

The following papers by Pahinga Collective, Magsumbol, Jopanda & Garcia, Ong, and Colting-Stol were part of the Zoom panel “Collective Care as a Praxis of Change in the Filipino Diaspora” which was chaired by Valerie Francisco-Menchavez (San Francisco State University).

A CALL TO REST: PAHINGA AS RESISTANCE AND REFUSAL

Conely de Leon with Pahinga Collective

Foreword

We are a small and newly formed collective of Filipina/x/o faculty, graduate students, community organizers, and service providers representing migrant, queer, and feminist grassroots organizations in Tkaronto. Our desire to form the Pahinga Collective stemmed from an urgent need to create a space that was by us and for us, a space where we could imagine otherwise. To us, pahinga encompasses many things. It means rest as much as it means stillness, ease, pause, reflection, and slowing down. We approached our panel with the intention of building an emergent community praxis centered on collective care and healing justice. Through digital kwentuhan (talk story), we hoped to capture our initial reflections on what it meant to us to enact a politics of refusal, to embody rest as a form of resistance, and to think more capaciously about collective care and intergenerational healing in the wake of COVID-19. We ask, how might such a framework sustain us - sustain our community-, movement-, and solidarity-building efforts? Importantly, our creative process has involved conversations around safety, trust, accessibility, and community. We share our multimodal approach with you - our digital kwentuhan, our songs, our poetry, our photographs of loved ones, as well as accompanying transcripts, learning community resource list, and collaborative Spotify playlist - as an invitation to create with us, and above all, as a call to rest.

Ben & Ben, Magpahinga

Chorus

Dito ka lang sa'kin magpahinga muna

Lalabanan din mga dambuhalang

'Di maubos na problema

Malapit na, pero 'di rin kasalanang

Magpahinga

Just stay here with me, rest for a while

We will fight them too

All these giant never-ending problems

We're almost there

But there's nothing wrong with resting

In the wake of COVID-19, intensified gendered and racialized violence, a growing need for mental health resources and supports for our communities, and an overwhelming sense of unrest, we welcomed the release of 9-piece OPM¹ band, Ben & Ben's² *Magpahinga*, a song that spoke to our collective need for rest. We were inspired to pay closer attention to this message, to listen more deeply. It is this song, and the lyric video that accompanies it, that opens our panel presentation.



Figure 1. *Magpahinga: Official Lyric Video*. (Music video by Ben & Ben. Presentation screenshot by the Pahinga Collective, April 16, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4GJo2pZqWc>).

1. Original Pilipino Music.

2. Ben & Ben, accessed April 2022, <https://www.benandbenmusic.com/>

Opening Remarks

Mau: We are a small and newly formed collective of Filipina/x/o³ faculty, graduate students, community organizers, and service providers representing migrant, queer, and feminist grassroots organizations in Tkaronto.⁴

Mycah: We join you virtually from our present location in Michi-Saagii Nishinaabeg Akiing (Mississauga Territory, [Treaty 13, 1805](#)),⁵ the traditional shared gathering grounds with Onkwehonwe through the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, and the historical home of the Wendat Nation.

Jhona: Some of us are affiliated with X University⁶ through the Department of Sociology, the Department of Social Work, and the MA Program in Immigration and “Settlement” Studies.

Con: In solidarity with Indigenous students, faculty, and staff, we reaffirm our commitment to removing the university’s namesake from our collective work, our CVs, our professional communications, our email signatures, our syllabi, and replace it with an “X”..

Jann: ...Enacting a collective refusal guided by Quechua scholar, Sandy Grande’s call to “refuse the university [as] the arm of the [white] settler state”⁷ which builds on Kahnawà:ke scholar, Audra Simpson’s broader work on refusal (2014).⁸

3. We use the term Filipina/x/o to acknowledge the multitudes of gender identities that the members of the collective identify with, i.e., as Filipino, Filipina, and Filipinx. For a more comprehensive discussion of the use of *Filipina/x/o*, see Kay Ulanday Barrett, Karen Buenavista Hanna, and Anang Palomar, “In defense of the X: Centering queer, trans, and non-binary Pilipina/x/os, queer vernacular, and the politics of naming,” *Alon: Journal for Filipinx American and Diasporic Studies*, no. 1(2).

