Introduction: Towards an Oceanic Filipinx Studies

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In recent years, there has been a surge in Filipinx scholarly, community, and popular culture engagement with the idea of oceans/seas and the oceanic to anchor our histories, cultures, and politics. For some, the oceanic is invoked to refer to the fluidity and multiplicity of diasporic Filipinx experiences and the modes of hybrid cultural production and identity formation among diasporic Filipinxs crossing numerous oceans and nation-states.[1] For others, the oceanic refers to the archipelagic nature of the Philippines and the many ways island cultures shape the heterogeneity of Philippine identity, politics, cultural production, and activism.[2] For others, the oceanic refers to a spatial analytic and the need to understand transregional relations in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.[3] For all these scholars, the oceanic is a metaphor and analytic to refer to the various embodied, discursive, imaginary, and material experiences of crossing and becoming that make up the numerous ebbs and flows of oceanic articulations in the fields of Philippine and Filipinx Studies– both in the diaspora and in the Philippines.

As guest editors located in Ka Pae Hawai'i, we aim to explore the complexity of these numerous articulations, highlighting work emerging from Hawai'i and the broader Pacific to reveal how the oceanic is shaped by place-based and regional experiences. While waters and oceans have been used to describe connections across vast geographies that make up most of the globe, we can see the different directions and mobilities of currents when we center the politics of place and region from the perspective of an island. Diasporic

1. Christine Bacareza Balance, *Tropical Renditions: Making Musical Scenes in Filipino America* (Duke University Press, 2016); Allan Punzalan Isaac, *American Tropics: Articulating Filipino America* (U of Minnesota Press, 2006); JoAnna Poblete, *Islanders in the Empire: Filipino and Puerto Rican Laborers in Hawai'i* (University of Illinois Press, 2014); Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns, *Puro Arte: Filipinos on the Stages of Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2012); Denise Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Duke University Press, 2012); Kale Bantigue Fajardo, *Filipino Crosscurrents: Oceanographies of Seafaring, Masculinities, and Globalization* (U of Minnesota Press, 2011); Roderick Labrador, "Circa91: Conversations With My Daughter," *Alon: Journal for Filipinx American and Diasporic Studies* 1, no. 2 (2021).
2. Jay L. Batongbacal, "A Philippine Perspective on Archipelagic State Issues," *Maritime Studies* 2002, no. 122 (January 1, 2002): 18–31, https://doi.org/10.1080/07266472.2002.10878660.
3. Fajardo, *Filipino Crosscurrents*.

Filipinx Hawai'i experiences, for instance, connect to broader Filipinx crosscurrents of migration and diaspora, and yet embody different forms and directions shaped by regional and place-based island politics and experience. This first special issue will thus focus on waters that we are most familiar with, ka pae Hawai'i, followed by mapping the potentiality of transoceanic Filipinx theory from across Oceania. This is not to exclude oceanic contexts like the Caribbean, Turtle Island, the Indian ocean, and other areas, but to invoke an invitation for multi-scalarly mapping crosscurrents and tidalectics among peoples rooted and routed in various places.

On Theorizing Oceanic Filipinx Studies from Ka Pae Hawai'i

As a group of islands located in Oceania, ka pae Hawai'i is deeply shaped by transoceanic relations and sensibilities. As Paul Lyons and Ty P. Kāwika Tengan note, from a Kānaka Maoli perspective, Hawai'i is a place that is deeply shaped by a fluidity of being in the world; one that embodies Kānaka Maoli relations to the environment, and the big and little currents and place-based knowledge that make up the broader Moana nui: "Hawai'i's relationship to the broader moana nui spans time, space, land, and oceans that make up broader Pacific epistemologies and ways of being in the world."[4] At the same time, Hawai'i is an archipelago that is shaped by oceanic and archipelagic US imaginaries as a result of the violent collisions, movement and mobility of infrastructures, discourses, and peoples forced into relation across archipelagic spaces. As a settler colony that was imagined as a militarized and extractive geography, Hawai'i is enmeshed in the enduring legacies of forced migration, dispossession, anti-immigration, and anti-blackness that shape diasporic and Indigenous experiences of the many people who call Hawai'i home. Yet images of Hawai'i as a multiracial paradise, commoditized touristic scenes of white sandy beaches, swaying palm trees, picture-perfect sunsets, and highly sexualized hula girls and surfer boys hide these clashing and violent histories. These histories of forced collision shape the kinds of narratives of resistance that emerge from various forms of oceanic cultural production, identity formation, and everyday acts of resurgence.

These oceanic currents, marked by shared and colliding histories of empire and trans-Indigenous relations that exceed the American Pacific, shape the conversations that emerge from our multiple articulations of Oceanic Filipinx studies project in Hawai'i; our intervention here is like when three bodies of water meet. There are differences in our family migration itineraries, ethnolinguistic affiliations, relationships to Hawai'i and the Philippines, and academic

4. Paul Lyons and Ty P. Kāwika Tengan, "Introduction: Pacific Currents," AQ *American Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2015): 545–74.

training. Yet, we travel together, embodying the multiplicity of debates and approaches that make up Oceanic Filipinx studies. For Rod, an Oceanic Filipinx studies project has two points of origin: (1) when he began to live in, conduct research, and do community work in Honolulu in the 1990s, and (2) when the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Ethnic Studies department made an intentional move towards an Oceanic ethnic studies during their 45th anniversary celebration in 2015. What he experienced in Honolulu did not neatly align with frameworks in Filipino American studies, Asian American studies, or Philippines studies. This was brought to the fore during the *Blu's Hanging* controversy during the Association for Asian American Studies conference in Honolulu in 1998. For Rod, the controversy was not so much about whether or not we knew how to read and analyze, or artistic license and censorship, but it revealed how we generally knew so little about racial and ethnic dynamics in the islands and perhaps even less about Filipinxs in Hawai'i. For his department, an Oceanic ethnic studies is "an intellectual, cultural, and activist project for innovative research and social justice initiatives grounded in the indigenous knowledges, compassionate social values, and biocultural perspectives of Hawai'i," which extends Rod's and Erin Kahunawaika'ala Wright's earlier push for non-Indigenous folks in Hawai'i to "engage indigeneity."[5] In a sense, this departmental move asked if ethnic studies can be an appropriate approach for doing work in Oceania. Beyond geographic region, faculty members asked what it would mean to approach ethnic studies through the frame of oceans. This Oceanic Filipinx studies vision stems from these basic questions and attends to what it means to be shaped by the politics of Indigeneity and place and how they inform the kinds of transoceanic connections and decolonial futures within and beyond Hawai'i.

