1. Decolonizing Environmental Pedagogy: Rerouted Knowledges and Participatory Ecopoetics in the Poetry of Craig Santos Perez

Born on the northwestern Pacific island of Guam/Guåhan, raised in California, and currently residing on the island of O'ahu, Hawai'i, the CHamoru poet, scholar, and activist Craig Santos Perez writes about his native island and culture from a perspective of migration. Widely acclaimed and frequently discussed both by ecocritics interested in Indigenous literatures and by scholars working in transpacific studies and the blue humanities who emphasize "concepts of fluidity, flow, routes, and mobility" (DeLoughrey, "Toward a Critical Ocean Studies" 22), Perez explores Indigenous practices of place-making as well as creative modes of resistance against settler acts of land-taking that threaten his native island of Guam/Guåhan. Perez's ongoing series of poetry collections, *from unincorporated territory* (2008-ongoing), makes visible historical as well as contemporary acts of colonial violence and environmental devastation in the Pacific. At the same time, it imagines poetry as a tool of resistance against the ongoing violation of Pacific Islanders' rights to sovereignty, communal well-being, and environmental as well as mobility justice. Building on the insights of a number of scholars who have written about Perez's work, I show in this chapter how his poetry seeks to educate his readers and sensitize them toward the harmful impact of military invasion and colonial enclosure on both Guåhan's natural environment and CHamoru relationships to the nonhuman world, while also re-articulating CHamoru identity and cultural production as both place-based and mobile. Highly attentive to various kinds of im/mobility and invested in producing a new kind of mobile environmental imaginary for the purpose of CHamoru cultural restoration, Perez's first four collections explore how the environmental knowledges derived from CHamoru cultural practices have been made precarious by ecological devastation and CHamoru immobilization, on the one hand, and by continental migration and the resulting disruption of CHamoru genealogies of knowledge, on the other hand. As I argue, Perez's poetry responds to this devastation and disruption with a participatory ecopoetics that promotes poetry as a means of mobile CHamoru place-making and community formation and as a means of environmen-

tal pedagogy that seeks to engage the broadest audience possible in an Indigenous-led collective project of decolonization.

Craig Santos Perez: A CHamoru Poet Writing *from* Unincorporated Territory

Perez writes both in response to a long history of colonization and ecological degradation in Micronesia and under the compounding pressures of a new era of U.S.-led "[t]ransoceanic militarism" (DeLoughrey, "Critical Ocean Studies" 23) in the Indo-Pacific that perpetuates the disenfranchisement of Indigenous Pacific Islanders such as the CHamoru. Perez's poems thus simultaneously document and enact, for the specific geopolitical and environmental context of Guåhan, what Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor calls "native survivance" (Vizenor 1; see also Lai 2), that is, a political as well as cultural struggle against the erasure of Indigenous presences that acknowledges structures of (neo-)colonial domination while renouncing the paralyzing effects of victimization. Put differently, Perez's poems perform what Tongan scholar Epeli Hau'ofa has called "a spirit of creative originality" (Hau'ofa, "Our Place Within" 85; see also Jansen 5) that critiques and challenges these structures of domination. Evoking the legacies of Spanish colonization and Japanese occupation as well as Guåhan's current political status as an unincorporated U.S. territory, Perez's poetry denounces ongoing CHamoru territorial dispossession as well as the cultural and environmental devastation it has caused on the island. More specifically, Perez links the ecological devastation of the island and the larger ecosystem of the Marianas to the loss of Indigenous cultural practices and knowledges as well as to varying frames of mobility and immobilization that have disrupted and continue to disrupt CHamoru genealogies and knowledges.

Perez's ecopoetry of migration bespeaks a desire for a meaningful engagement with the natural world in the context of colonization and militarization that cannot be reduced to a simple desire for emplacement in the sense of rootedness. Rather, his experimental and stylistically varied ecopoetry of mobility depends in crucial ways on a critical investigation of those histories and experiences of displacement that inform CHamoru identity and culture in the twenty-first century. As I show by reading the first four volumes of his series *from unincorporated territory* (*[hacha]* 2008, *[saina]* 2010, *[guma']* 2014, *[lukao]* 2017), Perez's poems sound out the possibilities and limits of Indigenous knowledge production and transmission in the context of occupation and ecological crisis by evoking alternative epistemologies and genealogies of knowledge. As his work showcases, poetry as a means of record keeping and of developing a counter-hegemonic vocabulary of resistance against the exploitation of Indigenous peoples and homelands plays a crucial role in this endeavor. By writing a multi-voiced poetry that combines "mobile visual forms" and "lyrical

