Naimas! The Rise of Filipina/o/x Foodways in Hawai‘i

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ABSTRACT. In this article, I situate my research by employing standpoint theory to chart the evolution of Filipino Foodways through the daily lives of Filipina/o/x women in Hawai‘i to illuminate, make explicit and visible Filipina/o/x women's knowledge and epistemologies. I argue that we can learn what needs to be re-membered, retold, relearned, and retaught in order to reconnect within the fields of education, ethnic studies, history and food studies by studying what has been systematically pushed aside and forgotten. My goal is to amplify and uplift the narratives of Filipina/o/x women that have engaged in alternative archives and economies. In addition, I also show how Filipina/o/x foodways in Hawai‘i persists through the transmission of ancestral knowledge despite attempts at erasure via colonial foodways in the Philippines and in diaspora. We can understand our values, identities, and tastes today by studying Filipina/o/x food stories and history as well as begin healing from intergenerational trauma while combating colonial mentality and resisting discriminatory practices.

Keywords: Filipina/o/x Women, Filipino Foodway, Hawai‘i, Education

"*Food to the Filipinos is History. It is also Bond, Culture, and Identity.*"
—*Doreen G. Fernandez*

The People's Open Market: Kalākaua Park

In the quiet, pitch-black darkness, my grandma Jasmine would wake me to join her on her weekly Saturday morning trips to the People's Open Market in Kalihi. Kalihi is a densely populated urban neighborhood in Honolulu. Beautifully rugged and complex it is home to the working class, the largest low-income housing in the state, and diverse immigrant population. The People's Open Market is where local farmers, fisherman, bakers, and home cooks directly sell their produce, fish, baked goods, and food at affordable prices. As a child (in the 1980s), I vividly remember how curious and intrigued I was as we walked from table to table, immersing myself within the ocean of Filipina/o/x people who were shopping, haggling, and talking story. I heard different languages spoken, often a mix of Ilokano, Tagalog, Visayan, Pidgin, and English. The shoppers greeted each

other with either "Good morning," "Kumusta," "Naimbag a bigat," or "Magandang umaga po." Hearing the different Philippine languages spoken felt familiar yet strange; familiar because it reminded me of my grandparents, and yet strange because I could only understand bits and pieces of what was being said, which made me feel distant and excluded. Not being able to speak any of the Filipino languages, especially Ilokano has in many ways been a topic of angst and pain. Fortunately, while shopping with my grandma, I learned how to select a variety of Filipino vegetables through which I learned some Ilokano words. I mainly learned the names of the vegetables like tabungao (squash), talong (eggplant), marunggay (horseradish tree), ootong (long beans), and kamatis (tomatoes). These vegetables were used in some of the popular (at least in Hawai'i) traditional Filipino dishes that were passed down in my family: pinakbet, batsu (pork & squash), and chicken papaya with malunggay. However, the best part of every trip was getting to buy a variety of kakanin from the baked goods vendors. I would get my favorite puto, bibingka, tupig, and cascaron on a stick all in a small brown paper bag.

I spent a lot of time with my grandparents when it came to preparing and eating Filipino food. I remember preparing the ingredients for my grandma by plucking marrungay leaves on her living room floor over old newspapers. I cooked alongside my grandparents. I watched how my grandpa ate his rice and sida (or fish) with his three-finger scooping technique (kamayan). Being with them was an education unto itself. These trips to the open market were more than merely "shopping for food." I see it as my grandparents' way of teaching and transmitting cultural knowledge, embodied knowledge, and traditions. Now that I am a mother, I give voice to what was unspoken: that the transmission of cultural history, knowledge, and wisdom is important because our stories and lived experiences are vital to our families and communities' positive identity formation. Without our own embodied Filipina/o/x stories, Acido states, "the profound realization that comes from one's story—a story itself, not simply a story as a tool or medium, but a story as empirical evidence of one's ontological becoming—an essential element in changing how we see and become in the world" (Acido, 48). Seeing and reading our own stories and learning about our history is a way to legitimize our existence to ourselves, to our community, and to the world. Even within the Filipino community in Hawai'i, there are diverse histories and stories as each wave of Filipina/o/x immigrants experienced unique challenges and opportunities. For this reason, I add to the diversity of Filipinx/a/o stories as a fifth generation Filipina in Hawai'i who is deeply invested in the power of Filipina/o/x foodways. By situating my own embodied knowledges in Filipina/o/x foodways, I created my own Naimas methodology, explained later in this article, that will allow me to foreground Filipina/o/x women's identity-making, culture, history through food in Hawai'i.

Fifth Generation

In this section, I meditate on what it means having grown up in Hawai'i as a fifth generation Filipina to understand why this work of centering Filipina/o/x foodways through my embodied experiences at the People's Open Market with grandma Jasmine is so important. I was unsure of my identity having grown up in Hawai'i in the early 1980s. I considered myself local—someone who was born in Hawai'i and is a descendant of Sakada migrants and not a recently arrived immigrant. As a fifth generation Filipina American of Ilokano descent, I mainly spoke in Pidgin and considered Hawai'i home. I did not consider the Philippines home in the same way. I rarely heard any stories or saw pictures of our family who lived in the Philippines although I wished I had the chance to learn what motivated them to come to Hawai'i and to hear about their lived experiences. My connections to my ancestral language, cultural traditions, and family ties were intentionally and unintentionally lost, severed, and forgotten. I know now that the root cause stems from the impact of assimilation, acculturation, and colonialism.