As a daughter of immigrant Bisayan parents, Demiliza draws from her experiences of being born and raised in Hawai'i and growing up in working-class Kalihi, Honolulu. She waded through the stresses of poverty, policing, and assimilation in Kalihi alongside other racialized diasporic, local, and Kānaka Maoli peers from different militarized, colonial, state-based relationships to the US. For Demiliza, she believes that she and her peers collectively challenged their colonial realities through the building of new, fun, and pleasurable cultural identities grounded in Kalihi and other forms of youth subcultures. This Kalihi youth culture and consciousness have led Demiliza to identify and align herself with social justice movements that heal our relationships to land, waters, and to one another in her adulthood. Her dissident and rebellious youth cultural experiences inform an Oceanic Filipinx studies that attends to the emergence of everyday identities, cultures, cross-community relationships, and potential coalitions created in Indigenous place. Demiliza's hybrid cultural youth experiences led her

5. Roderick Labrador and Erin Kahunawaika'ala Wright, "Engaging Indigeneity in Pacific Islander and Asian American Studies," *Amerasia Journal* 37, no. 3 (2011): 135–47.

to align with and build transoceanic relationships in queer, feminist Black, Brown, and Indigenous community and scholarly spaces in Hawai'i, Oregon, California, and Minnesota in her adulthood. Learning from trans-Indigenous seafaring solidarities between Micronesian migrants and Dakota people as well as racial justice movements like the #BlackLivesMatter uprisings for George Floyd and #StopAsianHate in Mní Sóta Makhóčhe (The land where the water reflects the skies) shape her vision of transoceanic decolonial and abolitionist justice. For her, Oceanic Filipinx studies must work towards place-based approaches towards eroding structures of heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and settler colonialism in Hawai'i and other oceanic contexts.

Oceanic Filipinx Studies: Beginning the Conversation

The following exchange outlines some of our tentative thoughts on the emerging field of Oceanic Filipinx studies in the context of Hawai'i. They are not meant to be prescriptive mappings of the field but rather a provocation and marking of emerging transoceanic currents that make up the field. This dialogue is like waves in a sea, propelled by various winds. These waves travel at different speeds creating a swell, and sometimes there are storm-generated waves that move thousands of miles (to Hawai'i) and create an intellectual groundswell. As our conversation illustrates, groundswells are usually more patterned and predictable, but local winds can wreak havoc on waves, generating more hectic and chaotic swells. Just like these waves, our conversation is similar to when waters from different sources meet, the encounter can be intermittently and/or simultaneously smooth and choppy. Where these waters meet are shaped by generational gender and geographic differences related to our family migration itineraries, languages, and academic disciplines. Our relationships to and how we got to Hawai'i are also different—the same seas carried us from the Philippine homeland but through different currents. While we acknowledge our differences, we also highlight what we share as we build community. As we travel together, we embody the layered hybridity and multiplicity that exemplify Oceanic Filipinx studies. We offer the following conversation in the spirit of transoceanic methods to reflect our various roots and routes, the layered weaving of personal and intellectual genealogies.

Rod: For me specifically, Oceanic Filipinx studies began with simple questions: How can I do Filipinx studies differently? While still centering Filipinxs, how could I do Filipinx studies in a US-occupied Kingdom of Hawai'i? Are there ways to engage Hawaiian studies, settler colonial studies, Filipino American studies, and Philippine studies without being subsumed by them? By extension, can we do Filipinx studies in Oceania? Can we frame Filipinx studies regionally but also methodologically through the metaphor/analytic of oceans and

water? In his groundbreaking essay on a regional identity anchored by the seas, Epeli Hau'ofa initially re-imagined an Oceania that did not include the Philippines:

> On the eastern extremity of the region, there were some influences from the Americas, but these were minimal. For these reasons, Pacific Ocean islands, from Japan through the Philippines and Indonesia, which are adjacent to the Asian mainland, do not have Oceanic cultures, and are therefore not part of Oceania.[6]

Yet later in the same essay, there remained the possibility of being Oceanic for those of us in diaspora: "All of us in Oceania today, whether indigenous or otherwise, can truly assert that the sea is our single common heritage."[7] But I was also curious about those disconnected from the homeland—linguistically, culturally, spiritually, and politically. Can we do Filipinx studies that is not directly connected to the homeland or to the Philippine nation-state? Is it a settler move to focus on the places where we live, that is not our homeland? So what can an Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i look like? How can we define this emerging field?

