

INTRODUCTION

Articulating Filipinx¹ Canadian Studies In, On, and Through British Columbia

JP CATUNGAL AND MAY FARRALES

FILIPINX CANADIAN STUDIES IN
THE AFTERMATH OF LAPU-LAPU DAY

WE WRITE THIS introduction in the shadow of the tragic deaths and injuries that took place on 26 April 2025 at Lapu-Lapu Day Festival. Named after the Mactan Chieftain Lapu-Lapu, who resisted Spanish imperial encroachment and killed Ferdinand Magellan in 1521, the festival was organized as a block party in the South Fraser neighbourhood of Vancouver, on the unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples. The festival closed off portions of the South Fraser neighbourhood for performance stages, food trucks, vendors, and other activities. On the evening of the festival, a car drove into the crowds gathered in the festival's food truck area. Eleven people were killed and many more were physically injured and hospitalized, not only Filipinx Canadians, but also members of Colombian, Brazilian, Vietnamese, and other communities.² Countless more have also experienced trauma, some from witnessing the events directly at the event or subsequently on social and mass media, and some through their relationships with various affected communities. Months later, the grief remains, and efforts to heal continue.

In a press conference held less than twenty-four hours after, BC Premier David Eby spoke particularly to the outsized impact on Filipinx

¹ We use the term *Filipinx* here to signal our gender and sexual politics, with the x for us constituting something of a refusal of gender binarism. We acknowledge that there is ongoing discussion, including among scholars, on the politics of the morphology of this word (c.f. Barrett et al. 2021). We have left it to our contributors to make their own choices about this word and thus leave room in this special issue for different orientations and politics around this category.

² Their names are Vicky Bjarnason, Jenifer Darbellay, Linh Hoang, Richard Le, Katie Le, Nerissa Pagkanlungan, Kira Ganapol Salim, Glitza Maria Caicedo-Samper, Glitza Daniela Samper, Daniel Samper Toro, and Jendhel Sico.

Canadian communities of the Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy. He called on the province to step up to support grieving communities, noting: “We’re going to put our arms around them as all British Columbians. We are going to stand with them, support them, just like they support us, every single day in this province. It’s their turn to get care from us” (quoted in Mintz 2025). Drawing on deeply entrenched notions of Filipinx Canadians as care workers (Tungohan 2023; Coloma et al. 2012), Premier Eby reverses the directionality of care labour and hails Filipinx Canadians as rightful recipients, rather than providers, of care in this moment of mourning. Nevertheless, the overrepresentation of Filipinxs, especially women, in nursing and other hospital roles still meant that Filipinx Canadian health care workers felt the impact of the tragedy doubly. Indeed, Premier Eby himself recognized this racialized and gendered overrepresentation, saying: “We can’t go to a place that delivers care in our province and not meet a member of that community. This is a community that gives and gives” (quoted in Alberga 2025). Nurse Glesy Banton-Victoria speaks directly to the double impact on Filipinx Canadian nurses of the tragedy: “If you’re a Filipino working through those days in emergency, this is probably one of the toughest days of your life, seeing your community. [It’s] almost like a violation of yourself, of your values” (quoted in Alberga 2025). While space constraints prevent us from launching a deeper analysis of the invocation of care – as need and labour – in relation to Filipinx Canadians in British Columbia, we dwell on the topic here in part because care remains a key organizing concept in Filipinx Canadian studies, and it is a concept that comes through in different ways – in relation to practices of hospitality, the ethics of collaboration, or cultural productions – across different papers in this special issue.

Community efforts to address the needs of Filipinx diasporic communities in British Columbia are another common theme that recurs across different contributions to this special issue. We also observed such efforts in response to the Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy and saw an outpouring of large-scale support and efforts at care, both within British Columbia and from other parts of Canada and the world. According to Mina Kerr-Lazenby (2025), over two million dollars were fundraised within a week, with much of the money going directly to those who were affected or their families, and the rest going to support community-led efforts for healing and recovery in the weeks that followed. In addition, Filipinx Canadians and other groups organized immediately to support affected communities, particularly through the provision of mutual aid, grief

counselling, and other forms of action and assistance. In particular, we observed the ways that groups such as Vancouver Filipino Emergency Coalition and others drew on and harnessed the presence and strength of already existing organizing networks and community capacity to organize aid quickly. The quickness with which these efforts emerged testifies to the importance of community organizations and networks as resources to respond both to acute and ongoing violence directed at or experienced by Filipinx Canadian communities.

