’t seem to make sense but unexpectedly come up anyway particularly while hearing cha-cha and bachata and eating *tostones*, *arroz con gandules*, *lumpia*, and *pancit canton*” (Nievera-Lozano and Santa Ana, 2018). In Melissa-Ann’s contribution to the introduction of the same volume, the current landscape of America is continually shaping our diasporic Filipinoness in America:

We are taking note of the multitude of expressions of our queer love and our transphobia; our support for Black Lives Matter, and our anti-blackness; our holistic healing practices, and our right to bear arms. All of this, as we tumble through the daily spectacle of the Trump Administration and the Duterte Administration after eight straight years of hope with Obama. The tide is changing. Fast.

Identity is no longer a definitive and static representation, but rather an evolving identification which depends on past and current experiences they have witnessed and are living through.

Another aspect of the culture being fluid is their religious background. The Philippines is a predominantly a Catholic country and all of the participants grew up primarily Catholic or Methodist. This means that many of them believed in attending church every Sunday and participating in Catechism church classes. Although, as Oscar mentioned, "Like most Filipinos, I was raised and born Catholic so I was an altar boy and I was a good one." This Catholic upbringing served a purpose for the participants growing up, but as they began to question this religion, their spiritual beliefs evolved. Keith stated, "I am a practicing Catholic, and I try to go to church as often as I can before my meals. That's about the extent of my actual physical practice when it comes to my faith in Roman Catholicism. In terms of my actual beliefs in the doctrines and the scriptures, it's a little bit more flexible now after what I've learned throughout my college years, particularly, but ultimately, I still believe in the Holy Trinity." Many participants still believed in the Christian faith, although their faith shifted to honor the guidance of their ancestors as part of their spiritual practice. As for Leah, she softly states, "I was raised Roman Catholic, I went to CCD classes on the weekend, I did confession and communion confirmation. And then when I got to college, around that time, I was 19 or so, I started becoming more spiritual rather than religious. So, I acknowledge the connection with the ancestors and spirits. And that definitely guides me through a lot." All of them felt that the constraints and contradictions of the Catholic religion made them question their spiritual beliefs. Interestingly, four out of the eight participants either

identified as Buddhist, had a Buddhist family member, or were a mixture of Catholicism and Buddhism. Melissa-Ann revealed the hybridity of her family's spiritual practices (“we call ourselves Catholic, Buddhist, and Buddhist Catholic, something like that”). This is a surprisingly evolved identification of being Filipinx/o/a/ in the diaspora, because Buddhists are a minority group in the Philippines and are barely practiced by Filipinos elsewhere in the world. With further research, this interesting phenomenon could shed a light on current spiritual practices that shape their evolving and fluid identities of diasporic Filipinos.

Their identities are continually shifting and fluid as they navigate their lived experiences. This rollercoaster ride of emotions, of joys and pains, of searching, shifting, decolonizing, healing, and being, constantly creates new versions of who they are and who they want to become. They do not do this alone, but rather with family at the core and center of who they are becoming. Despite individually searching, family is the connecting weave that brings them back to themselves as individuals in community. This is an example of the deep Filipino value *kapwa*, “I am you and you are me”.

Scene 2: Transcendent Love

TONY: In the previous scene, participants shared their identities through their ancestors’ geographic locale, religion, and language. The importance of this is that it honors their family’s rich culture and heritage. Their identities were never static, but rather constantly evolving and fluid due to the societal and political landscape of the Black Lives Matter movement, civil rights movement, and their multicultural upbringings.

In this scene, transcendent love is mentioned in particular as love of themselves, for community, and for ancestors. A love that is connected to new births, non-living

humans, and each other. Transcendent love is synergistic and reciprocal, it transforms and flows through generations of *pamilya* lineage. It is this deep and compassionate love, primarily for ourselves, that flows through each one of us and passes it through our families and into our communities. Connected to the Filipino concept of *kapwa*, a deep sense of “I am you and you are me”, that transcends love as an emotion, viewing it as a way of being in the world with ourselves and our communities.

TONY

Many of you have talked about your identity and the cultural fluidity of it caused by the societal and political landscape of our country. I sensed joy and pain in your identities and the essential centeredness of family. What keeps this all together?

ROVIELLE

I thought, wow, I have a very unique story to share. I'm still not really, I haven't gotten to a point where I am recognizing my whole self. But I felt somehow, subconsciously, that through this project, and through contributing part of my soul to the book, and then that's going to be read by other people, is going to release something inside me. I was ready to commit and I was ready to meet. And this is something that I had felt just subconsciously, as an inkling. And so that's why I wanted to contribute. And I thought, maybe if I could share my story, other people would also get inspiration. Now we would like to grow up from what initially seemed like – you were on a journey, a process of questioning, and

eventually we'll get to a point where you're actually welcome in the truth of yourself. (Rovielle, personal communication, August 21, 2019)

LEAH

If we think you're Filipino, we love you, you're part of our family. If you have one Filipino person in your family, like for real, like, no colorism exists. So, if someone may have a black parent or, like, a darker skin parent, there might be more resistance. But at the end of the day, like, generally speaking, we tend to take everybody in. But it kind of like, does us in sometimes, where it's like, we kind of, like, love people more than [we] love ourselves. (Leah, personal interview, August 13, 2019)

TRINIDAD

We did it because we loved the community and we loved what we were doing. It was never about the money. It was always about the love for our community. (Trinidad, personal communication, October 13, 2019)

KEITH

For my community, I would say I want them to not forget *kapwa*, I want them to remember that wherever we are, even if you have your own picket fence home with the front yard here in the U.S., I want them to remember that you have *kapwa* around that could always use your company, your support. And I want for the Pilipinx communities to be self-sustaining, not just financially but emotionally, morally, ethically. You know, I don't want to go to Sea Food City and see banged up roads, super tight parking spots, and carts everywhere where they shouldn't be, I want our

community to thrive, and it starts with us. We can push for these agendas on a systematic level, but I want people to not dismiss the importance of civic work, especially for your own community. (Keith, personal interview, October 14, 2019)

MELISSA-ANN

A renewed relationship to love, yeah, to a collective love, I say that because we spent a long time in the past century or so faking love. Of a self-love that became narcissistic because we were taught that's how to survive... Renewed relationship to a collective love, like a real deep meaning of love. (Melissa-Ann, personal communication, August 16, 2019)

ALLYSON

And to me, at the center, all of, all of those things is love. And like I try to really approach things with love, even if things are hard. Or even if people don't approach me with love, I try to still come back with it. (Allyson, personal communication, October 17, 2019)

MELISSA-ANN walks towards the food table, grabs a new plate, and puts on it a scoop full of chicken adobo and five pieces of golden brown lumpia.

TONY: In this scene, love is centered around love for themselves, love their communities (collective love), and love being the center of all that they do. This idea of a transcendent love, a love that is synergistic love that transforms and flows through generations of

pamilya lineage. It is this love for themselves that flows through each one of us and passes it through our families and into our communities. *Kapwa*, a deep value of I am you and you are me, that transcends love as an emotion but as a way of being in the world with yourself and your community.

Transcendent Love Analysis

The theme of love reverberated throughout the *kuwentuhans*, and the way in which the *kuwentuhans*' community is foundational to making sense of their experiences as diasporic Filipinos. The idea of love for themselves grounded their realities in what it means to be Filipino in this current time and gave them pride in their Filipino heritage. Rovielle's deep reflection on her contribution to the book reminded her that something spiritually inside of her was yearning to revisit those memories from her upbringing; that part of her healing process was about being "ready to commit to and ready to meet" herself and love that part of who she was; that sharing her story was not only an act of love for herself, but also an expression of the love she has for others who have gone through similar pains of questioning themselves and not always loving themselves; that this truth inside of her is transcendent love that she is experiencing for herself and for the communities she impacts. It is this spiritual love that is reciprocated in the healing of sharing her story, and in those that will connect with it. Rovielle initially did not realize that her story was out of the ordinary, that her reflecting on the different places she lived and the negative comments she received was a valid part of her experience. It was in this realization of the love that she had for herself that she welcomed those wounds as part of who she is. It was through the process of questioning and owning her experiences that self-love became part of her journey and decision to share her story so that others could be inspired and share as well. This individual act of loving herself resulted in her

communities – she is taking care of herself; therefore, the collective is also taken care of. As Allyson eloquently reminded us, “...and, like, I try to really approach things with love, even if things are hard. Or even if people don't approach me with love, I try to still come back with it.” She centers love with everything she does. It is the answer and response that bring us closer to each other. That transcendent love is the reciprocal feeling of love between each other, expressed in how we treat each other. Keith strongly states, “For my community, I would say I want them to not forget *kapwa*, I want them to remember that wherever we are, even if you have your own picket fence home with the front yard here in the United States, I want them to remember that you have *kapwa* around that could always use your company, your support.” His love for himself is a connection to the love for his community. Nurturing the heart, the embodiment of love for oneself and for community, is a spiritual process that guides them to help those around them.

A common experience for many diasporic Filipinos is the hospitality of welcoming Filipinos into our homes, connecting with them over a meal, and spiritually playing, dancing, and discovering our connections. Leah jokingly and seriously captured it when she said, “If we think you're Filipino, we love you, you're part of our family.” The pure fact is that, if we think you're Filipino, you are already welcome into our homes and families. Although we may not know you, we will give you whatever we have and share it with you. Her idea that “sometimes [...] we kind of, like, love people more than [we] love ourselves,” offers a deeper meaning of love. The fact Filipinos willingly give of themselves to connect spiritually with others of Filipino heritage is a love that is beyond nationality, but rather expresses a deep love for their people.

When Melissa-Ann speaks about spending “a long time in the past century or so, faking love,” she is referring to the traumas of colonization that exist in the psyches of the Filipinos, due to their having to endure primarily loving their colonizers more than themselves in order to survive. The Filipinos’ sense of who they originally were is not of the standard of what the colonizers are. This “renewed relationship to a collective love” is loving ourselves as well as our people and our communities.

The term ‘radical love’ has been frequently used in activist circles, and often has a political connotation and definition attached to it. Radical love is not sentimental or mawkish, it moves beyond the superficial and into the political. It is a political love, intertwined with social justice movements and the constant fight to validate marginalized and oppressed groups in the American political context. Transcendent love is used in a connected yet slightly different context, digging deeper into the human experience and contributing a more abundant space for love that can be reciprocated. Transcendent love is different from radical love because it is not defined from a specific political viewpoint or reaction to injustice, but is an age-old practice, kept alive within communities from generation to generation. The word ‘transcendent’ shapes this love into a completely different form, beyond what is already known. That unknown is the reciprocity of love that flows from generation to generation, a love that is connected to each other, ancestors, new births, and non-living humans. It is a love that transcends the visible, and has a generative, reciprocal relationship to the spirit world. It goes beyond what we think and what we know, but deep within our DNA and genes, we know that serendipitous encounters are an example of transcendent love.

Scene 3: Healing and Visioning

TONY: As the community *kuwentuhan* continues to deepen, from identity and cultural fluidity into transcendent love and *kapwa* as a way of being in the world, they all are coming full circle into healing and visioning for themselves and their communities. It is this collective community *kuwentuhan* and their Pilipinx Radical Imagination that shifts the energy of the *kuwentuhan* into a different imagined reality of what possibility that may become. In the process of healing and visioning, these energies create new possibilities for themselves and their communities. Hooks beautifully defines healing as “occur[ring] through testimony, through gathering together everything available to you and reconciling” (hooks, 2015). As individuals and in community, we heal through sharing our testimony with each other. Visioning is about manifesting the invisible to become visible, and about speaking into existence what is wanted and what will be, without needing any proof that it will come to be.

TONY

It is powerful to feel that we, as Filipinos in the diaspora, have a deep nostalgia for our motherland and proudly identify as Filipinos. We carry this deep love for ourselves and our communities in the spirit of *kapwa*. How does healing from the intergenerational traumas of colonialism shift us towards the essence of who we are as Filipinos in the diaspora? As we heal and decolonize, what is your Pilipinx Radical Imagination?

KEITH

What comes to my mind is that, as a Pilipinx in diaspora, I'm hoping that we all who are in diaspora, better ourselves so that other people who are

not identified as Pilipinx will see us in a good light and know that we have a lot to offer, that we are honest people, decent people, respectable people, and successful people. I think if we can do that throughout the diaspora, it will improve our conditions abroad. But most importantly at home. (Keith, personal interview, October 14, 2019)

MELISSA-ANN

We have spent so much time under colonization and imperialism. We have been spending so much time on the outer, on what we see outside of one another, we have forgotten how to honor and think about one another's core, and also to know that we can reshape our own inner core to heal, like, we've just been so caught up in the superficial and it's still here, with the advent of social media, and Instagram, and all of those things, I really feel like my radical imagination is calling for us right to abandon those teachings ultimately, and to be very real about how we are going to have, in a way, that namaste – like, the divine me honors the divine in you, and, like, the core in me honors the core in you and, like, all these titles and labels and all of that. But that feels like a long, long way ahead. But we're starting somewhere. (Melissa-Ann, personal communication, August 16, 2019)

TRINIDAD

I see imagination as that it's, it's the seed of possibility before something becomes our reality. So radical imagination to me is imagining at the farthest reaches that we possibly can. And we don't have to imagine the

hard work, thinking about, like, Pilipinx Imagination, because we're currently living experiences that our ancestors probably didn't ever think about, right, like a lot of our ancestors probably could not.

(Trinidad, personal communication, October 13, 2019)

OSCAR PEÑARANDA

I think of radical in the sense of – I got the meaning of it when I thought about Kelly, and then ‘radical’ being applied to the book, and now it’s number one, as a community-rooted type of thinking. It has to be us, unlike before if it was an imagination or a vision to for Filipinos... politically active, institutionally active, because we did a lot of personal individualized things when we were doing it, but I think the generation after us is going after institutionalizing it, which is good... Yeah, I think number one, they'll enjoy it more than the first thing. I'm a cultural person in literature and art. But my primary purpose is not to be well-schooled and talk nice, my primary purpose in going to those things is pleasure, so they have to enjoy it first, you don't enjoy it, and then you have to learn and enjoy that later so, first thing is the white people they would enjoy it or the non-Filipino and even Filipinos, we'll enjoy ourselves more, so the first thing is, we'll have more fun. The second, of course, is that depending on who it is that receiving the information for the non-Filipinos, [the audience] will see how many, how many stories they haven't really heard and how many stories that are kind of like theirs, that so they will see themselves in us also. (Oscar, personal communication, August 6, 2019)

ROVIELLE

Yeah, okay. Filipinos are creative and we love to have a great time, but also with others in the community, in a group with their families, we are passionate people who are expressive in our emotions and thoughts. And also we are spiritual, as well as superstitious. So, we adapt to change and can easily mold ourselves into the structure of the society we live in. We are highly adaptive beings. And so with all these running through my blood when I think the Pilipinx Radical Imagination, I think of endless possibilities. (Rovielle, personal communication, August 21, 2019)

JOSEPH

Imaginaries are actually a real lived experience of the modern, of the contemporary that people strive to, right. So that's speculative future, when we look at speculative past, what happened, what kind of imaginary things to be, like, we're thinking of that as connected to the present moment, even though we know those things may or may have not existed... hope is also imaginative (Joseph, personal communication, August 21, 2019)

LEAH

People are hungry for these conversations [community *kuwentuhans*], they're hungry for these essays, to read the artwork, to [peruse] over, they bring their kids, they want continuity, people show up... That's right, people show up every single time, there hasn't been one where it's like, only one person shows up. And, let's say, if only one person shows up, this

space wasn't there before. But like, to me, what stands out a lot is that people show up because of what is being offered... And I am like, people show up with their questions. They show up with their hunger, they show up with their humility, some people just sit, just listen, because they really want to take it all in... And another thing I find is that there's something that happens in the room, that it's like we have been talking about connection a lot. But like, there seems to be this collective energy that happens, collective synergy that happens, where folks are together in that moment. And there's a real recognition that we're there together. No, it's not just being within the same walls. It's like, knowing, when they're in that space, like [it's] about sharing space. We were sharing space, sharing dialogue, sharing energy, sharing hopes, sharing dreams and wishes, sharing memory, sharing the pain. Like, I know, some people are crying up in there, something speaks to them. (Leah, personal interview, August 13, 2019)

ALLYSON

Radical belong to us. And so, I felt I'm going to use that word in ways that would describe what I want to become. So, it allows us to become radical or allows us to return to our roots in a way to inform who we decide to become. If you look it up, I mean, mathematically I think it means roots, too. And then when I think of imagination, it makes me happy. To be allowed to imagine, that's fresh, I think the idea that you can make who and what you become, and you can imagine things that may or may not be

there already, but it's a choice, at least for me it's a choice. And imagination without liberation, it is so hard to imagine, like, so it's almost like you're saying you are liberated to imagine what you want Pilipinx to be. And that's cool, it's a good thing. And so, I think of it in a, in a really important way. Like, it's a bit magical. And it allows us to transform who and what we want to become, and so thank you for that. Thank you for allowing us that... And it's tough sometimes, but I really feel like the largest vision for me and what I'm hoping for is liberation. And there's glimmers and sun shines in your book of those little moments I'm like, that shows the hopefulness, or that shows the radicalness, or you can really see the liberation in that. You could also see how hard it is to get liberation (Allyson, personal communication, October 17, 2019)

LEAH with a plate in her hand she walks toward the food table, looks around at what is left and puts white rice first on the plate, then chicken adobo with the thick brown sauce over the rice.