Demiliza: I believe that Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i must begin with a deep examination of one's own positionality in relation to the different historical, social, political, and economic circumstances that have shaped our heterogeneous Filipinx community here in the occupying settler state of Hawai'i. I believe that doing Oceanic Filipinx studies here requires us to center and to honor the multiplicity of Filipinx/a/os cultural experience in Hawai'i. In Hawai'i, our community differences consist of immigrant generation, language, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and culture. Our different positionings help to inform the multiple articulations of Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i. For myself and my co-editors, I pose the question in Pidgin, "Wat kine Filipino u?" Garuntee, there is no escaping that question of positioning yourself when you are here in Hawai'i. We ask this question of each other all the time. Since returning home in 2021, one of the first questions I would ask Filipinos I meet at quarterly community events like *Pusong Filipinx* held at the Bishop Museum is, "Wat sku u wen grad?" to see if I can get a sense of who they are and what communities they come from. Are they high-class private-school kine? Are they public-school proud like me? Are they Kalihi-bred? Or, are they not even from Hawai'i? When I learned that someone was Bisayan at a friend's karaoke birthday party I went to last month, I gave them a high-five. We shared a mutual understanding that oftentimes, we are usually the only Bisayans in a vast sea of Ilokanos in Hawai'i. When I

6. Hau'ofa, Epeli. "The ocean in us". *The Contemporary Pacific*, 10, no. 2 (1998): 405.
7. Ibid, 406.

encountered my Bisayan friends' parents at a funeral recently and they asked if I spoke the language, I felt my heart sink. I looked away feeling ashamed and said, "No aunty/uncle, I cannot speak Bisaya / Cebuano. I wish I could."

I believe an Oceanic Filipinx studies framework in Hawai'i can also highlight my own vexed sense of belonging as a Filipina who was, as the Latinx feminist scholar Bianet Castellanos terms, *positioned as settler* in Hawai'i.[8] With Oceanic Filipinx studies' particular focus on place, this framework exposes how Hawai'i is simultaneously home and not home at the same time. The Philippine-US empires have positioned me here in Hawai'i as a settler who benefits from Kānaka Maoli dispossession. What is also true is that I have experienced structural racism, classism, gendered and sexual violences on stolen 'āina. Growing up in the 90s/2000s Hawai'i, local cultural representations negatively depicted Filipinxs as FOB (fresh off the boat), buk buk, low-class, dog-eaters, sex-danger, and heavily accented foreigners. Recent migrants were disproportionately harassed for these racialized representations. At times, scraps and animosity between recent migrants and local Filipinos materialized as a result of these denigrative representations. These xenophobic and anti-Filipino representations were hegemonically normalized and accepted. This caused me to be ashamed of and loathe who I was even when I acknowledged that I was not mocked "as badly" as my recent immigrant peers. Growing up Filipina in Kalihi meant trying to decipher my identity entrenched in mixed messages I would hear at home, in school, church, community, and everyday life in the streets of Kalihi: "Don't learn how to speak Filipino and be FOB," "Don't talk pidgin or you'll sound stupid," "We go beach! / Don't get dark," "Be skinny and sexy / Don't spread your legs and be one slut / Don't act like a boy," "Be good / Don't be one dumb Kalihi kid." With the lack of empowering representations of Filipinos in my girlhood, I spent a great deal of my life distancing myself from my Filipino identity rooted in the lands and waters of the Visayas and Mindanao of the Philippines. To this day, I still feel deep pain, grief, and torment about my disconnection to my ancestral lands, waters, languages, cultures, and family members who still remain in the Philippines. When I was younger, I used to wake up every morning wishing that I was not Filipino because of my experiences with being shamed intensely for it in Hawai'i. I left Hawai'i twelve years ago because of this shame only to confront it again in Hawai'i as an adult. To build on what Rod had mentioned, I think it is crucial to examine how places outside of the Philippine "homeland" shape our Filipino identities. What are the historical, social, economic, and political circumstances in Hawai'i that made me hate myself as a young Filipina trying to understand my place in the world?

8. M. Bianet Castellanos, *Indigenous Dispossession: Housing and Maya Indebtedness in Mexico* (Stanford University Press, 2020).

Although there were moments when I felt cultural loss and alienation, I think it's important to examine how I was able to feel belonging in a place that I felt hated me. I explore my experiences with seeking belonging in Hawai'i in my creative piece entitled, "A Filipina Hood Feminist Perspective: Youth Culture and the Politics of Feeling Good in Working-Class Kalihi," in the forthcoming Weaving Our Stories: Return to Belonging Anthology edited by Luanna Peterson.[9] I talked about how my immersion into (pop) punk rock, skate, kawaii, reggae/island, hip-hop and r&b, and rave cultures infused in Kalihi allowed me, my sisters Sara Lee and Sherina, and others to resist oppression, feel belonging, and gain dignity and freedom even if just for fleeting moments. Drawing inspiration from and thinking about my youth experiences alongside the brilliance of Black scholars and activists like Robin D.G. Kelley, Mikki Kendall, and adrienne maree brown, I arrived to the conclusion that what got me through the everyday violent struggles as a Filipina was my active participation in and co-creation of Kalihi culture.[10] To this very day, people rep Kalihi HARD through cultural venues, rituals, and practices such as music, food, faith, and fellowship, making stink-eye at those looking down on Kalihi, dancing, scrapping, graffiti of private property, unapologetic T-Shirts with "Kalihi: The City with No Pity," emblazoned across their chests, and "chee-hooooos" for those doing big things coming out of Kalihi, making Kalihi proud. It is my identity as a Filipina born and raised in Kalihi that has allowed me to rise above the odds stacked against me. I wielded my Kalihi cultural resistance strategies to fight for my access into higher education spaces that provided me with the language and tools to connect my youth experiences to larger systemic issues such as land dispossession and exploitation, militarism, racism, heteropatriarchy, and settler colonialism. These Kalihi strategies have connected me to learning and engaging my own family's history which comprises stories where the fluidity of culture, the merging together of "tradition" and innovation, allowed my ancestors to navigate and build futures beyond oppressive structures.

