

Anarchist forms of organizing and *bayanihan* (solidarity) in the face of a Philippine state of calamities

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This article sheds light on recent *bayanihan* (“solidarity”) actions and aspirations in response to the combined calamities of government, pandemic, and climate change in the Philippine archipelago. Through perspectives shared with me by Philippine anarchists and activists, I discuss understandings of Tagalog-language personhood boundaries in *kapwa* (“shared self”) collectivism, and the functions of mutual aid or *bayanihan* in addressing climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. The intention of this article is to expand the framework of diaspora scholarship on Philippine Studies beyond a hegemonic U.S.-centric lens to a global perspective: I am also highlighting contemporary anarchist or grassroots Filipinx/Philippine voices concerning anti-hierarchical community organizing.

The first part of this article describes local and diaspora anarchist perspectives on *kapwa* (shared self or self in other) collectivism and *bayanihan* solidarity in theory and in praxis and situates these concepts within the wider framework of Huey P. Newton’s Intercommunalism. I emphasize the dynamics and features of communalism and hyperlocal Intercommunalism, which are intrinsic to Philippine collectivist beingness and *kapwa*.¹

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In the second part, I build on Philippine social ontologies with watery and oceanic images to conceptualize forms of diaspora and liminal relationality. I configure the ocean space (*dagat*), the intertidal shoreline, the mountainous hinterlands (*bundok*), and the resistance space of the “*palengke*” or marketplace as analogous to community pantries by way of thinking through “Filipino” beingness and anticolonial resistance or fugitivity.

Maritime migration histories from the Philippine archipelago are used to highlight the metaphorical and material imagery of waters, voyaging, or fishing practiced in the places Filipinx/a/o travel to and have settled down.² Directional agency towards the *bundok* (mountains) can be found in histories of marooning (*marronage*)³ involving anticolonial resistance or fugitivity grounded in “zones of refuge,” while the estuarine space is the liminality from which I theorize “spiritual” collectivism and intercolonial solidarity.

Furthermore, to decenter nation-states in favour of topographies in motion, I theorize the positionality of beingness among Philippine circular/liminal migration or *balikbayan* (return or returning migrants) vis-à-vis the diaspora and the “homeland.” Revisiting the (often diametrically opposed) differentiation of Philippine identities between those in the archipelago and those in diaspora, I highlight the in-between liminal or “floating subjectivity”⁴ of Filipino Overseas Foreign Workers (OFWs) and return migrants.

I propose multiple forms of relational or comparative diaspora perspectives due to the archipelago’s diverse ethnicities and islands and assorted intercolonial and intergenerational dispersals across the globe. The circular or liminal positionality of the *balikbayan* return migrant vis-à-vis a “diaspora” or “homeland” beingness requires specific attention, as it disrupts unidirectional models of migration scholarship focused on Filipinx-American frameworks.⁵ I conclude considering the spiritual or collective consciousness of *bayanihan*, interrogating the idea of a syncretized “Filipino” beingness beyond the Tagalog-centric *kapwa*, arguing for to a relational solidarity across waters/land boundaries.

A Note on Language Use

Notwithstanding critiques of a hegemonic Tagalog-inflected discourse from “imperial Manila” encompassing the peripheral provinces and regions, all “Filipino language” terms are Tagalog language in origin. My study is a place-based and not ethnic-based analysis in which Tagalog characteristics have been conflated to signify a broader “*kapwang* Filipino” sentiment beyond metro Manila’s borders.⁶ I am referencing an intrinsic collectivism and relational kinship in community or neighborhood on a local level.

State of Calamities

One of the hardest-hit Southeast Asian nations during the COVID-19 pandemic, inhabitants of the archipelago known as the Philippines are being simultaneously confronted with a repressive state apparatus, volatile regional actors, and the frontline impacts of climate change. The archipelago experiences an average of 20 typhoons a year and floods induce landslides during the rainy season. People are also subject to intense persecution, including extrajudicial killings of peasants and Indigenous environmental defenders standing in the way of corporate landgrabs. Surviving in the archipelago belies the rhetoric of local politicians’ and Development Studies experts regarding the people’s “resilience” in the face of these calamities.⁷

Recent community organizing in the archipelago has taken place within the context of various local and imperial antagonists: an authoritarian government in power from 2016 to 2022 (President Rodrigo Roa Duterte’s successor, Bongbong Marcos, will likely continue his style of rule); a counterinsurgent Maoist National Democratic Movement⁸ in the hinterlands; and Chinese imperialism, which involves land grabs for mining, the leveraging of trade indebtedness, territorial incursions in the Palawan Sea and West Philippine Sea, and overfishing, all of which threaten the livelihoods of Indigenous and peasant communities as well as fisherfolk.⁹

With respect to authoritarian governance, the anarchist Bas Umali federation identifies integral executive structures as a major force of

impoverishment impacting cause local populations working in fisheries and agriculture.¹⁰ The Duterte administration instituted “Anti-Terror-Bill” targets any form of government critique and punitive “community quarantines” limit movement.¹¹ Peasants, fisherfolk and Indigenous land stewards are under constant threat of “red-tagging”¹² as “terrorists” or “communists,” thus opening them to targeting as part of the government’s “war on drugs” extrajudicial killing. Quarantines often act as de-facto house arrests, limiting and endangering workers whose livelihoods depend on jobs such as driving public transportation vehicles or street hawking.¹³

Despite these dangers, youth activists, frontline communities in the global climate movement, self-identifying anarchist groups, and organizers both on the ground and in the diaspora (including some Maoists) organize to support the livelihoods of those most impacted. This involves the circulation of resources and the spread of anarchic practices rooted in Philippine collectivist values. Emblematic of these practices is the organizing of transient “community pantries,” as well as bartering and trading to foster self-sufficient fishing communities. Anarchist organizers constantly face direct repression in response to activist initiatives and insidious instrumentalization or co-optation of their projects and concepts (for example, government appropriation of the term *bayanihan* during its COVID-19-related economic “aid” program).¹⁴ In the following section, I dialogued with self-identifying anarchists of Philippine descent in the archipelago and its diaspora concerning their interpretations of *kapwa* and the *bayanihan*, particularly when these Tagalog concepts are invoked in disaster settings. The activists come from diverse Philippine ethnicities and engage with culturally-specific collectivist forms of enacting solidarity.