4. Ange Loft writes: “Toronto/Tkaronto/ Aterón:to /Tsi Tkaóron:to roughly translates from Mohawk to *over there is the place of the submerged tree or trees in the water*. The word has been variously translated to *abundance* or a *place of plenty* in Wendat, then attributed to mean the meeting place.”

Ange Loft, “Remember Like We Do,” in *Indigenous Toronto: Stories that Carry this Place*, eds. Denise Bolduc, M. Gordon-Corbiere, R. Tabobondung, and B. Wright-McLeod (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2021), 21.

5. [Treaty 13, 1805 on Native Land Digital](#).

6. Officially renamed Toronto Metropolitan University. For more information on this historic name change, please see “[Introducing X University: An Open Letter to the Community from Indigenous Students](#)” and “[Wreckonciliation: Indigenous Students fighting for social justice & human rights @ X University](#).” See also, the “[Standing Strong \(Mash Koh Wee Kah Pooh Win\) Task Force Report and Recommendations](#)” and the “[Next Chapter Action Plan](#).”

7. Sandy Grande, “Refusing the University,” in *Toward What Justice?: Describing Diverse Dreams of Justice Education*, eds. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (New York: Routledge, 2018), 47-66.

8. Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

Jo: As Professor Anne Spice (Tlingit) writes, “[H]istorically, Indigenous people have signed with an ‘X’ under conditions that do not fully recognize or honour Indigenous lives. It is a sign of assent under duress.”⁹

Marking the Occasion: Our First Conference as the Pahinga Collective

Mau: This is an important moment in that this is the first time we are presenting together as the Pahinga Collective.¹⁰

Jann: For some of us, this is our first conference.

Jhona: For all of us, this is our first CFSC-organized panel at the Association for Asian American Studies Annual Conference.

Mycah: We have experienced much harm in classrooms, conference spaces, meetings, hallways of white supremacist institutions. These violent and extractive spaces are not the spaces we want to pour our energy into.

Con: *But this space, with all of you today, is.*

Mau: We wish to participate in virtual gatherings that nourish and strengthen our relationships with one another, that are capacious in visioning, and attentive to the ways in which our social justice work is inextricably linked.

An Invitation

Jo: Our intentions in preparing for this panel began with an invitation to consider the following: How can we be more intentional about how we show up for ourselves and each other? What does *pahinga* mean to you? How might we conceptualize *pahinga* as a form of resistance? How might such a framework help us sustain our community- movement-solidarity-building efforts?

Mycah: We have gathered and collaborated, virtually using a number of platforms, including Zoom, WhatsApp, Spotify, and Google docs. In each of these spaces, we have attempted to make room for our collective healing, our collective breath, that *hingang malalim*.

9. Anne Spice, “As an Indigenous professor, Egerton Ryerson’s name haunts me,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 11, 2021. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-as-an-indigenous-professor-egerton-ryersons-name-haunts-me/>

10. To us, *pahinga* means rest, pause, breath, stillness, ease, slowing down, *dahan dahan lang*.



Figure 2. *Our lolas are here with us* (presentation screenshot by the Pahinga Collective: *our lolas are here with us*, April 16, 2022).

Jhona: What if we brought our plants and our pets into this space? Our salabat,¹¹ our malunggay tea, our blankets? What if we incorporated ASMR (Auto Sensory Meridian Response)?

Mau: What could such a layered and multi-sensorial experience evoke? How could it support our collective healing? How might it replenish, restore, and reanimate us so that we can continue the work that is most meaningful to us all?

Learning as We Gather

Con: It has taken time for us to arrive at this point of articulation. It has taken time to ease into a creative process that made sense for all of us.

Jann: Arriving at *pahinga* required us to draw on our collective wisdom. It meant sharing the difficulties we were going through as the seasons changed—as the Fall 2021 semester ended and the Winter 2022 semester had begun.

11. *Salabat* is a hot ginger tea, often consumed to fight colds or fevers, nausea, indigestion, etc.