I come from the "Sarabusings" who were hunted down by the Spanish Guardia Civil, which forced them to move from different parts of Bohol, Cebu, Leyte, and Mindanao spanning from provinces to interior mountain barangays to evade capture. They changed our family last name to "Saramosing" to successfully fool and hide from the Spanish

9. Peterson, Luanna., Ed. Weaving our Stories: Return to Belonging Anthology. Savant Books and Publications, 2023; Luanna Peterson co-founded Weaving Our Stories (WOS) to offer learning opportunities that explore the role and power of the individual and collective story in the journey toward self-determination and social-justice. WOS provides a safe and supportive space for people to cultivate their voices while deepening our sense of place and belonging in Hawai'i and this planet, we call home.
10. Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (Simon and Schuster, 1996); Mikki Kendall, *Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot* (Penguin, 2021); adrienne maree brown, ed., *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*, Later Printing edition (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2019).

Guardia Civil. They used their intimate cultural knowledge of and relations to lands, waters, and people belonging to the Mindanao sea to deceive colonial powers. I come from Sakada great-grandparents who used and built on these intergenerational cultural knowledges to move through the extremities of plantation life and return to the Philippines at the height of WWII. I come from strategic and wisdom-filled family chain migrations back to Hawai'i to escape state-sanctioned land-grab resettlement policies and wars in Mindanao during the 1970s Marcos administration. Although colonialism has caused ruptures in identity and culture, my family's stories suggest that it is in the realm of culture everchanging that allows each generation to move through treacherous and forbidding landscapes as well as survive and thrive through these social storms. Taking up Martin Manalansan's question, "What does hiya (shame) do?" I meditate on the generativity of shame in my own journey.[11] Instead of retreating from shame with being from Kalihi, I embraced it. By pressing into Kalihi culture deemed shameful, I gained access to spaces that allowed me to better articulate, empower, and reclaim myself as a Filipina. This special issue gestures towards an Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i that empowers Filipinx to intimately know and meditate on their social position in relation to the waves of cultural knowledges, languages, and stories that reside here in Filipinx/a/o Hawai'i. We can then strategically mobilize these cultural energies towards collective liberation for Filipinx, Kānaka Maoli, and all other differently displaced diasporic, local, Black, and Brown communities who call Hawai'i land, seas, and skies home in ways that do not draw false equivalences in search of commonalities.

Rod: In 2015, my department celebrated our 45th anniversary at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and we used that moment to deliberately shift to an Oceanic focus. We thought of the Oceanic in multiple senses, as geography (building off Hau'ofa's alternative regional imagining of what we often talk about as the Asia-Pacific) place-specificity, analytical frame, creative process, and community engagement. From that point on, I began to ask what it would mean to do Oceanic Filipinx studies. And even before that I wanted to know how I could do a Filipinx studies that wasn't firmly framed by Filipino American studies, Asian American studies, or Philippine studies—but engaged Hawaiian studies and settler colonialism in Hawai'i. My book, *Building Filipino Hawai'i*, was my attempt to tread through those disciplinary waters. I still wanted to center Filipinxs in my study and be in conversation with these other disciplines, especially since I was trained in anthropology but saw myself as an ethnic studies scholar. I had to engage in the semantics of settler colonialism for Filipinxs in Hawai'i (i.e., "Are Filipinos 'settlers'?") but I was also interested in

11. Martin F. Manalansan, "Unpacking Hiya:(Trans) National 'Traits' and the (Un) Making of Filipinxness," in *Filipinx American Studies: Reckoning, Reclamation, Transformation* (Fordham University Press, 2022), 362–69.

how our (self) representational politics and local community struggles for power reinforced and/or resisted the continued dispossession and displacement of Kānaka Maoli. Just as Demiliza called for us to contend with our own positionality, I think it's similarly important to acknowledge the disciplines and fields we are in conversation with.

Demiliza: In Dean Saranillio's work, he challenges us to become literate and multilingual in each others histories and struggles.[12] As you earlier stated, an Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i approach requires us to reach across disciplines that keep us from understanding the complexities of how the U.S. empire impacts our communities in different ways. How did the political economy, militarism, settler colonialism, and heteropatriarchy in the occupying settler state of Hawai'i and in the Philippines shape our fraught relationships to each other? In addition to the vital contribution of Asian settler colonialism scholarship discussed in Katherine Achacoso's Afterword, other important strands of Oceanic Filipinx Studies in Hawai'i are the current bodies of knowledge in Filipinx Studies and Filipinos in Hawai'i studies. Filipinx studies has discussed substantially the impact the U.S. empire has had on Filipinos and the Philippines concerning race, racialization, gender, colonial immigration legislation, and the political economy.[13] Our Oceanic Filipinx studies approach extends this scholarship by honing in on how these racial configurations are not only transited in our diasporas but also how they engage with the historical, social, political, and economic material realities of place. To be clear, as Katherine has pointed out for our context of Hawai'i and our place in Oceania, an Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i requires us to pay attention to how both U.S. and Pacific racial geographies have come to shape distinct Filipinx experiences and identity formation in Hawai'i. In addition, it requires us to build from current literature that discuss issues of ethnicity, race, and racialization of Filipinx in our place-based context of Hawai'i. U.S. imperial, racialized imagery and colonization in 1898 helped to foster the absorption of the Philippines into the world capitalist economy beginning in 1906. Labor demands in the U.S. led to the destabilization of the Philippine economy and the large-scale emigration of Filipinos globally, more specifically to Hawai'i. Therefore, an Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i approach must, as Rod has suggested in his work, account for these social, economic, and

12. Dean Itsuji Saranillio, "Colliding Histories: Hawai'i Statehood at the Intersection of Asians" Ineligible to Citizenship" and Hawaiians" Unfit for Self-Government"," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 13, no. 3 (2010): 283–309; Dean Itsuji Saranillio, *Unsustainable Empire: Alternative Histories of Hawai'i Statehood* (Duke University Press, 2018).
13. Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Empire and Migration in Filipino America, 1898-1946*, vol. 5 (NYU Press, 2011); Nerissa Balce, *Body Parts of Empire: Visual Abjection, Filipino Images, and the American Archive* (University of Michigan Press, 2016); Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World* (U of Minnesota Press, 2010).

political circumstances shaping two colonizations: US colonialism in the Philippines and in Hawai'i.