TONY: In the previous scene, they are highlighting the importance of sharing space and their personal definitions of radical imagination. Although, with regard to this scene, Viola (2012) reminds us that “FilCrit pedagogy is also committed in theorizing and building solidarities across gender, race, sexuality, and other forms of difference” (p. 195). The participants are connected to their radical imagination to FilCrit because they are building solidarity alliances across their communities. That sharing of space is

building across differences to radically imagine what they are healing and visioning for themselves and their communities. That healing and visioning process is part of building solidarity, as stated in FilCrit pedagogy. Moreover, solidarity across multiple communities is highlighted in the Transcendent Resistance framework, specifically in relation to fighting for a liberatory and emancipatory world. Transcendent Resistance pushes our humanity towards collective spiritual consciousness, to stand up against oppression and inequalities on a global scale, and to a new world.

TRINIDAD stands up and stretches. Plate in hand, she walks over to check what food is left. She picks up four pieces of *puto* (steamed rice cakes) and *turon* (sliced bananas rolled in a thin layer and then deep-fried) and places them on her plate.

ALLYSON

This story changed and impacted my life in so many ways. I shared with Mahalaya (daughter), “I can't sleep sometimes thinking about all the people whose right to breathe has been taken from them.” Then Mahalaya responded, “You and I are a lot alike then. I believe our purpose is to help people breathe again. You teach the teachers how to breathe so they can teach their students to breathe.” I looked at her in her eyes and heart and said, “And when you dance, your breath in each movement gives the world a chance to breathe again, to live again. But, we're both going to have to learn to sleep, to rest so that we can continue to pursue our purpose.” She paused and softly asked, “It's been a while, mom, since

you've listened to me breathe.” “I think it's time again. I miss the music of your heartbeat.” (p. 136)

TONY

Allyson, wow, such a beautiful and deep example of what transcendent love is. That the breath is the sustenance of life and an overlooked, important natural rhythm that keeps us alive. As well as the heartbeat, it is the essential life force that keeps us alive. In this moment, the daughter reminds her mother that these two life forces are connected and are a musical rhythm of life. That transcendent love, a reciprocity of love, is practiced in their breath and heartbeat.

OSCAR PEÑARANDA slowly gets up and starts packing up his stuff, signaling that it's time to wrap up the *kuwentuhan*. The rest of the people gathered looked at each other smiling and laughing, knowing it was an abrupt stop. Understanding that the *kuwentuhan*'s time was up, they gave each other one final embrace, either a huge hug or a kiss on the right cheek. One by one they left with large plastic bags filled with *baon* (leftovers), Filipino food wrapped in aluminum foil.

TONY: ALLYSON finishes with a beautiful story of reminding her child, Mahalaya, to breathe, and resolving to continue to pursue their purposes. This profound act of breath is reinforced by the Pilipinx Radical Imagination of transcendent love and healing, and of transcendent resistance as a continual radical process of love, healing, and becoming that interweaves a deep self-reflection on internal and external prevalent sensibilities to

enhance a vision of humanity striving collectively for a liberatory and emancipatory new world. Breath is the life force that connects us all is the breath that we breathe collectively inhaling and exhaling for a liberatory and emancipatory new world.

After ALLYSON's story, OSCAR PEÑARANDA closes the *kuwentuhan* just as he started it, full circle. As the elder, he was always guiding the dialogue while watching it happen and unfold. Even his silence speaks volumes to what the organic experience has been for everyone. OSCAR PEÑARANDA packing up his things is the nonverbal cue that the *kuwentuhan* is about to finish. When the others see this, they smile and laugh, because the elder has spoken, and the unwritten cultural underpinning is that everyone will follow his lead. Normally, when people leave a gathering, two things must happen: (1) Say goodbye to everyone in the room; (2) Go home with leftover food, symbolizing nourishment of the body and soul, and taking with you the connection and memory of being together.

Healing and Visioning Analysis

The Pilipinx Radical Imagination was inspired by the progressive thinking of the Black Radical Imagination (Kelley, 2002). Kelley pays homage to the Combahee River Collective and the brilliance of Black radical women for inspiring others to continue their legacy and to further develop the Black Radical Imagination. As he paid homage, we (co-editors of The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader) also paid homage to an inspirational seminal text "A Bridge Called My Back" (Anzaldua & Moraga, 1981) that inspired our volume. Kelly describes the Black Radical Imagination as "a collective imagination engaged in an actual movement for liberation. It is fundamentally a product of struggle, of victories and losses, crises and openings, and endless conversations circulating in a

shared environment” (Kelley, 2002, p. 150). This was our premise for asking the contributors about their Pilipinx Radical Imagination. Each contributor had a unique response about what it meant for them and their community, but what they had in common was that it gave them the space to stretch their imagination into vision, while placing transcendent love at the center.

Oscar Peñaranda reacts to the word ‘radical’ as something that is “out of the box”, that has yet to be unveiled, and described it as “a community rooted type of thinking.” The concept of the Pilipinx Radical Imagination is connected, through the individuals, to their communities also. Keith’s vision is that Pilipinx people are seen for their positive attributes, and wants Pilipinx people to not only contribute to local communities in their current location, but also in their motherland, so that “people who are not identified as the Pilipinx will see us in a good light and know that we have a lot to offer”. Others wanted to analyze the Pilipinx Radical Imagination word for word, such as Allyson, who lovingly states that it “allows us to transform who and what we want to become”. Allyson is connecting the radical, that is a part of all of us, with the community as connected from Oscar’s reflection of his Pilipinx Radical Imagination, although when she thinks of imagination, it feels expansive and opens up space to dream and imagine what liberation can look and feel like, while transforming how we envision our community. Joseph referred to his Pilipinx Radical Imagination as a “speculative future” and connected the imaginative to hope.

Rovielle expands on her Pilipinx Radical Imagination of Filipinos in the diaspora as “highly adaptive beings.” Her description is framed in a positive light, which is important to emphasize, because adaptability also can be looked upon as negative, such

as in terms of assimilation, or sacrificing who you are as a person to survive. As she reframes adaptability in a positive way, she expands her view and vision into something much larger. Rovielle equates her Pilipinx Radical Imagination with “endless possibilities”, as something that has not yet been realized or come to fruition.

Trinidad aligns with this thinking and also connects it back to the spirituality of our ancestors, observing that “we're currently living experiences that our ancestors probably didn't ever think about, right”.

The contributors of the book describe Pilipinx Radical Imagination as the expansive space to dream and vision for themselves and their communities. Imagination gives permission to challenge what we know and think, and to broaden our view of our lived reality. Melissa-Ann reminds us of the impact of the colonial and imperial past that have shaped the way Filipinos in the diaspora have navigated in the world, noting that “we’ve spent so much time under colonization”. Her radical imagination challenges Filipinos in the diaspora to shed the colonial past and forge a new future, and that, in the process of visioning, we must simultaneously heal as well.

This experience of describing and voicing their Pilipinx Radical Imagination provided the participants with a breath of fresh air, a chance to dream and expand our thinking into endless new possibilities, while centering love and liberation for our community. In providing this space, the Pilipinx Radical Imagination has provided a glimmer of hope for what can be realized, both by contributors and within their communities. It is this parallel relationship of healing and visioning that expands the concept of the Pilipinx Radical Imagination, organically shaping what we want to be

while honoring and paying homage to the ancestors that imagined us being here in this very moment. While we vision, we heal.

Community *Kuwentuhan*. Every book event provides a space for the community to connect with each other. This was called a “Community *Kuwentuhan*” because Francisco defines a *kuwentuhan* as talk story (Francisco, 2014), and Jocson defines it as “...not simply about sharing stories but also about the nature in which the stories take place” (Jocson, 2008). Nonetheless, the depth of a *kuwentuhan* is much more than what is witnessed, because it is felt and experienced in the body and soul. In a *kuwentuhan*, stories are flowing, laughter is present, and there is a deep acknowledgment of pain, struggles, and emotions. It is a time that is filled with reciprocity of love, joy, and pain, wrapped in dialogue that humanizes each other’s collective experiences. Topics vary from painful family matters, romantic relationship woes, financial hardships, joys and celebration of family events, gossiping about current family matters, to speaking to the oppression and hardships of *buhay*, life. The reciprocity of healing and visioning was exemplified in three different book events at: (1) De Anza College, Cupertino, CA; (2) Eastwind Books of Berkeley; (3) Mountain Province Cafe, Brooklyn, New York; and (4) online.

De Anza College. On March 7, 2018, the co-editors and a few of the contributors presented at an Ethnic Studies class at De Anza College, Cupertino, CA, in Professor Juan Gamboa’s class. This was a Chicax class, and Latinx students comprised the majority, although there were a handful of Pilipinx American-identified students in the class as well. After the presentation from the co-editors and contributors of the book, a Filipino male, John, raised his hand and said,

It's not a question, it's an appreciation because I am Filipino American and have my culture and people who connect with me and have published a book and have made it. I can walk around the streets with my head high. The stereotype is Filipinos may be hard working but they are seen as low. When you look at it, they are nurses but they can't go higher than nurses. Say like my mom, dad, my sister. You're only supposed to go so high that you can't overcome that barrier. There are some people who have made it and put in their experiences and giving me inspiration to do what I can do. This book has given me advice to make it in life. (De Anza College booktalk, March 7, 2018)

While he was visibly holding back his emotions, he clearly felt a great sense of pride for who he was in that moment. He felt validated and affirmed for who he was as a Filipino. It was at that moment that healing was taking place in community because he was able to share his challenges, and his fellow classmates were able to witness his transformational shift from feeling invalidated to being affirmed in community. The *kuwentuhan* was a space in which he felt safe enough to express his vulnerability and heal in community.

Eastwind Books of Berkeley. On November 10, 2018, the co-editors and a few of the contributors presented at the Eastwind Books store in Berkeley, CA, a compact and cozy, narrow space, that barely fit twenty people comfortably. Due to wildfires, the air was brown and it was hard to breathe, yet the energy of the Pilipinx Radical Imagination attracted the audience nonetheless, bringing people together to deeply listen, witness, and share a part of themselves. One of the audience members, a *pinay* and close friend of

Melissa-Ann, sat next to her young child, with another unborn child listening in her womb. During the community *kuwentuhan*, she felt compelled to share her story and how The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader moved and healed her and her children.

But I just appreciate the storytelling, the background, it gives so much life to even the words because I'm emotional, it's beautiful, right? And I also think it's as the mother of two boys, and a *babae* [daughter] on the way. Yeah, I was thinking, who would I want to give this to, right? Because we're entry points into, into this place of missing, right, as we talked about, we didn't learn about our history [until] a lot later. But how beautiful a gift [it] is to share it now. So yeah, that's what comes up for me as a mom. And as one of the coolest *Tita*, right. Like offering something so, you know, I appreciate [it]. I heard about this dream before you all created it right, with Melissa-Ann. And I'm so proud of just the courageousness, right? Just to be born with a spark to say, we're going to do this, no matter what's happening in life, that we're still like, Oscar has shared that it's, there's the unexplainable, but it's explainable, right? That is the legacy of our ancestors, right? When we hear those voices, and we have those sparks that say, you must do this, right? You must connect with this person that doesn't come out of a place of nowhere, that comes from a place of resistance, and legacy building, and to really take ownership over these beautiful gifts from generations before us in this time of like, really, world suffering, right? And really just acting in the now. Because I think, as a lot of things are happening, like locally and globally, it's things like this that are still hopeful, right? It's things like this that really ignite seven generations ahead of us, so I really appreciate those that have come out,

despite the unhealthy toxic air outside, because we want this right. So, thank you.
(Eastwind Books, Nov 10, 2018)

Her powerful sharing not only brought tears to her own eyes, but to those of all that were deeply listening to what her heart was sharing. The book affirmed who she was, and in this process of in-the-moment healing, she felt happy that she could pass the book down to her child next to her, and to the unborn child in her womb. Thus, *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* opened up a space of healing in community and expanded the space of possibilities for her children not to experience the same trauma she had, of not feeling affirmed or validated in her younger years, of seeing only faces and stories different to those of her own culture and heritage. In the past, she was not seen and her humanity was invalidated, which made her question her own self-worth and identity. Not seeing herself in books made her question who she was in society. *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* was a symbol of affirmation and healing of her existence that she can pass to her children.

The Mountain Province (Brooklyn, New York). Another book event was held on April 20, 2019, in a kitchen designed cafe, created by owner Ray Luna in homage to his grandmother who was constantly cooking food for family gatherings. This sentiment attracted many *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* contributors from the Philippines, Canada, and the United States. One of them, Karen, shared her piece invoking the spirit of serendipitous healing with her mother. Her sharing brought an existential sense of family and pain, and the witnessing of it was an example of

transcendent love and healing for herself, her mother, and the audience who deeply listened to her story.

Karen hesitated for a moment and then emotionally shared:

There's something weird that you and your mom are going through the same thing and the same time. There's a connection between mother and child. So that was the opening for me writing this piece which is much longer than what I'm going to share today. But I want to give you that background because [it's about] me dealing with this and exchanges with my mother about how to be strong. Whether or not it's okay to cry when we're in pain. That's the undercurrent of this piece. And so, you'll hear my exchange with my mother through some letters, this idea of crying and tears. Disability Justice is something that is part of my Pilipinx Radical Imagination... where we look at fractures, we think about not just fractured people, but fractured, fractured experiences, things that happen because of intergenerational trauma. We look at those things, not just as deficiencies like things that are bad, but actually possibilities. Can we re-examine the way we look at people and each other and all of our flaws, and actually see them as openings, right? So that's what this is about. And this is the picture of my mom, this is the picture of my mom's mom and my mom, and she was a picture of my mom's mom, and they're here with us. Coming up I asked my mother to come in, turn out, to come back to Skype. She's in Florida. But I think it was a lot. But she wishes us all well... What I want from you, Mom, which I can't tell you now, but what I want is for you to be my mommy, to cradle me in your arms and let me cry to you. Even if we don't know what will happen to my body. Even if you don't

agree with the choices I've made. Just to tell me that you trust me and tell me that everything will be okay... Tears are sacred. Tears are healing... If this didn't happen to me when it happened to you, we don't know. Mine is more of a physical thing that happened because it was a chemical reaction to my body that I took for a long time. You had nothing to do with what I had. But I feel that what happened to you was because of what happened to me... The pain you feel, I feel it too. I feel that what happened to you is because of what happened to me. I feel in my heart that when I cry, I cry my mother's tears too. I cry the tears that my mother lets no one see. And perhaps, I also cry the tears of both my grandmothers and their mothers. My mother reminds me that things are not what they seem, we may think we understand, but we know much less than we actually do. My journey with my mother teaches me that sometimes our pain and tears are the result of experiences that reach beyond our own lifetimes, and geographies. But she also teaches me we already have the wisdom to survive. Together, we learn that it's the stories we uncover, that offer us confidence to seek out this wisdom and understand our lives and each other better." (The Mountain Province, April 20, 2019)

Online book event. The last book event of 2020 took place on May 9, 2020, in the beginning months of the pandemic. People from all over the world were in community and heard the stories shared in the *kuwentuhan*. Listening to our stories being validated in community was healing not only for ourselves but for the community that came together virtually that day. It was a spiritual gathering of our community and we were able to vision together what the Pilipinx Radical Imagination means to them and to their

community. The final part of the online book event was a collective visioning board that the participants were able to contribute in real time. The question that was posed for the participants was, “How do we reimagine what our communities can/will look like during and after the global pandemic?” Below is an image of the completed collective visioning board.

