

BUILDING A CRITICAL PINAY ISLANDER FRAMEWORK OF MYNTORING:

A Scholar Warrior's Navigational Guide

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ABSTRACT: The navigation of higher education by Filipina women/Pinay islanders can bring intense feelings of isolation and an emotional toll, especially in predominantly white spaces of learning. Yet, myntors can serve a vital role in navigating coloniality. The pathways of schooling and professionalisation come with constant negotiation and reconciliation of contradictions. In this article, I propose a conceptual framework, Critical Pinay Islander Framework of Myntoring (CPIMF). Based on my reflection of my academic trajectory as an islander and a Pinay 'scholar warrior', I argue how this framework can promote a sense of empowerment, liberation, and healing through a critical understanding of the Pinay diaspora, transnational wayfinding, and solidarity. I suggest that CPIMF can be an effective process and method to interrupt and disrupt the settler colonial mentality in academia.

KEYWORDS: Pinay/Filipina diaspora, critical Filipina, myntoring/mentoring, higher education, decolonisation

Being the first tenured Pinay/Filipina American professor at a predominantly white institution (PWI) and a newly appointed Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Program Director/Chair has been a life changing experience, as well as a contentious journey of questioning my purpose and values in my career. Pinay¹ denotes a self-identified woman of Filipino origin; coming from or having roots in the Philippines, and is a term interchangeable with Filipina by Filipina Americans. I am still in awe of how I survived the treacherous voyage towards tenure. With ongoing contradictions to negotiate, I remain in the academy, for now. My voice is not unique among black, Indigenous and women of colour (BIWOC) in this career trajectory, yet, in general, our stories are not heard nor elevated. Hence, in this article, I propose a framework, a Critical Pinay Islander Framework

¹ According to de Jesús (2005), "Pinay is Tagalog slang for 'Filipina woman'; however, this term is used interchangeably with Filipina by Filipina Americans. In an e-mail to me (March 18, 2003), historian Dawn Mabalon traced the term's history: 'The origins of 'Pinay' can be traced to the early migrations of Filipino/as to the United States.... [The term] has historically been used by Filipina/o Americans to denote Filipina/o American communities from the 1920s to the present, and seemed to be particularly reclaimed and politicized... It's interesting how that term traveled from the United States back to the Philippines, and the controversies surrounding its usage" (see p. 14 and introduction to de Jesús (2005) for more robust discussion). I reclaim Pinay, and it is an ongoing discourse of meaning making through one's lifespan.

of Myntoring (CPIFM). Based on my lived experiences, this proposed framework can validate parallel experiences of decolonising, reclaiming, and empowerment. It is my hope that it can serve as a scholar warrior's navigational guide in higher education, community-based work, and scholarly activism particularly as it applies to islanders in continental academic spaces.

Contentious space of higher education: Resisting settler colonialism and white supremacy

Higher education has been characterised as a colonial project with deep rooted processes that cater to the 'American Dream' (Constantino, 1966). Settler colonialism, as linked to white supremacy, is deeply engrossed in the academy. Settler colonialism is an interlocking system of power that perpetuates the ongoing repression of Indigenous peoples, cultures, resources, and ways of knowing (Wolfe, 1998, 2006; Veracini, 2011). Masta (2019) indicates three functions in which settler colonial ideology is pervasive in higher education: 1) to reduce the power of historically minoritised communities; 2) to force assimilation and adoption of western-dominated thinking and ways of knowing; 3) to perpetuate narratives of erasure of multiple points of analysis. The academy is a vital space of power and control, and a place that upholds the interlocking systems of oppression. Simultaneously, the commodification (McGee, 2015) and corporatisation of higher education – the framing of finances and profit over people's learning – has widely interrupted academia (Clay, 2008). Higher education holds power on who and how one can enter a particular career and profession. It is also the place where many BIPOC (black, Indigenous, people of colour), immigrants, and members of the working class become critically aware, politicised, negotiate their roles and responsibilities, and may commit to utilising their ongoing understanding and critiques of the system to change it. Hence, people who occupy spaces in the academy serve as gatekeepers in accessing degrees, that ticket to social advancement (Harris & Gonzalez, 2012). They may also serve as key players in facilitating critical consciousness, validation of one's social positionalities, healing, and transformation. Such power is delicate.