Kapwa, Bayanihan, and Barangay

Kapwa or “*kapwa tao*” is a personhood term formulated during Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino Psychology Indigenization efforts in the 1960-70s).¹⁵ It is often translated as “shared self” or “self-in-other,” with the *ka-* particle depicting a closing or bridging of a ‘space’ or ‘gap’ (“*puwang*”).¹⁶ The attribution of *Kapwa* is a “community virtue” ethic that is frequently used in the diaspora. Despite its Tagalog lin-

guistic derivation, its common usage amongst peoples of the diaspora highlights the connections Filipino/a/o subjects have to each other, as well as their/our perception of the archipelago and its people.¹⁷ With this in mind, I deploy *Kapwa* as a useful concept detached from the physical space of the archipelago itself which fosters meaning in the affective “shared space” of the collective imagination or “imagined community” of the diaspora.¹⁸ Thus, its meaning shifts from Tagalog-centric territorial boundaries to a stabilized function of *communitas* in and between the diasporas. As Simoun Magsalin from the anarchist educational and publishing collective *Bandilang Itim* (Tagalog for “Black Flag”) notes, “Filipinos already know mutual aid as *bayanihan*. Mutual aid or *bayanihan* is a mode of cooperation based on solidarity. It is us helping each other because it benefits all.”¹⁹ Gertrudes R. Ang relates *bayanihan* to the terms *bayan* and *bayani* (“hero”):

The term *bayanihan* has been identified by social scientists and other observers as an ancient Filipino custom, symbolic of the Filipino group work. It is derived from the Tagalog root word *bayan*, a town or nation. To be faithful to this comradeship or tasks of *bayanihan* was considered, from early times, to be *bayani* (...)²⁰

Furthermore, Ang connects the symbolism of oneness in a community spirit to *bayanihan*: “It may also be expressed as *pagkakaisa* (to be one, to be united).”²¹ These forms of collectivism emphasize their significance in *feeling* and in *doing solidarity*.

The traditional pre-colonial organizing unit of the *barangay*, which is now the name of urban and rural sub-municipal townships, is another Filipino collectivist arrangement that anarchists utilize for theoretical deliberations on hyperlocal confederation.²² The term *barangay* references a type of traditional boat and reflects the unitary maritime nature of the archipelago, as evoked by Filipino Overseas Foreign Workers (OFWs). I will now expand on the theoretical implications of these collectivist values building on a number of discussions coordinated by Filipino anarchist Simoun Magsalin.²³

Anarchist Perspectives

Filipino anarchist “J.M.” regards *kapwa* and *bayanihan* as “a great example of the camaraderie inherent in Filipino culture”²⁴ signaling foundational cultural predilections toward anarchist/communalist forms of organizing: “I could say that these values show how inherently capable the Filipino is on self-governance, as [Filipino] culture exemplifies mutuality upon the people.”²⁵ Anarchist Sata, however, points out that the two values are not culturally limited to Philippine and/or Tagalog collectivism, noting that “in most regions with pertinent natural disasters [including the Philippine archipelago], the sense of *kapwa* is very strong.”²⁶ Anarchist organizer Felipe de Silangan expands on the Philippine value of *Utang na loob* (“debt of gratitude”), noting it is part of a constellation of related collectivist concepts, including *kapwa* and *bayanihan*, which stem from traditional practices like “house transferring” (prevalent in rural areas, the durable bamboo stilt houses can be collectively lifted from the ground and carried to another site). While these terms may vary in usage within archipelago and diaspora-based communities, their overarching meaning embodies a “spirit of Philippine culture” beyond restrictive nationalist concepts.²⁷ In sum, anarchists’ interpretations suggest some of the tensions underlying notions of Philippine “community” and related moral obligations. The second part of this article addresses these tensions through an articulation of the spiritual and emotional bonds that accommodate kinship, bonds which unfold under conditions of migratory racial capitalism, diaspora remittances, and calls for reciprocal assistance.

***Bayanihan* organizing against disaster capitalism**

Despite ongoing governmental repression, initiatives such as those described in the widely distributed pamphlet “Paano Magsimula ng Bodegang Bayan/How To Start a Community Pantry” (ABOLISYON! Collective and Makò Micro-Press),²⁸ have been incredibly successful. Aimed at English and Tagalog-speaking audiences, the pamphlet circulated after the well-known Maginhawa community pantry (initiated April 14, 2021) was organized by local activist Patricia Non near the University of the Philippines Diliman campus (law enforcement

immediately “red-taged” Non).²⁹ Exemplifying economies of mutual aid sharing, a group of fisherfolk under the banner of the National Federation of Small Fisherfolk Organizations (PAMALAKYA), offered the neighborhood community 50kg of their day’s catch in tilapia fish at another community pantry held on April 19th.³⁰ A third community pantry in the district of Bacoor featured agricultural groups providing sweet potato and other produce in abundance.³¹ Mutual aid organizing was also apparent in the response to Typhoons Rolly and Ulysses in 2020³² and in the “*kapwa mangingisda*” (a *kapwa* of fisherfolk) involving YACAP (Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines) activists, who prepared packages of goods for Bacoor fisherfolk living under community quarantine.³³ It should be noted that these instances of anarchic organizing were not explicitly deemed to be “mutual aid initiatives.”³⁴ Nonetheless, they represent a “promising example of the potential of anarchism in the Philippines. It’s already here, growing from within the husk of these dead things (as it always does).”³⁵

To realize projects such as community pantries, anarchists fighting statism require “spaces where there is a questioning of the laws and social norms of society and a creative desire to constitute non-capitalist, collective forms of politics, identity, and citizenship.”³⁶ Correspondingly, the diaspora-based Anarchipelago Kollektive, which also has membership within the archipelago, contrasts its anti-authoritarian commitment with the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Philippine National Democratic movement, which in the past agitated for “leftist unity” in support of the election of reactionary president Duterte on the grounds that he was “anti-imperialist.”³⁷