Figure 1. Pilipinx Radical Imagination Collective Visioning

Pilipinx Radical Imagination
How will we reimagine what our communities can/will look like during and after this global pandemic?

Pilipinx studies

we'll be more gentle with each other. we focus on when we can come together but also allow space for us to respectfully disagree and come back together when it makes sense

For us to feel stronger, elevated and forward thinking in our thoughts and action. Especially for your children and future generation.

more QUEER FILIPINX representation <3

we align with other oppressed communities and understand our fates are connected

I imagine communities being more connected. Connected in ways like online outlets and goals.

Young people who are rooted in who they really are, who love themselves, and who are equipped to struggle together for a more just, humane and loving world

I imagine not gatekeeping the Pilipinx identity. Not having to check boxes or quantify our Pilipinx-ness. Not feeling like we aren't Pilipinx enough.

include more disabled queer Filipinx

We NEED to share our stories to continue our learning, to speak out against the atrocities that affect Pilipinx and other POC, to remember the past.

palpable, stronger spiritual connection that promotes our collective healing and collective resistance!

we will not render each other invisible and disposable. we will remember our loved ones' deaths were not in vain and we will DO DIFFERENTLY and dismantle the systems that led us here.

"it is difficult to be a rememberer - living in the heart of the empire - when the status quo has people suffering from a collective cultural amnesia that keeps many ungrounded and easily misguided, but remembering, knowing.

I hope people can see how glaringly our communities are divided by race/class/gender/sexuality/etc and we separate and fight each other because we believe it's a zero sum game. But I hope we can see that we're all kapwa

and understanding what has happened in the past strengthens our ability to navigate, vision, and to create futures. when we gather, tell stories, remember together, we tap into an already existing network of roots and mycelium.

they show us what has existed, what has been done, how things may play out. if we remember we won't fall into the same patterns, an unnecessary cycle that our ancestors worked through

so we wouldn't have to." -some writing I am working on for a future zine "consciousness rooting"

that when we look out for each other we look out for ourselves because we are one community.

cherish the things we have in our immediacy, the community we are in proximity to, the things we can eat that is locally sourced

knowing that self-work and community work are equally vital and pursued. aligning our struggles with one another but also holding space for our individual healing that in turn also healths the community, our families, and our ancestors

Learn to forgive ourselves

Thinking in terms of possibilities rather than limits. Moving away from "we can be like you" and toward "we are who we are. fuck you!"

more QUEER FILIPINX representation <3

if we do this right, love and care for one another will be our guiding principles. We will understand how we are interconnected and responsible for one another, and we will act accordingly, in a way where everyone is sacred, no one is disposable.

this pandemic has made gatherings like this to be a lot less accessible physically AND intellectually, so while I don't have an answer, hopefully asking ourselves

HOW to make these dialogues even more accessible will be something I think we should constantly ask ourselves

understand we are enough. periodt

checking in with each other to take long one another and provide more safe spaces to speak up as part of our healing.

First to really accept our SELVES and LOVE our SELVES because that's where the healing can start before we can sharew

I have to go but I just wanted to thank all of y'all for this space. Ordering the book as we speak. My soul is fed and I'm grateful that we cultivated our own little virtual sense of bayanihan. Take care y'all!

for me the crisis is a continuing crisis. it is Capitalism. Covid is weaponized to continue this crisis. but PilipinXs have always resisted against oppression, can reflect on history, and can serve as a bridge between communities.

understanding being strong is exhausting and even though we get tired and that's okay

To not struggle by ourselves and seek help and support each other. Allowing ourselves to not be afraid and rediscover our culture

efforts to bridge discoursey stuff like this to folks who come from the diaspora who didn't grow up having access to this (including FRIENDS, PEERS, FAMILY educated enough to provide access) to this discourse

The collective visioning board was a prime example of a community *kuwentuhan*. After the participants contributed to the collective visioning board, many of them were able to share what they wrote. The community *kuwentuhan* space was healing the community and expanding everyone's spiritual sensibilities to imagine and dream. This aspect of a community *kuwentuhan* was a powerful space of transcendent love, healing, affirmation, and liberation.

Each of the book talks involved contributors sharing their contribution and their perspective on the Pilipinx Radical Imagination. After they created an ambiance of honesty, vulnerability, and authenticity, the audience engaged in a community dialogue, or community *kuwentuhan*. We never knew how to plan for this portion of the event. It was the most unpredictable, emotional, and powerful part, as exemplified in the four different examples from the De Anza College pinoy, the expecting *pinay* mother with her child, Karen's serendipitous encounter with her mother, and the diasporic Filipinos visioning together in an online space.

With the De Anza College pinoy, and the *pinay* expecting mother at Eastwind Books, healing appeared to happen in the moment. Both shared that they feel affirmed by the stories that were shared, making them feel validated and. Karen's sharing the painful story of her own and her mother's injury showed the interconnection of their spirits feeling and healing together, even though they were physically apart. The emotional sharing of the dialogue with her mother was an in-the-moment healing of the trauma she endured.

Lastly, the online book event provided a rare occasion for the diasporic community to manifest their Pilipinx Radical Imagination together. This gathering of

diasporic Filipinos, sharing their stories and engaging their vision for themselves and their communities in an online platform, was healing to witness, and deeply listen to what others have experienced and the audience simultaneously writing down together what they vision for themselves and their communities, was a rare occasion for the diasporic community to manifest their Pilipinx Radical Imagination together. Even for those that did not vocally speak, the community *kuwentuhan* gathering was healing for the audience members witnessing in real time the powerful stories of healing and reflection. The witnessing was also the community healing and visioning that the book talks epitomized.

The participants in the community *kuwentuhans* in the book, as well as those interviewed, all were able to deeply reflect on their past and current lived experiences as a diasporic Filipino. They paid homage to their ancestral roots and to their fluid cultural identity. The community *kuwentuhans* also created a space for the audience members to engage in authentic and vulnerable ways, and in this process of validation and affirmation, in-the-moment healing took place. Furthermore, the witnessing of these moments opened up more space for Pilipinx Radical Imagination, creating a container in which to reflect together as a community and contemplate what it means to each participant individually. As the healing occurred, it opened up a space for visioning and manifesting what those present want for themselves and their communities.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION

Healing and Visioning in our Process of Becoming

In the collective *kuwentuhan* the Filipino/a/x/@, Pilipino/a/x/@ or Pin@y contributors from The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader articulated three main themes: (a) identity and cultural fluidity; (b) transcendent love; and (c) healing and visioning. As mentioned in the theoretical frameworks section, Transcendent Resistance and FilCrit both contributed to the framing and analysis of the three themes. The first concept is defined by (1) nurturing of the heart; (2) radical imagination; and (3) fighting for a liberatory and emancipatory new world, whereas FilCrit pedagogy centers the lives of Filipino/a American experiences and strongly engages the advancement and advocacy of the communities that they live and reside in (Baldoz, 2011; Choy, 2003; Delmendo, 2004; Fujita-Rony, 2003; Posadas, 1999; Strobel; 2001). Using these two frameworks intertwined to amplify the voices of diasporic Filipinos making sense of their realities leads to a more in-depth analysis of the essence of their current lived realities. This provided contributors with the vocabulary and language needed in order to make sense of their lived experiences as they navigate what it means to be a diasporic Filipino in this current moment of time.

The three main themes of this study show the ways in which we can disrupt some of the common Filipino narratives of participation in college activities, continued practice of Catholicism, and working in the helping professions, by opening up spaces for peripheral voices to enter the conversation. This study is significant in that it shows the power of the *kuwentuhan* as a tool for both disruption and creation in the lives of

diasporic Filipinos, and of the community *kuwentuhans* as a parallel site of healing for past intergenerational traumas and visioning for the possibilities of positive community contributions. These new spaces have the imaginative potential to be inclusive of more voices of diasporic Filipinos, and to support a full understanding of the depth and breadth of their realities.

Summary

As shared earlier in this dissertation, there are 10.4 million Filipinos living or working abroad, primarily in the Middle East, Europe, Canada, and the United States, in search of a better life for themselves and their families (Commission on Filipino Overseas, 2013). As a result of economic motivation, their hands are tied in terms of needing to assimilate to the host country's culture, values, and traditions. While the majority of research into these Filipinos has focused on the domestic workers' experience, rarely has there been a study focusing on diasporic Filipinos' positive contributions to their host country, or about their Pilipinx Radical Imagination. As a result, the purpose of this qualitative study is to explore diasporic Filipinos' current lived experiences and vision for their communities. This study focuses on eight self-identified Filipino/a/x/@, Pilipino/a/x/@ or Pin@y contributors from The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018), interviewing them using a culturally humble data collection methodology, *kuwentuhan*, sharing stories, (Jocson, 2008). This methodology honored and respected the cultural norms and ways of being that are familiar to the diasporic Filipino cultural experience. It provided an intimate, comforting space that was not direct or abrasive but respectful, thoughtful, intentionally poised, and lovingly methodical. The overarching research question was, "How do the

experiences of diasporic Filipinos inform their Pilipinx Radical Imagination?” Analysis of the data demonstrated three main themes: (1) identity is culturally fluid; (2) transcendent love is the center of their love for themselves and their communities; and (3) community *kuwentuhans* are sites for healing and visioning. Further research is needed to document the positive contributions of Filipinos in the diaspora, the complexities and multiplicities of Filipinos in the diaspora, and further development of the Pilipinx Radical Imaginary.

Discussion

This chapter includes a discussion of major findings as related to the literature in Asian American studies, Ethnic Studies, the emerging scholarship of Filipino American studies, and what implications may be helpful for use by the diasporic Filipino community and researchers that either self-identify as or are researching about diasporic Filipinos. The chapter includes a brief summary with a discussion of the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for future research. In the previous findings chapter, I provided an in-depth analysis of the findings and in this chapter, I provided a further extension of the analysis of the findings woven in to deepen what was already mentioned.

The overarching research question and sub-research questions are as follows:

“How do the experiences of diasporic Filipinos inform their Pilipinx Radical Imagination?”

- What is your Pilipinx Radical Imagination?
- What does it mean to be Pilipinx in this moment?
- How are Pilipinx actively making sense of their stories?
- How are Pilipinx documenting their stories?

The data suggests that the experiences of diasporic Filipinos inform their Pilipinx Radical Imagination is multifaceted and comprised of three major themes, as outlined above. I will delve more deeply into each of these themes in the next section. Some concepts relate primarily to the individual, some to the collective, and some are an interconnection of both. All these concepts help contribute to an understanding of how the experiences of diasporic Filipinos inform their Pilipinx Radical Imagination.

Theme 1: Identity and cultural fluidity

The evolution of Pilipinx identity formation begins with the racial hierarchy caste system of Spanish colonization (Constantino, 1969), which leads to the reclaiming of the identification of Filipino to include the entire population of the Philippines regardless of racial ancestry (Guerrero, 2010; Ocampo, 2012), and then to F/Pilipinx identification. All the participants strongly identified with their Philippine ancestral roots and of Pilipinx as the current identification for P/Filipinos. The participants were aligned with the literature of Pilipinx identification which states that “...switching the F to the P celebrates identity, as we learn about the larger frame of decolonization” (Pilipinx-UCLA Residential Life, n.d. para. 3). Three out of the eight participants mentioned that different cultures, especially the Black/African American culture, influenced their identity as Filipino in the diaspora. Furthermore, the societal and political landscape at the time of the *kuwentuhans* involved the racial reckoning of Black Lives Matter and the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Viola (2012) reminds us of the ways in which diasporic counter-consciousness continually develops and reflects on intersectional identities. These participants center their Filipino identity, and also recognize the other identities that shape their full humanity, thereby critiquing the dominant narrative of a homogenous

society of Filipinos in the diaspora and presenting instead a multifaceted and complex culture.

The evolution of identity to incorporate naming cultural identification is reflected in the participants' cultural fluidity. Throughout most of the interviews, a majority of the participants mentioned either their parents' or grandparents' specific geographic place of upbringing, as a way to honor those distinct cultural identities. Moreover, due to societal influences and what was happening in their lives at the time of interview, the majority of them had shifted their identities to reflect the fluidity of their culture. The participants' identity is no longer a definitive and static representation of who they are, but rather an evolving identification, dependent on the past and current experiences they are witnessing and living through.

In four of the *kuwentuhans* participants stated either that they practiced Buddhism or that their spiritual practices were influenced by Buddhism. Since the Philippines is predominantly a Catholic country (Constantino, 1969), this is a gap in the literature that needs to be explored.

Theme 2: Transcendent love

Throughout the study, in the majority of the participants' *kuwentuhans* and the community *kuwentuhans*, a deep sense of love reverberated consistently. The participants strongly claimed love for themselves, love for their families, and a collective love for their communities. The Black Radical Imagination (Kelley, 2002) has a deep foundation of love and liberation and this connects with the idea of transcendent love. Moreover, the concept of radical imagination not only should inspire action and deeper connections of solidarity (Khasnabish & Haiven, 2012), but also a deeper self-love and love for

community (Boggs & Kurashige, 2012). The love that the majority of participants spoke to was a deep, ancestral love that included radical love and intergenerational love that flowed through ancestors, new births, and non-living beings. Many of the participants shared the simplicity of love through their examples of affirming love for themselves, and a model example of transcendent love, such as Allyson's story of her daughter (Mahalaya) and the interconnection of the breath. "It's been a while mom, since you've listened to me breathe. "I think it's time again. I miss the music of your heartbeat." (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, p. 136). Transcendent love needs to be explored further to expand the possibilities that may include the ancestral, intergenerational, future births, and the land.

Theme 3: Healing and visioning

In previous literature, the radical imagination (Kelley, 2002; Boggs & Kurashige, 2012; Frazier, 2014; Khasnabish & Haiven, 2014) related to being able to reimagine and shape a new future. This is connected to the majority of the participant *kuwentuhans* and community *kuwentuhans*, although the participants' micro-healing of themselves and the community healing enacted through sharing past experiences led to a collective visioning for the communities that they represent. The literature does not include healing as part of the process of visioning, and yet this is something that reverberated throughout this study. The notion of self- and collective healing provides more space to vision and be. This space of healing, community *kuwentuhan*, in turn affirms participants' humanity and then leads to the personal and collective vision described as their Pilipinx Radical Imagination. Later in this section, I will provide a more thorough reflection of the significance of a community *kuwentuhan*.

Results and their implications for theory and research

In Chapter I, the research study utilized two theoretical frameworks: (a) Transcendent Resistance and (b) FilCrit Pedagogy. I will now discuss how the results in this study fit with these frameworks.

Transcendent resistance

The Transcendent Resistance framework expands on transformative organizing, Eric Mann's (2010) social movement theoretical framework, that speaks to the social movement-building happening in the current political climate. The three main components of the Transcendent Resistance framework are (1) nurturing of the heart; (2) radical imagination; and (3) fighting for a liberatory and emancipatory new world. The results of this study aligned with this framework in terms of how nurturing of the heart was connected to the theme of transcendent love and reciprocity of love being central to the discussions. Radical imagination and fighting for a liberatory and emancipatory new world were also connected to the Pilipinx Radical Imagination, with participants actively visioning this for themselves and their communities. The results provide a new insight into the relationship between visioning and healing, which is that in order to stimulate a personal and collective vision, individual and community healing need to occur in parallel. In the hope that the Transcendent Resistance framework could be utilized as a new framework for current social movements, the results spoke to the *kuwentuhans* and community *kuwentuhans* as spaces for simultaneous healing and visioning in community, which can be a precursor to the implementation of the Transcendent Resistance framework in current social movements.