Filipina/o stories were also absent in my elementary and secondary school experiences. I was only taught in elementary school that Filipina/os worked on the plantation and they were called Sakada. The primary narrative of the Sakada is that they were hard working, submissive, and hospitable. There was no additional context, background, or stories. It wasn't until I was in college that I learned that my great grandparents were also part of the Sakada migrant community in Hawai'i. Growing up with a lack of Filipino history, cultural representation, and food-related racism, evident in jokes about eating black dog or dinuguan (pork blood stew) in Hawai'i produced deep feelings of self-hatred and shame about my identity. Further education granted me access to learn more about my Sakada ancestors through articles, timelines, and books I read in my English, History, American Studies, Educational Foundations, and Ethnic Studies classes. I have had the privilege to earn a college education and also obtain mentoring from numerous Filipina/o/x scholars. These experiences in graduate school gave me the courage, confidence, and support I needed to delve deeper into a type of decolonial process and scholarship. My work interrogates how knowledge is produced; and as Lydia Hiraide states, "to denaturalize and critique Western knowledge as neither superior nor universal".[1] In addition, I also employ Walter Mignolo's definitions of decolonial and/or decoloniality as "a project in de-linking: a process of emancipatory rupture which confronts and resists the pervasiveness of Eurocentrism." I put into service the 'de' which, Hiraide argues, "'de' positions decolonisation as a more obviously continuous and reiterative process, which not only seeks to overthrow colonialism, but also to remove and redress its lasting traces and legacies afterwards that not only opposes domination, but actively opens up the space of resistance and radical alterity"

(2021). I, therefore, strive to provide both academically and practically (everyday living or household knowledge) instances of de-linking that removes and redresses the traces and legacies of colonialism. I engage in the process of rejecting and resisting colonial legacies of miseducation, self-hatred, and shame as well as the standard American diet (fake, processed, and factory farmed). Instead, my work centers relearning and recovering ancestral knowledge of growing, preparing, and sharing food as a creative and critical act of resistance, as well as reclaiming our cultural inheritance through ancestral and cultural wisdom about our foods through history, storytelling, and embodied practice (planting, cooking, eating, and other related activities). What foods did they eat? Why did they eat it? How was it prepared? What did they grow? How did they grow it? What herbs and plants did they use for medicine? Through these embodied stories with cultural food, it is a crucial site for examining Filipina/o/x women's identity-making, history, and culture in Hawai'i.

In this way, my work contributes to the study of Filipina/o/x American foodways and education in the Hawai'i context. I explore how Filipino food is not just an amalgamation of culinary influences and conquests from China, Spain, Mexico, and the United States. Rather it is the physical manifestation and representation of Filipna/o/x people's fight, endurance, suffering, survival, and rise through a history of colonialism, oppression, poverty, and war. My research departs from the broader Filipino Food Movement that started in 2013 in the San Francisco Bay area. I apply a critical lens to trace the genealogy of Filipino Foodways in Hawai'i which has a rich and complex history that has yet to be written about by emerging Filipina/o/x scholarship. In this particular moment of exposure and recognition that Filipino food is now receiving in the Filipino diaspora in the continental US and Hawai'i, there is a coalescing of decades of scholarly and popular media work that can be credited to Doreen Fernandez, Dawn Mabalon, Martin Manalansan, Alexander Orquiza, Amy Besa, Nicole Ponseca, and the Filipino Food Movement to name a few. At the same time the popularity of Filipino Food in Hawai'i can be attributed to long time local favorites such as Jesse's Coffee Shop and Bakery, Elena's Restaurant, San Nicolas Chicharon & Sausage, and Nanding's Bakery. However, Filipino Food in Hawai'i is primarily home cooking. It is now reaching the mainstream through convenience store retailer 7-11 who are now selling pork guisantes and chicken adobo with pancit and rice created by their Filipina/o/x workers.

In the following sections, I will share my Naimas methodology that will allow me to center my embodied theorizing, and which will in turn elevate Filipina/o/x women's cookbooks, memoirs, and oral histories as alternative archives. My goal is twofold: (1) to expose colonial foodways that have attempted to denigrate and erase Filipina/o/x Hawai'i foodways stemming from the 1898–1946 U.S. colonial period in the Philippines and the culinary assimilation period in the

1920s–to Hawai'i in the present, and (2) to demonstrate how Filipina/o/x foodways have continued to persist and evolve in Hawai'i through the everyday lives, knowledges, and epistemologies of Filipina/o/x women. I use my Naimas methodology to amplify the voices of Filipinx women contributing to the present-day culinary movement by way of conclusion.

Naimas Methodology: Filipina/o/x Foodways as Alternative Archives

In order to create my interdisciplinary Naimas methodology, I use a feminist standpoint theory approach that assumes the subjectiveness of perspective informed by daily lived experiences, thereby also suggesting that we must privilege the perspectives of those who have been oppressed, exploited, and dominated to have any real understanding of those groups. In particular, I am interested in reclaiming, recovering, and legitimizing particular Filipina women's knowledge and epistemologies within education and food studies that calls attention to:

> A commitment to the production of information women want and need in their struggles to survive and to flourish—information about our bodies and our children's bodies: our environment; economic, governmental, and legal institutions and practices; international relations; and so forth. And it is thereby directed by commitment to the high value of women, their activities, needs, and desires."[2]

This commitment to the production of information women want and need in their struggles to survive and to flourish is one of the reasons I am engaging feminist standpoint theory to develop my Naimas methodology. This approach supports Filipina/o/x mothers, sisters, aunties, grandmothers, great-grandmothers' voices, stories, knowledge, their transmission of knowledge, teaching, learning, mothering, love, and sacrifice expressed through written and oral forms encapsulated in culture, food, and education. My Naimas methodology describes the practices and knowledge that problematize the colonial legacies of miseducation, self-hatred, and shame. In this view, Filipina/o/x Foodways as an alternative archive challenges colonial and traditional archives as it centers oral histories, embodied knowledge and/or household knowledge, lived experiences, of Filipina/o/x women through cookbooks, recipes, and memoirs rich in history and stories.