In Greater Vancouver and other locales in British Columbia, community gatherings took place immediately after the tragedy. A vigil was held the day after, on the evening of 27 April, in Vancouver's Kensington Park, not far from the site of the Lapu-Lapu Day Festival. At this vigil, Salia Joseph of Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (the Squamish Nation) addressed the community in shared grief and offered, in her address, words of support rooted in a land-based understanding of relationships between Indigenous and diasporic communities. She noted: "Our home is your home, our grief is your grief. When somebody suffers in our territories, we all suffer. We want to wrap a blanket of prayer around your people at this time" (quoted in "Vancouver's Filipino Community Mourns" 2025).

A few days later, vigils were also held at our respective universities – the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University – with leadership and organizing by Filipinx student groups, including Anakbayan SFU, Sulong UBC, and UBC Kababayan. Vigils were also organized and held in other universities, cities, and towns across British Columbia – including at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford, at Ben Lee Park in Kelowna, and at the BC General Service Employees' Union building in Nanaimo – often with the leadership of Filipinx Canadian workers and organizations. Activist groups and community organizations in different locales also held candlelight vigils, sharing circles, and prayer gatherings not only in various municipalities in the Lower Mainland, but also in Canmore, Banff, and Calgary in Alberta; Brampton, Hamilton, Pickering, Ottawa, and Toronto in Ontario; Montreal, Quebec; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Whitehorse, Yukon.

The cover image for our special issue was taken by photojournalist Michael Y.C. Tseng at the UBC vigil, at which JP spoke. We chose this image to place our special issue in direct proximity to the Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy, not only temporally but also politically. At the UBC vigil, and in other community gatherings since, a common refrain articulated by speakers is that the Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy needs to be understood



Figure 1. JP Catungal speaking at the UBC vigil on a platform in front of the s̓i:łqəy' qeqən, the Musqueam Post. Photo by Michael Y.C. Tseng, used with permission.

as part of a longer history of pain experienced by the Filipinx Canadian community, in British Columbia and beyond, as a result of our racialization, exploitation, and stereotyping as migrants, workers, youth, and caregivers. At vigils, community organizers articulated their refusal to singularize and spectacularize the “event” of the tragedy, insisting instead on the necessity of a structural reading that locates it within a larger analysis of the place of Filipinx in the racialized context of so-called British Columbia, and indeed, Canada more broadly. It is our goal in this special issue to pursue this larger analysis.

A second reason for our choice of the cover image is that it signals, albeit subtly, the need to locate our interventions within the context of ongoing settler colonialism – and ongoing Indigenous legal and political orders – as they take place in so-called British Columbia today. To the left of the Philippine flag in the image is a portion of a plaque/sign about s̓i:łqəy' qeqən (“double-headed serpent post”), or the Musqueam Post, in front of which the UBC vigil took place (“Musqueam Post” 2025). Figure 1 gives a fuller picture of the spatial context of the vigil, where speakers stood on a platform in front of the qeqən. The cover image and the location of the vigil itself require us to locate ourselves and our grief in direct proximity to Indigeneity more broadly and to ongoing x̱wməθḵw̱əy̱əm sovereignty and place-making more specifically.

x^wməθk^wəyəm carver Brent Sparrow Jr., who designed the post, describes the ways that the post articulates x^wməθk^wəyəm history, place, and peoplehood:

This qeqən (post) tells the story of the origin of our name x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam). The old people spoke of a small lake called x^wməm̓q̓e:m (Camosun Bog) where the s̓i:lqəy̓ (double-headed serpent) originated. They were warned as youth to be cautious and not go near or they would surely die. This s̓i:lqəy̓ was so massive its winding path from the lake to the stal̓əw̓ (river) became the creek flowing through Musqueam to this day. Everything the serpent passed over died and from its droppings bloomed a new plant, the məθk^wəy̓. For this reason the people of long ago named that place x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam – place of the məθk^wəy̓). (quoted in “Musqueam Post” 2025)

For us, the presence of the sign in the image and the location of the vigil in front of s̓i:lqəy̓ qeqən invite us to examine what it means for us as Filipinx Canadians to be here – and to grieve as a community – on Indigenous lands. We are invited to think about how we might orient ourselves to enduring Indigenous sovereignty and territory. A key starting point for us is recognizing the Indigenous communities on whose lands we work and make home. As feminist and queer racialized scholars and members of the Filipinx Canadian community, we have written this introduction and have edited this special issue on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the səl̓ilw̓ətaʔl̓, k̓w̓ik̓w̓əʔl̓əm (Kwkwetlem), Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh, and x^wməθk^wəyəm. We participate in community on these lands and our research relationships also situate us in relation to other Indigenous territories; these include, for May, the lands of the Kitselas Nation, the Kitsumkalum of the Ts̓msyen, and the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation; and for JP, the lands of the lək̓w̓əŋən Peoples, known today as the Songhees and x^wsepsəm/Esquimalt First Nations, and the WSÁNEĆ Peoples.