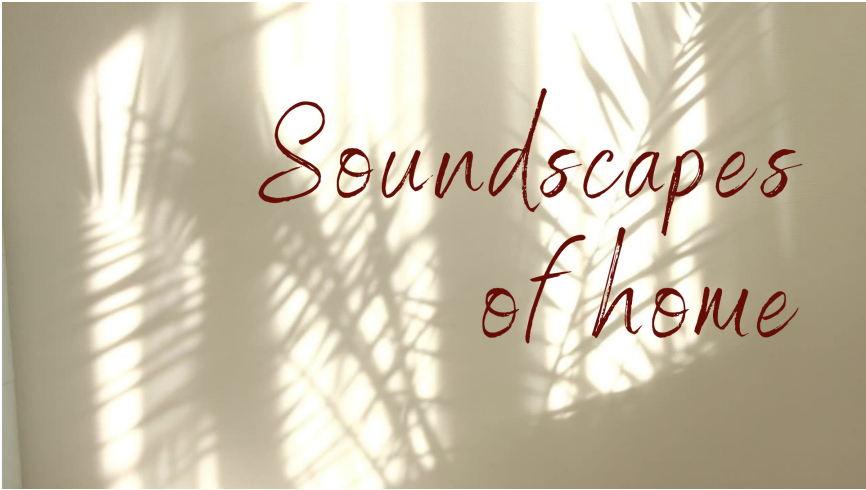


Figure 3. *Soundscapes of home* (presentation screenshot by the Pahinga Collective, *Soundscapes of home*, April 16, 2022).

Mau: Through the co-creation of what we have called our “Soundscapes of home,” we drew wisdom from the motherland... like the heavy rainfall in Roxas that teaches us about stillness and time, or the seeds and plants we grow that teach us about rootedness.

Jo: Through shared memories and shared stories with our elders, our lolas in particular, we introduced photographs into our creative process as a way to capture the quiet and intimate moments that remind us to slow down.

Jhona: Our citational politics and praxis has been a source of healing as well. Citing Indigenous, Black, and racialized scholar-activists, writers, and digital creators has been central to our politics of refusing the university as an arm of the white settler state (Grande 2018). Citing our lolas, our ates, our communities, and each other has been a way to further uplift and honour the knowledges we hope to carry with us into the future.

Mycah: We wanted to find a way for all of us to be present and contribute in ways that respect our capacity and access needs at this time. So, we chose to create a digital media presentation to capture what *pahinga* means to us, what collective care has looked like for us over several months through COVID-19.

Con: To get creative, it was important to release ourselves from the dictates of academic conferencing, to release ourselves from the pressures of hyper-productivity and performativity—to prove what we already know in our bones and instead, imagine, what else, what more?

Jhona: The digital media component of our presentation is precisely an entry point, an emergent practice, a process in imagining, “What else? What more?”

Mau: Through this experiential component of our presentation, we hope to tap into what amplifies our awareness of stillness, sound, and song.

Foundational Rest-as-Resistance Resources

Jann: Here, we honour the work of Black feminists as we imagine what *pahinga* as resistance can add to conversations around collective care and healing justice.

Con: Here, we share two resources with you. The first introduces some of the core tenets of the Nap Ministry’s rest-as-resistance framework¹² as developed by founder, Tricia Hersey, and the second offers excerpts from the “Radical Rest-Health Justice for Social Change Manifesto.”¹³

Mau: In this moment, we are reminded of Maya Angelou who often spoke of the power of gentleness, tenderness, and simply existing as resistance¹⁴ and Audre Lorde who wrote, “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”¹⁵

12. Tricia Hersey, *Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2022) [Forthcoming]

13. “Radical Rest Healing Justice Manifesto,” *Radical Rest*, accessed April 2022, <https://www.radicalrest.org/manifesto.html>.

14. Maya Angelou, “Still I Rise,” NPR, accessed May 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2014/05/28/316728748/maya-angelou-reads-still-i-rise>; Alyssa Rosenberg, “Maya Angelou and the power of pain, audacity and joy,” *Washington Post*, May 28, 2014. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/act-four/wp/2014/05/28/maya-angelou-and-the-power-of-pain-audacity-and-joy/>.

15. Audre Lorde, “Epilogue” in *A Burst of Light and Other Essays* (London: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1988), 125.