lines" (Knighton 343) with quotations from and references to a great variety of source texts, Perez foregrounds the particular perspective on human-nature relationships afforded to a CHamoru migrant and poet who writes about the contested social, political, cultural, and environmental territory of Guam/Guåhan. In this chapter, I follow Perez in using the name *Guåhan* to refer to the geographical place and politically contested territory officially known as Guam, except when a distinction between the two names helps to clarify an argument about the occupied status of the island. Similarly, I use the self-chosen term *CHamoru/s* for the Indigenous people of Guam/Guåhan, instead of the official designation *Chamorro.*[1]

The western Pacific island of Guam/Guåhan is positioned at the heart of Oceania but at the fringes of what Paul Lai has so aptly called the "Discontiguous States of America" (3). Lai speaks of the "Discontiguous States of America" in order to foreground "the imperial topography of the United States" as well as "Native American reservation spaces within the boundaries of the contiguous states, offshore territories in the Caribbean and Pacific Oceans (including Guantánamo Bay, Cuba), and the two outlying states of Alaska and Hawai'i" (3). Guam/Guåhan is the largest and southernmost island of the Marianas archipelago, which in turn lies at the eastern rim of the Philippine Sea. Claimed by Magellan for the Spanish Crown in the sixteenth century and colonized by Spanish missionaries during the seventeenth century, Guåhan was ceded by Spain to the United States after the Spanish-American War of 1898. Having been turned into a dependent territory of the United States without prospects of full statehood as a result of the Insular Cases of 1901, the island remained under U.S. naval control until it was captured by the Japanese during WWII. After Guåhan was retaken by the United States in 1944, the *Guam Organic Act* (48 U.S.C. § 1421 *et seq*.) of 1950 formally turned Guåhan into an "unincorporated, *organized* territory" (Perez, *[hacha]* 8; emphasis added), granting its inhabitants U.S. citizenship and a certain degree of self-governance without, however, granting them full constitutional rights, thus ultimately perpetuating the island's colonial status. To this day, Guam/Guåhan and its Indigenous population, the CHamoru, retain a liminal political position that has allowed the U.S. government to exploit the island for military purposes (Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 9). Local activist groups, such as We are Guåhan, continue to protest military buildup, not least because of its projected disastrous environmental impact on the island. In 2010, the acting governor of Guåhan, Felix Perez Camacho, introduced a bill to change the island's name to "Guåhan," a name signifying "place of resources" (Guam Legislature 1) in CHamoru and meant to "instill indigenous ownership" (2). Since the change was

1 As Craig Santos Perez outlines, the doubly-capitalized spelling "CHamoru" is to be preferred over the older spelling "Chamoru," because the letters CH are considered one character in the CHamoru alphabet (*Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 10). In quotations from primary and secondary sources, I leave the terms and spellings used by the respective authors.

never officially recognized by the U.S. government, however, the political project of renaming the island has been stuck in a legal limbo, a situation tragically befitting its unincorporated yet organized (read occupied) status.

Taking the contested status of his native island as a central theme and originally envisioned as a twelve-book project (Perez qtd. in Schlund-Vials 57), Perez's ongoing book series *from unincorporated territory* consists, as of date, of five thematically and formally linked volumes of poetry. The CHamoru subtitles of the first four collections point to important themes of the series and, as Erin Suzuki remarks, to each book's main "organizing principle" (182): the first volume, *[hacha]* (2008), is named after the CHamoru word for 'one,' expressing Perez's "interest in origins and sourcings" (Suzuki 182); the second volume, *[saina]* (2010), takes as its title the CHamoru word for 'ancestor,' 'elder,' or 'spirit,' but also refers to a CHamoru outrigger canoe built as part of a cultural revival project, pointing to "reflections on navigation, the erasures and gaps in knowledge created out of the experience of colonialism, and Perez's personal experience of diaspora" (Suzuki 182); the title of the third volume, *[guma']* (2014), translates as 'house' or 'home,' which brings to mind not only "how the concept of home itself gets deconstructed and reconstructed across a number of diasporic sites" (Suzuki 182), but also the endangered ecosystem of Guåhan and the so-called *guma' uritao* or 'men's house,' a traditional place of learning for young CHamoru men (Rogers 34); the fourth volume is called *[lukao]* (2017), which means 'procession' or 'wandering around,' alluding to the succession of generations as well as, once more, to CHamoru experiences of displacement and migration; the title of an upcoming fifth volume *[åmot]* (2023), finally, names herbs or medicine and thus gestures both to CHamoru practices of healing with local (and imported) plants and to poetry as a means of healing a community severely impacted by colonization and military occupation. Before *[åmot]*, Perez published a collection of poems, *Habitat Threshold* (2020), that stands independently from his ongoing series, even as it remains thematically connected to *from unincorporated territory*. Like some poems in *[lukao]*, *Habitat Threshold* shifts the primary focus away from Guåhan and toward Hawai'i, where Perez moved to take up a teaching position and where his two daughters were born. It is due to this shift in *[lukao]* that I concentrate on the first four and primarily on the first three collections in my analysis. I use the first edition of *[hacha]*, published with Tinfish Press, rather than the partly revised edition republished with Omnidawn, not because I fetishize a supposed original version of the collection over the revised one, but because some of my readings reference visual aspects of Perez's poems that were modified as part of the switch from the square format of the first edition of *[hacha]* to the Din A5 format of the revised edition.