As coeditors, we draw especially from fellow critical race feminist scholars Sherene Razack, Malinda Smith, and Sunera Thobani (2010), who ask: “How can we theorize our ‘place,’ when the place itself is stolen?” (2). This is, for us, an enduring formative question, one we invoke and think about continually in our conversations with each other and in our scholarly practices. Most of the contributors to our special issue take up this question squarely from their embodied and grounded perspectives from across different Indigenous locales in so-called British Columbia as well as from transnational perspectives. We unpack more, below, how

the entwined processes of racialization and settler colonialism in British Columbia profoundly shape Filipinx Canadian presences in British Columbia, and are thus key concerns across the papers that comprise this special issue.

SITUATING FILIPINXS AND FILIPINX CANADIANS STUDIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Located on Turtle Island's West Coast, on the predominantly unceded territories of various Indigenous Nations with enduring legal orders, British Columbia also has long Asian diasporic, migratory, and transnational histories, including Filipinx migrant communities who continue to make home in these lands today. According to the 2021 census, over 174,000 Filipinxs live in British Columbia, making it the third-largest visible minority community in the province after Chinese and South Asian communities ("Vancouver's Filipino Community Mourns" 2025). While the majority of the community arrived in the province after the liberalization of federal migration policy in 1967 and the introduction of migrant worker programs in the 1980s, Filipinx migrant presence in the province has been documented as early as the 1860s (Muego 2024).

This special issue attends to the politics of these Filipinx diasporic presences in British Columbia, our place-based histories and struggles, and our acts of daily living, creativity, and community building in different parts of this province. Together, we argue that the relatively nascent field of Filipinx Canadian studies has much to gain, politically and conceptually, from the scholarly perspectives that emerge from the "here" of British Columbia. In turn, we also insist that BC studies is enriched by interdisciplinary and intersectional analyses of racial processes, migratory circuits, labour experiences, organizing efforts, creative interventions, and community formations by Filipino Canadian scholars working in, on, and through British Columbia.

Friendship and Gathering While Racialized in White Institutions

The seeds for this special issue began, at least partly, through long-standing friendships and collaborations. We, as co-editors, have known each other personally since 2012. We met, of all places, in New York City, when we were both still graduate students. JP had been invited to participate in a discussion of four then-recently released books on Filipinx global migrations, which was part of the American Association

of Geographers annual conference that May also attended.³ Perhaps, tellingly, JP found himself as the lone geographer of Filipino descent discussing books at a geography conference about Filipinx migrant lives and landscapes. Drs. Kale Bantigue Fajardo and Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, interdisciplinary Asian American studies scholars of Filipinx descent, were also part of the panel as authors of *Filipino Crosscurrents* and *Migrants for Export*, respectively. We ended up formally meeting in the conference hallways and continued keeping in touch.

Our paths eventually crossed again, more permanently, when JP moved back to Vancouver and started as a postdoctoral fellow at UBC, where May was doing her PhD in geography. We both became actively involved with the Philippine Studies Series (PSS), a space of convergence for artistic, activist, and academic work on Filipinx-ness, the Philippines, and the diasporas at UBC. One of the papers in this special issue – by Teilhard Paradela, Dada Docot, and Karla Lenina Comanda – takes up the arts-based interventions that took place under the auspices of the PSS as a means of theorizing the complications of research, labour, and community as variously positioned Filipinos in historically white Western institutions. Together, we (May and JP) took part in collective conversations with fellow PSS members and organized various talks and screenings, including and especially ones focused on Filipinx Canadian genders and sexualities. For us, the PSS was one site at UBC for productive examinations of our place as racialized scholars in academia. We also benefited from and participated in lively conversations with Indigenous and other racialized faculty and students at UBC who were interested in the possibilities and limits of doing antiracist and decolonial work in white settler colonial institutions. The third annual Dialogues in Critical Indigenous Studies series was one example of such gathering, which May co-organized with fellow graduate students Lindsay Lachance, Mike Krebs, Corey Snelgrove, and Jessica Hallenbeck. Focusing on enactments of “the theme of representations and enactments of Indigenous feminisms through performance,” conversations at the gathering engaged with critical Indigenous studies and performance aesthetics (Department of Theatre and Film 2016; see also Hunt/Tłaliłila’ogwa and Farrales 2024).