FilCrit pedagogy

FilCrit pedagogy builds on Filipino/a experiences “in the advancement of culturally relevant and transformative sites of knowledge production” (Viola, 2012, p. 194). The results of this study align with FilCrit pedagogy in the way that all the participants interviewed strongly identified with their Filipino culture as a way of advancing their families and communities. Viola (2012) also defines diasporic counter-consciousness as Filipinos in the diaspora continually developing and reflecting on their intersectional identities (Crenshaw, 1989) which is connected to the concept of cultural fluidity, one of the main themes of this study. In diasporic consciousness, lived experiences, coupled with society’s current events, reshape cultural identity. The results of this study confirmed Viola’s diasporic counter-consciousness as being reflected by participants developing and reflecting on their identities as diasporic Filipinos. However, participants provided an interesting insight that their evolving identity is also a critical reflection of the importance of their parents’ and grandparents’ specific place of upbringing in the Philippines, and the religious influence of Buddhism within the context of a majority Catholic culture. Many participants stated that their spirituality was informed and influenced by Buddhism.

Limitations

While this study introduced new theoretical frameworks and utilized the data methodology collection of *kuwentuhans* to give voice to the stories of the participants, there were limitations to the study. After self-reflection, it can be said that although the Pilpinx Radical Imagination Reader sought to focus on Filipinos in the diaspora, the majority of the participants currently reside in the United States, primarily on the West

Coast. The larger focus of Filipinos in the diaspora would offer different perspectives from the diaspora itself, and not only the perspective of a Filipino in the United States. Also, the term 'Pilipinx' originated in California and is very specific to the identifications of the younger generation, millennials, and generation z, which again is heavily focused on the West Coast Filipinos in the U.S. If *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* was an expansive representation of Filipinos in the diaspora, there needs to be a broader range of voices from various geographic locations around the world. The contributors from the book primarily resided in either the San Francisco Bay Area or San Diego. This is also true for the eight participants that took part in this study, since five out of eight resided in the San Francisco Bay Area. These voices were able to share their stories and showed differences across generations, but nonetheless their Filipino consciousness was influenced by the San Francisco Bay Area Filipino activism.

Overall, the *Pilipinx Radical Imagination* intention is to provide a framework for Filipinos in the diaspora to document their current stories and vision for themselves and their communities. Although, contributors and the participants in this study were majority from California, primarily from the San Francisco Bay Area and San Diego.

Research Study Major Contributions

In this section, I will briefly share three contributions in the field of Education, primarily in Asian American Studies and Filipino American Studies. The four major contributions are:

- (a) *Pilipinx Radical Imagination*
- (b) Transcendent Resistance framework
- (c) *Kuwentuhan* as a Data Collection Methodology

(d) Community *Kuwentuhan*

Pilipinx Radical Imagination

The Pilipinx Radical Imagination was inspired and informed by Kelley's Black Radical Imagination. He compassionately describes this concept as "a collective imagination engaged in an actual movement for liberation. It is fundamentally a product of struggle, of victories and losses, crises and openings, and endless conversations circulating in a shared environment" (Kelley, 2003, p.150). Inspired by his work to collectively imagine and realize futures for liberation specifically for the Black community, it made me deeply reflect on what Radical Imagination means for diasporic Filipinos. Oftentimes, the Pilipinx community reacts to the injustices and inequities in our society and quickly responds to the situation at hand. This results in only responding to what is needed in that moment, and not further challenging our community to think more expansively and in depth about what the community actually needs. The balance of reacting and visioning can provide a necessary collective thought partnership for understanding what our community can actualize. The Pilipinx Radical is a new concept for diasporic Filipinos to really challenge themselves to think about what they want for their communities in this particular moment. This concept asks people to ponder on the past and current lived experiences that make up their fluid identity. Each of the terms in the Pilipinx Radical Imagination has people question how this individually resonates with them.

The x in 'Pilipinx' describes a current generational identification that seeks to be more inclusive on the gender spectrum. The term 'radical' connotes a challenge to the normative societal systems of injustice in academic, political, and activist spaces. The

term ‘imagination’ allows space and gives permission to dream visions into existence. It challenges people to think outside the box and to push the boundaries of possibility in their thinking and being. It also allows people to pause and reflect on their personal Pilipinx Radical Imagination, as well as a collective Pilipinx Radical Imagination for the communities they represent, to support their developing a clear idea of what they are striving for and what is possible.

Transcendent Resistance Framework

Transcendent Resistance is a newly created theoretical framework inspired by Eric Mann’s (2010) social movement theoretical framework, transformative organizing. It transforms the system itself and is in revolutionary opposition to the power structures of colonialism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism in its current form, imperialism. There are seven components of Transformative Organizing: (1) radical social change through the strategy of building an international united front to challenge the U.S. empire; (2) transformative organizer is a conscious agent of change a revolutionary educator with a plan to intervene in and make history; (3) leadership of society’s most exploited, oppressed, and strategically placed classes and races; (4) produced by transformative organizations; (5) truly transformative in the course of battle; (6) transforms the organizers; and (7) transformative political program (Mann, 2010). These seven components can be used to critique the current political system as a base model of transformative organizing to ground and guide our work. Transcendent resistance expands on this theoretical model that speaks to the current social movement building happening in this current political climate. The three main components are (1) nurturing of the heart; (2) radical imagination; and (3) fighting for a liberatory and emancipatory

new world. Nurturing of the heart is the unconditional and radical love for the earth embodied core values such as in *Lak'ech* (Mayan word: you are my other me), *kapwa* (Filipino word: you are my other me), and empathy to radically heal mother earth. The idea of caring for ourselves is not seen as selfish or individualistic but a radical love for the collective and community. The combination of in *Lak'ech* and *kapwa* with selfcare, transforms into collective and community care. Their individual acts of caring for themselves result in nurturing and love for their communities. They are taking care of themselves; therefore, the collective is also taken care of. Fighting for a liberatory and emancipatory new world can be a global example of an international solidarity movement that organically can become an intersectional movement for collective liberation; the idea that an individual's liberation connects to another person's liberation and we are not all free unless everyone is free. Radical Imagination was inspired by Grace Lee Boggs (2013) and her coining of the term solutionaires (solutions + visionaries) to envision a new world. That we can radically challenge ourselves and the systems that we live in beyond what we have seen and done. With our imagination, it gives us playful permission to imagine a new world that is possible and just for all. Our radical imagination allows us to collectively vision and manifest a different world we are living in.

The transcendent resistance framework moves beyond validating our experiences in academia with radical healing and radical love at the center and moving towards a transformational spiritual collective shift of a liberatory and emancipatory world. Furthermore, it pushes our humanity to collective spiritual consciousness to stand up against oppression and inequalities on a global scale to a spiritual transcendence of a new world. Transcendent resistance is both an individual and a collective identity, that is not

solid but liquescent, an -ing; a continual radical process of love, healing, and becoming that interweaves a deep self-reflection of internal and external prevalent sensibilities to enhance a collective humanity visioning for a liberatory and emancipatory new world.

The Transcendent Resistance framework can be utilized by current and future generations of activists in their organizing strategies, visioning sessions, and ways of being in the world. This can be a model for creating a liberatory and emancipatory world.

Kuwentuhan as a data collection methodology

In addition to Jocson and Francisco's definitions of *kuwento* and also discussed in Chapter IV, Ricardo D. Trimillos describes *kuwentuhan* as "the Filipino genre for socializing in which raconteurs tell stories and create narratives. Often there is no apparent cohesiveness or point to a *kuwento* until the end, when everything becomes clear(er). Thus, the Filipino focus upon the process, the "getting there," makes *kuwentu-kuwentuhan* simultaneously engaging, social, delightful, and enlightening" (Gonzalves, 2007, pp. 2-3). Given that *kuwentuhan* is a Filipino cultural communication concept, the utilization of *kuwentuhan* as a culturally responsive and culturally humble data collection tool, it can instantly create comfort and authenticity and elicit in-depth responses from those being interviewed. Although specific to the Filipino culture and diasporic Filipinos, this methodology can provide diasporic Filipinos and non-Filipinos an option for gathering data when conducting qualitative research that is about diasporic Filipinos.

The sacred practice of bringing food as a gift, breaking bread together, taking time to ease into the dialogue, and understanding the time and space required in order to explore the interview questions in depth, elicits different responses from each of the interviewed participants. As a self-identified diasporic Filipino, it not only gave me

permission to authentically bring my own cultural authenticity into the *kuwentuhan*, but it also elicited a richer and more genuine response from the participants. Because I had a personal relationship with the participants, and also identified as F/Pilipina/o/x, the *kuwentuhan* data collection methodology brought instantaneous comfort and trust. We (interviewer/interviewee) felt a symbiotic reciprocity of an authentic sharing and exchange about our lives. The *kuwentuhan* created a space where we could fully share our humanity and feel validated, affirmed, loved and honored.

For future research, self-identified diasporic Filipino researchers can utilize this culturally humble data collection methodology when conducting qualitative research to elicit genuine and authentic responses.

Community Kuwentuhan

The concept of the community *kuwentuhan* was born out of the The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader book events. During these events, some of the contributors shared their contribution pieces and their concepts of Pilipinx Radical Imagination, either for themselves or their communities. When the audience participants deeply listened to these stories, an atmosphere of comfort, familiarity, and safety was created.

The final part of each book event was a community dialogue. In these organic dialogues, a range of emotions was shared, critical questions were posed, personal and collective healing was enacted, and visions for our communities were vocalized. These safe, brave, sacred spaces allowed the engaged audience to be vulnerable, authentic, and to take part in community, healing and visioning. A community *kuwentuhan* should and can be incorporated in Pilipinx community organizing models in meetings, community events, organizing sessions, and all aspects of community building. A *kuwentuhan* can

also help communities to create and sustain connections, pause and reflect on what is currently happening, and have a place in which to heal and vision. It creates an organic space of interconnection and safety.

Recommendations for Further Research

As stated in the previous section, the Pilipinx Radical Imagination is a new concept that is intended to represent Filipinos in the diaspora, to document their current stories, and to inspire them to vision for themselves and their communities. A larger representation from various countries is needed in order to make the research more inclusive of wider perspectives and experiences across the globe that represent a larger portion of Filipinos in the diaspora. Further research is needed to include documented Filipinos in the diaspora primarily from UAE, Middle East, Canada, and Europe, where many of them work and live abroad. Moreover, it is my hope that Pilipinx Radical Imagination can become a movement, continually building individual and collective consciousness that will highlight the positive impacts and contributions of Filipinos in the diaspora.

In analyzing the data, we discovered that the Pilipinx Radical Imagination opened up space to highlight the multiplicities and complexities of the P/Filipino/a/x diasporic experience, especially in the Filipino American narrative. The data showed that the formulation and normalcy of the Filipino American narrative has restricted the possibilities available to the Filipino American narrative timeline. If we use the Pilipino Cultural Night (PCN) as the metaphor for the normalcy of the Filipino American narrative, it becomes the general narrative experience that Filipinos face. Although further research needs to be carried out regarding the gray areas that exist on the

periphery of what it means to be Filipino in the diaspora, to open more space for what the Filipino American narrative can be, rather than just looking at what it is. We must be more expansive and welcoming to various narratives so that we can connect the dots of the complexities of the Filipino diaspora.

The Transcendent Resistance framework can be utilized in social justice movements as an alternative way of thinking, being, and dreaming in the world. This model was inspired by the Dakota Access Pipeline movement to protect the land and water that was going to be affected by large corporations not honoring the treaties of sacred Indigenous land. Further research is needed to develop the Transcendent Resistance framework and how it can be used in various organizations and social movements to understand whether it can advance justice and liberation for our communities.

Kuwentuhan as a data collection methodology is used in educational research as a culturally responsive tool to better understand the complexities and intricacies of those that are being studied, although rarely. *kuwentuhan*, although specific to Filipino culture and heritage, is a culturally responsive data collection methodology that can be applicable to educational research that seeks to understand the depths of personal narratives and collective group sharing. Educational researchers can utilize this data methodology and analyze and assess whether it captures the richness and essence of the personal and collective stories.

Our format for the book events always included a time for Q & A, with the aim of opening space for a community dialogue. It was usually at the end of the program, after the editors spoke about the background context and contributors spoke about their

submissions. The safety, familiarity, authenticity, and vulnerability of the contributors gave permission to others in the space to be vulnerable in sharing their truths. This Q & A transformed into a community *kuwentuhan*, a dialogue of community healing, a space both to challenge and to just be. In this sacred space, pains, challenges, wins, and questions were shared as a community. This was a place of healing for intergenerational trauma, in which people were able to share things that they had never expressed in a public setting. This community *kuwentuhan* was both the most unpredictable and the most magical part of the book events. As mentioned earlier, the community *kuwentuhan* needs more attention for further research, so we can have a better understanding of the colonial and societal trauma that Filipinos in the diaspora have endured and navigated. Community *kuwentuhans* is a new concept for the diasporic Filipino community.

Conclusion

This study focuses on eight self-identified Filipino/a/x/@, Pilipino/a/x/@ or Pin@y contributors from *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018), examining their current lived experiences and their visions for themselves and their communities. The study illustrates the connections between Transcendent Resistance and FilCrit pedagogy as theoretical frameworks that can teach us how these participants' current lived experiences shape their evolving identities, love for themselves and their broader communities, and provide them a space to vision for their communities.

My further intention for this qualitative study was for researchers in multiple fields such as education, ethnic studies, Asian American Studies, Philippine studies, and Filipino American studies, to better understand the experiences of diasporic Filipinos and

the Pilipinx Radical Imagination. The participants' *kuwentuhans* unveiled that further research is needed to explore both culturally fluid identities and the community *kuwentuhan* as a needed approach in diasporic Filipinos communities for connection, healing, and visioning.

Researcher's Personal Reflection

My parents, Jose Celetaria Santa Ana and Alicia Abulencia Santa Ana, immigrated to the United States in the early 1970s seeking a better life for themselves and their future family. With only \$300 in their pockets, their American dream slowly became a reality. They secured jobs that were able to financially support them and their families both in the United States and “back home” (Philippines), sustaining a side business, putting their children through the public educational system, navigating American society, and hoping to create opportunities for us to be financially and emotionally successful too. It was what they called the American dream but, as Oscar Peñaranda reminded me during our *kuwentuhan*, that was their Pilipinx Radical Imagination. Diasporic Filipinos all over the world are constantly being reminded that they are colonial subjects, subjugated to the domestic labor workforce, although our struggles and challenges are also sites of strength, resiliency, and visioning for the places we live and work. It is a reframing of the negative societal narratives acknowledging that, although there are 10.5 million Filipinos living and working abroad, there are also positive contributions to the places that we inhabit. The Pilipinx Radical Imagination opens endless possibilities for ways to highlight the contributions to the cultural fabric of the places that they live and work.

This dissertation process has been a spiritual journey for myself and the communities I serve. During the process, I was reminded that I was the vessel for opening and creating space for the different narratives that are yet to be heard and highlighted; that in our personal narratives, there is power, love, healing, and an affirmation of our collective being. Within the shared spaces of the community *kuwentuhans*, I witnessed the transcendent love we have for each other, and the deep emotions that were released as part of the individual and collective healing process. I spiritually saw our ancestors smiling down on us, laughing, and eating, as we lifted the ancestral trauma from our spirits. It was in those moments that the Pilipinx Radical Imagination was defined, not by words, but by feeling and being.