The data on the experiences of Filipino/a/x, let alone Pinays, in higher education in the US. are challenging to capture. Filipino/a/x are lumped in the racial/ethnic category of Asian/Pacific Islanders (API). In autumn 2019, data indicated that among tenured full professors, 51% were white men, 27% were white women, 8% were API men, and 3% were API women. Black men and women and Hispanic men each accounted for 2% of full professors across US institutes of higher education. The following each accounted for 1% or less of full professors: Hispanic/Latinas, American Indian/Alaska Native individuals, and individuals of two or more races. In the same year, data indicated that among assistant professors on U.S. campuses, 28% were white men, 33% were white women, 2-3% each were API men and women, and 4% were Black women (NCES, 2020). In general, people of colour are underrepresented, and women are less likely, in comparison to men, to achieve tenure and occupy high ranking positions in the U.S. academy (Kelly, 2019).

There is limited literature on the lived experiences of women in the academy of specific race/ethnicity and other intersectionalities on the global landscape. For example, some data shows that the representation of women among faculty in Canada is on the rise with tenured full professors at 28%, associate professors at 44%, and assistant professors at 50% (The Daily, 2019). More than 25% of tenured full professors in India are women

(Government of India, 2019). Women are particularly underrepresented among senior academics in many European countries: Netherlands (19%), Germany (19%), France (22%), Switzerland (23%), Sweden (25%), and the United Kingdom (26%) (European Commission, 2019).

Based on 2017 data in the Philippines of faculty in all types of higher education institutions (e.g., state and local universities and colleges, other government schools, and private higher education institutions), 52% were women which is considerable comparatively on a global scale (Office of the President, Commission of Higher Education, 2017), though the data did not provide academic ranks (e.g., tenure track assistant professor, tenured associate professor, etc.). A study of 114 Filipino/a/x American university faculty members in the U.S. indicates that Filipino/a/x Americans are not well represented in the full-time tenure track faculty level (Maramba & Nadal, 2013). The study also indicates a heavier representation of Filipino/a/x American faculty in ethnic studies, Asian American studies, and American studies disciplines in the U.S. Less represented disciplines were education, psychology, economics, social work, and communication. Lastly, the study concluded that geographic locations mattered as to where Filipino/a/x American faculty members were found. A majority, 54%, are located on the West Coast of the U.S., specifically in California, which aligns with the location of the general Filipino/a/x American population (Maramba & Nadal, 2013).

Literature on BIWOC in academia, their working conditions, and lived experiences indicates harsh and hostile work environments rooted in multiple oppressive forces (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, etc.) (Aguirre, 2000; Evans, 2007; Harris & Gonzales, 2012; Castaneda, Flores, & Niemann, 2020; Brooks, 2020). The dynamics of stereotype threats (Steele & Aronson, 1995), implicit biases (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006; Gutierrez & Muhs, 2020), microaggressions (Sue et al., 2009; Yosso et al., 2009), and white fragility (DiAngelo, 2018; Fujiwara, 2020; Joplin, 2020) continue to exist and create lasting power struggles (Arriola, 2012; Bradley & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Ervin, 2012; Monforti, 2012; Niemann, 2012a, 2012b; Smith, 2012; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001; Wallace et al., 2012; Wing, 2012). Tokenisation, dehumanisation, and erasure that occur, particularly in the tenure and promotion process (Monforti & Michelson, 2020; Park, 2020) impacts their physical and mental health (Turner, 2002; Neimann, Gutierrez y Muhs, Gonzalez & Harris, 2020).

Given the context, major implications for myntoring Filipino/a/x exist. It calls for decolonising and critically feminising the academy. Hence, the use of 'myntoring' instead of 'mentoring'² is a way to decolonise and reclaim a critical feminist perspective on relationship building among those I engage with in a mutual and collaborative learning environment. In this article, I indicate that 'myntoring' encompasses this relationship building in teaching, researching, and/or community-based work that also recognises the place of the islander in continental higher education. Myntoring strategies can develop sustainable and strong support systems. They can provide a venue for BIWOCs to fight back, and breathe love and life in the toxic environments of academia, through changing policies, procedures, and practices (Manzo, 2020) and can promote healing (Slocum, 2020).

² I am aware that the root 'men-' from 'mentoring' is derived from a Proto-Indo-European root meaning 'to think' and is related to mind or thought. The use of 'myntoring', to me, is part of my own process and journey of reclaiming and decolonising one's thinking as they presume roles and responsibilities in the academy. I look forward to further exploring how to become more critical.