In this work, situated on the unceded lands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm where UBC is located, our presence and labour forced us to reckon with being Filipinx scholars in a historically white Western institution where scholarship on Filipinx Canadian issues, including in British Columbia,

³ See Silvey 2013 for the published version of the book review symposium.

has had a long provenance. Scholars such as Aprodicio Laquian and Eleanor Laquian, who were based at UBC's School of Community and Regional Planning, had been writing about Filipino Canadians in British Columbia since the 1970s (E. Laquian 1973; Laquian and Laquian 2008). Eventually, Drs. Leonora Angeles and Geraldine Pratt, in the School of Community and Regional Planning and the Department of Geography respectively, would also join and become key players in advancing Filipinx Canadian studies in British Columbia, both through their scholarly work – often in collaboration with Filipinx Canadian community organizations – and through their labour as teachers of Filipinx Canadian scholarship and mentors of Filipinx scholars at UBC (see Angeles 2012; Pratt 2004, 2012).

The works we feature in this special issue draw from and are in conversation with these scholars. We are also in conversation with broader Filipinx Canadian scholarship, especially works that take on a more national scale approach. As editors, we have respectively been part of larger and longer-term efforts to articulate Filipinx Canadian studies as a field of scholarship in collaboration with scholars from outside British Columbia. During his graduate studies at the University of Toronto, prior to his arrival at UBC, JP was co-editor of *Filipinos in Canada: Disturbing Invisibility* (Coloma et al. 2012), which brought together scholars from across disciplines and across the country whose works engage with issues of significance to the study of Filipinx migration, diaspora, and community formation. Of the contributors to that volume, several were based or worked on/in the BC context. These included Geraldine Pratt (2012) and Leonora Angeles (2012), as well as Carlo Sayo and Jean Marc Daga (2012), who contributed the poem “My Folks,” drawing from their work as youth activists and organizers in so-called Vancouver. JP's and Ethel Tungohan's respective chapters also brought in British Columbia, with JP (Catungal 2012) examining media representations of the deaths of Mao Jomar Lanot, Charle Dalde, and Deward Ponte in Greater Vancouver in the 2000s, and Tungohan (2012) discussing examples of Filipina caregivers' political actions, including through their work with the West Coast Domestic Workers Association in Vancouver and the BC chapters of Migrant Canada and the National Alliance of Philippine Women of Canada.

JP and May were also contributors to *Diasporic Intimacies: Queer Filipinos and Canadian Imaginaries* (Diaz et al. 2017), which centred queer Filipinx communities and our interventions and experiences within Filipinx Canadian studies. While JP's contribution to the volume was

more conceptual, May's was more explicitly grounded in place, drawing directly from her empirical work on sport and heteromascularity with Filipinx basketball players and league organizers in Vancouver (Catungal 2017; Farrales 2017a). Other BC-based contributors included artist Kim Villagante, whose ink drawing titled *Indigenous Imagination 1 (queen)* visually opens Part 2 of *Diasporic Intimacies*.

Intermittently through the course of our friendship, we had been thinking about what it would mean to gather a scholarly community on this West Coast of Turtle Island. The 2024 Association for Asian American Studies conference in Seattle, on dxʷdəwʔabš (Duwamish) lands, provided such an occasion. We convened a roundtable on Filipinx Canadian studies in British Columbia that included ourselves in conversation with Allen Baylosis (UBC), Alyssa Reyes (SFU), Christine Añonuevo (University of Northern BC), and James Pangilinan (UBC). In the summer of 2024, we began thinking about the need to gather more Filipinx Canadian studies scholars who work on and/or in British Columbia, with the goal of generating community, sharing knowledge with each other, and thinking collectively about what Filipinx Canadian studies in, on, and through British Columbia might offer for bringing Filipinx Canadian studies and BC studies into conversation. In December 2024, with support from SFU's Department of Geography, SFU's Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, the SFU David Lam Centre, and UBC's Centre for Asian Canadian Research and Engagement, we held an invitational one-day workshop at SFU's Harbour Centre campus with the goal of pursuing this special issue. Prior to the workshop, we shared our works with each other in whatever form they existed at that point; some were fully written pieces, while others were mere sketches or outlines of ideas for potential papers. We used the workshop to refine our ideas and to think together about the broader framework of "Filipinx Canadian studies in, on, and through British Columbia," the title that we gave to both the workshop and now give to this special issue. In total, we had twelve participants, including ourselves and two undergraduate student research assistants (Kady Viernes from SFU and Felicity Gutierrez from UBC), and we workshoped eight potential single-authored and coauthored contributions.