Intercommunalist diaspora relations to and from the Archipelago

Highlighting diaspora connections, the Anarchipelago Kollektive frames *bayanihan* within a larger Intercommunalist strength of solidarity in struggle, linking class and racial oppressions in the United States and the Philippines:

As autonomist leftists, we are working to deconstruct the matrices of violence that crush all people living in

the margins. We draw parallels between the imprisonment and modern enslavement of Black and Brown peoples in the U.S. with the present reign of terror in the Philippines that has claimed more than thirteen thousand lives in the past year alone. Both states have used the veil of a “war on drugs” to legitimize the imprisonment and assassination of marginalized peoples.³⁸

From an Intercommunalist organizing perspective, the Philippine diaspora play an invaluable societal role by supporting local archipelago livelihoods through financial remittances and the coordination of international aid networks. I’ve observed instances of *bayanihan* mutual aid coordinated by diaspora/OFW networks in the United States through community pantries. One effort targeted the archipelago region of Bicol and another focused on the urban area of Cavite.³⁹ In both instances, funds from overseas facilitated the sharing of fresh produce and goods amongst those in need.⁴⁰

Filipina Anthropologist Dada Docot’s engagements with mutual aid reflects the intermediary and liminal role of *balikbayan* as solidarity asserts itself in defiance of state borders: she helped set up a community pantry in her hometown of Nabua, Bicol province (southern Luzon Island and adjacent islands) while living overseas in the United States. The project was sustained for 15 days with the collaboration of a friend of hers, a teacher residing in Nabua. Coordinated through Facebook, the pantry received donations in kind Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 4 PM, at the teacher’s residence.⁴¹ Honey Andres, also located in the United States, set up the Cavite Mutual Aid Network on April 8, 2021, in response to a large urban fire in one of Cavite province’s built-up areas. Diaspora remittances played a role in both initiatives.⁴²

Intercommunalist solidarities are grounded both in personal diasporic connections, and interconnecting struggles beyond the diaspora. Bandilang Itim, for example, position themselves in solidarity with Black Lives Matter (BLM) movements globally, arguing BLM is part of a wider struggle against American imperialism and global racial

capitalism:⁴³

We have more in common with the Black communities in the American Empire, living in fear for their lives every time a cop car comes blaring down their neighborhoods, than with the billionaires and land-owners in our own country. We have more in common with Syrian refugees than we do with the career politicians running this country nor with the political dynasties they hail from. We should not allow the State to co-opt the term Bayanihan! And we do that by actually engaging in acts of Bayanihan!⁴⁴

Bandilang Itim has encapsulated its outlook in a poster featuring a Philippine Eagle, a Tiger, and a Black Panther against a yellow background with the caption: “No Justice No Peace/ We Resist As One/ Our Struggles Interlinked/ To The Dissidents Branded As Terrorists by The State.”⁴⁵ The work references police abolition groups, BLM, and the struggle for democracy in Hong Kong.



The illustration was ‘tweeted’ with the following explanation: “We live in different parts of the world. We speak different languages. But our struggle is the same.” A second graphic referencing international solidarity, “Your Struggle is Ours/Freedom for Asians/Justice for Asian Americans/Our Struggle is Yours,” targets Chinese imperialism and state repression in East Turkestan, and the brutality of the military junta in Myanmar.⁴⁶ Bandilang Itim have also extended solidarity to Syrian refugees and the anarchists of Rojava (northern Syria) who played an instrumental role in the defeat of Daesh (“ISIS”). Bandilang Itim is disrupting nationalist frameworks promoting a distinct “Philippine” or “Filipinx” identity or ontology in the diaspora: anarchism goes beyond nation-state paradigms.

Theoretical concepts of communalism: Topographies of Community Spirit and Resistance

Theorizing beyond the *kapwa*, *bayanihan*, and *barangay* as examples of communalist or anarchic organizing, I will now address regional trade in maritime Southeast Asia, as well as Spanish imperial colonialism linking the archipelago to Latin America through the Acapulco-Manila Galleon trade. One conceptualization concerns the relation of coastal and fisherfolk practices to shorelines and the *dagat* (“ocean”). The other concerns the larger islands’ hinterlands or *bundok* (Tagalog for mountains) and the agency of fugitivity and anticolonial resistance through flight. I argue that both these spatial concepts rely on place-based and Inter/communalist dispositions.

Situating migration flows

Philippine migration involving what is currently designated as ‘the Americas’ is best defined as “intracolonial” rather than “transnational.”⁴⁷ Freed from a static and national “identity,” dynamic kinship ties can be accentuated as an “interspatial” or spiritual characteristic of Archipelagic solidarities. The essence of what it means “to be from/in the Philippines” is shifted from beingness to that of *feeling and doing*, as in the examples of *bayanihan* and localized experiences such as Docot’s and Andres’ community pantries and fundraising. Thus, an intertidal notion for Filipinx in the diaspora – no matter the explicit

ethnic heritage combinations or generations removed – is one that recognizes the integration of the overseas diaspora within the fluid meaning of being “Filipinx/a/o” and vice versa. Considering the circular migrations of peoples and remittances that codify contemporary Philippine relations, a comparative intertidal ontology forges a sociocultural consolidation between the *kapwa* dwelling in the archipelago and those who are *kapwa* in the diaspora. Positioning oneself as a collective in *kapwa* extends solidarities beyond oneself to others in affinity. The oceanic space (*dagat*), the intertidal shoreline of the estuary, the mountainous hinterlands (*bundok*), and the dissidence practices of community pantries and other manifestations of anarchic mutual aid are generative complexities shaping “Filipino” beingness and anticolonial resistance or fugitivity. Here I track a topography of relation and resistance: moving inland from the ocean to the community pantry *palengke* (“marketplace”).