The first four collections of *from unincorporated territory* consist of several poem sequences whose titles—"tidelands," "(sub)aerial roots," "achiote," "ocean views" or "the micronesian kingfisher *[I sihek]*"—frequently reference island geographies or natural phenomena. The individual sections of these sequences do not form self-

contained wholes; they are not grouped in each volume by sequence or contained within one volume only. Rather, the individual sections, or installments, are dispersed throughout the books in which they appear. Even more, some sequences spill from one book into the next, appearing in two or more collections. Parts of the sequence "aerial roots"/ "(sub)aerial roots," for example, can be found in the first two volumes of *from unincorporated territory*, while sections of "tidelands" are included in the first three volumes of the series and individual installments of "organic acts" appear in the second as well as the fourth volume, pointing both to ecological entanglements and to the historical entanglement of Indigenous and foreign cultures on Guåhan and in the Pacific at large. When viewed as a project of place-making in the context of im/mobility, *from unincorporated territory* can be read not only as a project of revitalizing Indigenous environmental knowledges from a perspective of displacement, but also as an experiment in ecopoetics that tries to reconfigure what is known about small island ecologies and, more specifically, how Indigenous epistemologies and cultural practices, including poetry, come to matter in the production and transmission of knowledges about small island ecologies that are shaped by all kinds of human and nonhuman mobilities.

From a Cartographic to a Transoceanic Imaginary of Place

As a number of scholars have noted, references to the politics of cartography play a central role in *from unincorporated territory* (see Hsu, Cocola, Heim "Locating Guam," Lai, Schlund-Vials). From its first pages onward, Perez's series *from unincorporated territory* repeatedly uses maps, or "poemap[s]" (Perez, *[lukao]* 9), to engage critically with Guåhan's past and current status as a contested political and cultural territory that is defined by human mobility. The first installment of the sequence "lisiensan ga'lago" in *[hacha]*, whose CHamoru title means "dog tag" and refers to the stripes of cloth that CHamorus had to wear as markers of identification during the Japanese occupation of WWII (Lai 12), presents the conflicting cartographic imaginaries of Guåhan promoted by the island's varying occupying forces as well as a CHamoru counter-perspective to these colonial projections. The first half of this installment reads:

"goaam" ∼
"goam" ∼

"islas de las velas latinas"
(of lateen sails ∼

"guan" ~ "guana" ~

"isles de los ladrones"
(of the thieves ~ "Guåhan" ~ "guajan" ~ "islas marianas"
(after the spanish queen ~ "bahan" ~

"guhan" ~ "guacan" ~ "isla de san juan" ~ "guaon"

"y guan" ~ "omiya jima" ~ "guam"

"the first province of the great ocean" ~
(*[hacha]* 15)

The visually striking composition of the section's text mainly consists of exonyms for Guåhan and the Marianas, that is, historical names for the island and the larger archipelago used on colonial maps and in travel accounts by outsiders rather than its Indigenous inhabitants. Among the quoted names are several that mark relations of possession, such as the Spanish name "islas marianas" [*hacha* 15] which claims the islands for Spanish Queen Mariana of Austria (1634–1696), or the byname "the first province of the great ocean" (15) given to the Marianas by the Russian explorer Otto von Kotzebue at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Rogers 1). Other exonyms express the ideological distortions of colonial cartography, such as the two Spanish names going back to Magellan. Magellan first baptized the Marianas "islas de las velas latinas" (*[hacha]* 15), a designation that acknowledged local seafaring traditions. Later, he renamed the island chain "isles de los ladrones" (15), islands "of the thieves" (15), after a group of CHamoru used their agile sailboats to steal a rowboat from Magellan's ship the *Trinidad* (Rogers 9). As the opening poem of *[hacha]* suggests, the act of re-naming a geographical place betrays the colonizers' will and power to control the knowledges that circulate about a particular locale along with the place itself.[2]