As we've found in our past participation in other Filipinx-led academic gatherings, our workshop became both an intellectual space where we shared in the labour of circulating and fine-tuning our ideas and a makeshift opportunity for collectively naming our racialization as Filipinx Canadian junior scholars within largely historically white

academic institutions. In this act of naming and through the sharing of our personal stories, the gathering convened a space of collective care and affirmation, one that was markedly Filipinx Canadian not only because of the topics of our papers, but also because we occupied university space as racialized bodies. The space itself felt indelibly Filipinx Canadian: it was characterized by familiar sounds of mixed English and Filipinx languages, punctuated occasionally with Filipinx speech forms such as swardspeak, culturally inflected humour, and community gossip. Many of us remarked about the rarity – and necessity – of such a gathering. As Filipinx Canadian scholars, care for each other and our community was another key aspect of the work we accomplished at the workshop. In our acts of listening and responding to each other's complaints about our experiences as scholars, we not only did the collective work of critiquing academic whiteness, but also provided support and camaraderie to each other (see also Catungal et al. 2023). As workshop co-organizers and co-editors of this special issue, we also understand this work as care partly because we wanted to craft the workshop as a space of vertical and horizontal mentorship, and work with fellow junior scholars and graduate students as published interlocutors.

A Place-Based Approach: Interventions On and From the “Here” of British Columbia

This special issue is a part of this intellectual history, as well as of a much wider and longer set of genealogies of thinking and organizing in and with Filipinx communities in British Columbia. The main point we want to advance with this special issue is that Filipinx Canadian studies has much to gain – analytically and politically – from attending to the politics of Filipinx diasporic presences in British Columbia; our place-based and place-specific histories and struggles; and our acts of daily living, creativity, and community building in different parts of this province. Among other things, we note that theorizing from the “here” of our respective BC locations refuses what may well be called methodological nationalism in Filipinx Canadian studies, which is characterized by the general tendency in this field to treat what are actually place-specific or region-specific perspectives as if they stand in for the national scale of “Filipinx Canada” more broadly. We foreground, instead, a critical place-based approach to Filipinx Canadian studies in, on, and through British Columbia.

We are energized by similar efforts, in Asian American studies, to consider the scalar politics of Filipinx Canadian studies and to argue

for a place-based approach that begins with the specificity of British Columbia as an analytical and geographical context. In a piece on the place of the Midwest in Asian American studies, Erika Lee (2009, 247) argues for the wisdom of moving beyond the US coastal regions as the presumed epicentres of the field. She argues that “relocating ... to the Midwest illuminates new issues,” “challenges some of the field’s key assumptions and paradigms and draws attention to new ways of doing research, teaching, and outreach.” In this special issue, we foreground British Columbia as site and source of situated Filipinx Canadian critique in an effort to address the Ontario-centric tendency in the field, a pattern that could be explained in part as an effect of the clustering of Filipinx Canadian scholars in the Greater Toronto region and the demographic concentration of Filipinx migrants in the city (see, for example, Coloma et al. 2012; Diaz et al. 2017). This has produced what we consider to be relatively unexamined spatial ways of knowing that shape “Filipinx Canada” and “Filipinx Canadian studies” as political and conceptual formations, in which, as we note above, actually place-specific perspectives have sometimes been scaled up to Canada as a nation-state. Our special issue is our collective effort to ask questions about the seeming methodological nationalism of such a geographical pattern of scholarship, along with its epistemological and methodological implications. Centring BC-based locations and perspectives, our special issue is also thus our proactive response to earlier calls to expand the spatial ambit of Filipinx Canadian studies as a field and scholarly community (McElhinny et al. 2012).