In the following sections, I propose a conceptual framework and explore how myntors serve a key role in navigating the academy. I begin by describing my stance, a Pinay scholar warrior of resistance and healing (Trinidad, 2014). I then propose the Critical Pinay Islander Framework of Myntoring (CPIFM) and its components. I integrate island feminism through the intersectional identities or social positionalities of being a Pinay/Filipina woman living in the diaspora and rooted in multiple islands (of Molokai and Oahu in Hawai'i). It is through internalising the values of *kapu aloha*³ ('sacred love' in Hawaiian: Meyer, 2003, 2013) and *mahalaya* (freedom and love⁴ in Tagalog, a Filipino language) that centres the proposed framework of resistance (Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009). I conclude with implications for creating change in the academy from a critical Pinay islander framework.

The scholar warrior of Kapu Aloha and Mahalaya: A stance of resistance and healing

I am a descendant of settler Filipino/a/x in the US and I live in the Filipino/a/x diaspora. I self-identify as a Pinay/Filipina woman with roots from Paoay on the island of Luzon (Ilocos Norte, Philippines) and the island of Molokai, Hawai'i. I am the first in my family to attend university and earn a PhD. Although I have had insightful and supportive myntors along the way, it took time for me to recognise, decolonise, and honour the role models from my diverse island communities. Wisdom found in unlikely places, like stories passed on from one generation to another, symbols, myths, and songs, and the role modelling of myntors should be part of reclaiming Pinay indigeneity, healing, and resisting the toxic hegemony of erasure and invalidation of one's cultural wisdom of living well.

Bringing oneself and sharing stories can bring meaning to the process of resistance and healing through myntoring. Being employed in the US academy for nearly two decades, I have experienced trauma of navigating the promotion and tenure system and witnessed the trauma of navigating higher education - the structural oppression, microaggressions, implicit biases, and other perceived harm. What has helped me stay grounded is knowing and, time and time again, revisiting a stance of a *Pinay scholar warrior of Kapu Aloha and Mahalaya* (Trinidad, 2014; Trinidad & Brown, 2015; Trinidad, 2021). As a Pinay Islander scholar warrior, I both value education, and also see it as *miseducation* for the communities I come from and serve. It took my journey through formal higher education, particularly earning my doctorate, to realise how schooling perpetuates the status quo of power and control. I observed, as early as preschool, that the pathway was subservient. It needed to be interrupted. As Constantino, a Pinoy scholar, emphasises, critical awareness of issues the community face, must be at the core:

³ *Kapu aloha* stems from Hawaiian epistemology (Meyer, 2003, 2013), and is to have reverence for aloha. It is a compassionate commitment to *pono* (to make right). It is a problem-solving approach in the face of conflict and adversity that requires discipline and constraint while also fostering deep respect and love. For more, please see: <https://www.ksbe.edu/article/luana-busby-neff-kahookahikanuha-explain-kapu-aloha-at-laahui-rising/> and <https://www.hawaiipublicradio.org/arts-culture/2015-07-31/kapu-aloha-power-of-love>.

⁴ *Mahalaya* stems from the values of love and freedom. For me, having been part of the Malaya Movement (see Trinidad, 2021), the love of serving our community and people, and the commitment to building our community towards freedom and liberation keeps me grounded and focused on my purpose in this work.

Education is a vital weapon of a people striving for economic emancipation, political independence and cultural renaissance. We are such a people. Philippine education therefore must produce Filipinos who are aware of their country's problems, who understand the basic solution to these problems, and who care enough to have courage to work and sacrifice for their country's salvation. (1996, p. 1)

Similar to other Filipino scholars, I hope to be part of building “blueprints of new forms of deliberative public engagement in education that prioritises the possibilities of [collective freedom and] democracy building” (Claudio, 2017, p. 196). This connects to the values of *kapu aloha* (‘sacred love’) and *mahalaya* (‘freedom love’). Embodying these values, it is putting forth the praxis of radical and fierce love in action through the use of one’s power and privilege of being a scholar (Trinidad, 2021; Nielsen & Rodriguez-Coss, 2020). As a Pinay/Filipina woman, it also encouraged me to redefine through time my role as a woman, and challenge my role as a leader in a Filipino culture that has been heavily influenced and colonised by Spanish missionaries.