The word "Naimas" in Ilocano means tasty, savory or delicious. I chose this term intentionally as I want Filipina/x/o people of all

2. Harding, S. (2009). Standpoint Theories: Productively Controversial. *Hypatia*, 24(4), (2009) 192-200.

generations in Hawai‘i to crave, to learn, and to be proud of their cuisine and heritage. “N” in Naimas stands for “Nakem ‘’ which in the Ilocano language means soul consciousness.[3] Building upon Ilokano scholar Jeffrey Acido’s work that positions Nakem as embodied storytelling practice, my work mobilizes Nakem to foreground the use of embodied storytelling through food. The “A” in Naimas stands for ancestors. I highlight the ancestors of Filipina/o/xs that were impacted by the US education system in the Philippines and in Hawai‘i that used food as a colonizing agent. The “I” in Naimas stands for immigrant experiences which will allow me to focus on Filipina/o/x experiences with assimilation through school lunches and resistance through labor strikes, soup kitchens and survival gardens. The “M” stands for memory. This focus delves into colonial amnesia and interrogates how we re-member history. The second “A” in Naimas stands for ‘Āina (that which feeds /land). I explore the ways Filipina/o/xs in Hawai‘i connect with the land and its people (Kānaka Maoli) through mutual struggle and efforts to revitalize Filipino and Hawaiian languages, cultures, food, and epistemologies. The last letter “S” stands for Sariwa which means “fresh” in Tagalog. In this section I show how Filipina/o/xs are taking a fresh or new approach to strengthening Filipina/o/x identity and representation by highlighting the Filipino food movement in Hawai‘i. Although generations of Filipina/o/xs have been colonized and traumatized, I show how the Naimas methodology can assist Filipina/o/xs to reflect, heal, and connect with their own unique experiences, stories, and recreate their own narratives of uplift and empowerment.

Culinary Colonialism in the Philippines and Culinary Assimilation in Hawai‘i

My Naimas methodology takes seriously the role of colonialism and cultural assimilation through food. I provide context to expose colonial foodways that have attempted to denigrate and erase Filipinx Hawai‘i foodways stemming from the 1898–1946 US colonial period in the Philippines and the culinary assimilation period in 1920s to present-day Hawai‘i. During the 1898–1946 US colonial period, American reformers and educators enforced and validated culinary colonialism. Under the guise of a “civilizing mission,” American reformers and educators known as Thomasites—600 American teachers arrived in the Philippines in 1901 to establish a new public school system, to teach basic education, and to train Filipina/o/x teachers, with English as the medium of instruction. Americans assumed they were bestowing upon the Filipina/o/x people principles of American civilization

3. Acido, J. T. (January 01, 2016). Nakem Pedagogy: Social Biography in Liberatory Education.*Educational Perspectives*, 48, 48-54.

that would bring mutual happiness and liberty demonstrating America's elitist beliefs and values. The belief that American genius is reasonable, progressive, and beneficial for Filipina/o/x erases, pushes aside, destroys, and dismantles Filipina/o/x culture, foodways, and epistemologies. For example, American reformers provided free public school for girls in the Philippines that sought to "civilize them through a curriculum of domestic science courses, which required Filipina/o/x girls to adopt white, middle-class gender roles and learn American cooking, baking, knitting, sewing, household hygiene, and sanitation" (Mabalon, 152). In addition, students were told to eat three meals a day avoiding the traditional merienda (afternoon snack), to eat with forks and spoons instead of their hands, and to avoid crops inferior to American varieties. They were also taught that American food in the form of refined sugars, red meats, and highly processed foods were nutritionally superior. For example, first graders were taught that imported canned condensed milk had greater health benefits than carabao milk (Orquiza, 2013). From this young and impressionable age, Filipina/o/x children were taught that the American way was better and to abandon their so-called "primitive" Filipino ways of being and knowing. This civilizing education implies that Filipina/o/xs had no prior ancestral or cultural knowledge that was deemed worthy by the dominant culture's standards to know what was healthy, clean, and good for them.