In turn, our special issue also insists that the scholarship that coheres under the banner of “BC studies” will be enriched by interdisciplinary and intersectional analyses of racial processes, migratory circuits, labour experiences, organizing efforts, aesthetic interventions, and community formations by Filipinx Canadian scholars working in, on, and through British Columbia. We point here to three particular interventions addressing BC studies that emerge from the contributions of the special issue. The first is quite basic: Through this special issue, we seek to address the relative dearth of Filipinx Canadian scholarship in the journal *BC Studies*. A quick search using the string “filipin* or filipino or filipina or philippin*” on the *BC Studies* website yields all of five results: one article by Geraldine Pratt in collaboration with the Filipino Canadian Youth Alliance (2003/2004) on second-generation Filipino Canadian youth experiences of belonging and displacement; another article by Pratt with Caleb Johnston (2009), on their testimonial play *Nanay* based on

their history of research on and with Filipinx caregivers; and Margarita James's (2019/2020) autobiographical reflection titled *My Transpacific Life*, in which she shares her stories and perspectives as a mixed Líl'wat and Filipina woman and elder and grandmother to her Mowachaht-Muchalaht family and community. The search also turned up the word Filipino in a book review (on Filipino Seattle) and in the byline of an author (Candace Galla), whose article focused on technologies and Native Hawaiian histories in the Pacific Northwest.

A second intervention concerns the centrality of Filipinx Canadian racialization to the making of British Columbia's political and social geography. Well-documented forms of Filipinx Canadian racialization continue to characterize the experiences of Filipinx Canadians in British Columbia, as in other places. These include our gendered overrepresentation in precarious work sectors, stereotyped representations in media and popular culture, and various forms of institutional neglect, including in the field of education (Coloma et al. 2012; Tungohan 2023; Farrales 2017b). These patterns are undergirded and powered by logics and systems of white supremacy, in Canada more broadly and in British Columbia more specifically. Various papers in this special issue extend this argument by making the necessary point that Filipinx in British Columbia are racialized in relation not only to white supremacy, but also to ongoing settler colonialism and Indigenous dispossession. When we ask, in this special issue, what it means to make life, place, and community "here" in British Columbia, we want to be attentive to the fact that this "here" is both a settler colonial "here" (British Columbia) and a vibrantly Indigenous "here" (of various, mostly unceded, Indigenous communities with ongoing legal and political orders). While this is true across various parts of Turtle Island, the specificity of what this looks like in British Columbia, in various Indigenous territories and in relation to specific Indigenous communities, is taken up directly by several contributors to this special issue. For example, in her contribution with James Pangilinan, Christine Añonuevo thinks through hospitality as an analytic as well as a political practice, which has shaped her familial and community relationships and life, both in the past on Syilx territory in the Okanagan Valley and currently on unceded Gitxsan territory in the Hazeltons. In his contribution with Dennis D. Gupa, Alvin Erasga Tolentino points to Indigenous artists Victor Reece (Tsimshian) and Sharon Jinkerson-Brass (Key First Nation), of the Big Sky Multi Media Storytelling Society, as some of his early teachers in his journey as a dancer towards decolonizing his art practice. In one of our

This Space Here contributions (above), the open letter to Filipinx in the aftermath of the identification of unmarked graves at the sites of various former BC residential schools in the past few years exhorts Filipinx Canadians to hold institutions of significance to our community – including the Catholic Church – to account for their participation in ongoing histories of violence against Indigenous people. By situating themselves in place and in lively relation to Indigenous communities, these contributors force BC studies scholars to see such Indigenous-Filipinx entanglements as possible refusals of the futurity of British Columbia as a settler colonial space and the elevation of possible futures for “British Columbia” that are oriented towards Indigenous sovereignties, including as upheld by Filipinx (and other racialized) communities.

A third intervention concerns the question of how Filipinx Canadian and migrant communities make, and remake, British Columbia in both discursive and material ways. The papers insist quite forcefully that we are not just “here” but are active in shaping the very geographies of this province, including through our enrolment as workers within settler colonial capitalist systems that are key to powering British Columbia as a province. As others before us have argued, our communities do this through our embodied labour, especially in care work, agriculture, resource extraction, and service industries (see also Coloma et al. 2012). Several of our special issue contributors expand our understanding of just what kinds of labour we do to shape British Columbia’s social and political geography. The labour of Filipinx Canadian placemaking, for example, literally works to mark our literal presence in BC landscapes through the creation of sites, spaces, and infrastructures by and for our communities. One of our *This Space Here* contributions discusses one such example: the setting up of a cluster of culturally relevant businesses in Vancouver’s Joyce-Collingwood neighbourhood and how it has constituted a Filipinx Canadian ethnocultural hub, despite being threatened by gentrification and displacement. In this contribution, first published in 2021 in the *Tyee*, Christopher Cheung powerfully notes how such Filipinx Canadian entrepreneurs leave their mark on the landscape of this East Vancouver neighbourhood and support the ability of Filipinx Canadian migrants to make lives and home here. He also notes that the reproduction of this hub as a kind of Filipinx Canadian community and cultural infrastructure is powered by Filipinx Canadian patronage and our circulation of the space’s significance, through our stories, within our communities, and to broader publics (see also Kuwentong Pamamahay 2024).