Additionally, la paperson (2017) in their volume, *A third university is possible*, present a framework for decolonisation in higher education by hotwiring its “machines”. Because of my islander upbringing, earlier awareness of how settler colonialism has impacted Native Hawaiians on my home island of Molokai, and previous work as a macro social worker with community-based organisations serving Native Hawaiians, it became possible for me to position myself within multiple systems as a bridger – someone who connects and links people, teams, and collective and overlapping efforts in the work of social change.

My professional credentials allowed me to occupy a hybrid space – one foot in, and another out of the academy, what Collins (1999) refers to as an *outsider within*. My schooling and professionalisation, both on the Hawaiian islands and on continental USA also provide a landscape view of how oppressive forces are dynamic on multiple levels – locally and globally. Being hyper aware of my Pinay settler positionality, who occupies space and place in Hawai‘i and now the continental US, I am in constant motion of learning, being curious, relearning and navigating how I can utilise my power and privilege as a scholar in interrupting the cycle of settler colonialism in spheres of influence (Saranillio, 2008). Wherever I am, it is a must to acknowledge whose land we are occupying and question the role of higher education in decolonising, reclaiming, healing, and transforming change among the most vulnerable among us. I must always examine and analyse how settler colonialism is operationalised through the “possession of political power to colonize” (Fujikane, 2008, p. 7). As a tenured faculty member, I occupy a position in the “machine” and may hold other positions of leadership and expertise. With that, part of “hotwiring the machine” is to check the ways we engage with minoritised island communities in teaching, curriculum development and research, and the practice of accountability and responsibility. Who and what are we centring in doing our work? To hotwire is to be in a constant position of critiquing, proposing ideas, and acting to break the status quo. Such strategies can integrate island feminism (Karides, 2020; Karides et al., 2020; Nielsen & Rodriguez-Coss, 2020).

Critical Pinay Islander framework of Myntoring: A proposed guide

The Critical Pinay Islander Framework of Myntoring (CPIFM) builds upon the literature of critical Filipino/a/x studies (Bonus, 2016; San Juan, 1992, 1998, 2009; Rodriguez, 2016, 2017;

Francia, 2010; Balisacan & Hill, 2003; Tintiangco-Cubales & Sacramento, 2009), Filipino diaspora and transnationalism (Lott, 2006; Fujita-Rony, 2003; Dufoix, 2003; Labrador, 2015; Takaki, 1993), and critical praxis (Sison, 2016; Saranillio, 2008, 2018; Giroux, 1997; McLaren, 2005). The “critical” part of CPIFM emphasises the importance of a power analysis: how power for, by, and with people plays out and is embedded in systems through structural processes. It critiques and decolonises the dominant hegemony (Nadal 2009; David, 2013), and reclaims Filipina/Pinay (de Jesus, 2005; Tintiangco-Cubales, 2005; Chattergy & Nieva, 2017; Brown, 2014) Indigenous epistemology (Mendoza-Strobel, 2010; Mendoza & Strobel, 2013, Strobel, 2015).

The “Pinay” in CPIFM aims to reach Filipina women who live in the diaspora and their communities, and address their needs through praxis. Its focus on the women in Filipino culture is an attempt to decolonise and deconstruct the role of gender. Due to the Philippine Islands’ 400 years of Spanish colonisation and then the triumph of the US in the Philippine-American War, education for Filipinas was heavily influenced by Hispanic and American systems. While the Spaniards excluded Pinays from formal education and constrained education to perpetuate patriarchy/*machismoism*, the Americans used education as part of its colonial project to ‘civilise’. Through its policies, formal education provided women with practical career skills relevant to the family in society (Hiep et al., 2021; Torres, 1993). Both Filipino Islander men and women were educated and literate at pre-colonial contact. Pinays were also heavily involved in civil society and played important roles in social, political, cultural, and spiritual aspects of life. In general, the ‘Pinay’ in CPIFM centres Filipina voices and stories and reclaims and builds upon their wisdom (Palabay & Lubi, 2016; Salinas & Yu, 2017; Salinas, 2019).