As Filipina/o/xs were immigrating to Hawai'i from the 1920s to the present time, they brought this history of culinary colonialism with them, while also having to contend with the pressures of culinary assimilation. According to Christine Yano, "culinary assimilation is learning the ways and tastes of national citizenship through food" (Yano, 31). Food was used to Americanize immigrants in Hawai'i. Most of the immigrant groups that were recruited to Hawai'i to work on the sugar plantations faced the dilemma of what to eat in their new island home. Yano points out the complex foodscape of Hawai'i through school lunches when she explains:

> Serving school lunch in a place like Hawai'i meant serving the taste of a particular version of America, especially for a postwar generation in the early days of statehood. This was not macaroni and cheese America, nor was it hot dog-or-hamburger-in-a-bun America; this was an America of its own making in a local context of the many Asian cultures and indigenous Pacific base that formed Hawai'i's ethno-racial mix. This version of school lunch meant a hot meal that more often than not included rice: America with its own local Asian based twist.[4]

4. Yano, C. R., & Adams, W. (2013). Tasting America: The Politics and Pleasure of School Lunch in Hawai'I. *Eating Asian America: A Food Studies Reader*

Yano's description of school lunches in Hawai'i gives us a glimpse into the political, sociocultural, and economic make-up giving particular meaning to food. Regardless of your racial mix, at this time in Hawai'i, not only did one live under campaigns to "Speak American" but also to "Eat American" (Yano, 2013). School lunches are just one of the many ways that citizenship had to be earned, maintained, and displayed. Generations of Filipina/x/os growing up in Hawai'i had to navigate what it meant to eat their way towards US citizenship. I intervene in this history of culinary colonialism and assimilation with my Naimas methodology that employs a feminist standpoint epistemology to remedy the effects of harmful assimilative practices in food that suppressed generational memory and severed relationship to ancestral foods. Although these histories attempted to erase Filipina/x/o foodways in Hawai'i, in the next section I showcase how they have persisted and how they are now being reclaimed and recovered through the exploration and research of survival gardens, Hawai'i Plantation Village food tours, Wisdom Blend medicinal classes, and Honolulu pop-up dinners.

Survival Gardens: Historical Resistance Through Filipinx Foodways in Hawai'i

For the last ten years, I have been reading and researching Filipina/o/x culture, foodways, literature, and history in Hawai'i. I was hungry to learn more stories about how Filipina/o/xs fought against discriminatory and oppressive practices and how they demonstrated resilience, resourcefulness, and resistance during the plantation era through food. For this section, I center the oral histories of Filipina/o/x plantation workers compiled by the University of Hawai'i's Center for Oral History as well as the unpublished memoir of my paternal grandmother Beatrice Galase. In amplifying these Filipina/o/xs voices and lived experiences with what I am calling "Survival Gardens," I invoke my Naimas methodology that aims to reclaim, recover, and reconnect our present-day Filipina/o/x community since many Filipino families grow vegetables for their daily consumption that continue to exist in urban and suburban areas and are not limited to plantation history, but grew out of it that. Survival Gardens are an example of a feminist standpoint epistemology informed by archival generational memory.

Saranillio's "Alternative Economies for Alternative Futures" (2014) and Machida's "Devouring Hawai'i: Food, Consumption, and Contemporary Art" (2013) speak to how food functions as an alternate economy. Saranillio suggests, "alternate economies, especially land-based Indigenous economies, also offer the "material conditions of resistance"—the ability to sustain resistance via autonomy that makes a community less vulnerable and controllable by employers,

creditors, developers, and potential thieves".[5] While Machida explains, "Food equally exists in complex relation to material culture, like other communities, acquires histories, values, and "social lives" through human usage that are invested with multiple layers of meaning.[6] In this light, Filipino women and men in Hawai'i have been participating in these alternate economies of resistance and meaning making through what I call survival gardens. These survival gardens were planted to supplement their meager pay and to provide their families with food. These survival gardens were planted away from the camps to avoid any adverse reaction or reprimand from plantation owners. These gardens are not to be confused with plantation gardens or victory gardens where plots of land were assigned to plantation workers to reduce overhead for planters. Victory gardens also were used during war time to supplement rations and reduce food costs. The survival garden has multiple meanings for Filipina/o/xs because it represents the transmission of ancestral Philippine-household and cultural knowledge to younger generations in Hawai'i. It also represents a history of how Filipina/o/xs were the embodiment of self-sustaining practices and values they learned in the Philippines in times of oppression, poverty, and scarcity that they experienced in Hawai'i.

In order to combat colonial mentality and resist discriminatory practices, Filipina/o/x women engaged in alternative economies (planting, gathering, fishing, and sharing) and retained some form of Filipina/o/x foodways in Hawai'i despite the colonial foodways education they might have received or was passed down to them. An example of one of these Filipina/o/x narratives is from my grandma's memoir. My grandma, Beatrice Galase (currently 89 yrs old), grew up on the plantation in Waikapū, Maui from 1933 to 1945, until the end of WWII. She is the daughter of plantation laborers who arrived in the islands in the 1920s with their parents from the Philippines. I specifically chose my grandma Bea because she wrote an unpublished memoir and shared with me her rich knowledge and memories of life growing up on the plantation. Particularly compelling are her foodways memories that were tied to almost every aspect of their daily lives. For example, Grandma Bea recalled:

> We had to weed the garden and water the plants making sure that everything is neat and nothing wasted and when dried already the plants we would pull it out and then we plant again seeds so that we comfortably have vegetables in the garden.[7]

5. Saranillio, D. (2014). Alternative Economies for Alternative Futures. In A. Yamashiro & N. Goodyear-Kaopua (Ed.), *The Value of Hawai'i 2: Ancestral Roots, Oceanic Visions* (pp. 197-206). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press
6. Machida, Margo. "Devouring Hawai'i: Food, Consumption, and Contemporary Art." *Eating Asian America: A Food Studies Reader*. Ed. Robert Ku, Martin F. Manalansan and Anita Mannur. New York: New York University Press, 2013. 323-350.
7. Galase Beatrice...unpublished memoir, 2015