Meanwhile, other contributors hone in on embodied labour in the creative and performing arts as a crucial form of place-making that produces literal places and spaces in various places in British Columbia. Several contributions, in their own respective ways, ask the question: How do Filipinx Canadian communities not just bring, but shape their sense of individual self and group identity as diasporic subjects in various parts of this province through their work as cultural producers and performers? In their respective papers, Baylosis, Clarissa Cecilia Mijares, and Gupa and Tolentino powerfully illustrate the centrality of creative labour and practice in the creation of Filipinx diasporic communities in British Columbia. Baylosis and Mijares each look to the staging of Filipinxness in theatre and community dance spaces in Greater Vancouver and Victoria, respectively. Their contributions address performances as a means through which Filipinxs in British Columbia articulate their presence via their creative and embodied practices on stage and behind the scenes. Theatre and dance practitioners Gupa and Tolentino jointly articulate the decolonial possibilities enabled by diasporic performance practice both in British Columbia and transnationally through their notion of “coalitional choreographies.” In their own ways, Baylosis, Mijares, Gupa, and Tolentino examine how creative performances of Filipinx diasporic identities in the province articulate their sense of place while confronting and being confronted by the settler colonial, migratory, and transnational contexts of Filipinx Canadian lives in different parts of British Columbia.

In her paper, Mijares looks to the work of Filipina dance teachers – as choreographers, designers, and community leaders – in so-called Victoria, arguing that their work in cultural production reshapes Victoria representationally and materially. They do so, she notes, by making dance-focused community infrastructures and stage productions, and through their embodied presence as performers and participants in the local social life of the city. Similarly, in his paper, Baylosis looks to the devised theatre production *buto/buto: bones are seeds* and the historical and investigative labour done under its auspices to chart a longer history of Filipinx presence in British Columbia, including telling the story of the documented presence (in the census) of Benson Flores on so-called Bowen Island, located on Skwxwú7mesh lands. In and through this work of devising – making theatre “from scratch” through extensive community involvement – Filipinx Canadian cultural producers and the communities they collaborate with remake and rework what narratives are available not only about Filipinx Canadians, but also about British Columbia and its histories and geographies more broadly.

Placing Filipinx British Columbia, Including Transnationally

As we've been noting, Filipinx Canadian placemaking is a key thread across the papers in this special issue. Several of our contributors write directly, often from their embodied perspectives, about how diasporic subjects understand ourselves here especially with respect to relations and relationalities grounded in particular places and sites. In a dialogic piece, Añonuevo and Pangilinan reflect on how Filipinx Canadian world-making practices in British Columbia might be oriented in ethical alignment with Indigenous landscapes, lifeways, and laws. They draw on the notion of hospitality to reorient Filipinx Canadian life in British Columbia away from the settler colonial state. In their co-authored contribution, Teillard Paradela, Dada Docot, and Karla Comanda examine three artistic projects of the PSS. The article traces the development of PSS's thinking on what it means to do academic, advocacy, and artistic work within a settler colonial context. Also concerned with the diaspora's entanglements with colonialisms, JP and May's co-authored paper critically assesses how, on and in relation to being on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, the diaspora's turn to Indigeneity reproduces colonial practices of consumption and erasure.

Each in our own ways, our special issue contributions not only situate Filipinx Canadians within British Columbia; we also situate British Columbia as a node in a much more extensive and global Filipinx Canadian diasporic geography. In other words, one of the interventions our contributors offer is to *transnationalize* British Columbia through attending to the geographies of Filipinx Canadian diasporas here. Practices such as the bringing back of fabric from Bohol in the Visayas to make dance costumes in Victoria, as documented by Mijares, or the sending of balikbayan boxes (care packages) and monetary remittances from Vancouver to Manila, as discussed in Paradela, Docot, and Comanda, entangle British Columbia and the Philippines economically and culturally, for example. In our own contribution, we critically engage the ways that Philippine-based ideas of gender and sexuality make their way here, in the diaspora, as a means for Filipinx North Americans to make sense of themselves beyond the dominant (Western) gender and sexual frames available here. Angel Bella's *Soundworks* contribution links Toronto, Vancouver, and Manila by attending not only to her own mobilities across these sites, but also to how these sites' ecological and environmental similarities and differences figure in her own shifting senses of place as a mobile Filipinx subject. Her sonic autocartography writes her family history and sonic geographies squarely within her

examination of Vancouver as a local node in a global diasporic network that also includes Manila and Toronto. By thinking with and through these traffics and mobilities – of bodies, goods, money, and concepts – our contributors make the necessary point that, for Filipinxs, the “here” of British Columbia is globally situated, tied as it is to other places through our diverse and vibrant practices of transnationalism as migrant and diasporic subjects.