Dagat

Barbara Andaya reiterates but also questions the notion of a “watery Zomia,”⁴⁸ which references James C. Scott’s concept of a liminal Southeast Asian territorial space of resistance or “zone of refuge.”⁴⁹ She argues that the “watery Zomia” is born not only of fugitivity from feudalist or state systems of governance, but from interrelations with land-based forms of rule. This maritime Zomia locates my first spatiality: oceanic (*dagat*) relations within the 200-kilometer limit of the Philippines’ “Economic Exclusive Zone” (an EEZ demarcates ocean territories deemed within the jurisdiction of a State by United Nations treaty) involving lands and trade histories between the archipelago and other islands in the region. I refer to sea-based peoples in close proximity to Southeast Asia’s overlapping EEZs, which are zones of contention involving land territories. Loma Cuevas-Hewitt cites Tongan anthropologist Epele Hau’ofa, who writes of spatial connectivity between the lands of the Pacific Ocean (a “sea of islands”) beyond the Philippines’ EEZ and its intertidal zones.⁵⁰

Estuary

Strictly speaking, it is essential to distinguish between a diaspora

which has resettled and adopted another citizenship, and the archipelago's OFWs or *balikbayan*, who journey in circular or return migrations, affirming their principal citizenship as "Philippine." This conceptualization is central for integrating overseas experience with remittances and circular migration, a fusion which the oceanic peoples of the Pacific share.⁵¹ Here, I turn to the liminal intertidal space of the estuary to theorize a "spiritual" collectivism and intercolonial solidarity. Throughout Southeast Asia, the estuary is a spiritual or metaphysical space wherein waters and tides intermingling with freshwater, saltwater, and land, as well as a geomorphological space of human settlement. This liminal intertidal or estuarine space relies on human and nonhuman interaction, and in times of global warming, it is also a space of greater precarity, subject to manifold typhoons. In the context of the Philippines, the government utilizes estuarine spaces for vanity projects, notably the dolomite sand reclamation of Manila Bay and the removal of fisherfolk for capitalization projects or other reasons. Both issues were protested by the fisherfolk of PA-MALAKAYA (National Federation of Small Fisherfolk Organization in the Philippines) and YACAP during the Global Climate Strike of September 24, 2021.⁵²

The spiritual space of the estuary relates to the "shared space" of *kapwa*, with its liminal personhood extending empathetically towards others, beyond the boundaries of a singular personhood of the self. Similarly, estuary and intertidal spaces extend beyond the boundaries of singular waters and lands, mixing waters with continuous geological terraforming. The liminal boundaries of spirit and space constitute a constant dynamic motion or action, as well as inherent agency involving a multitude of actors (human, land, water, air, breath). This in-between space of the estuary is a 'space-in-itself'.⁵³

The 'evaporation' of "estuary" from Tagalog in favour of the Spanish term *estero*, is an instance of linguistic colonial erasure in which "estuary"/ *estero* has come to signify polluted creeks and canals within Metro Manila that drain into Manila Bay. The less commonly used word, *wawa* ("river mouth" or "estuary") carries a relation to the *-wa* particle in *kapwa*, *puwang* (space/gap/interval/passage) and *luwang* (distance/breadth).⁵⁴ These linguistic configurations of an interspatial

or “shared space” of expansive spirit reclaim *estero* for the intertidal logics of anticolonial and decolonial resistance within the *kapwa* and *wawa*.

I engage with this intertidal space as a material, metaphorical,⁵⁵ and metaphysical concept in the sense of transcending physicality, merging into the spiritual in “breath.” *Wawa* also refers to “meaning” or “understanding,” further illustrating a heightened space of action in a spiritual sense: the highest form of *spirit* leads to full enlightenment of *mind*. This form of spiritual transcendence echoes the double-meaning of Hegelian *Geist*, that is, the self-realization of spirit/mind through community/unity of spirit.

My theoretical deliberations on this intertidal or “interspatial” space are indebted to Hawaiian etymologies, and thus Austronesian languages, which equate “breath” (*ea*) with “spirit.”⁵⁶ These analogies also parallel European philosophical theories of *pneuma* (spirit as “moving air” or “breath in motion”). In Nahua (the traditional territories of the Nahaus peoples encompass much of central America and Mexico) linguistic conceptualization, following Gloria Anzaldúa, I am conceptualizing an in-between-space (*nepantla*), and *nepantlera* are intermediaries that move within this physical and spiritual space.⁵⁷ *Kapwa* as “shared self,” then, depicts a personhood that is also a “shared space” of breath/spirit in interaction.

The cycles of the *balikbayan* are as circular as flows in *kapwa* relations. Akin to Abidin Kusno’s idea of “floating subjectivity,”⁵⁸ the *balikbayan* requires a voyaging in between conditions of citizenship within the nation-state, while embodying a conflictual paradox to the physical territoriality of the nation-state.⁵⁹ Here, I am borrowing from Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui’s *Aymara* (Andean Indigenous) concept of *ch’ixi* (“parallel coexistence of multiple cultural differences that do not extinguish but instead antagonize and complement each other”) modernity, whose imagery of miscellaneous-but-distinct mixing I liken to the mergences of estuarine waters. I am interested in a process that does not amalgamate/re-indigenize an essentialist notion of being but, instead, recognizes the need for coalition-building and solidarities between porous cultures.⁶⁰

Rivera Cusicanqui argues that in contrast to hybridity/*mêtissage/mestizaje* or Créolization discourses, *ch'ixi* does not insinuate a dilution or sterility in relation to the 'Other' (usually qualities of 'whiteness'). It instead highlights the motley of influences, combined but intact, in modernity.⁶¹ With regards to the archipelago, we are dealing not only with a motley of colonial and mercantile cultural influences, but also with localized or regional languages and place-based traditions: living within the boundaries of a nation-state is not the only way to enact "Filipinoness."⁶²

Palengke

Departing from proper Antillean word usage for "marooning,"⁶³ the terms *palenque* or *palenquero* more commonly designate respective *maroon* (descendants of Africans, often with mixed Indigenous ancestry) communities in the former Spanish colonies of continental Central and South America. What is striking is the shift in meaning of the *palinka* (wooden stakes or palisade, an enclosure oppositional to freedom): we have a transition from *palenque*, referencing early Spanish colonial fortifications in what is now Mexico, to fugitive *palanquero* communities in Imperial Spain's Central and South American territories that developed their own creole languages, to the term *palengke*, meaning "marketplace," in the Spanish empire's Philippine colony. The *palengke*, like the estuary, performs as a space of convergence. Community pantries are *palengke* in as much as they are anti-capitalist/anti-colonialist forms of barter and trade. These "markets" for local produce are social physical spaces for meeting; communities converge for exchange according to their needs, but also according to principles of sharing and abundance. The *palengke* is a feature of modernity emergent from intercolonial dialogues rooted in past and present, an enduring space of collectivism and resistance.