She was taught at a young age how to cultivate the garden and grow their own food not only as a means of sustenance but also as a means of contributing to an alternative economy. In other words, my grandma participated in an alternative economy that was not completely reliant on their meager plantation wages. Her participation in an alternative economy does not only live in the past as a nostalgic memory but a living history as she shared her knowledge of cultivating her garden with her grandchildren and great grandchildren. My grandma's experience is not unique as most Filipino families had a survival garden. In an interview with Theresa Delos Reyes, the daughter of a Filipino laborer from Maui, she recalls her own family's survival garden:

> Always fresh from the garden. My mother buy only fish, when the peddler come around and sell fish. That's all. Not meat. My father used to use beans, potato leaf, anything that you find in Filipino food. Especially Kalamunggay, they call. That's the main food for Filipinos. Pumpkin, squash, onion, green onions—that's the easiest to grow. See, everything from the garden. He raised bananas for us to eat, papaya, anything. Eggplants, oh, so much.[8]

Rosalina Labrador Wagner, the daughter of a stable man from Koloa plantation, remembers how foraging and picking wild fruit was one of her chores:

> Oh, yes, oh, yes. And they were in abundance, they were wild. Like those Filipino beans. And the pumpkin and the squash, they almost grew wild. And the tomatoes. And then, too, we would pick up fruits. They had wild guavas and those plums. As far as I can recall, the sugarcane, we ate a lot.[9]

Filipina/o/x laborers and their families coming from the Philippines brought with them their Filipino foodways and their culture through survival gardens. In the garden, they planted memories from home. They weren't planting rosemary and thyme but Marrungay (horseradish), Talong (eggplant), Ampalaya (bitter melon), and Kalabasa (squash or pumpkin). They were planting the foods they and their families had eaten for generations. These survival gardens also contributed to the fight for equality during plantation strikes that relied heavily on community organizing and support to supply

8. Delos Reyes, Theresa. "Oral History Interview." Nishimoto, W. S., & University of Hawaii at Manoa. (2003). *Pioneer Mill Company: A Maui sugar plantation legacy* Honolulu, Hawai'i: Center for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

9. Wagner Labrador, Rosalina. "Oral History Interview." *Kōloa: An Oral History of a Kaua'i Community*. Honolulu, Hawai'i: Center for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 1988.

plantation laborers' soup kitchens with fresh produce.[10] Filipina/o/xs were not just hardworking, hospitable, and friendly but also fierce fighters for workers rights and social justice.

Sariwa: Filipinx Women in Today's Filipina/o/x Foodways "De"Colonial Project

Hannah Tavares in her book, *Pedagogies of the Image Photo-archives, Cultural Histories, and Postfoundational Inquiry* argues, "Filipinas rarely appear as a subject of interest or meaningful study or agency" and "In conventional histories of sugar plantations in Hawai'i the focus is often on male experiences with very little attention to women let alone Filipina and their lived experiences of structural privation".[11] In this section, I spotlight three Filipina/o/x women that bring to life in various ways my Naimas methodology, but also attend to Tavares' critique. Esperanza Garcia, Nicki Garces and Natalie Aczon are just a few of the Filipina/o/xs in Hawai'i engaged in preparing Filipino food, owning Filipina/o/x restaurants, bakeries, or perpetuating Filipina/o/x culture through food. Through observation and personal correspondence I learned how these Filipina/o/x women are demonstrating and employing "fresh" ways towards strengthening, (r)evolutionizing, representing Filipino foodways in Hawai'i. By reclaiming, recovering, and respecting our ancestors' knowledge and traditions to increase our vitality and maintain our integrity and identity.

Esperanza Garcia—"If you eat my food, you are family"

Esperanza "Espe" Gabrial Garcia's tour at the Hawai'i Plantation Village (HPV) magically transported visitors back in time to the plantation era. I called Espe's tour the "Filipino Food tour" as she was the only Filipina/o/x docent that would engage all of her visitors' through an audience participatory and multi-sensory approach that was captivating. She told her personal stories of her Filipina/o/x family and their everyday lives, Filipino foodways and how they grew their garden and cooked their food, and the history of the Filipino camp on the plantation. Now a retired docent, Espe would only conduct her Filipino food tours on Mondays at 10:00 a.m. Espe would only hold these tours on Mondays because it would take her all weekend to prepare the food she would share during the tour and at the end of the tour from the back of her car. Espe called it her food ministry. The food Espe would make included a

10. Hiura, Arnold, Rao Huo, and Paiva D. Sakamoto. *From Kau Kau to Cuisine: An Island Cookbook, Then and Now*. Honolulu: Watermark Pub, 2013.
11. Tavares, H. M. (2016). *Pedagogies of the image: Photo-archives, cultural histories, and postfoundational inquiry*. Springer.

variation of adobo, chicken long rice, cone sushi, maki sushi, chili, and different types of local desserts such as manju and bread pudding. The different food that she prepared is a representation of the complex history and intimate relationships Filipinos built on the plantation with other ethnic groups that make Filipina/o/xs in Hawai'i's experiences and history unique. Filipina/o/x food and foodways were also shared with our Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, Okinawan, Korean, Portuguese, European neighbors, workmates, supervisors, and plantation owners. As Yanos states earlier, "this was an America of its own making in a local context of the many Asian cultures and indigenous Pacific base that formed Hawai'i's ethno-racial mix".[12]