The “Islander” in CPIFM acknowledges the intersecting identities and/or social locations of an islander. It builds upon the growing literature on island feminisms (Karides, 2017; Karides, 2020; Karides et al., 2020; Nielsen & Rodriguez-Coss, 2020). A major contribution of CPIFM to island feminisms is the knowledge and awareness of how island life and island diaspora can shape one’s opportunities for education. Adding islandness to intersectional analysis complicates understandings of oppression and empowerment as it occurs on island and continental spaces. An island feminist perspective can also shed light on deconstructing settler colonialism in education. For example, messages of educational success and economic advancement may come from the metropole. Additionally, the ‘brain drain’ (out migration of skilled islanders) or the negotiation of returning home to the island after obtaining one’s education only to be met with limited economic opportunities are phenomena of island diaspora that require continued exploration. The Philippine Islands’ diaspora is – proportionately – the largest globally, constituting 11% (11-12 million people) of the country’s population (McKenzie, 2012) with Pinays making up 56% of all overseas workers (OFWs) (Congressional Policy & Budget Research Department, 2021). Pinay OFWs tend to work in elementary occupations (jobs that involve the performance of simple and routine tasks which may require the use of hand-held tools and considerable physical effort), including elder or child care, nursing, or teaching. While the US is the top geographic place of the Filipino diaspora (4 million) (American Community Survey, as cited in Inquirer, 2018), Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates are also top geographic destinations of the overseas workers (Congressional Policy & Budget Research Department, 2021).

In an analysis of the Philippine Islands’ diaspora, the integration of a critical Filipino Marxist lens, San Juan (2009) suggests the following:

History from the viewpoint of the masses, the working people and their struggle for freedom, equality and dignity. Apply this popular-democratic, historical materialist perspective to the study of U.S. history, its evolution as a class society, as a political system based on the division of its inhabitants into social classes. (p. 143)

Philippine [and Filipino American] history from a progressive point of view in particular the period of U.S. colonization and decolonization of the country up to today. And together with that, the rise of the U.S. empire and its current hegemony in a globalized market / commodity-dominated planet. (p. 146)

Coupled with island feminism, a critical Filipino Marxist perspective of U.S. hegemonic imperial discourse exposes how white supremacy intertwines with capitalism to occupy islands. For example, the US policy of “Benevolent Assimilation” under President McKinley in 1898 imposed a “civilizing mission” in the Philippines (San Juan, 2009). The processes and programmes employed upon the U.S. invasion of the Philippines were then exported under US imperialism to the sovereign islands such as Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Hawai’i.

As these islands became a model of Pacific and Atlantic neo-colonies, what was the gendered impact of these policies? In particular, how did women’s roles shift in society? The Spanish American War of 1898 was fought against Spanish imperial rule to liberate island natives from Spanish tyranny. The globalisation of U.S. intervention through militarisation and war across island nations under the guise of democracy holds relevance for island feminisms. Specifically, the framing of democracy and freedom under the guise of the neoliberal free market has been applied to legitimise the exploitation of island populations on islands, but also as part of the diaspora. The configuration of the Philippines in the Asian Pacific basin as “the borderline of the Orientalist imaginary and the Western racializing gaze” (San Juan, 2009, p. 153), integrated with an island feminist lens (Karides, 2017) can shed light on assessing current contemporary issues Pinay Islanders face by including an intersectional and decolonial perspective. The geopolitical dynamics that Filipinos, Hawaiians, Māori, and other islanders and their diaspora must negotiate, suggest an overlap in conditions of oppression and exploitation. It is this commonality across island diasporas that brings promise to solidarity work on and off the island across marginalised groups such as women, workers, peasants, Indigenous and racialised groups.

Lastly, the “Myntoring” in the CPIFM embraces the critical feminist relationship building that happens in spaces of learning, transformation, empowerment, and healing. The CPIFM involves people and the processes of building love, care, and solidarity. Most importantly, island-informed collaborations and partnerships in learning guide and facilitate navigating the contradictions marginalised groups face in the academy and this includes islanders. These contradictions may include differences between island and continental understandings of growth in learning, the meaning of success in a career or profession, or for example, the expected roles and responsibilities of a Filipina in their chosen family and community.

The CPIFM has three major components that are addressed in the following sections. These include: the process of honouring Pinay living in the diaspora; transnational wayfinding by resisting collective amnesia as healing; and solidarity as critical praxis in healing.

The process of honouring Pinay living in the diaspora

A major component of the CPIFM is honouring Pinay living in the diaspora. Diaspora refers to:

the phenomenon of dispersion from a place; the organization of an ethnic, national, or religious community in one or more countries; a population's spread over more than one territory; the places of dispersion; any nonterritorial space where exchanges take place, and so on. (Dufoix, 2003, p. 2)

For some, the term means nothing more than the idea of displacement and the maintenance of a connection with a real or imagined homeland. Other scholars examine the issues of voluntary or involuntary migration of people; the maintenance or the recreation of identification with a country or a land of origin; and the existence of communities that claim their attachment to a place, or, to the contrary, to their spatially free-floating existence (Dufoix, 2003).