In curating this special issue, we were critical in not romanticizing seas in our turn towards the oceanic. Instead, we wanted to highlight how oceans can also be a site of turbulence. I see oceanic currents as a generative place to expose how nation-states have ruptured relationships and mobilized violence among Filipinx and between different communities in Hawai'i. The *Blu's Hanging* controversy at the 1998 Association for Asian American Studies Conference is one such example that provides insight on how this deviant Filipino portrait, one that stems from the US imperial and racial imaginings during the Philippine-American war era, becomes a normalized cultural representation of all Filipinxs in multicultural settler Hawai'i, thus bolstering our position in the racial order of Hawai'i and in turn contributes to the dispossession of Kānaka Maoli.[14] Despite Filipinxs' one-hundred year presence in Hawai'i, Filipinxs at-large have struggled to obtain upward mobility as exemplified in our comparatively low educational, occupational, and income status along with Kānaka Maoli, Sāmoans, and newer Micronesian migrants.[15] Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i is an approach that locates these waves of localized clashing histories in order to expose and erode the overlapping and intersecting systemic legacies of US empire.

Rod: Since you brought up the *Blu's Hanging* controversy—I was a grad student then and it was wild being at that conference. There were different levels of discourse circulating before, during, and after that conference around reading and critique, what constitutes "community" and our connections and commitments to community; differential access to power, resources, and status among the different Asian American communities represented by AAAS; the role of professional associations, among other things. People were talking at, through, and around each other but it was quite clear, when we were building coalitions, that folks didn't really know much about Hawai'i, let alone Filipinxs in Hawai'i. In building with folks at the conference, it was important for me to lean on my experience in Hawai'i. The first place I lived when I first moved to Honolulu was Kalihi, a predominantly Kānaka and immigrant, low-income, urban community.[16] The Filipinx

14. Candace Fujikane, "Sweeping Racism under the Rug of 'Censorship': The Controversy over Lois-Ann Yamanaka's Blu's Hanging," Amerasia Journal 26, no. 2 (2000): 158–94; Darlene Rodrigues, "Imagining Ourselves: Reflections on the Controversy over Lois-Ann Yamanaka's Blu's Hanging," Amerasia Journal 26, no. 2 (2000): 195–207.
15. Jonathan Y. Okamura, *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawai'i* (Temple University Press, 2008); Roderick N. Labrador, *Building Filipino Hawai'i* (University of Illinois Press, 2015).
16. See Saramosing's work for a further description of the community; Saramosing, Demiliza. "The 'Young Kings of Kalihi': Boys and Bikes in Hawai'i's Urban Ahupua'a." In *Reppin': Pacific Islander Youth and Native Justice*. University of Washington Press, 2021; Demiliza Sagaral Saramosing, "Unsettling Kalihi: The Kalihi Valley Instructional Bicycle Exchange (KVIBE) and Its Decolonization of Urban Space" (Master's Thesis, UCLA,

community I encountered in Kalihi was different from the Filipinxs of my early youth in and around Subic Bay, Zambales in the Philippines, the Filipinx of my formative years in southeast San Diego, and the Filipinxs of my college years in western New York. After spending my undergrad years in western New York with mainly middle and upper middle class Filipinxs who were from the midwest and east coast, I embraced the comfort and familiarity of Kalihi. Hearing the early morning crowing of roosters, the soft and quiet tapping of intermittent rain, my ears reached for the sweet syncopation of Ilokano on my bus rides to Mānoa. The faces of these Filipinx strangers on their way to work in Waikīkī were familiar yet unknown. I worked with youth in Kalihi during my graduate studies at UHM and then again when I first began working at UHM. It was the youth in Kalihi that changed the focus of my dissertation research. My initial project was supposed to be on Filipino public presentations of self, but the prevalence of ethnic and racial joking and the politics of (self)representation were too difficult to ignore. The middle school and high school students and their families that I worked with were inundated with the negative images we read in Lois-Ann Yamanaka's work, popular media, and in the struggles of their everyday lives. During and after the conference, it was important for folks in and outside of Hawai'i (Filipinxs and non-Filipinxs) to understand these experiences. In my work in the schools, we were constantly trying to figure out how to address inequalities and the marginalization that these students encountered while attending to the islands' history of colonization.

The controversial AAAS conference was before Jonathan Okamura's "Illusion of Paradise" and Haunani-Kay Trask's "Settlers of Color" were published.[17] The primary scholarship on Filipinxs in Hawai'i before then was done by Dean Alegado, Ruben Alcantara, and Jonathan Okamura. The heated debates, the broken friendships, and the new friendships that resulted from that conference allowed folks to talk about the different racial and ethnic dynamics in Hawai'i while exposing the problematic multicultural paradise image and thrusting to the foreground conversations about settler colonialism in the islands. That moment gave us a chance to talk about the specificity of Filipinx experiences and histories in Hawai'i and also opened up talk about our connections to the broader Oceania, which brings us back to this special issue, but also the work that's been going in the community.

In the early 2000s, I was part of a team that helped to create a language and culture curriculum at a local school complex for middle school and high school students. The initial design of the heritage language curriculum focused on three communities: Hawaiians,

2018).

17. Jonathan Y. Okamura, "The Illusion of Paradise," *Making Majorities*, 1998, 264–339; Haunani-Kay Trask, "'Settlers of Color and "Immigrant" Hegemony: "Locals" in Hawai'i', AMERASIA JOURNAL, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2000, Pp. 2-26.," *Sage Race Relations Abstracts* 26, no. 1 (2001).