Bundok

Non-Tagalog languages which understand land or physical space in their functionality and in narrative or mnemonic registers for scientific knowledge, may depict more explicit linguistic analogies. It is noteworthy that Many Austronesian languages include unambiguous

words signifying directional demarcations, such as motion of going “towards the mountains” or “towards the ocean” (cf. *mauka* and *makai* in Hawaiian). These suggest interrelations between egocentric and geocentric orientations that are experiential and ‘lived’.

Bundok is a Tagalog word transposed into English by the U.S. military during the Philippine-American War (1899-1902) referencing local populations in resistance disappearing into the mountainous hinterlands (“the boondocks”). Hinterland-based insurgents are routinely associated with the *bundok* and this is generalized as a catch-all term for dissidents. For example, climate youth activist Jefferson Estela, targeted by the Anti-Terror-Bill, relates “They can’t accept what I do for the environment. They even called me an NPA [New Peoples’ Army, armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines] Whenever I go home, they always ask me how it was in the mountains.”⁶⁴

***Kapwa* and Revolutionary Relationality**

Conceived as watery zones of convergence, *palengkes* are both transitory and temporally liminal. They are dependent on human and non-human participants coming together for ‘living’ purposes. The emphasis on solidarity and ontology foregrounds feeling and doing, dynamic caring (as with *bayanihan*), a “sharing self” personhood realized through collective action in affective or spiritual attunement. The collective constitutes personhood, and this collectivity “does” the solidarity.

Filipino sociologist Erwin Rafael has argued that if revolutionaries are to transform the world anarchically, they must enact a systemic change in relations, and this, I would argue, is what animates the collectivism of *kapwa* and *bayanihan* in action:

Anarchist ideas on revolution are paradoxically proximate but distant at the same time. On one hand, the revolution is proximate because there are plenty of examples of non-hierarchic organizing, mutual aid, cooperative relations, and everyday resistance against domination that already provide materials for an an-

archist society (...). On the other hand, the revolution is distant because it requires not just a widespread transformation in form but also in substance of the relations that compose the world.⁶⁵

The *palengke* as a resistance practice; recourse to the *bundok*; the estuary as a spiritual or metaphysical space of convergence merging with *dagat*: all stand in relation with the spiritual *kapwa* and its unity in the *barangay*, an ocean vessel that is transposed as an affinity or political unit onto land.

The transience and dynamism of the *palengke* dislocates the Tagalog-centrism of *kapwa*. *Kapwa* collectivism's flowing waters incorporate diaspora spacetime and economic mutual aid, centering the feeling and doing of *bayanihan* as an intuitive or spiritual mode of being, like the *palengke* of community pantries. In their shared boundlessness, *kapwa*, *bayanihan*, and *palengke* suggest a form of transcendence akin to the "community of spirit" posited in Hegelian philosophy.⁶⁶

Conclusion

The imagery of oscillating tides and the mixing of saltwater and freshwater in the estuarine space provides a local "place-based" anchor removed from the concept of the nation-state. I ground anarchism in the land, waters, and spirits that give life to the archipelago known as "the Philippines." Anarchism escapes limits: simultaneously the *phenomenon* of estuarine waters and their landed perimeters can be situated elsewhere, in other archipelagos and other coasts, and adapted to the geographies and spirits of their fecund estuaries. Corresponding to the constant mixing of waters and interactive shorelines, "power" and spirit are continuously negotiated according to their particular constituents. For the diasporic "Filipinx/a/o" this means remaining in spirit to/with the Philippines, despite residing in another location, as long as constant relational concepts are *enacted* with other diasporic "Filipinx/a/o" or with the land itself, regardless of nation-state and citizenship entrapments.

Philippine onto-epistemologies of *kapwa*, *bayanihan*, and the (*ch'ixi*) syncretism and liminality of *palengke*, perpetuate resistance in dialogue with the environment and spirits in communication. Mobilizing intellect/mind towards “community of spirit” or *bayanihan* and solidarity, lies in “irrational” emotive actions of solidarity that enact resistance in not being “tamed.”

The act of *doing bayanihan* or solidarity requires introspection enveloping the topographies of the ocean, estuary, and mountains. *Bayanihan* also requires cultivating the feeling of collectivist personhood in the archipelago and its diaspora. We must relate to each other in *ch'ixi* modernity, with the constant and continuous ebbs and flows of the intertidal waters. The emphasis lies on an intuitive intersubjectivity: one that does not strive for an Indigenous or pre-modern form of “Filipino,” a “shamanist” babaylan. One recognizes the prevalence of what Neferti X. Tadiar terms “psychic structures,” which remain intrinsic and persistent throughout modern subjectification of the “irrational” Filipinx/a/o in or out of diasporic space.⁶⁷

Along with the Intercommunalist solidarity practiced by “overseas” Filipinx in their remittances to the archipelago and cross-border anti-state solidarities being enacted by anarchists in the Philippines, “community pantries” and dissident fishing communities are central to *doing bayanihan*. Fishing and farm-to-table is a reality of non-urbanized Philippine livelihoods to this day, and as such, communalist farming, fishing, and bartering practices are critical forms of mutual aid that intensely capitalized urban-based regions (such as the US) have much less recourse to.