This dissertation process was equally agonizing and exuberant at the same time, mirroring those participants' feelings in the *kuwentuhans* and the community *kuwentuhans*. We were visioning and healing together, as a collective community. This dissertation reaffirmed that I am part of an ancestral legacy of activists, healers, global citizens, and visionaries. The Pilipinx Radical Imagination opened a gateway for multiple narratives to be uncovered and unveiled, giving us permission to vision for ourselves and our communities and simultaneously heal along the way, so that we can realize our fullest humanity in all aspects of society. My spiritual persistent dissertation journey was humbly sustaining this vessel to expand the spaciousness of dialogue to heal and vision for what we can imaginably become.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent for Participants

Informed Consent for Participants

Participant Name _____

Participant Address _____

Email address _____

Greetings Participant,

This letter is to request your participation in the sharing of your cultural and ethnic identification of being Filipino/a/x/@, Pilipino/a/x/@ or Pin@y. Your interview will be a part of the research that I will conduct from December 2018-December 2019. This research will contribute to my dissertation in the Doctoral Program at the University of San Francisco's School of Education.

The purpose of this study is to explore the naming and visioning of diasporic Filipinos from USA, Canada, Australia, and Philippines. Through this research, I hope to explore the fluidity of identity development and visioning for the Pilipinx community.

As Filipino/a/x/@, Pilipino/a/x/@ or Pin@y, your experiences are vital to this research. I am specifically looking for participants with the following characteristics:

- Each person will self-identify as Filipino/a/x/@, Pilipino/a/x/@ or Pin@y.
- Each person will have contributed to *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018)
- Be willing to allow the researcher to record and transcribe the interviews
- Be willing to participate in a study that may eventually be published in an academic publication such as a journal, monograph, white paper, or book.

I am requesting your help by allowing me to incorporate your experiences, as part of this larger research about diasporic Filipinos existence and visioning for their communities. If you consent, this would mean that you are allowing me to include your experiences in this research. This information might be oral or written stories. This information may contain images or other materials that represent your experiences.

The research would also include your existing contribution from *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018). As part of this research, you may include your participation as an individual interview (approximately 45 minutes to one hour). You and I would devise a way to record each of the interviews in a way that feels more authentic and inclusive for you as a participant. These recording methods might include digital recording, video recording, note-taking, or journaling after each session – your feedback is critical to this part of the process.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS VOLUNTARY. You are under no obligation to participate in this study and you may decline to participate in any or all parts of this dissertation research at any time.

Your confidentiality is very important to me and to this study. Every effort will be taken to protect your identity. All documentation will be accessible only by me. I will use pseudonyms rather than real names to represent each of your experiences. You will have the option of choosing a pseudonym, or you may choose to use your legal name.

The anticipated benefits of the study for you as participants in the study are providing an opportunity to name your existence and vision for your communities as diasporic Filipinos. There will be no cost to you as a result of taking place in this study, nor will you be reimbursed for your participation.

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email is pinay.radical.imagination@gmail.com. You may also contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091, by emailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

I am deeply grateful for your participation, and for your generosity in helping me share your experiences as a diasporic Filipino and visioning for our communities. My hope is that the documentation of your experiences can be used as inspiration for future texts of diasporic Filipinos. Your participation and contributions would be invaluable and I thank you for your consideration.

In community solidarity,

Anthony Abulencia Santa Ana
Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form Purpose and Background

Informed Consent Form Purpose and Background

Anthony Abulencia Santa Ana is a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco's International and Multicultural Education Department. He is conducting a study that includes experiences of diasporic Filipinos and their visioning for their communities. I am being asked to participate in this study because I am a participant with the following characteristics:

- Self-identify as Filipino/a/x/@, Pilipino/a/x/@ or Pin@y.
- Contributed to *The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader* (Nievera-Lozano & Santa Ana, 2018)
- Allowing the researcher to record and transcribe the interviews
- Willing to participate in a study that may eventually be published in an academic publication such as a journal, monograph, white paper, or book.

Procedures

If I agree to participate in this study, the following will happen:

1. Anthony Abulencia Santa Ana will be given permission to include my experiences of being a diasporic Filipino for this dissertation research. My experiences may be provided as an oral or written story, and could possibly contain images or other materials that I provide to represent my experiences.
2. I will share my experiences as an individual interviewee (approximately 45 minutes to one hour).

Risk and/or Discomfort

I am aware that my involvement in this research about identity and visioning could be an emotional experience for me. I understand that at any point I am free to end my participation or omit any part of my experiences. I will have the opportunity to read what I have contributed to this dissertation research.

My identity will be confidential and I will have the opportunity to choose my pseudonym. Documents related to the observations and my experiences will be secured and accessible only to Anthony Abulencia Santa Ana. I understand that he will make every effort to protect my identity. I understand that participation in this study may have the unintended consequence of a loss of confidentiality.

Benefits

The anticipated benefits of the study for you as participants in the study are providing an opportunity to name your existence and vision for your communities as Filipinos in the diaspora.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no cost to you as a result of taking place in this study, nor will you be reimbursed for your participation.

Payment/Reimbursement

There will be no payment or reimbursement for participation in this study.

Questions

If I have any questions, comments or concerns, I may email Anthony Abulencia Santa Ana at pinay.radical.imagination@gmail.com or call him on his cell phone at 408-759-0046.

If I have any questions or concerns about my participation in this study, I should first talk with Anthony Abulencia Santa Ana. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the University of San Francisco's IRBPHS, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach IRBPHS office by calling 415-422-6091, by emailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subjects' Bill of Rights," a cover letter and a copy of this consent form to keep. **PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS VOLUNTARY.** You are under no obligation to participate in this study and you may decline to participate in any or all parts of this dissertation research at any time.

My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on my present or future status at the University of San Francisco.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature Date

Researcher's Signature Date

Research Subject's Bill of Rights

The rights below are the rights of every person who is asked to be in a research study. As a research subject, I have the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is trying to find out;
2. To be told what will happen to me and whether any of the procedures, drugs, or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice;
3. To be told about the frequent and/or important risks, side effects, or discomforts of the things that will happen to me for research purposes;
4. To be told if I can expect any benefit from participating, and, if so, what the benefit might be;
5. To be told of other choices I have and how they may be better or worse than being in the study;
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study, both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study;
7. To be told of what sort of medical or psychological treatment is available if any complications arise;
8. To refuse to participate at all or change my mind about participating after the study is started; if I were to make such a decision, it will not affect my right to receive the care or privileges I would receive if I were not in the study;
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form; and
10. To be free of pressure when considering whether I wish to agree to be in the study.

If I have other questions, I should ask the researcher. In addition, I may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach IRBPHS office by calling 415-422-6091, by emailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

**Appendix C: Allyson Tintiango-Cubales
The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader Book Submission**

MAHALAYA & ALLYSON TINTIANGCO-CUBALES (MOM)

**Learning to Breathe: Pinayist Dialogues
between Mother and Daughter**

Heartbeat @ 3 years old

MAHALAYA: Mama, Why are you crying?

MOM: I'm just really stressed out.

MAHALAYA: Why?

I remember watching my mom put together the binders for her tenure at the dinner table. Letter after letter, from student after student, it seemed endless. I wondered why she was so sad.

MOM: I don't know if I can explain why.

All the while, I am thinking that this child at three wouldn't be able to understand my fears and guilt of not being able to raise her—how a mother is naturally suppose to know how to do. I'm suppose to give up everything for her, right? I'm suppose to console her when she's upset. How could this three-year-old baby even understand what I'm going through as a community engaged-Pinay-professor, pretending to be a mother. Pressures of being a good Pinay. Pressures of being a good professor. Pressures of being a good mother. I didn't feel I was really real in any of those identities. No longer did my impostor's syndrome only affect my identity as a scholar but it seeped into all my insecurities of not being a good mother. My tears came from the severity of my anxiety that I may not receive the tenure necessary to keep my job, which also meant, I would not be able to provide for my child.

MAHALAYA & ALLYSON TINTIANGCO-CUBALES

MAHALAYA: Come here mama.

I put my hands on my mom's face and watched the tears drip from her eyes down her cheek and onto my hands. I slowly put her head to my chest positioned to hear me breathe.

MOM: I'm just so scared. I'm afraid I can't take care of you.

I wept as I listened to her heartbeat, remembering that this child, who had slightly premature birth, suffered from a premature heart which caused a number of hospitalizations and an endless series of sleepless nights caring for her, worrying if she would ever mature. And there she was breathing.

MAHALAYA: It's okay mama, I'll take care of you because you always take care of me and so many other people too. Can you hear my heartbeat?

MOM: Yes, lovebug, it's like music.

So much clarity in that moment. She taught me how to see my purpose. A doctor, but not that kind of doctor; sure enough a doctor that listens to people's breathing, their heartbeats, their stories. My vocation is to listen deeply to their narratives to see what they need and provide what is necessary for them to continue to breathe. This I learned from listening to my own child's heartbeat.

Heartbreaking and Heartmending @ 5 years old

MAHALAYA: She said I was too dark. Why did she say that? Am I too dark?

MOM: She's wrong. You are beautiful.

I was completely heartbroken, hearing my child say that another child told her she was too dark. I thought, why does happen? Why so early? Not sure if she was even prepared to handle it.

MAHALAYA & ALLYSON TINTIANGCO-CUBALES

MAHALAYA: That's oppression, right?

I learned that word in my PEP (Pin@y Educational Partnerships) afterschool class and I was so proud that I knew how to use it. My mom started PEP to teach teachers how to teach Ethnic Studies focused on Pinays and Pinoy to kids like me all the way from kindergarten to college. I really don't know a life without Ethnic Studies. I was pretty much born into PEP.

MOM: Yes, it's racism. It's based on a system of white supremacy, where people think and act on the belief that white is better than any other color.

Okay, I was not sure if it was going to make sense to a five year old kindergarten. I mean, can we teach about racism to kids?

MAHALAYA: Hm, that's like the three I's of oppression, right? I learned in PEP that INSTITUTIONAL oppression is like the laws that make it okay to be racist, then the INTERPERSONAL is like what that girl said to me, and the INTERNALIZED is like if I let it get to me and I end up hating myself because I'm a brown Pinay.

I remember feeling so clever that I was able to use what I learned in my PEP class. I also felt I was channeling my inner Ninang Dawn (Mabalon).

MOM: Yes, thank you for PEP!

Shocked and thrilled at the same time, I was so thankful that my child was being educated by amazing teachers in her PEP afterschool program. In many ways, PEP was my first baby...teaching the baby that I birthed how to live in this world that is oftentimes cruel and filled with all kinds of oppressions. But Mahalaya had PEP to ground herself, to teach her how to breathe in this socially toxic world.

MAHALAYA: (a couple of years later) : Can I have monster cupcakes with three eyes this year? And I'll make sure to give cupcakes to all

MAHALAYA & ALLYSON TINTIANGCO-CUBALES

of those who might have self-hatred so that I can teach them to take a bite out of oppression.

And they were purple ube cupcakes.

Dancing with Heart @ 7 years old

MOM: What do you dance with?

MAHALAYA: My heart.

MOM: Then why are you so sad?

Mahalaya danced since she was three years old and she always trusted her heart. Since her very first performance, I knew she had something special. Our ritual backstage always went beyond makeup, costumes, and warming up. It always includes a centering moment. A whisper in her ear, I would always ask, "What do you dance with?" and without a doubt, she always said, "My heart." But there was one time when her confidence was shot.

MAHALAYA: I'm never going to be good enough.

I saw all the girls at the competition, most them were taller than me, with good feet, turn-out, and flexible legs that kicked past their heads. And there I was, pigeon-toed-sickled feet with knobby knees, the kid who was the last one in class to be able to do the splits and pretty much smaller than everyone else. There was a time when I thought I really didn't have a chance because all I had was heart.

MOM: Why do you compare yourself to others?

MAHALAYA: I don't know. I'm just not as good as other girls.

Not too many people know this but there was a time when one of the

MAHALAYA & ALLYSON TINTIANGCO-CUBALES

girls that I danced with told me I was the worse one in class. She even pushed me to go to the back of line when we were going to do our across-the-floor combinations. I wanted to believe that she was just being mean, but it really stuck with me. This was combined with being told that did not having the natural skills needed to be a classical ballerina. This may all come as a surprise to people who only see the selected photos that my mom chooses to post on Facebook.

MOM: You are amazing and you dance with your heart.

I wasn't sure how to get her to believe in herself. I could see the tears running down her face and I was heartbroken.

MAHALAYA: But I'm not the best one. I mean, I won't win anyways.

MOM: But you move with your heart...

MAHALAYA: But it's not enough...

MOM: Enough for what?

MAHALAYA: I just don't know if I'm special.

MOM: Do you realize that your dancing has so much power? When the music starts, I can feel you breathe. From the moment that your body begins to move, I can see that you are beyond grace, it's pure joy. You tell stories and counterstories with your movement. You carry the legacy of your babaylan ancestors in your spirit. You mend soul wounds that have withstood many generations of trauma. You are a vessel of critical hope. Your dancing is medicine. Your dancing is healing.

MAHALAYA: Like when you listen to my heartbeat?

MOM: Dancing is breathing. Each movement is a breath. So, what do you dance with?

MAHALAYA & ALLYSON TINTIANGCO-CUBALES

Anytime before she gets on stage, I ask her this question. Her answer is as practiced as the dance itself.

MAHALAYA: My heart.

I never had a problem dancing with my heart. Without dancing with your heart, you're just doing blank moves. Even my commitment to improving my technique in dance, I do with my heart. My mom taught me from the very beginning that dancing isn't worth doing if I don't do it from the heart. Actually, she pretty much taught me to do everything with my heart.

Beating Hearts @ 12 years old

MOM: Why are you so calm?

This child organically lives out the meaning of her name, Mahal=Love and Malaya=Freedom.

MAHALAYA: I'm a pisces, I'm water. When the water is peaceful it's all nice and flowy, but when I get stressed out, there is a tsunami. There's no in between.

I'm not the only pisces in my family. I come from a matriarchy of fish beginning with my Lolas who are some of the strongest women that I know. They've swam oceans to ensure our family's survival. We, fish swim in schools. Schools that teach Kapwa, I am you and you are me. We, fish swim in schools that are cohesive and calm until we are being hunted or attacked.

MOM: What do you stress out about? Do you ever worry about fitting in?

I often ask Mahalaya questions about her social life. Every night we have conversations about our day where we share moments of fear

MAHALAYA & ALLYSON TINTIANGCO-CUBALES

and efforts of bravery.

MAHALAYA: What is the reason to fit in? We were all born to stand out, right? I mean we all have people who we admire and aspire to be like. Like in dance, there's people that I look up to and hope I can be as good as them one day but I don't want to be them, because I am me.

MOM: Then, what do you stress out about?

MAHALAYA: Big things, like, people are getting hunted and tortured.

MOM: What do you mean? Nightmares?

MAHALAYA: No, like real things that are happening in our world. Like inside my heart, I worry about my daddy. I worry about him walking on the street. Because people who look like him are getting killed everyday. I even worry about my cousins who are Black because we live in a nation that doesn't respect that #blacklivesmatter.

I remember watching a Black man get killed on Instagram by a police officer. I watched his girlfriend watch. I watched his daughter watch. This is the night that I won the National Junior Outstanding Dancer Award from NYCDA (New York Dance Alliance). My mom thought I couldn't sleep because of excitement of winning but really I couldn't sleep because I couldn't stop thinking about a the Black man that was killed. I couldn't sleep because of Kapwa.

MOM: Do you remember the man who was killed by a police who strangled him? He kept saying, "I can't breathe."

MAHALAYA: Yes, I remember you giving a presentation on it during a workshop for teachers at the Free Minds, Free People conference.

At this same conference, I did a dance called, "I See Fire" and the focus was on solidarity with the #blacklivesmatter movement.

MAHALAYA & ALLYSON TINTIANGCO-CUBALES

MOM: I can't sleep sometimes thinking about all the people whose right to breathe has been taken from them.