This transnationalism also manifests politically, addressing not only Philippines-Canada entanglements, but also other global issues that Filipinx Canadians in British Columbia organize on, such as the ongoing genocide in Palestine. For example, the advocacy and activist group Migrante BC endorsed and participated in the 4 October rally for Palestine in Vancouver. Their Instagram statement of support, inviting Filipinx Canadians to march with their contingent at the rally, said in part “From Palestine to the Philippines, Stop the US War Machine! Long Live International Solidarity!” (Migrante BC 2025). By articulating the globality of US empire, tying Palestine and the Philippines together, and embodying international solidarity in the place-based practice of rallying with other communities in Vancouver, Migrante BC makes crystal clear that our political life “here” is also entangled with ongoing global struggles and transnational solidarities against empire and militarism globally.

FILIPINX CANADIAN SCHOLARSHIP IN BRITISH COLUMBIA IN/AS COMMUNITY

As we noted above, the papers that make up this special issue move through methodological, empirical, conceptual, and political grounds from these unceded coastal and western lands. To put it differently, the papers in this special issue offer entry points into Filipinx Canadian studies from the “here” and from the places within which the authors’ scholarship and conversations unfold.

Not surprisingly, given the geography of Filipinx Canadian community formation and migration in the province, many of us are clustered in major urban areas, including the unceded territories of the *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm*, *Skwxwú7mesh*, and *səlilwətaʔ*, on which Vancouver and nearby suburbs are located, and of the *ləkʷəŋən* Peoples, on which Victoria is located. We also have contributors whose lives and work are located in rural and northern parts of the province, including the unceded territories of the Lheidli T’enneh First Nation; the Kitselas Nation; the Kitsumkalum of the Ts’m syen; and the Gitxsan people in Hazelton. A select number of our contributors were previously based in or have worked in British

Columbia, but are now located in other parts of Turtle Island, including in Winnipeg on the traditional homelands of the Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Inineew (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene, Dakota, and Métis; in Montreal on Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) lands; and in West Lafayette, Indiana, on the homelands of the Bodéwadmik (Potawatomi), Lenape (Delaware), Myaamia (Miami), and Shawnee People.

While a vast majority of us are university-based academics, some contributors work primarily as government officials or as performing arts practitioners. We come to this work from quite different academic and artistic fields and are thus engaged, collectively, in thinking about Filipinx Canadian studies in, on, and through British Columbia from a decidedly *interdisciplinary* perspective. Together, we examine BC-based Filipinx Canadian efforts to make life and place from our respective learnings in the fields of geography, sociology, health studies, feminist and queer studies, creative writing, performance studies, and critical race and ethnic studies. As co-editors, we firmly believe that our special issue is strengthened by the diversity of our disciplinary and interdisciplinary locations, as well as the complex geographies that ground our interventions in, on, and through British Columbia.

As co-editors, we have deliberately chosen to foreground and profile the work of fellow junior (nontenured) scholars, including current graduate students, in this special issue, as we did during the December 2024 workshop. We have done so in part because, for us, these thinkers and their works give us a powerful sense of what is to come for Filipinx Canadian studies in, on, and through British Columbia, as well as what analytics, methodologies, and issues are central to their scholarship and theorizing and thus to the future of this field of study. We are energized by the ways that our contributions engage in conversation with earlier works in Filipinx Canadian studies, both within and beyond British Columbia. As a kind of citational network, the list of references compiled in this special issue constitute important accountings of thinkers and thinking that ground Filipinx Canadian studies. Importantly, these are not just Filipinx scholars, but also Black, Indigenous, Asian Canadian, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Latinx theorists and thinkers, a vast majority of whom approach their work from intersectional feminist, queer, and decolonial perspectives. We are honoured to be part of this collective work, and we wish a sincere thanks/agyamanak/salamat to our contributors, and our larger communities, for the beautiful labour of laying the groundwork – through their thinking and doing – for a more socially just and abundant future for Filipinx Canadians in British Columbia and beyond.

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