Samoans, and Filipinxs (this project eventually led to the creation of high school-level Ilokano and Samoan language classes– ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi was already offered at the school). Most of our students were heritage language learners, not foreign language learners or native speakers, but somewhere in between. We wanted to show the students that their languages and cultures they practiced at home were not only important in their family settings but also valuable in educational environments. We asked the students to think about the history of Hawaiʻi and relate their own genealogies to the islands. Students pointed to the rootedness of indigeneity and routedness of immigration, while gesturing to the possibilities of intersectionality. Students asked us how our languages, cultures, and histories are connected and we pushed them to think about the ways our political struggles are connected. Students whose families were genealogically connected to the Marshall Islands, Chuuk, American Samoa, Hawaiʻi, and the Philippines looked at traditional medicines, cultural values, relationships to land and water, and histories of colonization to compare and relate to each others' experiences.

When we pushed students to think relationally, embrace intersectionality, and foreground Hawaiʻi, students responded in their own terms. As one student told me, "I know I'm not Hawaiian. I'm not trying to be Hawaiian. I'm from Chuuk. It's just that we live here now. Chuuk in Hawaiʻi." Keith Camacho's work, along with the works of Joanne L. Rondilla and Vicente Diaz, references our communities' political and historical ties.[18] But as my former colleagues Jacinta Galea'i and Julius Soria (the primary authors of the inaugural Ilokano and Samoan language curriculum) often asked our curriculum group, "Is or should colonial subjugation be the only or primary thing that ties us together. What about linguistic and cultural similarities? What about our shared histories in Kalihi?" These led to other questions: How can we struggle to uplift our people while not continuing the legacies of colonialism in the islands? How do we build solidarity with others without submerging our own struggles or de-centering ourselves? What these students illustrated is that the ocean is indeed in us; the oceans that carry some of us from our homeland to new homes are also waters that nourish us and carry us to each other.

Demiliza: The Filipinx Hawaiʻi struggle to build a unified sociopolitical power and identity is directly linked to the ongoing systemic cultural representation of our community–especially those disproportionately impacting recent arrival immigrants– as dog-eaters, "FOBs" (fresh

18. Keith L. Camacho, "Filipinos, Pacific Islanders, and the American Empire," *The Oxford Handbook of Asian American History*, 2016, 13; Joanne Rondilla, "The Filipino Question in Asia and the Pacific: Rethinking Regional Origins in Diaspora," *Pacific Diaspora: Island Peoples in the United States and across the Pacific*, 2002, 56–68; Vicente M. Diaz, "Bye Bye Ms. American Pie: The Historical Relations Between Chamorros and Filipinos and the American Dream," *Isla-A-Journal of Micronesian Studies* 3.1, 1995, 147–60.

off the boat), "sex danger," and heavily accented low-wage workers. These representations are embraced in Local culture and humor, thus fortifying Filipinx subordination in multicultural settler Hawai'i, fraught intra-settler and intra-Filipinx community struggles (i.e. Locals vs. immigrants vs. mainland), and ongoing Kānaka Maoli dispossession. For me, the political project of Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i centers collective Filipinx cultural empowerment and resistance that rejects the assimilative logic of incorporation into the settler "multicultural paradise."

I foresee an Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i that foregrounds Filipinx cultural identity empowerment as a potent source to disrupt current Local racialized gender and sexual norms bolstering capitalist and multicultural settler colonial relations. Learning from and thinking alongside David A. Chang, Vicente Diaz, Christine DeLisle, Keith Camacho, and Teresia Teaiwa who theorize the Native Pacific cultural ethics of indigeneity, diaspora, and positioning among Pacific Islanders, I suggest that an Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i must take stock of one's own Filipinx social position while examining identity and promoting cultural empowerment that is accountable to and in relation to differently displaced peoples as well as to Kānaka Maoli on whose land, seas, and skies we inhabit.[19] This way, Filipinx cultural producers, scholars, and community activists do not replicate carceral and settler colonial relations. During my time in Minnesota, I became inspired by the trans-Indigenous cultural exchange and decolonial solidarities made between Micronesian migrants and Dakota peoples through the vehicle of Micronesian seafaring knowledges grounded in the Indigenous Dakota concept of being in "good relations" with all creation.[20] Oceanic currents have allowed me to return home to Hawai'i. Here, I am committed to merging my own Bisayan/Filipina cultural value of pagatiman (communal care and reciprocity) rooted in my own ancestral ties to the Mindanao seas and routed to Hawai'i, Kānaka Maoli values of kuleana, pilina, and malama 'āina that were nurtured in me having been born and raised in Hawai'i to what I have learned from

19. David A. Chang, "Borderlands in a World at Sea: Concow Indians, Native Hawaiians, and South Chinese in Indigenous, Global, and National Spaces," *The Journal of American History* 98, no. 2 (2011): 384–403; The Pasifika Archive, "PI Studies Symposium- To Search for Roots Is to Discover Routes: Pacific Theories of Diaspora," 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEYpOVKvYJc; Christine Taitano DeLisle, "Pungent Pasts, Fragrant Futures: Smelling and Telling Our Stories Across Oceans and Islands" (Pasifika Webinar Series, The University of Utah Pacific Islands Studies Initiatives, 2021); Keith L. Camacho, *Reppin': Pacific Islander Youth and Native Justice* (University of Washington Press, 2021); Teresia Teaiwa, "L(o)osing the Edge," *The Contemporary Pacific* 13, no. 2 (2001): 343–57, https://doi.org/10.1353/cp.2001.0071.