Nevertheless, anarchists beyond the archipelago can still learn much from the ways in which their Philippine counterparts conceptualize and enact *bayanihan* as ‘caring for’ action, rather than a static “imagined community.” As Bandilang Itim explains:

Reflecting on past laws instituted to supposedly mitigate the effects of the pandemic, I think one term we should be keeping an eye on is “Solidarity,” which we at Bandilang Itim translate as “Bayanihan.” As

opposed to the “Patriotism” and “Nationalism” that is constantly being invoked by those in power and those with harmful motives (very often, the same people) to maintain unity with those who continue to exploit the inhabitants of this archipelago we’ve come to call the Philippines; We offer in its place Solidarity, caring for and supporting your fellow human being, recognizing that overcoming your shared weaknesses is how we build our shared strength.⁶⁸

The significance of *feeling* and *doing solidarity* is embodied in the *wawa* or estuaries, as is the related phenomena of Philippine/Filipinx being in *kapwa*. Linking *kapwa* to a geography or phenomenology of estuary, rather than a territorial nation-state, emphasizes the relationality of other places and people. Estuarine and metaphorical confluences of *kapwa* offer a relational virtue ethic that can be located in other Indigenous concepts of relational and ancestral lands,⁶⁹ while acknowledging the *ch’ixi* motley that constitutes the contemporary and historical ‘essence’ of the archipelago.

It is colonialism that brought the *palengke* term to the Philippines from Colombia, but these frameworks of thinking through “market-place” and *marronage* provide an intercolonial and hyperlocal collectivism across spacetimes. At the center of the *palengke* is an abundance and well-being of the communities themselves. The *palengke* physical space is a directional motion of fugitivity, originally steering towards the bundok or hinterlands, but it is also a metaphorical/metaphysical space of collective action and exchange, as the *wawa* spirit/intellect of the *wawa* estuary. Imagining and enacting *kapwa* as a collectivism that is imbued with spirits of estuarine waters and found in the natural phenomena shared with the Philippines as an archipelago, then decenters the nation-state and nationalist discourse of what it means to be “kapwang tao” or “kapwang Filipino.”

Notes

¹ De Guia, Katrin. 2005. *Kapwa: The Self in the Other. Worldviews and Lifestyles of Filipino Culture-Bearers*. Manila: Anvil Publishing.

² I will refer to the diaspora population in the United States mostly as “Filipinx”

and use the term “Philippine” as a nuancing adjective and noun when people have not explicitly self-identified with the label of “Filipino.”

³ “The complementary spatiality and motion of the land or mountains in relation to that of the coast is illustrated by the etymology of “*marronage*” and Taíno narratives of fugitivity embedded in the Spanish colonial word *cimarrón*, (from going ‘wild’ in the *címa* mountain summits or hinterlands). De Avilez Rocha, Gabriel. 2018. “Maroons in the Montes. Toward a Political Ecology of Marronage in the Sixteenth-Century Caribbean.” In: C. L. Smith et al. (eds.) *Early Modern Black Diaspora Studies*, 15–35.

⁴ Kusno, Abidin. 2012. “Peasants in Indonesia and the Politics of (Peri)Urbanization.” In: Arif Dirlik, Alexander Woodside & Roxann Prazniak. *Global Capitalism and the Future of Agrarian Society*.

⁵ Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr.’s inquiry as to if the Filipino “diaspora” is a factual “diaspora” captures the orientation of my article: “The concept barely captures the waves of migratory movements that have occurred across centuries under divergent conditions. And how could population groups that did not interact in the origin be subsumed under the umbrella of diaspora simply because of physical location outside the homeland? There is much heterogeneity and diversity within communities that come under the label. Moreover, the intellectuals and mobilizers, always in the minority, who conceptualize and construct the relationship between the dispersed population and the homeland also undergo generational change, with different predispositions, sensibilities, and even linguistic abilities, with memories of the homeland forgotten at one point but rekindled at a suitable historical moment. The process of ‘awakening’ suggests a teleology, even as many diasporist writers take a stance against the nation-state and its teleologies. Others have expressed concern about boundary maintenance issues: who among a dispersed people are in and out of the diaspora? Must there be a single, essentialized identity to qualify as a member of a diaspora?” (Aguilar 2015: 441)

See Aguilar, Filomeno V. Jr. 2015. “Is the Filipino Diaspora a Diaspora.” *Critical Asian Studies* 47(3), 440–461.

⁶ These terms are used in full awareness of their ethnic limitations throughout the archipelago in regions outside the Tagalog language sphere. It is commonly understood that “Tagalog” and “Filipino” are used interchangeably although the national language of “Filipino” is ideally meant to reference a Créolization of various Philippine languages in addition to Tagalog.

⁷ Eadie, Pauline & Yvonne Su 2018. “Post-disaster social capital. Trust, equity, bayanihan and Typhoon Yolanda.” *Disaster Prevention and Management* 27(3), 334–345. Butingtaon. 2020. “Resilience means fighting back.” *Bandilang Itim*. November 17, 2020. <https://bandilangitim.noblogs.org/2020/11/17/resilience-means-fighting-back/>

⁸ Bandilang Itim 2021a

⁹ Tomacruz, Sofia. 2021. “‘Maritime militia’: 220 Chinese ships swarm reef in West Philippine Sea.” *Rappler*. March 21, 2021. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/mari->

time-militia-chinese-ships-near-juan-felipe-reef-west-philippine-sea.

Gotinga, JG. 2020. "Over 100 Chinese vessels seen near Pag-asa Island in West PH Sea – AFP"

Rappler. March 2, 2020. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/chinese-vessels-sighted-pagasa-island-march-2020>. Fonbuena, Carmela. 2016. "Hague ruling; Filipinos, Chinese may fish in Scarborough." *Rappler*. July 13, 2016.

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/philippines-china-arbitration-scarborough-fishing-ground>

Fonbuena, Carmela. 2018. "Video captures China Coast Guard taking PH fishermen's catch." *Rappler*. June 8, 2018.