The Filipina diaspora yields diversity (Lott, 2006). For example, a family's migration story often stems from the women in the family who are often the first to migrate (Espiritu, 2003). These stories may include a process of honouring and reclaiming the voices and stories of key women figures in the community. At the same time, women's migration stories may have been kept untold, ignored, or deemed unworthy, making island women of the diaspora disappear. Thus, family genealogies may end up being fragmented, ruptured, disconnected, and lost.

The erasure of Filipino history, its systemic exclusion in formal education from K-12 and postsecondary/university both in the Philippines and the US, and its absence infiltrating other systems and policies that pose barriers, challenges, and threats to Pinay livelihoods, require analysis. CPIFM can facilitate and build upon the work of honouring the stories of Pinays as workers navigating how to make sense of their desires and decisions to migrate, make sacrifices, and pursue better economic opportunities outside of the island provinces and Philippines (Espiritu, 2003; Parrenas, 2008; de Guzman, 2014; Francisco-Menchavez, 2018). CPIFM in higher education can facilitate the examination of coercion and exploitation of Pinays, and its impact on their lives. Simultaneously, Pinay survivance can be the foundation, reclaiming and resisting cultural amnesia of events or moments in which Pinays were not meant to survive (Cadiz & Trinidad, 2020).

CPIFM helps to assess the possible configurations of experiencing the diaspora across time and space and the structuring of collective experiences. CPIFM can also explore how diaspora builds and gives meaning "to links between people by weaving guiding threads that stretch across tens of thousands of miles and shine like a familiar light in the labyrinth of others" (Dufoix, 2003, p. 3). Most importantly, CPIFM can provide an opportunity to facilitate diasporic consciousness across systems to:

continuing [the] process of decolonization becoming; relinquishing our reliance upon the schizophrenia of the perpetual present; resisting colonial mentality, deracination, and heteropatriarchal silencing; and refuting the model-minority stereotype of the obsequious, submissive, and/or exotic erotic. (de Jesús, 2005, p.12)

It can bring critical awareness of the significance and commonalities of the experiences of Pinay and/or Islanders' subjectivities, the positions of Filipina women throughout history, and transnational labour market (e.g., domestic workers, sex workers, nurses, caregivers, and teachers).

Transnational wayfinding: Resisting collective amnesia as healing

The second component of the CPIFM is transnational wayfinding as a process to resist amnesia and rise from trauma. Stemming from the literature on critical Indigenous pedagogy of place (Trinidad, 2014; Trinidad et al., 2016), transnational wayfinding is the process of "critically reclaiming home in the context of ongoing US imperialism, colonization, and global capitalism" through the comparative analyses of social movements (Trinidad, 2022).

This process integrates an island way of collective learning. It strives to ground collective processes of embarking and navigating through 'land' (the geographic place in which one settles) and 'ocean'. CPIFM expands on island roots, using the metaphor of 'voyaging' and 'wayfinding' or navigation. With that, a myntor in the academy can facilitate deep knowing and intense observation of ourselves and the sociopolitical economic context of the healing work that needs to be completed. It encourages students to be present, bringing their whole, authentic selves and ancestral wisdom(s) throughout their education (Trinidad, 2020). For Pinays, it means acknowledging that our families are transnational, living across places and oceans, and the heavy sacrifice and burden of care that Filipina women carry in their work (Cadiz & Trinidad, 2020). Pinays in the diaspora have the role to transform families and communities. Through the use of the CPIFM, we can witness history in the making with a stance of humility by validating struggles and trauma, and move to reposition power.

Solidarity as critical praxis in healing

The final component of CPIFM is solidarity as critical praxis: "Resistance is our right, solidarity is our duty." This is a quote drawn from the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines – US chapter (ICHRP-US, 2018). The quote guides and captures the role of a scholar activist in a social movement. To occupy space in the academy, it calls for persistently raising critical awareness of the oppressive forces that operate in higher education and encourages us to come together to problem solve and propose strategies for transformation and healing. The use of the CPIFM encourages the internalisation of 'resistance and solidarity' in spaces of learning. It aims for a discipline and practice of deep curiosity, humility, care, empathy, and mutual responsibility as solidarity.