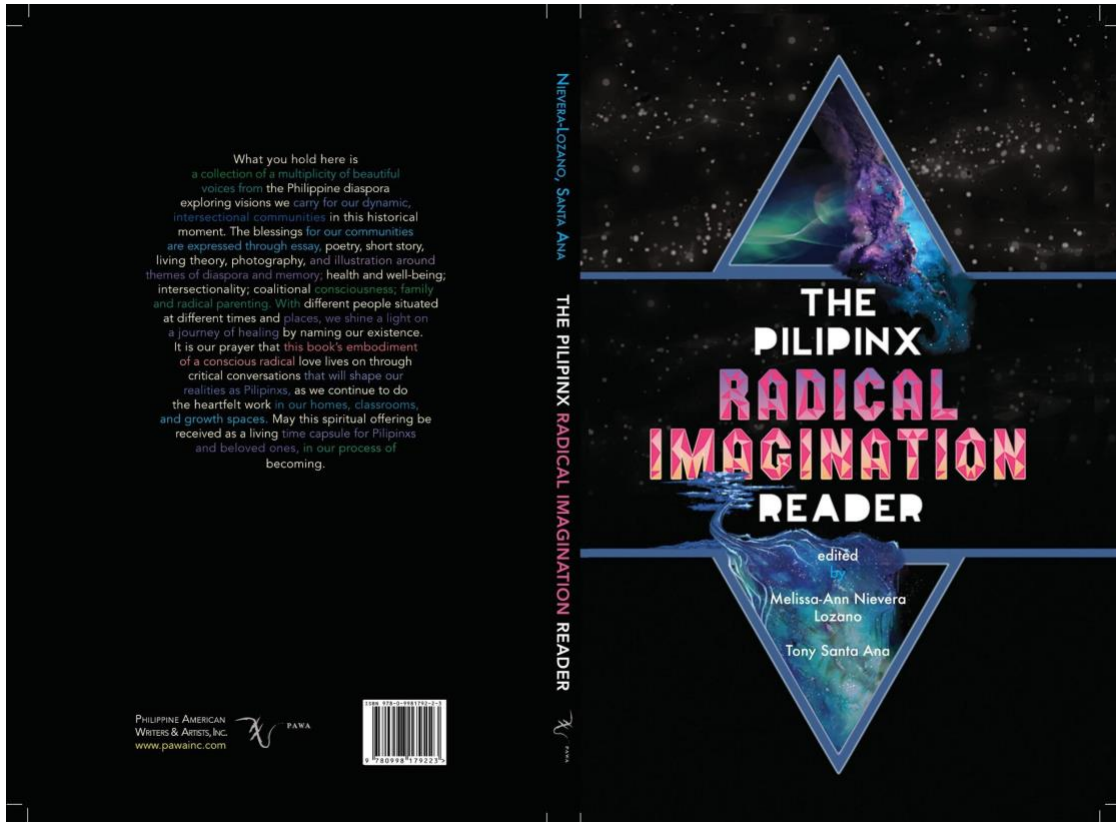
MAHALAYA: You and I are a lot alike then. I believe our purpose is to help people breathe again. You teach teachers how to breathe so they can teach their students to breathe.

MOM: And when you dance, your breath in each movement gives the world a chance to breathe again, to live again. But, we're both going to have to learn to sleep, to rest so that we can continue to pursue our purpose.

MAHALAYA: It's been a while mom, since you've listened to me breathe.

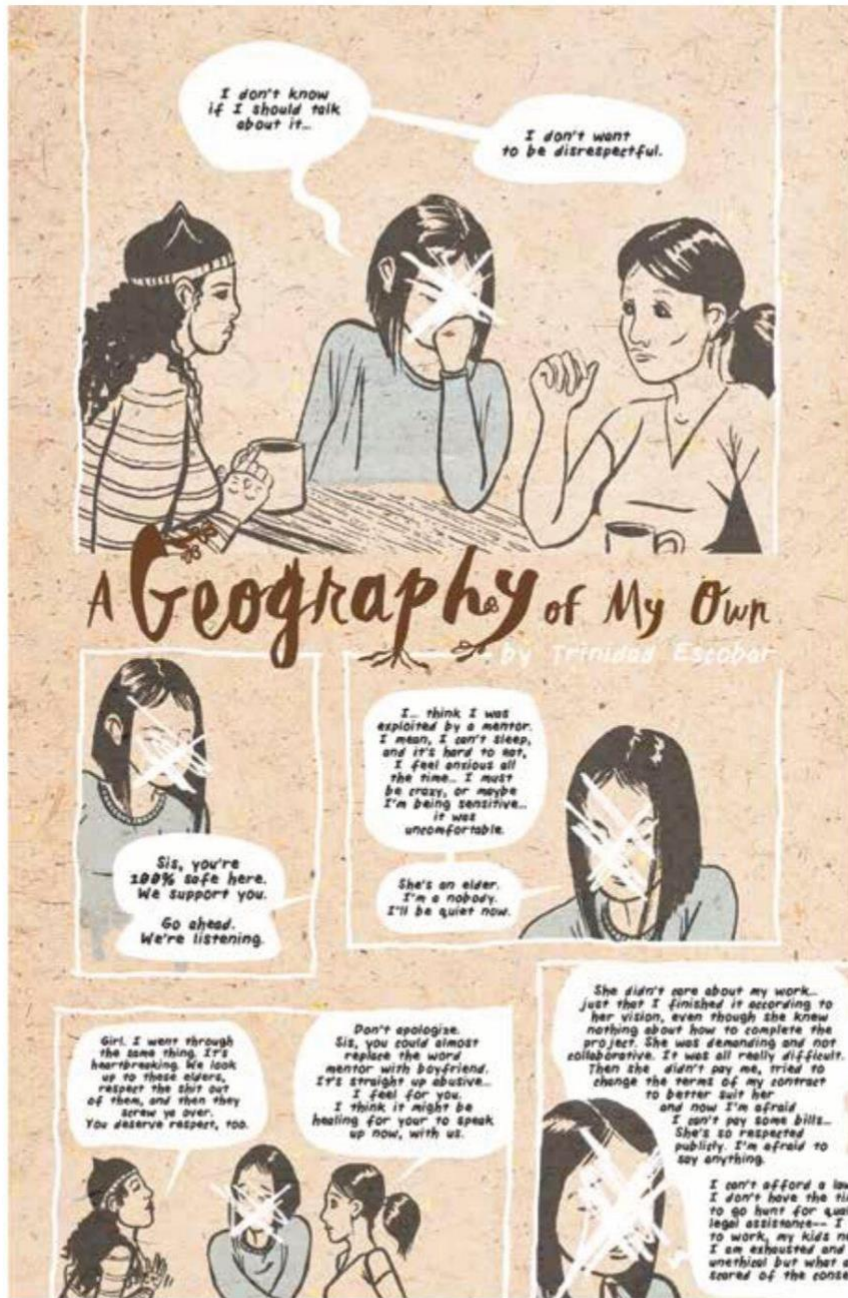
MOM: I think it's time again. I miss the music of your heartbeat.

Appendix D: Trinidad Escobar The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader Book Submission

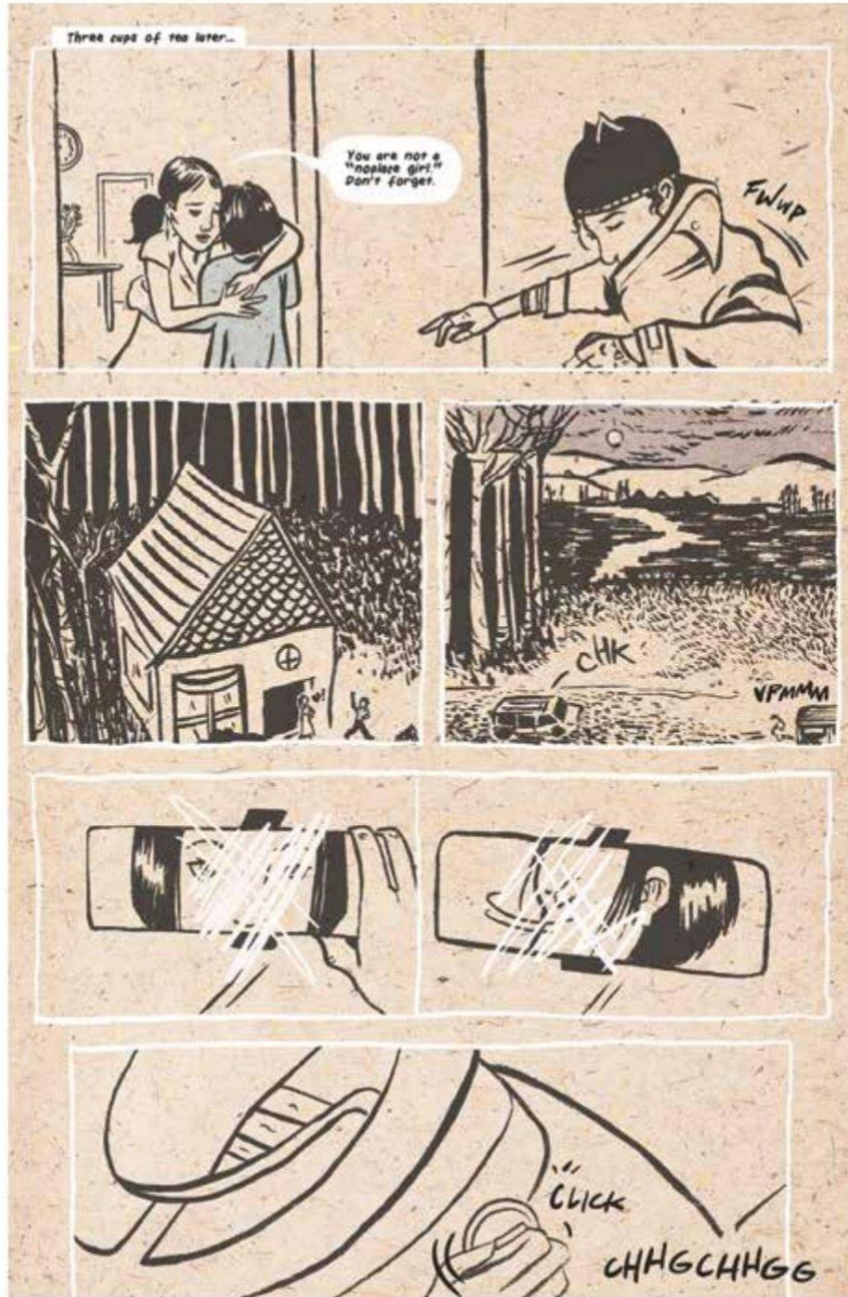


BOOK COVER ARTWORK BY
TRINIDAD ESCOBAR

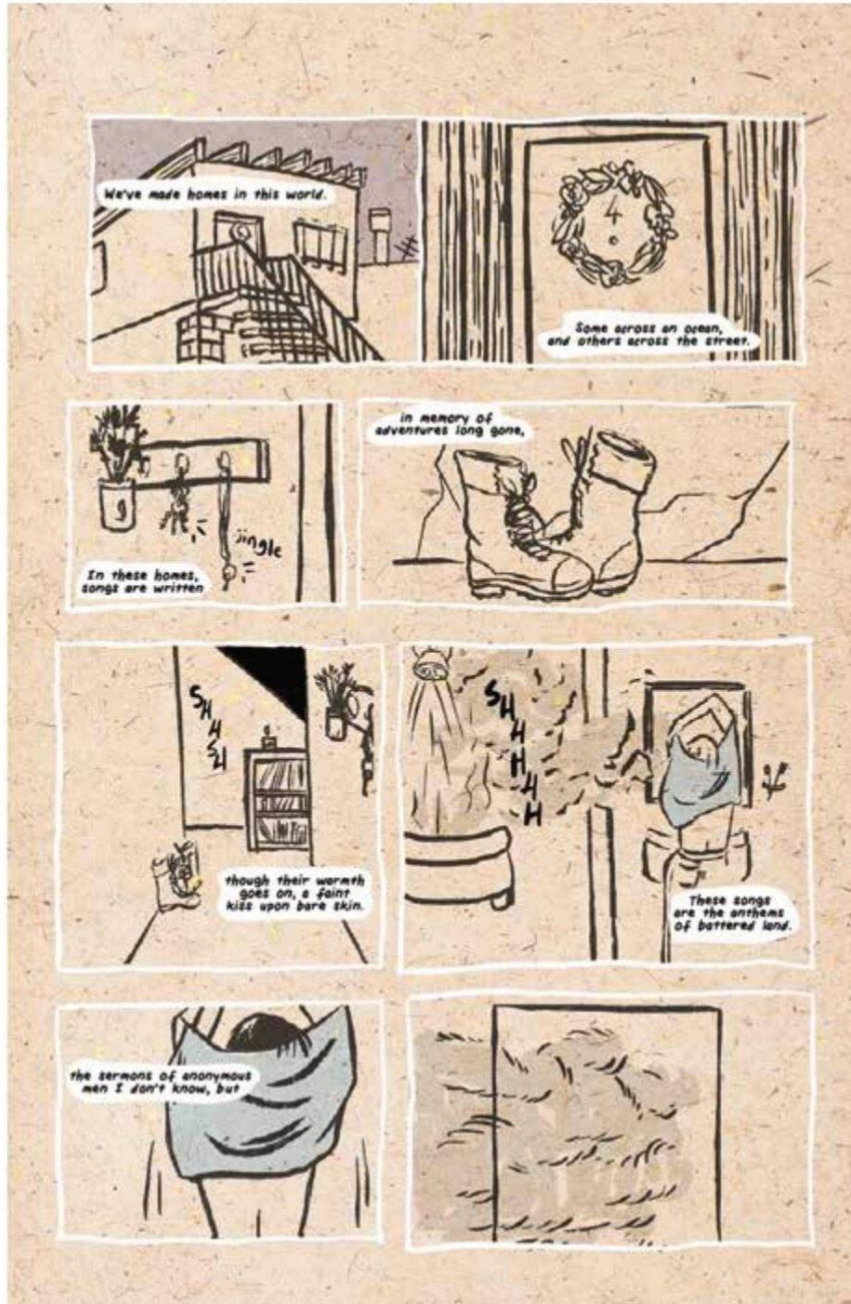
The spiritual and theoretical positioning of this book was quite important to me. I utilized triangles as sacred shapes that absorb and transmit power. The upward triangle contains the cosmos and symbolizes the energy that we send to it. The downward triangle contains the earth and its water; this symbolizes the energy that we draw from the heavens and return to each other (as well as the land itself). It is my belief that the transmission of knowledge isn't simply a series of synapses and chemical reactions within our bodies, but that knowledge itself is consciousness—alive and eager to see itself flourish. Therefore, so long as our imaginations are boundless, our ability to learn and teach each other is boundless. The type mimics the multifaceted nature of crystals. Like the inherent shape of crystals (what many indigenous cultures see as the conscious manifestation of the earth) our own identities, experiences, and imaginations as Pilipinx are multifaceted, reflecting and breaking apart light simultaneously. The colors found in the type are the colors of the Philippine flag but shifted. The color of peace and the color of war are, here, more representative of the new feminine era: wholeness instead of a world limited to binaries, wisdom over mere intelligence, compassion—instead of oppression—as the ultimate power.



TRINIDAD ESCOBAR



TRINIDAD ESCOBAR



TRINIDAD ESCOBAR



Appendix E: Keith Lara

The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader Book Submission

KEITH LARA

offer food or say, “feel at home”. We make everyone feel included and take initiative to be friendly and caring. Even when we didn’t have a lot of food for our own family, we always tried to give to those who needed it more. Our hungers were often satisfied by the contentment of our neighbors. Food feeds the body but acts of kindness feed the soul. We understand this and often rely on our acts of charity for sustenance to get us through the day. I’d like to call us to action. I’d like to call for the revitalization of our communities as they were in the Philippines. I’d like our commonalities to intersect and rekindle the fire that burned in our ancestors’ veins when they inhabited the Philippine Islands and masterfully carved a tradition that stands the test of time.