The Hawai'i Plantation Village is an outdoor museum composed of restored buildings and replicas of plantation houses, stories, infirmary, bathhouse and manager's office. Each time we walked through the tunnel to enter the main area where the plantation homes were, Espe would tell students and visitors that we were going back in time. Each time was spellbinding. Whether it was with school groups with elementary children or with college students, I noticed that people would come out of that tunnel with excitement and curiosity— looking forward to what would happen next. At every stop she would bring out different things from her bag of goodies. At the Tamarind tree she would bring out Tamarind candy wrapped in orange cellophane translucent paper that was twisted at the ends. Sometimes she would pull out ice cold pre-cut slices of mango from a plastic Tupperware container that would go along with the stories she shared of her childhood. At the achuete tree, she would share how it's used in Filipino dishes; also known as "the lipstick tree," she would tell us to take a seed and rub it along our lips. That way, our lips would be tinted red— that is what the tree was famous for. Espe brought history to life and our ancestors' stories to the forefront. For many Filipinos in Hawai'i, this history has been glossed over or systematically left out in our K-12 system. This lack of representation within the education system has led to either a negative identity formation for young Filipinx/a/os or it has led them to primarily identify as Local and not Filipino. For many Filipina/o/x immigrant descendants in Hawai'i, our history and language has either been forgotten or silenced. As historian Arthur Bestor states, "Deprive me of my historical consciousness, and in the most literal sense, I do not know who I am".[13] Espe's Hawai'i Plantation Village food tour is a conduit to supporting Filipina/o/x Americans of immigrant descent in their effort to recover, reclaim, and embrace their Filipinx identity. As Espe retells her stories, they inform and shape the historical consciousness and post-memory of visitors, locals, and school children. As Marianne Hirsh states, post memory is for people

12. Yano, C. R., & Adams, W. (2013). Tasting America: The Politics and Pleasure of School Lunch in Hawai'I. *Eating Asian America: A Food Studies Reader.*
13. Abram, Ruth. "Harnessing the Power of History." In Museums, Society, Inequality. Sandell, Richard, London: Routledge, 2002.

who never experienced an event first-hand and may visit museums to fulfill a need to adopt and develop it.[14] Paul Williams adds by noting, "one does not remember alone but also uses the memories of others, and that one grows up surrounded by phenomena and gestures, sentences and images, architecture and landscape that are full of strange pasts that preceded the subject".[15] Espe's stories, which are her personal memories, are crucial in forming a historical consciousness and post-memory for visitors and for descendants of plantation immigrants. Espe's family's story is similar to the thousands of Filipina/o/x immigrants and non-Filipina/o/x immigrants on the plantation. In her tour, Espe goes beyond the scripted narrative as she tells many stories of her father, mother, and other Filipina/o/x immigrants on the plantation. Espe's Filipino food tour captured how effective and meaningful household and cultural knowledge can be to experience living history. This has now inspired more Filipina/o/x educators to continue her legacy as a docent, telling Filipina/o/x stories to reclaim our cultural knowledge and wisdom through storytelling about our Filipino Foodways. At the end of every tour Espe would say, "If you eat my food, you are family."

Nicki Garces—Nanang Michaela's Wisdom Blends

When you think of the Filipino Foodways in Hawai'i, one doesn't usually think of the Filipina/o/x plants/food as medicine. Yet, ancestral food is a powerful medicine that has the ability to heal and cure diseases from Western life that touts overconsumption. Nicki Garces is an information professional, Violet and Vivian fund coordinator with the Consuelo Foundation, and also a plant medicine practitioner. Nicki's work intimately intertwines the Filipina/o/x ancestral knowledge she receives from her Nanang (Ilokano for mother) with indigenous wisdom and knowledge from numerous indigenous plant medicine practitioners, and roots her work in the relationship between the land, people, and plants in Hawai'i. Nicki's business is called Nanang Michaela Wisdom Blends. She named her small business after Michaela, her great grandmother, who taught Nicki's mother plant medicine and to honor her matrilineal line. "Wisdom Blends" came from her friend and teacher Dr. Christine Lipat. The term "wisdom blends" demonstrates how Filipina/o/x people were and are wise, smart, innovative, and knowledgeable about their connection to plants and the natural world, which helped them survive and thrive all these years—even through colonization.[16] Colonial food practices sever us from the natural world

14. Hirsch M. (2012). *The generation of postmemory : writing and visual culture after the holocaust*. Columbia University Press.
15. Williams, Paul. "Looming Disaster: Memorial Museums and the Shaping of Historic Consciousness" Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities. New York: Berg, 2007.
16. Nicki Garces, email message to author, August 22, 2022

on every level. From the food we buy in the grocery store to the way we think of nutrition and healing. The term "Blend" represents the blending of traditional and Western concepts.