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/china-coast-guard-taking-filipino-fishermen-catch-scarborough-shoal-video>

¹⁰ "In our case, the best available data on poverty is highly attributable to low agricultural and fishery productivity and poor economic performance; and this [...] can be directly traced to government negligence, incompetence, irresponsibility and non-accountability. Poverty is caused by unemployment; lack of land to till; degradation of natural resources; lack of economic opportunity; lack of social services, corruption and absence of a logical economic development agenda." See Umali, Bas. 2006. *Archipelagic Confederation: An Anarchist Alternative for the Philippines*. <http://libcom.org/files/bas-umali-archipelagic-confederation.pdf>

¹¹ Magsalin, Simoun. 2020a. "Against a Quarantine with Martial Law Characteristics." *Libcom.org*. April 3, 2020. <https://libcom.org/blog/against-quarantine-martial-law-characteristics-03042020>

¹² Red-tagging is defined as "the act of labelling, branding, naming and accusing individuals and/or organizations of being left-leaning, subversive, communist or terrorist." It is used as a strategy by "State agents, particularly law enforcement agencies and the military, against those perceived to be 'threats' or 'enemies of the State.'" See Gavilian, Jodesz. 2020. "Lives in danger as red-tagging campaign intensifies." *Rappler*. February 20, 2020.

<https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/252028-lives-in-danger-duterte-government-red-tagging-campaign/>

¹³ Magsalin, Simoun. 2020b. "Abolitionism against the pandemic policing in the Philippines." *ROAR Magazine*. September 4, 2020. <https://roarmag.org/essays/philippines-pandemic-abolition/>

¹⁴ Klein, Naomi. 2007. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*.

Montefrio, Marvin Joseph F. 2020. "Food Insecurity and Bayanihan in the Locked-Down Philippines." *Gastronomica* 20 (3), 57–59.

¹⁵ In my own research, I have found valuable sources in Philippine Theology which exemplify the affective and cognitive ontology of ethics and virtue beyond personhood.

Enriquez, Virgilio G. 1977. "Filipino Psychology in the Third World." *Philippine Journal of Psychology* 10 (1), 3–18.

Reyes, Jeremiah. 2015. "Loób and Kapwa: An Introduction to a Filipino Virtue Ethics." *Asian Philosophy* 25 (2), 148–171.

Yacat, Jay A. 2012. “*Kapwa* theory and the dynamics of Filipino interpersonal relations: reviewing the empirical evidence.” Unpublished manuscript [University of the Philippines, Sikolohiyang Pilipino course material].

¹⁶ The Austronesian linguistic particularity of “we (inclusive)” and “we (exclusive)” pronouns denotes a differentiation of Philippine ontologies of shared personhood and Othering, with the correspondence found in the Tagalog pronouns of “*kami*” and “*tayo*” (with inclusions and exclusions referential to a speaker’s position).

¹⁷ Desai, Maharaj “Raju.” 2016. “Critical *Kapwa*: Possibilities of Collective Healing from Colonial Trauma.” *Educational Perspectives* 48 (1-2), 34–40.

¹⁸ Feminist Filipina scholars like Neferti X. Tadiar also describe gendered “shared sociability” or “syncretic sociability:” “Rather than viewing this subjective apparatus founded on *kapwa* as underdeveloped or incompletely developed in relation to the modern Western subject, we might instead view it as *the creative persistence of and reinvention of psychic structures which were replaced or destroyed by the modern subjectification processes carried out in colonial and capitalist spheres of production.*” (Tadiar 2009, 386, fn 51, emphasis added)

Tadiar, Neferti X. 2009. *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Making of Globalization*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

¹⁹ Bandilang Itim. 2021a. “Asia Art Tours Interviews Bandilang Itim: Philippines & Anarchism.” April 2, 2021. <https://bandilangitim.noblogs.org/2021/04/02/asia-art-tours-interview-bandilang-itim/>

²⁰ Ang 1979, 91.

Ang, Gertrudes R. 1979. “The Bayanihan Spirit: Dead or Alive?” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture & Society* 7, 91–105.

²¹ Ang 1979, 91

²² Anarchist Bas Umali (2006), amongst others, references the *barangay* as his localized organizing unit of Philippine anarchism.

Scott, Henry William. 1994. *‘Barangay’ Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

²³ All anarchists cited in this article provided their own pseudonyms or had already published online under these names.

²⁴ J.M., personal communications, April 2021.

²⁵ J.M., personal communications, April 2021.

²⁶ Sata, personal communications, April 2021.

²⁷ Felipe de Silangan, personal communications, April 2021.

²⁸ Bandilang Itim. 2021b. “Paano Magsimula ng Bodegang Bayan/How To Start a Community Pantry.” April 17, 2021. <https://bandilangitim.noblogs.org/2021/04/17/bodegong-bayan/>

²⁹ Valenzuela, Nikka G. 2021. “Community pantry: “Not charity, but mutual aid.” Inquirer.net. April 18, 2021. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1420463/community-pantry-not-charity-but-mutual-aid>

De Leon, Dwight. 2021. "Maginhawa community pantry temporarily shut down amid red-tagging." *Rappler*. April 20, 2021. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/maginhawa-community-pantry-temporary-shutdown-due-red-tagging-april-20-2021>

³⁰ Pamalakaya Pilipinas. April 19, 2021. https://twitter.com/pama_pil/status/1383959440152416256

³¹ Honey Andres announced a donation of 200kg of *kamote* (sweet potatoes), as well as a monetary donation of US\$ 461 or PHP 21,657. See Andres, Honey. *Facebook*. April 21, 2021.

<https://www.facebook.com/honey.andres.77/posts/291628512583826>

³² "The typhoons came around November last year, so they were hitting us right in the middle of the pandemic. Where the state had slacked when it came to rescue & relief operations, other people had stepped in. You could see people organizing themselves online to help coordinate rescues, combing social media for information about people stranded on the roofs of their homes." Bandilang Itim 2021a.

³³ Pascual, Jekki, 2021. "Mga mangingisda sa Cavite magbibigay ng relief packs sa mga kapwa mangingisda."

ABS-CBN News. April 18, 2021. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/18/20/mga-mangingisda-sa-cavite-magbibigay-ng-relief-packs-sa-mga-kapwa-mangingisda>

³⁴ Lahumbuwan. Bandilang Itim 2021a

³⁵ Bandilang Itim 2021a

³⁶ Pickerill & Chatterton 2006: 1

Pickerill, Jenny & Paul Chatterton. 2006. "Notes towards autonomous geographies: creation, resistance and self-management as survival tactics." *Progress in Human Geography* 30(6), 730–746.