My vision for the future of the Filipino Community is that we all live life with some goal of improving our country. A lot of Filipinos immigrate from Home to the United States. A lot of them succeed in the U.S. attaining high paying jobs, and creating a stable life for themselves and their families. I’m so proud of our accomplishments here as immigrants because we are known as friendly and hardworking people. However, I challenge us to go well beyond that standard. I’d like us to return to our roots and remember where we came from. It’s important to continue growing as a person and carve a path for ourselves but that path should involve giving back to the home country that has nurtured us for so long. My vision for a strong, united Filipino community is where we try to fight the injustices of our country and take control of our rights and freedoms. Acts of charity are important on a local level between fellow neighbors and acquaintances but I imagine a future where we gather together to create charities, programs, and any other such thing that could expand our compassion on a national level. Secondly and very importantly, a future I want us to secure for future generations should involve protests and political activism to combat the prevalent corruption that divides our beautiful country and diminishes our reputation on the world stage. All this can be done by those living in the homeland, those who have immigrated in search of a better life, and especially by those who are born abroad in foreign countries. The future I dream of for our beautiful country is one that is born out of the toil and sense of nationalism by Filipinos everywhere. Please, with all the talents that you have been born

KEITH LARA

with, with all the wealth you may have amassed, please find a way to give back to our country. Understand that our life here on Earth is extremely limited. "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again" -Stephen Grellet. Fellow Filipinos, take pride in your roots, take pride in your accomplishments, take pride in each other, and be militant in your pursuit of our country's betterment.

Appendix F: Melissa-Ann Nievera-Lozano The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader Book Submission

INTRODUCTION

Who We Be

As Pilipina/o/xs¹, we continue to reclaim different parts of ourselves. It comes from our shared experiences as colonized bodies grappling with modernity and making sense of our his/herstories. When approached by Tony in the summer of 2014 with the idea of a collaborative book project, I didn't hesitate. It was a timely endeavor, to anthologize the many voices shifting the dialogue in our multifaceted community. At the time, I was moving towards finishing my dissertation exploring Pinay scholarship, while raising an infant and a toddler. Tony had returned from teaching English in Japan for some years, and was in the early stages of his own doctorate program in education where he was introduced to the work of Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (2003). The title itself inspired him to ask: "What is our radical imagination?" We credit Dr. Kelley and countless black thinkers, cultural leaders and artists, who continue to generate language and modes of expression for communities of people of color to name and understand their own historical context in the U.S. After all, it is black culture that in some way bonded us together.

We happened to meet four years prior at a national conference, and connected as Pin@ys² who came of age during the "cultural renaissance"

¹ The *F* and *P* (for the term *Filipino/Pilipino*) are interchangeable, employed by each writer or artist according to their own context. A recent movement during academic school year of 2015-2016 called for the use of the *x* – as in, Pinxy, Filipinx or Pilipinx – to be inclusive of people who identify as transgender, genderqueer or non-binary. Stretching this to *a/o/x* (as in Piplina/o/x) expresses a sort of bridging of these multiple and inclusive gender expressions.

² Pin@y was a term first created to make the geopolitical distinction between Filipina/os in the U.S. and their counterparts in the Philippines, though now used to refer to Filipina/os throughout the diaspora. The @ symbol came about in the 90s on college campuses to denote gender neutrality. I use the terms Pin@y, Filipina/o American and Filipino American interchangeably.

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of the 90s. The 90s was an era in which Filipinx children of immigrant parents particularly in urban areas throughout the U.S. witnessed, practiced, and embodied forms of black culture—hip hop, graffiti, dance, and spoken word—as tools to express their own processes of ethnic identity formation. For us, it was a time when young Pinays (like me having grown up in Southeast San Diego) and Pinoys (like Tony having grown up in the San Francisco Bay Area), explored shades of resistance modeled by black thinkers, writers, educators, and artists who were most visibly on the front lines of resisting systemic oppression. Talking back, speaking up, and pushing against the status quo our parents had so easily internalized through their own colonial education in the Philippines was a contentious deed for which we were vilified or even ignored. Tired of the pressure of skin lightening, marrying up, and chasing the “American Dream,” we found a language that embraced our brown-ness modeled in black culture. So this book project is a nod to the ways in which black radical thought has opened up Filipinx radical thought in these times.

Where Our Hearts Lie

As youngsters in the 90s, we saw a fight for Filipinotowns, for visibility against the backdrop of a black and white paradigm. Through our college years, the early 2000s birthed a war focused on “terror”, the great recession, and exacerbating income inequality. Taking on graduate school as we approached the 2010s, we celebrated the first black president, saw the overturning of DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act), and witnessed the rise of a new Black Power movement led by black trans and queer women. In this second decade of the new millennium, we had to consider: how are Pilipinxs actively making sense of their his/herstories? And more importantly, how can we document it?

In this evolution of being Pilipina/o/x American, in this historical moment, we ask: “*What are Pilipinxs in these times envisioning for their communities? What is your vision? What are you thinking about? On this continuing journey across our communities, what now lies in your radical imaginations?*” In essence, “*What does it mean to be a Filipino... now?*”

It is overwhelming to think of how to introduce the following

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incredible pieces because the pieces speak for themselves. Unpacking many layers to the dimensions of our human existence and experiences that shape how we go about in this world is a difficult endeavor to repeat without taking the learnings out of context from the original source. I am so grateful for the community that came to speak our truths. May you feel the labor of love put forth from our contributors. They are testimonies of healing.

The Way We Flow

The book flows through five sections which reflect non-linearly how one might come to their own radicalization. Chapter 1– “Cutting Out a Space: Diaspora & Memory” begins to unpack identity by offering meditations on the ways in which we (have had to) travel through the world, as well as travel through memory to see more clearly where/who we are. Chapter 2– “To Breathe: Health & Well Being” explores our human condition as we slide between joy and grief, feeding our bodies with the goodness of food and community along the way. Chapter 3 – “Suturing our Split Selves: On Intersectionality” reveals stories of navigating other powerful social locations we occupy alongside our Pilipinx-ness, such as being a person of mixed heritage, or a person exploring sexual orientation and non-normative, queer love. Chapter 4– “Cause a Stir: Coalitional Consciousness & Organizing” suggests ways to think about collectivizing towards uplifting the spirits and changing the material conditions of our people. Lastly, Chapter 5– “How to Make Home: Family and Radical Parenting” models practices of resistance with those we love in a shared effort to build a new world, as they say, “the revolution begins at home.”

The themes lay out the possibility of a narrative of radical healing in which a Pilipinx is jolted into (1) a memory of “home” or “the motherland,” thus launching their (2) healing journey—one that requires they (3) put back together the pieces of themselves which have been ripped apart through legacies of colonialism. (4) The healing may happen through forms of collectivizing our voices and making calls to action; and at some point, may ultimately bring us to create new critically informed ways of (5) raising our families.

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This book offers a weaving of stories from voices today we don't often hear. It's intended to add to the dialogue and build understandings that can bear out new relationships to the term Filipino American, Pin@y, Pilipina/o/x in this historical moment. We've never been a monolithic group or for that matter homogeneous. Our various ethnicities, regional backgrounds, relationships to religion, gender, politics, and class throw us into different corners. I think of Lola Eudocia³ and the many other Pinays on the margins, never given air time for their stories to be told in their voices. Indeed, we have something to say. Our heterogeneous, hybrid, multiple groups within are responding to this world by spelling out our conflicting realities. All that is echoing inside us. Our concerns, hopes, dreams, aches, pains, efforts and triumphs as a people are published daily via social media. We are rising and falling, and we are watching each other.

We are taking note of the multitude of expressions of: our queer love and our transphobia; our support for Black Lives Matter, and our anti-blackness; our holistic healing practices, and our right to bear arms. All of this, as we tumble through the daily spectacle of the Trump administration and the Duterte administration after eight straight years of hope with Obama. The tide is changing. Fast. It pushes a quality of radical thought markedly different than any other time before. So from the corner coffee shop to our living rooms to our classrooms, we are saying something. We are writing and creating with an urgency to push back on that which harms us, and with a promise to take care of ourselves. This is not a race. We will not run our spirits to the ground. We are working this shit out.

When Words Become Action

As you turn the pages of this reader, note that what is "radical" is up to you. It is a term with a hundred possibilities. Ultimately, the purpose of this reader is to stir conversation around the ever dynamic definition of who we are. It is you who identifies what needs more exploration and

³ Tizon, A. (2017, June). My Family's Slave. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved July 31, 2017, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/06/lolas-story/524490/>

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discussion: what is not said in this reader? What can be more deeply challenged or understood? What voices are not being included or honored? In here, our conversations emerge as we search for forms of wholeness, balance, justice, and love among us. We excavate truths about ourselves and our genealogies (of body, mind, and soul), birthing new language and ways of being that reflect this historical moment. We testify. Through memory and foresight. This book is a living, breathing time capsule capturing our fluidity in our process of becoming. May it honor and recognize our uniqueness as individuals in our commitment to connectedness. What is certain is that we are rising as critical beings: critical of history, critical of time, critical of space, and most importantly critical of ourselves. This book is made out of and made for our community: LOVE is the center and source. We wish you blessings as you read this book. If triggered, hold yourself tight. In the words of loving meditation: “May we live in this world with ease, happiness, and good health.”

Peace & Light,
Melissa-Ann Nievera-Lozano

Appendix G: Oscar Peñaranda
The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader Book Submission

A Reunion of Strangers

OSCAR PEÑARANDA

The U.S.-Philippines War and experience of the birth of Philippine Independence were still fresh in the minds of everyone when my father was born in 1904. In our hometown of Barugo, Leyte, my father's generation only remembers those days silently. My grandfather was a revolutionary leader who was reputedly the last of Aguinaldo's officers to lay down his arms. His son, my own father, never spoke about those days to me. I had to find out for myself how life was during the U.S.-Philippines war.

Silence was the source of many historical gaps, like the story of Philippine Independence, upon whose principles my lolo and many other Filipinos like him, fought so fiercely. As a writer and an educator, I have decided to break that silence.

Twenty years ago, Abe Ignacio, colleague, historian, author and librarian, called me from out of the blue and told me that he had just seen on eBay, a Filipino flag dated 1899 with the name "Peñaranda" written on it. He thought that was my lolo's flag, captured by the Americans during his battles against them, and that I should bid for it before someone else got it. I had never heard of this flag or any stories related to it from my lolo.

Last year in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental, this flag and I had a rendezvous with destiny.

The gathering, of course, was not planned at all. We—Nonoy del Prado, the hotel owner; Edo and Annabelle Adriano; Jose Manuel "Dong" Villegas; Alexander Bautista Bayot France; and I—arrived in front

OSCAR PEÑARANDA

of the Florentina Hotel of Dumaguete within five minutes of each other. I had met Alex France 48 hours earlier, Dong not at all, Annabelle and Edo last year via text by a mutual friend Krip Yuson, and Nonoy, was the kind of person you thought you had met before but were not quite sure. Alex had never met any of them.

Alex, a Filipino martial arts master and teacher, had moved to nearby Sibulan three years earlier. A Caviteño by origin, he had lived in the US almost all his life and had come to retire there although he had no apparent link to the area. I came to see about an appointment in Silliman University. Like Alex, I am a student and advocate of Filipino martial arts. Nonoy had taken up some form of martial arts in his youth and was very interested in taking it up again, along with his son, Ramon, who had taken the “stick” fighting arts but stopped because of dengue fever and had been looking for a way to get back into it. Right away, father and son enrolled themselves in a private class with Alex.

In the midst of our conversation, I mentioned how about 20 years ago, I missed a bid on a certain invaluable family item on eBay, then a new on-line auction site, because of my incompetence with computers. And I paid a heavy price for that shortcoming. It never really left my mind. The item was a Filipino flag dated 1899 with the name *Peñaranda* handwritten on it, an obvious item identifier by whoever retrieved the flag. My heart had jumped upon seeing the item.

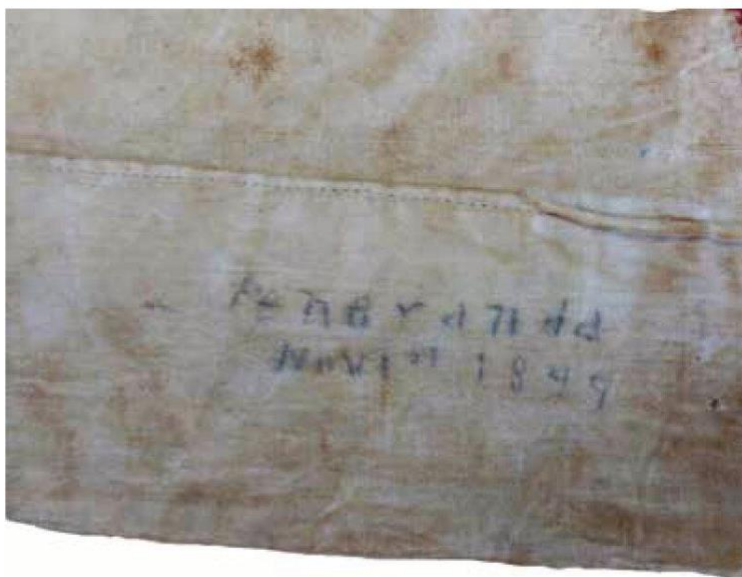
My grandfather, Florentino Peñaranda (Florentino is also my father’s name and my middle name) had fought the U.S. fiercely for Philippine Independence at the turn of the 20th century and was reputedly the last officer of Aguinaldo’s regular army to surrender, a year and a half after Aguinaldo himself, after Lukban, after Mojica, and after Malvar. But alas, not knowing how to bid on eBay, I could not procure his flag, a symbol of his legacy. I, however, wrote the seller and the eBay people to tell whoever had bought the flag that I am the grandson of Peñaranda, and that my family would be forever grateful if the buyer would contact me. I got no response.

As mentioned, I am also an educator in the U.S. When one of my fellow educators found out about my going to Dumaguete, he suggested that I contact his friend Alexander Bautista Bayot France. The name rang a bell. The previous year, in Dumaguete when I met Edo and Annabelle,

OSCAR PEÑARANDA



The full flag right side up with the red on top, symbolizing war. The author and his relatives are still trying to decipher what the symbol in the middle means.



Close-up of handwritten name "Peñaranda" with date "Nov 1st 1899."

(PHOTOS BY I. VER)

OSCAR PEÑARANDA

I had walked along the Boulevard one Sunday morning and was eating at the Bethel Hotel when I saw a group of stick-fighters practicing by the tall trees along the Boulevard. I approached them, and the instructor said that his name was Leonardo de la Luna. He told me that a colleague of his was also from the States, like me, but was now living in the Dumaguete area, one Alexander Bautista Bayot France. He gave me his card.

Alex picked me up from the Dumaguete airport. When we were having a late lunch, he said he knew Leonardo quite well and that he also wanted to talk about another topic. It was then that he broached a question that caught me off-guard. "What do you know about the Peñaranda family?" he asked. I said I knew about our private family history and my lolo's role in the fight for independence, though it was hardly in any history books.

I thought Alex was interested in a business proposal of some sort. He said, "I know about your lolo." How? "I believe I have your grandfather's flag. I was the one who outbid everybody to get his flag on eBay." I was floored. A mountain was lifted off my long-burdened heart.

"I put all my month's salary (without telling my wife, of course) to make sure that I outbid all those war memorabilia collectors," Alex said. "When I was bidding for that flag, I was thinking that since the Americans had taken that flag from the Filipinos, I was going to liberate it from its American captors." He also said that an acquaintance who had owed him a longstanding debt of a thousand dollars had, from out of the blue, paid him within a week of this purchase.

I told Alex that one of my missions in the Philippines was to put up a plaque in the typhoon-ravaged Baybay Municipal Building where my lolo brought his people to surrender on June 19, the day after his 25th birthday, and where he made his final and gallant speech as the last holdout of that gruesome war. My friend Joe Robles, another Fil-Am now retired in Baybay, was going to help me, I told Alex. "I know Joe quite well," he said. Good man." Another surprise. I didn't realize he knew Joe. "When you and your family get that plaque built, it would be my honor to give that flag to your family. For then, at long last, it would have found its true home."