In addition to her line of ancestral-inspired products, Nicki also teaches introduction to Filipino plants as medicine classes. She began teaching classes in 2021 when Jeanne Batallones from Hawai'i Community College asked her to teach a class for her Samahang Filipino Club during Filipino American History Month. Nicki takes the class beyond just learning about Filipino plants and how to use them, but also incorporates the history of these medicinal plants and explains why these cultural traditions were sometimes not passed on. According to Nicki, colonization is the primary reason why these practices and traditions were not passed down. These traditions did not have the same value as western medicines.[17] One of these traditions that Nicki wants to teach is how to make Lana (distilled coconut oil used for healing works), traditionally, made during a full moon. It is during the nights of the full moon that there is more energy and power (mana). Nicki states that it is important that Filipina/o/x people have this knowledge and wisdom. She emphasizes the fact that this knowledge helped our ancestors to survive colonization and begin to decolonize. Nicki believes by uplifting our ancestral cultural knowledge, we can better understand that our people were smart and innovative and that today and tomorrow we are able to take care of ourselves.[18] Our people once had a relationship with the land. We have similar stories like Kalo of the Kānaka Maoli. We come from nature. Reciprocal nature. Nicki's work is decolonizing the perspectives on what is healing and medicine. It is holistic when it encompasses not only the physical, but also the spiritual, mental, and environmental relationship. She tries to show that Filipina/o/xs have a body of knowledge and wisdom that allows them to survive and thrive for years.

Nicki also emphasizes that in the Philippines, traditional medicine is part of the health system there. Her teacher, Apu Adman (Rolando Gomez Comon) of Hilot Academy of Binabaylan is a sought-after consultant and continues to advocate traditional healing modalities. Nicki shared that there have been research results on the effectiveness of herbal medicines. Most recently, dangla/lagundi (*Vitex negundo*), virgin coconut oil, and tawa tawa/gata gata (*Euphorbia pilulifera Linn.*) have been proven effective in treating people with COVID-19.[19]

Nicki's vision and dream for Filipina/o/xs in Hawai'i are for them to look within their families to remember and (re)learn about plant medicine that got passed down in their families and to perpetuate it. She sees her workshops as a catalyst for that. She also wants to combine her expertise and passion for library and information science

17. Garces, email message
18. Garces, email message
19. Garces, email message

training and plant medicine: to have a repository of Filipino plant medicine in Hawai'i.[20] This repository would include books and online resources that we do not have to worry about getting lost or corrupted, and will always be available. This repository would honor embodied Filipina/o/x relations to medicinal plants as archive. This can forward Filipina/o/x plant medicines for future generations. It's like a return to the natural world—just like our ancestors who experienced life in a more holistic way.

Natalie Aczon—Finding Her Heritage Through Food

Natalie Aczon is a veteran and trailblazer in the hospitality and culinary scene in Hawai'i with her strong background in entrepreneurship, marketing, development, and project management she developed over decades of work in the food industry. Natalie used her expertise to inform her work as she was pivotal in starting and managing longtime friend and Filipino Chef Ed Kenney's restaurants Mud Hen Water and Mahina & Suns. At the age of four, Natalie and her family moved from Ilocos Norte, Bakara to Waikīkī, Hawai'i. Growing up in Hawai'i, Natalie found it hard to be proud of being Filipino because Filipina/o/xs suffered colonial legacies of being categorized as only blue collar workers such as groundskeepers, hotel maids, maintenance workers, housekeepers, dishwashers, cooks, or nurses. According to Natalie, Filipinos were never seen as people of talent, status, and intelligence so she always steered away from telling people that she was of Filipinx/a/o heritage. She used to only identify as someone who was born and raised in Hawai'i.[21]

Natalie's story is quite common as generations of Filipina/o/xs in Hawai'i experienced the same stigmatization of their cultural identity and considered themselves anything but Filipina/o/x and predominantly identified as local. However, what makes Natalie's story and experience significant and powerful is that in her 60s, she is now creating spaces for herself and others to re-connect, re-member, and re-learn their Filipina/o/x foodways and history. Natalie is courageous as she resists the status quo and the insidious legacies of colonialism that taught us to stay quiet and not ask why our Filipina/o/x culture, history, traditions were not taught in school, and were absent in restaurants, or in plate lunches. At home Filipina/o/x parents worked extremely hard to make sure their children assimilated to American or local culture, and even rejected where they came from leaving generations of Filipina/o/x Americans in Hawai'i conflicted.

Natalie's work with food reclaims cultural knowledge and recovers ancestral wisdom that was mired in shame. Her work embraces women's maternal and household knowledge which Tamara

20. Garces, email message
21. Natalie Aczon, email message to author, August 31, 2022

Beauboeuf-Lafontant affirms, "once we begin to see caring and mothering in larger, sociohistorical realms, we can recognize how in sharing knowledge we can also share power".[22] Natalie is taking part in the "de" linking process that not only removes but redresses the traces and legacies of colonialism specifically by choosing to learn, teach, and create spaces that champion Filipina/o/x ingredients such as malunggay (horseradish) or ube, which have been staple and major crops in the Philippines for over 400 years and part of our ancestral food, over Western ingredients. She is choosing Filipina/o/x dishes such as chicken papaya with ginger, turmeric, lemongrass, and malunggay over chicken noodle soup. To choose and prepare these specific ingredients and dishes is a creative act of resistance.[23]

The impetus for Natalie to step out from behind the scenes and enter the Filipina/o/x foodways scene in Hawai'i was to put her story, voice, and food on the table. It was her desire to learn more about why and how her parents came to Hawai'i in the late 1940s, and to be an example to her sons who bring her love and joy. During the pandemic, Natalie started researching her family's history and exploring recipes she collected from her cousins, aunties, co-workers and those from her childhood memories.[24] Natalie is fortunate that her 96-year-old mom is still alive and sharp. She is able to share what Delgado Bernal calls women's knowledge or household knowledge and asserts, "the application of household knowledge, specifically in the form of bilingualism, biculturalism, and commitment to communication, challenges the transmission of "official knowledge" that seeks disregard and invalidate "informal knowledge".[25] Love, caring, mothering, and household knowledge are all known as women's epistemologies that transmit vital ways of knowing to home chefs like Natalie. Therefore, Natalie's use of household knowledge as a home chef should not be undermined and demeaned by the notion that it is not considered "formal knowledge" and more significant than "informal knowledge." Although she credits her Filipina/o/x foodways knowledge to her family, aunties, and cousins for her household knowledge she also uses "formal knowledge" to research the origins and history of recipes that reconnect with her Filipina/o/x heritage.