Figure 4. *Rest is a Form of Resistance* (presentation screenshot of image by the Nap Ministry, *Rest is a form of resistance*, August 3, 2020, https://thenapministry.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/37322677_2131023570474180_1880599362388623360_o.jpg).

The Nap Ministry

Jhona: The Nap Ministry is an organization of multitudes. They are the originators of the “rest as resistance” and “rest as reparations” frameworks, creating “sacred spaces where the liberatory, restorative, and disruptive power of rest can take hold.”¹⁶

Con: In a collection of blog posts written by founder, Tricia Hersey, they write:

This work is a social justice movement and we have never identified ourselves as being a part of the wellness industry. We are deeply committed to dismantling white supremacy and capitalism by using rest as the foundation for this disruption. We believe rest is a racial justice issue, [a public health issue], a social justice issue.¹⁷

Jann: [Their] work is “seeded within the soils of Black radical thought, somatics, Afrofuturism, womanism, and liberation theology, and is a guide for how to collectively de-program, decolonize, and unravel ourselves from the wreckage of capitalism and white supremacy.

16. The Nap Ministry, accessed April 2022, <https://thenapministry.wordpress.com/about/>.

17. Tricia Hersey, “Our work has a framework: REST IS RESISTANCE!” *The Nap Ministry*, accessed April 2022, <https://thenapministry.wordpress.com/2021/01/11/our-work-is-has-a-framework/>.

Mau: “Rest pushes back and disrupts a system that views human bodies as a tool for production and labor. It is a counter narrative. We know that we are not machines.

Joelle: “We are not well. [This] is not a joke nor anything to make light of. To imagine [new worlds] that center liberation, we must practice rest as our foundation to invent, restore, imagine, and build.

Mycah: “It has always been time for justice. It has always been time to rest.”

We, too, hold on to this truth.

Radical Rest—Health Justice for Social Change

Jann: Radical Rest is a decentralized pop-up of healing providers seeking to support the bodies of the racial justice movement. Here, we share excerpts from their Health Justice for Social Change Manifesto.¹⁸

Jo: “Radical Rest holds that healing justice is at the heart of a vital liberatory movement. If we are too sick [and] exhausted, we are easier beings to control in the servitude of oppressive systems and institutions.¹⁹

Mycah: “Radical Rest believes in the wisdom of stillness, retreat, self reflection, [...] pleasure as profound and legitimate forces of resistance against [racial] capitalism which demand constant doing.

Jhona: “Radical Rest centers the needs of Queer, Trans, Black and Indigenous peoples and people of colour and works to create QTBIPOC health access.

Mau: “Radical Rest [...] seeks to expand the definitions of health to include offerings of communal [...] spiritual, and traditional Indigenous medicine ways and to reclaim our ancestral knowledge of healing.

Con: “Radical Rest is not perfect, is evolving from seed, is open to feedback about what’s working and what isn’t and is accountable to the people served.”

They believe in “feeding what work grows.”

They believe in “rupture and repair.”²⁰

We end with the following poem by Mycah Panjaitan. Mycah

18. “Radical Rest Healing Justice Manifesto,” *Radical Rest*, accessed April 2022, <https://www.radicalrest.org/manifesto.html>.

19. *Radical Rest*, <https://www.radicalrest.org/manifesto.html>.

20. *Radical Rest*, <https://www.radicalrest.org/manifesto.html>.

created this piece based on previous gatherings where we discussed the concept of pahinga in connection to a broader ethic of care that included caring for and honouring the earth. To capture the spirit of Mycah's piece and in turn, the spirit of these discussions, we wanted to feature a screen print by artist and storyteller, Kill Joy, whose work is grounded in honouring the earth and seeking environmental and social justice.²¹ Here, both the visual and textual representations of bayanihan acknowledge the stories, the journeys, and the weight that we carry as a community. In Mycah's own words, "all of that, came from all of us."