By the time we meandered our separate ways home past midnight, Alex and I felt like old friends. We probably were. That is, our souls were like flitting butterflies hovering around our destinies before we physically met.

OSCAR PEÑARANDA

But it took Dumaguete to introduce all of us to each other and to discover our past lives.

When I got back to the States, Alex and I did not communicate for about a month. He had told me that when I returned to San Francisco, he will tell his grandson in Vallejo my contact numbers and he can arrange with me how to let me have the flag. I met the grandson Isiah on Sutter St. in a college he was attending. He came out and with a bow, handed me the flag encased in a triangular container with a plastic glass window. The flag was visible but it was all folded. I did not open the case until it was time to take a picture of it for this article.

The day I got it, I carried the encased banner with me without missing the grand irony of it all: that this same Philippine flag captured by U.S. soldiers who had embarked from this city of San Francisco to the battlefields of the Philippines to fight the Filipinos whose leader's grandson now walk these same streets with the same flag retrieved and recovered from U.S. possession and history.

**Appendix H: Joseph Allen Ruanto-Ramirez
The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader Book Submission**

**The Filipino/Pilipina/Pin@y/Pinxy (American)
Aswang: Imagining Identity in Diaspora**

JOSEPH ALLEN RUANTO-RAMIREZ

*MA, PhD student in Cultural Studies – American Studies,
Claremont Graduate University*

T*o Love as Aswang* (2015) became a momentous moment for many Pilipinx American youths as it combines the poetic language of Barbara Jane Reyes and the imaginary of what an Aswang (also spelled as Asuwang) is or are. Though many researchers have contested what exactly is an Aswang, regional and ethnic definitions throughout the Bisayas and Luzon has always played it in the minds and hearts of many Pilipinx and even Pilipinx Americans. The image of an Aswang ranges from a demon-like woman severed from the waste with bat wings to a shape-shifting ghoul that tricks its prey. Aswang (pl) is never just one thing, one identity, or one definition. It is not all this yet all of this, something more yet something unknown. It straddles between the imaginary and the reality, the historical and the contemporary, the natural and the spiritual. The Aswang is complex. It is much, much more than what can be written in this paper or in any text, yet also unexplainable through oral traditions and artistic expressions. Here, I briefly argue that the Aswang is more than what we think, yet nothing at the same time.

The term Aswang came from the Sanskrit word for Asura which means “demon.” Various accounts and regional descriptions of the Aswang through Central and Northern Philippines makes “it” undefinable yet each ethnic group and region has a definite description of it. Aswang (pl) has been tied to ancient women priestesses and shamans who were cut from

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the waist up by the Spanish and therefore their spirits haunts the living (Mananangal). Another look at Aswang is through the demon child Tiyanak who sucks the fetus from the woman's body resulting in miscarriages or the Tikbalang, a demon with the upper body of a horse and legs of a man. Aswang seems to take a form of something that is hybrid—the living dead, an animal/human fusion, and a non-human who needs the essence/soul/blood of the living. They do so not necessarily to kill, but to survive, to exist, to continue living, to make sure their relevance (regardless of how demonic or fearful they may be) is still important. So what then is an Aswang and how does it relate to Philippine–America? Can I argue that Pilipinx Americans are exactly that, also less, yet a bit more? Are Pilipinx Americans Aswang (pl)?

I play with the Post-Humanist (sometimes read as “Un-Human” Studies”) theories and look at how these monsters, demons, figments of our imaginations are actually more than that; it is actually a manifestation of us. The Aswang, in the form of the Mananangal, was severed from the waist; her lower body wanders the land as her upper body flies through the air searching for her prey. She was the healer, the cultural bearer, the leader, the educated, the astronomer, the artist that the Spaniards and Catholicism wished to silence, oppress, and erase. She was colonized and split in half, one bound to the earth, the other travelled and transverse. She is killed by what is considered pure, holy, and, by extension, civilized. The Pilipinx American is also severed—cut from the spirit and the mind, where they long to know the past, the precolonial, the indigenous while living in the land of the colonizer. They are colonized; their tongues severed just enough to not speak with other Aswang (pl), but can still mutter enough to sound like one. They straddle multiple realms and lands, across waters and skies, trying to look for their bottom half that is still attached to the land their ancestors came from, one day hoping to stand completely as their ancestors did (Shohat, 2006).

Like the Tiyanak, the Pilipinx American Aswang is infantilized—seen as a child that needs to be educated, civilized, Americanized. It longs to connect to the bodies that know what life is, what being Pilipinx means. They absorb the works of authors and scholars that has written about them, their communities, their histories, their identities.

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They mimic the dances from the Philippines and perform them as a way to connect to their semi-lost identities. They devour anything and everything that may would give them a sense of belonging and a sense of self. They are childlike not because they are immature or uneducated, but because, sometimes, being marked as an adult means that these longings are expected to be hobbies rather than finding one self. "Adult" means they are marked to be "mature" and therefore these imaginings of the yester-life and longing for pre-colonial should be let go to make way for fiscal and familial success. To marry and be an adult means to grow up, and therefore, imagining becomes a hobby that can only be invoked on free time.

Like the Tikbalang, it is a hybrid of the natural and unnatural, of human and animal, of imaginary and reality, a hybrid, a chimera (Haraway, 1991). They live in mountains and tall trees, hiding from others knowing that if they reveal themselves, they will be feared and destroyed. Yet can you really kill a Tikbalang? It is said that when it rains while the sun is out, a Tikbalang is born. A Tikbalang is born from the mixing and existence of two unnatural (yet very natural) events. The Pilipinx American exists as a child of the indigenous and the colonizer, of the East and the West, of life and the bringer of "death." Both the Tiyanak and the Tikbalang are "dead," not because they are physically dead, but because they are seen as non-human. Only humans are marked for "life," to exist, to continue, they are marked for "death" because their whole existence draws fear from the living and their bodies are needed to be disposed as a means to purify the living's reality (Mbembe, 2003).

I argued that the Aswang (pl) are dead, but not just because they are demons or ghouls, but because they are bound to death and will continue living knowing they are marked as dead (Byrd, 2011). The Pilipinx American Aswang IS dead. They are constantly "killed," bound to a system that marks them as unnarrated bodies, numbers and data for statistics, and consumed into a system that washes away their "brownness" and placing them into a Model Minority caste that will one day let go of their cultural baggage and become American. They continue living and find themselves in a system that has marked them as bodies (and a community) that are disposable. Like the Mananangal, their entrails still exist. These entrails

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are the physical manifestations of what the subject needs to survive, to live, and without them, the subject “dies” or is minimized. These entrails are not just the Manananggal’s liver and intestines, but are also the Pilipinx Aswang’s cultural attire, broken language of their mother tongue, their food, the garlic smell of their house on a weekend morning’s breakfast. They are in museums as “native artifacts,” in history books that consist a couple of lines, and a corridor between the Pacific and the rest of Asia in a ride at Disneyland. Small manifestations of their existence, bound to a particular imagination that wishes to become a reality. They are marked for “death” because their very existence must be erased or minimized, never completely whole, never complete themselves. Holy water and crosses subdues them from quenching their thirst and filling their hunger to find themselves, to come out of hiding, to be themselves with everyone else being themselves. Like ghosts, these ghouls haunt every place they go to. Always saying their name, demanding to be seen, demanding their stories to be told, demanding to exist. Like ghosts, the Pilipinx American Aswang only wants justice in their names, their stories to be written down so others may know who they are, and their memories passed down. The Pilipinx American Aswang haunts every place they go to showing their existence with bumper stickers on their cars, tshirts, baseball hats, and tattoos. Their existence is never fully themselves as they always search for their true identity and its meaning (Gordon, 2008). The Pilipinx American Aswang is made up, yet real at the same time. It is a creation of the personal and communal, the cultural and the political, the imagined and the lived realities. They are both spatial and temporal—connected to land and through time. Manifested through tangible objects and a hybrid of indigenous and non-indigenous. It is exactly more than what can be explained on this paper. The Pilipinx American Aswang is who ever is reading this article and is also the writer—trying to find meaning and communicating with other Aswang (pl) through a language, a tongue that has been severed and speaks in other tongues, a language that is not theirs. The Pinxy Aswang leaves their mark in this book, hoping one day to have a discussion with other Aswang (pl) even though their existence means they must feed off each other. The Aswang is dead and lives in a violent world haunting, feeding, existing...all this and more, but still incomplete.

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Note: I use (pl) to denote plurality rather than adding an “s” as a norm in English lexicons.

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Appendix I: Leah Sicat
The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader Book Submission

Sinangag and Tostones in West Harlem

LEAH K. SICAT

When I think of home, I think of cha-cha music, lumpia, and pancit at family parties in California and pinsan sleepovers and sinangag brunches around the dining table the following morning. Swaying to the rhythm of bachata music at the beginners dance class one Friday night brought all those memories back to me as the dance instructor asked the students to note how “tropical-y” and slow the music sounded. At first, I struggled with why bachata brought a rush of memories in that brief moment listening for the beat. The breezy, relaxing tempo took me back to my years living in West Harlem fresh out of college, grappling with the absurdity and raw resilience of diaspora and shared histories and knowledges.

During late weekday afternoons, with the crowded subway stations and everyday commuters crammed into a single car, I used to look forward to transferring from the A train to the Uptown 1 train headed home to West Harlem. When Jay-Z mentions Dominicanos, Harlem, Broadway, and that McDonald’s, I know which neighborhood he’s talking about. Not to imply this particular place became familiar beyond measure, there was something unintentionally residual and simultaneously foreign about how people of diaspora, embodiments of colonial legacies and a U.S. imperial present, coincide and respond amidst colliding factors that bring us together. New York City, after the invasion of Iraq and before the 2008 market crash, was an interesting time and place. I had just moved there from California as a new young teacher, grappling with how my class, gender, ethnicity, compounded migration, and heritage represented

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gentrification in the neighborhood with the cheapest possible apartment that I could afford.

One afternoon visiting a cafe in my neighborhood, a young waiter who had been conversing with me leaned in and asked how come some Filipinos have Spanish last names. I responded, “The same reason you do.” He paused, looked bewildered for a moment, and nodded. That particular instance stays with me precisely because asking questions is necessary and so is an understanding of history. What would we do without the understanding and questioning of what has happened? Or, rather, what can we do without an understanding of shared histories and the active participation of those who share it with us? Even when we don’t immediately see shared connections and valuable differences, at what point can our shared experiences, histories, and intergenerational traumas shape possibilities for conversations and paths moving forward?

I don’t have any answers. Just questions and lots of reading to do. Hopefully, not alone. And importantly, not just for my own benefit. There will be memories and associations that just don’t seem to make sense but unexpectedly come up anyway particularly while hearing cha-cha and bachata and eating tostones, arroz con gandules, lumpia, and pancit canton.

Waking up to the sounds of bachata music and seeing vendors sell jicama and plantains in cardboard boxes on the street is the background for how I learned to cook Filipino food. New York City isn’t the city where I grew up, but it’s the place where I grew. Living on my own for the first time, I learned to appreciate cafe con leche from the corner bodega for my early morning commute and fried cheese and mangu for an occasional weekend breakfast. I also learned how far creativity, with an attempt for integrity, could go and how delicious it could be.

Audre Lorde notes: “Survival isn’t some theory operating in a vacuum. It’s a matter of my everyday living and making decisions.” Survival happens everyday in classrooms, in the streets, and in the kitchen. When I think of how I learned to cook, my memory goes back to the times of cooking in my tiny West Harlem apartment. Figuring out over that little stove how to fry lumpia—the way my parents did—and tostones—like the ones I got down the block—in the same sizzling hot oil. Lumpia, the crunchy hand-held rolled envelopes of tender chicken and vegetables. Tostones,

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the green platanos sold on the city sidewalks of my predominantly Dominican neighborhood that I learned how to fry and smash and fry again. Rich with flavor, they perfectly complimented sinangag, the garlic fried rice that I learned to love. Steak, sinangag, and tostones became my favorite dish to cook when friends visited. It was my way of sharing the foods I enjoyed out of the ingredients that were available. They were my form of transnational cooking, survival, and nourishment.

This reflection on cooking is not about mere consumption. It's not about merely ingesting what can be bought, but how to create, cook up, or remix circumstances that we encounter and how to sustain ourselves and each other. How do we build within and across collective struggles against the legacies of colonialism and imperialism? How do we protest or perpetuate patriarchy, white supremacy, and imperialism in our everyday lives? At what point do certain differences become trivial? And, let's not forget about amplifying the voices of those most impacted. At the same time, what are the creative and critical combinations we cook up for sustenance, nourishment, and ongoing education?

Appendix J: Rovielle Escalano Yamaki
The Pilipinx Radical Imagination Reader Book Submission

Home

ROVIELLE YAMAKI

Childhood was an array of colourful memories like jeepneys, green mangoes on sticks, extended families, bbq-smelling street food, warm tropical nights and organized chaos. That was the Philippines for me. The familiarity of it was home.

Around the age of nine in 1991 my family and I immigrated to Australia, the continent known as ‘Down Under’. The twist of coming from a mono-cultured country to a multicultural city set the course of my search to *find my truth*. I was very confused initially.

The Escalante family settled in the clean, quiet suburbs of orderly Melbourne. This city is renowned to have four seasons in a day. How true! The pale-skinned faces of people with strange-coloured eyes made me feel awkward and in wonder. School years exposed to me that though I could fit in within a very Anglo-Saxon world, I still stood out.

Thank goodness for my Filipina genes that can adapt, with humour and food, when faced with any challenge. The Australian accent came naturally and long before I knew it, I would mutter, “No worries, mate!”, “She’ll be right!” and “G’day”. Tagalog was shared at home with my parents but I reverted to English with my siblings Paolo and Danielle. Somehow, this suited us. Being bilingual empowered me. By the time I graduated from Melbourne University my mind thought Aussie.

I pursued a career in Japan, which brought yet again another culture shock. Written Japanese looked nothing like alphabet letters. Locals greeted each other with a bow and shoes were taken off inside every home, in schools and even at offices. Traditional tea shops steamed with delectable

ROVIELLE YAMAKI

aromas, desserts were served like elegant art and gardens immaculately manicured. It was a country of organisation in the highest order.

The joke was I looked Asian enough to blend in, but was still considered a complete stranger. To add confusion to my self-esteem, when I visited the Philippines and spoke Tagalog, my Aussie twang set me apart from the rest of my family.

What a conundrum!

So I took a good look at myself and asked the question instead... "If home is nowhere and everywhere, how do I make the most of it?"

Together, with my Japanese husband, Kentaro and I concocted a radical lifestyle change from city to countryside. In the warmer climate of the Sunshine Coast, in a tiny nestled paradise called Crystal Waters Ecovillage, we learned how to quieten our minds, grow our self-confidence and re-discover *self-worthiness*.

Through networking systems like 'Willing Workers On Organic Farms', Permaculture communities and house-sitting which, depended on trusting 'strangers' and taking a leap of faith, a whole new world emerged. We ate fresh vegetables and fruits from lush gardens, awakened to the songs of birds, gazed at grazing kangaroos and slept to the sound of frogs, crickets and under the serenity of the tender moon. And if during the day the sun got sweltering hot, we dipped in a creek flowing with cool pristine water. Eventually, we gained the trust of the community and forged friendships. Then, we built a small farm where we grew and supplied from, edamame beans and our own miso paste. Nature Kids was a program we facilitated before finally extending ourselves by serving locals and tourists wholesome food from our first family-run business called, 'Soul about Sushi' in the heart of our township. And, a very special little person Cocomi Elle, our one-year old daughter, decided to join us for the ride!

Philippines, Japan, Australia... What a world richly infused with traditions, values, and expressions. I am forever grateful to Rolando and Maria Violeta, my parents who were brave enough to step into *the beyond* to a land of many chances for success. The interesting part is that, from my life's adventure of intertwined confusion and cultivation, I have come to realize that Home is what you *create* it to be.

ROVIELLE YAMAKI



From left—daughter Cocomi Elle (6 months), Rovielle & husband Kentaro at their SOUL ABOUT SUSHI kiosk in the heart of Maleny town, in Australia.