For those of us living in the Filipino diaspora, a common ground, regardless of differences, is that we have settled in the US, and on stolen Indigenous lands. Oftentimes forgotten, the major distinction of Filipino/a/xs from other Asians in the US is that the country of origin was the object of violent colonisation and subjugation by US imperialism and monopoly capital (San Juan, 2009). US imperialism has been active in the Pacific for more than two centuries and this includes the Philippines. To encourage solidarity work, we must avoid "the nostalgic essentializing nativism that emerges in cultural and folk festivals and other commodified cultural products that accompany tourist spectacles, college Filipino/a/x

nights, and official rituals” and “connect folklore and other cultural practices to the conflicted lives of the Igorots, Moros, and masses of peasants and workers” (San Juan, 2009, p. 155). With that, the CPIFM can invite critical awareness of the power dynamics imposed on Pinay/Filipina women, and how the same power structures exploit multiple minoritised groups including islanders.

In practice, solidarity does not only mean representation in systems, nor recognition and support of diverse communities. Palatino (2018) frames it well:

Solidarity should be integrated into the comprehensive political work of activists... Building solidarity networks, establishing new ties... Solidarity is not a matter of strengthening our ranks to support the struggle of marginalized classes in the remote parts of the world, but an enlightening political duty that ultimately contributes to our resistance against homegrown enemies of the people... life-affirming act of humanity, the collective pursuit of a progressive type of politics which also boosts the prospects of our local struggles.

Solidarity is multi-issues, across land and ocean.

Conclusion

The proposed Critical Pinay Islander Framework of Myntoring (CPIFM) is a process and strategy for reclaiming Pinayism and healing in navigating higher education among island diaspora. Tintiangco-Cubales and Sacramento (2022) indicate that Pinayism is “a radical Pinay sisterhood that connects the global, local, and personal stories of Pinay struggle, survival, service, sisterhood, and strength to mentally, physically, politically, and spiritually uplift ourselves” (<http://www.pinayism.com/about/>). They also recognise that more “S’s” were needed to be included to reformulate the definition of Pinayism: self-love, shapeshifting, and solidarity as ways to practice Pinayism and pursue a liberatory praxis.⁵ Through the processes of honouring the lived experiences of the Pinay diaspora, validating transnational wayfinding, and promoting solidarity as critical praxis, CPIFM has potential to guide pathways to empowerment, self and collective determination for Pinays in academia. Further conceptualisation on transnational wayfinding as it relates to solidarity work is needed, especially when building community-university collaboration and partnerships from local to global levels. With the increased commodification and corporatisation of academia, disciplines like ethnic studies, gender and sexuality studies, including areas of study such as island feminism and critical Filipino studies, should be integral in curriculum development rather than being removed from campus offerings. An inter- and trans-disciplinary lens should be adopted in the academy, especially as the workforce calls for improvements in working with diverse communities and negotiating moral issues related to social justice, equity, place, and migration. This may facilitate epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2017), which may be necessary to unveil and bring consciousness to how deep coloniality is in multiple spheres.

Likewise, the role of higher education as it addresses human rights from local to global issues must be further examined. The academy can be a space where reparation can happen, and can do so by re-examining its role in building civil societies. The ‘machines’

⁵ Comments provided by Tintiangco-Cubales (2022) in their personal exchange as they shared their work on Pinayism and emerging work on Pin[a/x]yism Revisited.

within academia can be re-wired by professors, students, and community members. How do we create opportunities to deconstruct the ways academia fuels the engine of social control, imperialism, and capitalism? How do islanders and women create opportunities for transformation, empowerment, and change?

CPIFM invites Pinays and others to unpack the settler colonialism concept and complicate the rights of Indigenous, refugee, migrant, and immigrant women in island and continental spaces. For Pinays, it encourages us to answer the call to myntor each other and build communities of fierce love, mutual care, and authentic growth. For others, it can encourage people to recognise the role of women in being part of interrupting the discourse, and create strong support and strategies of engagement. When opportunities and conditions are created for liberation and healing, the cycle of trauma on the individual level can be tenfold, seeping through other domains - building strong families, groups, and communities in the US, islands, and diaspora (Tejeda & Espinoza, 2003; Friere, 2005; Trinidad, et al., 2016; Teaiwa, 2020).

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