Poem by Mycah Panjaitan

The weight behind our strength, our nerves
The unspoken but the felt
Bayanihan,
We carry.
We carry,
We hold,
We lift up.
To live,
To continue,
To move forward.
Across oceans,
We make our journeys.
Stories in our bodies
Make us grow like a tree.
A coconut tree, standing tall and firm.
I remember the water saying, relax my child, surrender with me.
The air whispering, you are free, you can move
The earth reminding you, you are rooted, you will not be shaken

21. Kill Joy, accessed April 2022, <https://joyland.space/>

Fire, well, you feel her in your veins, saying you are alive and full of passion

Bayanihan, let us remember who we are, let us come back to ourselves, let us find our way home



Figure 5. Bayanihan. (Screen Print by Kill Joy, Bayanihan, December 2020, <https://justseeds.org/product/bayanihan/>). Designed for Instituto Bogotano de Corte (ig:@institutobogotanodecorte); hand-pulled screenprint by Reboprints in Austin, Tejas. (ig:@reboprints).

Closing Remarks

We know that our need and desire to create a space of collective care, healing, and rest is in direct response to the gendered and racialized forms of exclusion we have experienced both within and beyond the academy. It is why we dare to do more than just survive. It is why we dare to show up for each other, again and again and again.

For us, *pahinga* is a form of resistance that amplifies the songs and stories of all our kin, and reminds us that there is more healing work to be done. It is a form of resistance that celebrates our collective memories and family histories, sustains us and grounds us in the present, and rallies us to fight for more just futures.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. Maraming salamat/agyamanak unay to Dr. Valerie Francisco-Menchavez and the Critical Filipina/x/o Studies Collective for organizing the CFSC Panel on Collective Care as a Praxis of Change in the Filipino Diaspora. We are grateful for the incredibly supportive space fostered by Dr. Francisco-Menchavez and fellow panelists, Jacqueline Colting-Stol, Nelle Garcia, Wayne Jopanda, Dani Magsumbol, and Josephine Ong. We are equally grateful to Dr. Ethel Tungohan, Dr. Casey Mecija, Dr. Ilyan Ferrer, and Katherine Achacoso for their words of advice and encouragement. Lastly, we wish to express our deepest appreciation for our lolas, chosen kin, Black, Indigenous, and Filipina/x/o leaders, scholar-activists, elders, and friends for teaching us that radical joy, love, and rest are possible in this lifetime. You inspire us all.

Supplementary Materials

Digital Media Presentation

Through digital kwentuhan (talk story), we hoped to capture our initial reflections on what it meant to us to enact a politic of refusal, to embody rest as a form of resistance, and to think more capaciously about collective care and intergenerational healing in the wake of COVID-19. This [digital media presentation](#) captures our collective reflections on *pahinga* (rest) as resistance and collective care as a community praxis. A transcription of the digital media presentation can be found at bit.ly/pahingacollectivetranscript.

Spotify playlist

The *Pahinga* (Rest) as Resistance playlist is a collaborative Spotify [playlist](#) which includes musical pieces that question and critique interlocking systems of oppression, express our connection to our communities, and offer us reminders to slow down, rest, and renew our spirits. We invite others to collaborate with us on this growing project. Through this intimate process, we celebrate being connected and held.

Pahinga Collective Resource List

Our resource list is a living document, one that will hopefully grow with time. Here, we invite others to share links to community-based works, literature, film, music, visual art, and organizations that might inspire and shape our collective care praxis. The link is accessible to all at bit.ly/PahingaCollectiveResourceList.

Collaborate with us!



pahinga.as.resistance@gmail.com

Figure 6. Collaborate with us! (presentation screenshot by the Pahinga Collective, Collaborate with us! April 16, 2022.)

Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS 2022): Ruin and Renewal CFSC Panel on Collective Care as a Praxis of Change in the Filipino Diaspora

Pahinga Collective Resource List

This is a living document, one that will hopefully grow with time.

We invite you to share links to community-based works, zines, poetry, literature, film, music, visual art, as well as organizations that might inspire and shape our collective care praxis.

Communities and collectives:

Critical Filipina/x/o Studies Collective

[Website](#)

Filipino Youth Fellowship

[Website](#), [Instagram](#)

GABRIELA Ontario

[Website](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#)

Makulay atbp.

[Instagram](#)

Migrants Resource Centre Canada

[Website](#), [Instagram](#)

Figure 7. Pahinga Collective Resource List (presentation screenshot by the Pahinga Collective, Pahinga Collective Resource List, April 16, 2022).