20. Vicente M. Diaz, "Oceania in the Plains: The Politics and Analytics of Trans-Indigenous Resurgence in Chuukese Voyaging of Dakota Lands, Waters, and Skies in Mní Sóta Makhóčhe.," *Pacific Studies* 42, no. 1/2 (2019): 2; Čhaŋtémazaand Monica Siems McKay, "Where We Stand: The University of Minnesota and Dakhóta Treaty Lands | Open Rivers Journal," accessed September 29, 2021, https://editions.lib.umn.edu/openrivers/article/where-we-stand/.

the Dakota-Micronesian cultural value of "good relations" grounded in Mní Sóta Makhóčhe (The Land Where the Water Reflects the Skies) to bolster an Oceanic Filipinx studies committed to cultivating Filipinx cultural resurgence in Hawai'i with the Kānaka Maoli cultural struggle for ea (life, land, sovereignty). Acknowledging my own Filipinx position shaped by trans-oceanic voyage, I also contend that Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i must be invested in ethical cultural blending, one that reorients us towards building "good relations" with Kānaka Maoli, diasporic, local, Black and Brown communities, and all creation on Hawaiian land, seas, and skies.

In doing so, we invite flows of Filipinx stories rooted in their respective lands, waters, and skies throughout the Philippine archipelago and routed through their family's varied migration and settlement experiences here in Hawai'i. We gain a better sense of how Filipinxs navigate their sense of self in relation to their feelings of (dis-)belonging in Hawai'i and in relation to place-based historical and current social, political, and economic circumstances. We come to understand how Filipinxs define and/or redefine their cultural identity amidst globalization in terms of sights, sounds, tastes, touch, smell, place/space, language that are place-based sensibilities specific to the Hawaiian archipelago and yet also connected to the greater Pacific, the US continent, our global diasporas, as well as the Philippines.

Structure of the Articles

In all these instances and the many more articulations of Oceanic Filipinx studies in Hawai'i, Oceanic is used as an analytic to describe the material ways in which Indigeneity and place shape the specificity of transoceanic experiences in Hawai'i. In this regard, the Oceanic is an important strategic analytic to mark the messy and hybrid politics of Filipinx life on this island and the connections and entanglements of diasporic Filipinx with other communities living in Oceania. These experiences are not homogenous, they differ from island to island, from ahupua'a to ahupua'a, and along class, race, gender, sexuality and ability lines, and are part of the complex experience of Filipinx Hawai'i diaspora that is specific to place. Through engaging with the articles and forum pieces in the special issue, we invite readers to contend with the diversity of mappings of Oceanic Filipinx studies. Each of the pieces highlight different methodological approaches and theorizations of Oceanic methods and as such highlight the current conjectures, and departure points of an emerging Oceanic Filipinx Studies. We offer the following section as a brief overview of the structure of the special issue and some emerging themes / debates we see in the field.

The articles begin with highlighting two oceanic methodological approaches to the study of the Filipinx diaspora in Hawai'i. The first article by Ellen-Rae Cachola begins by highlighting how the politics of place and region shape Oceanic Filipinx solidarities, Asian settler allyship, and queer, non-binary, women's transnational organizing.

Rendered through her own interpretations, Cachola maps a rich genealogy of Filipinx activism and organizing on Oʻahu in support for Indigenous movements for sovereignty and self-determination in Hawaiʻi and the Philippines. In doing so, she aims to expand the decolonial potentiality of recentering Oceanic methodologies in thinking through Filipinx experiences on occupied Native lands and in relation to decolonial movements in the Pacific. In contrast, the subsequent two articles by Nadezna Ortega and Rebecca Goldschmidt and Shannon Cristobal contend with how oceanic methodologies provide a conceptual analytic to highlight what it means to negotiate Filipinx / Ilokano cultural resurgence and identity formation in the context of occupying Hawaiʻi. While highlighting how the legacies of US empire and racialization attribute to Filipinx in Hawaiʻi experiences with cultural estrangement, loss, and shame, the authors attempt to think about the significant and decolonial potential of engaging with cultural resurgence, representation, and empowerment. Cristobal's piece addresses Filipinx identity-making through her examination of the decolonial politics of foodways. Tracing the embodied experiences of (re)growing, (re)membering Filipino foodways from Ilocos, Cristobal's piece challenges the stigmatization of Filipinx foodways in Hawaiʻi and points to how Filipinx enact diasporic reparations and kinships through the food they cultivate in their gardens. Similarly, Ortega and Goldschmidt address how Filipinx grapple with enduring structures of anti-Filipino racism and diasporic displacement through resurgence practices that revitalize Ilokano language, epistemologies, and worldviews. Drawing inspiration from the movements for Kānaka Maoli cultural resurgence, Ortega and Goldschmidt note that Ilokano movements to revitalize Ilokano language and culture in Hawaiʻi are an attempt to imagine alternative ways of being as well as relating to Kānaka. By (re)connecting Filipinx in Hawaiʻi to land, waters, languages and cultures, these authors set the foundation towards building transoceanic solidarities and decolonial justice in Hawaiʻi and the Pacific.

Forum:

The forum pieces build from the complexity of Oceanic methodologies in the first section to trace multiple genealogies and perspectives on future directions in Oceanic Filipinx studies. We open the forum with an interview from Rosie Alegado and Davianna McGregor recounting the contributions of Dean Alegado in the formation of Filipinx Studies in Hawaiʻi and Oceanic solidarities imagined within the University of Hawaiʻi's Department of Ethnic Studies. In subsequent pieces by the contributors of the "Hoy Get Out of the Sun!" four-part webinar series, by Germaine Lindsay Saladino Juan, and by Malaya Caligtan-Tran highlight contemporary reflections on Filipinx organizing in Hawaiʻi, attending especially to how geography, place, and region shape negotiations with race, Indigeneity, Anti-Asian / immigrant racism,

and Anti-Blackness in the Pacific. Each of these pieces contend with erasures and limitations of the fantasy of Local culture and multicultural inclusion through addressing and unpacking the complex nexus of anti-Indigeneity, anti-blackness, and anti-Asian racism in occupied Hawai'i and more broadly.