³⁷ Anarchipelago Kollektive. 2019. "A Short Critique of the Philippine ND/MLM Vanguard." <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/anarchipelago-kollektive-a-short-critique-of-the-philippine-nd-mlm-vanguard>

³⁸ Anarchipelago Kollektive. 2017. "Autonomy through Abolition of State Terror and its Matrices of Oppression." <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/anarchipelago-kollektive-autonomy-through-abolition-of-state-terror-and-its-matrices-of-oppress>

³⁹ The spaces of Nabua in Bicol Province and Bacoor in Cavite Province are urban by population metrics, but peripheral to Metro Manila itself or peripheral on the Island of Luzon. It is telling that both places benefitted from community pantries, as rural agriculture and fishing/aquaculture are not sufficient to feed the community in a lockdown or "community quarantine" situation.

⁴⁰ Cavite Mutual Aid. *Facebook*. <https://www.facebook.com/cavite.mutualaid>

⁴¹ Docot, Dada. 2021. "Carceral and Colonial Memory during Pandemic Times in the Philippines: A Long Letter of Solidarity from the Diaspora." *Commoning Ethnography* 4(1), 23–52.

⁴² Andres, Honey. *Facebook*. April 8, 2021. <https://www.facebook.com/honey>.

andres.77/posts/286111316468879

⁴³ As Alfred McCoy illustrates, United States surveillance apparatuses most recently perpetuated through the so-called War on Terror were first designed and tested during the Philippine-American War.

McCoy, Alfred. 2009. *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines and the Rise of the Surveillance State*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

⁴⁴ Bandilang Itim 2021a

⁴⁵ Ponkan 2021. "Advertising Anarchism." Bandilang Itim. June 2, 2021. <https://bandilangitim.noblogs.org/2020/06/02/advertising-anarchy/>

Bandilang Itim. 2021c. June 2, 2021. Twitter.com. <https://twitter.com/BandilangItimPH/status/1267774911084294146>

⁴⁶ The tweet by Bandilang Itim reads: "Even as the police state and pandemic rage on in the east, we stand in solidarity with our cousins from across the ocean. Our fight for freedom and yours for justice are interlinked. Together we can amplify both. #OurStrugglesInterlinked #StopAsianHate #MilkTeaAlliance"

Bandilang Itim. 2021d. March 27, 2021. Twitter.com. <https://twitter.com/BandilangItimPH/status/1375689038896766977>

⁴⁷ Martínez-San Miguel, Yolanda. 2014. *Coloniality of Diasporas: Rethinking Intra-Colonial Migrations in a Pan-Caribbean Context*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

⁴⁸ Andaya, Barbara Watson. 2020. "Recording the past of 'peoples without history': Southeast Asia's Sea Nomads." *Asian Review* 32 (1), 5–33.

⁴⁹ Scott, James. C. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed. An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

⁵⁰ Cuevas-Hewitt, Marco. 2007. "Sketches of an Archipelagic Poetics of Postcolonial Belonging." *Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture* 11 (1), 236–249.

⁵¹ Hau'ōfa, Epeli. 2008 (1993). "Our Sea of Islands." In: *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.

⁵² Pamalakaya Pilipinas. September 24, 2021. https://twitter.com/pama_pil/status/1383959440152416256

⁵³ I have termed this in-between the "interspatial," primarily to illustrate that "space" is not empty but filled with spirit that connects or relates in collectivism.

⁵⁴ Meneses, Kristine. 2018. "Pakikipagkapwa: A Filipino Value in Attempt to Counter Biodiversity and Cultural Diversity Loss." *Solidarity: The Journal of Catholic Social Thought and Secular Ethics* 8 (1), article 3, 13 pgs.

⁵⁵ The metaphorical convergence or mixing constituents of an "estuary" are adaptable to other diverse confluences or ephemeral waters in the hydrological cycle (Barker 2019; Diaz 2011).

⁵⁶ Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, Noelani, Ikaika Hussey & Erin Kahunawaika'ala Wright (eds.). 2014. *A Nation Rising*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

⁵⁷ Anzaldúa, Gloria. 2015. *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro. Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

⁵⁸ Abidin Kusno's context is Indonesian rural-urban migration in relation to centuries of maritime Minangkabau doing *rantau* or "voyaging" in maritime Southeast Asia.

Kusno 2012

⁵⁹ Camroux, David. 2008. "Nationalizing Transnationalism? The Philippine State and the Filipino Diaspora." *Les Études du CERI* 152. Centre d'études et de recherches internationales Sciences Po.

⁶⁰ In the Andean context this includes language relations between Quechua and Aymara. For this reason, my analysis of Andean philosophy also combines or alternates Quechua and Aymara language worldviews, thus decentering the states of Peru, Bolivia, and others to focus on the mountain massifs of the Andes.

Godenzzi, Juan Carlos. 1999. "Cognición y lenguas andinas." *Apuntes. Revista De Ciencias Sociales* 45, 97–106.

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Godenzzi, Juan Carlos. 1999. "Cognición y lenguas andinas." *Apuntes. Revista De Ciencias Sociales* 45, 97–106.

⁶² I explain the use of Tagalog concepts based on my own experiences, because the direct ancestral Ilocano heritage and localized knowledge of my grandparents, as well as my mother, who was raised in Bicol, is not as familiar to me.

⁶³ See endnote 3.

⁶⁴ Abad, Michelle. 2019. "'Kapag may isa, maraming sumusunod': Leading a Philippine youth climate strike." *Rappler*. September 28, 2019. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/philippine-youth-climate-strike-leaders>

⁶⁵ Rafael, Erwin F. 2018 "The Promise of an Anarchist Sociological Imagination." <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/erwin-f-rafael-the-promise-of-an-anarchist-sociological-imagination>

⁶⁶ I highlight this comparison, not to recenter Eurocentric philosophy in Philippine ontologies, but to show parallels of rational or irrational collectivism.

⁶⁷ Tadiar 2009

⁶⁸ Bandilang Itim 2021a

⁶⁹ In particular to be respected and relationally negotiated in settler colonial contexts such as the United States/Canada.