In March of 2022 she decided to share her recipes at a dinner she hosted with an intimate group of friends who influenced the creative side of her life for the last 20 years.[26] After that dinner she

22. Beauboeuf-Lafontant, Tamara. "A Womanist Experience of Caring: Understanding the Pedagogy of Exemplary Black Women Teachers." *The Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education*. 34.1 (2002): 71-86.
23. Esquibel, C. R., & Calvo, L. (2013). Decolonize Your Diet. *Nineteen Sixty Nine*, *2*(1).
24. Aczon, email message
25. Bernal, Dolores D. "Critical Race Theory, Latino Critical Theory, and Critical Raced-Gendered Epistemologies: Recognizing Students of Color as Holders and Creators of Knowledge." *Qualitative Inquiry*. 8.1 (2002): 105-126.
26. Aczon, email message

was asked to create a pop-up dinner. This was how her journey with pop-up dinners called, "Finding My Heritage Through Food" was born. Her first pop-up included recipes that she was comfortable cooking, to which she added her own unique spin. Natalie's recipes always use locally grown products. She believes in supporting local producers and farmers and was inspired by chef Ed Kenney to "live local." Her menu included: appetizer—Shishito stuffed w/local pork sausage lumpia; starter—fresh egg crepe filled with sauteed cabbages topped with sweet garlic sauce; soup—chicken papaya with ginger, turmeric, lemongrass and moringa, sides pickled bittermelon, chayote, red radish, daikon, carrots, and peppers; main entrees—kare kare, adobong pusit, and mung bean stew. For dessert she served halo halo with local mango, mountain apple, dragonfruit, rambutan, and preserved sweet mung beans, coconut gel, palm fruit, and ube ice cream with shaved ice. The dinner was a huge success; it sold out in two days and she has a waiting list for her next dinner.

Natalie's future goal is to have regular monthly pop-up dinners, cooking classes, and a podcast. She also is planning on having Filipino food and culture classes at the Culinary Institute of the Pacific. What is evolutionary about Natalie's work is that she is an advocate and promoter for up-and-coming Filipina/o/x Chefs in Hawai'i who are also hosting pop-up dinners specific to different regions in the Philippines such as, "A Night on the Bicol Express," inspired by the country's first trans-regional train by Mama's Boy Foods. This pop-up dinner included a five-course journey that included Adobong manok sa tinutong na kanon, pancit bato, tulingan kinilaw, Bicol express, and ube bibingka. These chefs, home cooks, and explorers are also learning about their heritage through food. Natalie is helping to amplify their work to bring it to the community and ultimately to the mainstream for more Filipina/o/xs to experience and be proud of our Filipina/o/x food and culture in Hawai'i. Natalie believes Filipina/o/xs need to come together as a movement in Hawai'i and that we will get farther together than doing it separately.[27]

In their own distinct ways Espe, Nicki, and Natalie exemplify my Naimas methodology as they share their stories (soul consciousness) and those of their mothers, aunties, and ancestors that came before them through immigration. They are also exploring memories and re-membering, which is intimately intertwined to the 'Āina, its people (Kānaka Maoli) and the shared hope and struggle to reconnect to our Hawaiian and Filipina/o/x languages, cultures, histories, and foods. We can learn to name and embrace our generational trauma brought forth by colonialism. At the same time, we can amplify our generational strengths, to (r)evolutionize, and raise a generation of Filipina/o/xs that are grounded in Filipina/o/x epistemologies.

27. Aczon, email message

Conclusion

Writing this article has been a humbling journey to listen, learn, and reflect on the ways critical Filipina/o/x foodways in Hawai'i are being used as an entry point to facilitate more opportunities for decolonization. My Naimas methodology seeks to re-learn what knowledge has been pushed aside, forgotten, buried, or discredited. Filipina/o/x food and foodways is clearly an alternative archive to re-learn, re-connect, and to re-member. It also is a means to empower, heal, and transform Filipina/o/x lives, lived experiences, and to honor our ancestors. We have an opportunity to decolonize our diets by first learning from our families and those in our local community. What recipes, stories, and cooking skills can you learn and share? What is the history behind these recipes, food, the way it was grown or produced? What kind of Filipino herbs or vegetables can you grow today? What local Filipina/o/x bakery or restaurant can you support? What kinds of Filipina/o/x food and foodways relationships can you build or reconnect within your daily life? Explore what makes Filipina/o/x food in Hawai'i Naimas. We must continue to create spaces in education (critical, feminist, foodways), ethnic studies (history, critical-consciousness, identity, and agency), and food studies (social biography, nakem-soul consciousness/decoloniality, narratives, memory and meaning) but also in institutions and in the community. In this way, we help our children, families, and communities understand their relationship to their food, history, heritage, and stories, which are vital to the well-being, healing, and empowerment of a multitude of generations of Filipina/o/xs in Hawai'i.