In the summer of 2020, a Filipinx collective of Hawai'i-based academics and community activists organized the "Hoy Get out of the Sun" webinar series in response to the global movement to protect Black lives. This webinar was held on Zoom and on social media platforms of *Pusong Filipinx*, a quarterly market for Filipinx millennials, creatives, and small businesses founded by Lalaine Ignao. In the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd by Minnesota police, Hawai'i became one site of community mobilization to address a global climate of anti-Blackness that crossed the Atlantic and the Pacific. Due to Hawai'i's unique location which inhabits a nexus of US and Pacific relations, numerous questions arose concerning how anti-blackness and Blackness operated in our place-based context and in Hawai'i's relation to Oceania. Throughout the series, our webinar speakers recounted how the United States imposed racial imaginaries of anti-blackness and anti-Indigeneity in the Philippines to not only justify colonization but to also justify the militarized police brutality of Filipinos in the Philippines and in Hawai'i. In thinking relationally to the contemporary context of the movement to protect Black lives in Hawai'i and globally, this series also aimed to create connections with diasporic Micronesian communities who are navigating discourses of anti-Micronesian and anti-black racism in Hawai'i. Although messy and imperfect, this series aimed to connect these struggles to Kānaka Maoli activists' calls to think about Black Lives Matter in Hawai'i as intrinsically tied to Native movements for sovereignty across Oceania.

Decentering continental racial geographies among Asian/Indigenous /Black relations in Turtle Island, the pieces provides an important pivot towards Oceania to consider how anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity in Hawai'i are also shaped by the complex politics of Blackness in Oceania and movements for sovereignty. Malaya Caligtan-Tran's piece reorients the field of Oceanic Filipinx studies towards considering how diasporic Indigenous Philippine experiences in Oceania broaden our understanding of the complicities, intersections and militarized entanglements between Pacific Islanders and Indigenous Philippine diasporic peoples. In foregrounding their experiences alongside other Igorots in Hawai'i offering ho'okupu (ceremonial gift) to Kānaka Maoli protecting Mauna Kea from the Thirty Meter Telescope in 2019, Malaya Caligtan-Tran connects the Indigenous struggles in Hawai'i and the Philippines as well as highlights the cultivation of radical relationalities that transcend militarized and settler geographies. Similarly, Germaine Lindsay Saladino Juan's contribution reflects on the relationship between xenophobic sentiments and the uptick in anti-Asian hate crimes on the continent and in Hawai'i during the global COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the

militarization and colonization of the Philippines. On behalf of her organization Anakbayan Hawai'i, she delivered a speech at the "Stop Asian Hate" rally at the Hawai'i State Capitol in March 2021 calling for Filipinos to channel the Ilokana/Filipina militant leader Gabriela Silang revolutionary action against oppression towards building anti-imperialist international solidarity in Hawai'i for demilitarized and decolonized futures.

The creative pieces in the forum are two-fold: 1) They grapple with themes of understanding the complex processes of Filipinx identity and cultural formation in occupied Hawai'i shaped by the legacies of imperialism, colonialism, and white supremacy and 2) they expand Filipinx critiques of the US empire through highlighting how land and water-based struggles in Hawai'i and Oceania inform Filipinx diasporic critique, cultural production, and activism. Kenzie Ozoa and Sean-Joseph Takeo Kahāokalani Choo's creative works serve as a tribute to their ancestors and community as well as offers a space to reflect on how their identity and cultural formations have been shaped here in the historical, social, and political context of occupied Hawai'i. Ozoa's use of oceanic metaphors in her poetry and Choo's execution of the absurd in his performance pieces bring to the surface what it means to (re)define and (re)create their identity amidst the legacies of colonialism. To maintain our commitment to the political project of Oceanic Filipinx studies, it is absolutely crucial to keep productive tensions as we create: How do we ensure that our Filipinx cultural productions— through artforms such as poetry, visuals, and performance— do not replicate systems of oppression that we seek to eliminate? Marie Ramos, Lyz Soto, and Kim Compoc, provide various creative reflections on how movements to protect Maunakea, and Kaho'olawe, Kapūkakī / #StopRedHill, among other aloha 'āīna inform Oceanic Filipinx visions of decolonization, resurgence, and revitalization in the diaspora. Ramos, and Soto in particular, reflect on the lessons 'āina teaches them in thinking through their own diasporic identity, displacement, and homemaking on Kānaka Maoli lands on O'ahu and Maui. Thus, their pieces offer other ways of relating in diaspora that contend with everyday forms of settler complicity.

In contrast, the last set of forum pieces in the special issue cautiously engage with the turn towards the Oceanic, highlighting both the perils and potential limitations of Oceanic methodology. In carefully attending to Pacific critiques of oceanic metaphors that transit Oceania, leilani portillo, Kahala Johnson, and Katherine recount the importance of maintaining critical tensions in mapping intersections between Filipinx and Kanaka solidarities and transoceanic connections. As queer scholars and artists who inhabit various diasporic displacements and proximities to Indigeneity, they note that in centering the frictive tensions between diasporic/Indigenous/ queer solidarities, we can attend to futures that do not fall easily within the decolonial itineraries of Filipinx /Kānaka Maoli /Queer organizing. Thus, in loving movement through intersections and departures, portillo, Johnson and Achacoso

reflect on the possibilities of critical Oceanic Filipinx studies on the edges of mainstream organizing. Similarly, Katherine's afterword, which reflects on the limitations of Oceanic methodologies, ends the special issue by probing the limitations of Oceanic and the political itineraries of a decolonial Oceanic Filipinx studies. Reflecting on her experience curating conversations on the special issue, Katherine's piece contends with the intersections and ethics of Native Pacific studies, cautioning the potential erasures and conflations of oceanic metaphors in the field.

We offer these pieces to invite readers to journey with us in engaging the complexity of Oceanic Filipinx approaches to the field. While our perspectives are only a brief glimpse into Oceanic Filipinx scholarship in Hawai'i, we hope they offer productive entry points to reimagining the anti-colonial and decolonial possibilities of Oceanic Filipinx scholarship.