2 For a more detailed discussion of the politics of the spatial practice of colonial map-making, see Mahshid Mayar's *Citizens and Rulers of the World: The American Child and the Cartographic Pedagogies of Empire* (2022), which argues, amongst other things, that "[r]enaming has long been adopted as a potentially tentative and revocable yet irrefutably violent project of imperial appropriation and colonial reclamation of space […and that] as such, it both facilitates and justifies the spatial and cultural advances made by the colonizer" (104). Significantly, too, Mayar discusses the long-term consequences of such a seemingly abstracted act of cartographic renaming on both the colonized and the environment they inhabit: "The act of renaming alienates the colonized not only from their past and present, their language and culture, but also from their right to protest the depletion of the limited natural resources the colonized spaces have in store, the destructive impact of such depletion on Indigenous ways of life, and the ensuing ecological crises that will assume global dimensions in the decades and centuries to come" (104).

Renaming is anything but innocent and can be used to establish and maintain relations of domination vis-à-vis the people and the land, the first installment of "lisensian ga'lago" displayed above confirms. In the case of Guåhan, it enabled what Michael Lujan Bevacqua refers to as Guåhan's "banal coloniality" (33), that is, the seemingly casual way in which the island has been subjected, and continues to be subjected, to colonization and militarization (See Heim; "Locating Guam" 187). Taken from Spanish, Japanese, and English sources, the place names in the quoted excerpt provide a linguistic record of the territorial conflicts and imperialist discourses that determined the island's geopolitical and cultural position after Magellan's voyages first put the Marianas on European maps. Exemplifying what Jim Cocola has called Perez's "cartographic poetics" (188), the different designations in this particular poemap form the shape of Guåhan, albeit one turned by 90-degree counter-clockwise in comparison to common Euro-American representations of the island on world maps, putting the counter-hegemonic perspective of Perez's collections on display. The pivotal point of this cartogram—and the only capitalized word on the page in the original edition of *[hacha]*—is "Guåhan," the CHamoru name for the island. Placed roughly at the form's center, this endonym challenges the colonial discourses associated with the exonyms on the page's peripheries and thus gestures toward the CHamorus' ongoing struggle for sovereignty.

The poem's visualization of Guåhan's discursive over-determination by foreign powers in the form of a map counters the figurative "geographic absence" (*[hacha]* 16) of Guåhan in the collective memory of its various occupying nations (Schlund-Vials 46). It exemplifies what Cathy J. Schlund-Vials calls the "cartographic pedagogies" (46) of Perez's poetry, which make visible "the role distance plays in the making of U.S. imperialism while at the same time unmasking the absented registers of American empire" (46). In the preface to *[hacha]*, Perez too addresses "Guåhan's marginality to discourses of US nationalism and Western historiography" (Hsu 283), here by pointing to Robert Duncan's 1968 poem "Uprising: Passages 25" as "one of the few poems in American poetry that mentions Guam" (Perez, *[hacha]* 11). Duncan's anti-war poem begins "with planes roaring out *from Guam* over Asia" (Duncan 154; emphasis added) before launching into a pointed critique of U.S. imperialism and militarism, albeit one that centers a (continental) American perspective, even though it decries the "holocaust of burning/ Indians, trees and grasslands" (155). It is in part in response to Duncan's poem, in which "'Guam' only manages to signify a strategically positioned military base" (Perez, *[hacha]* 11), that Perez chose the title for his series *from unincorporated territory*. Indeed, every section in the series begins with the word *from* or its CHamoru equivalence *ginen*, indicating Perez's avoidance of "the closure of a completion" (Perez, "The Page" n. p.) as well as the complex relationship of the individual sections to the longer sequences they are excerpted *from* (Perez, *[hacha]* 12). What is more, the repetition of *from*/*ginen* points both to the place-based nature of Perez's poetry and the fact that he is writing about the contested geographi-

cal and cultural territory of Guåhan "'from' the diasporic condition" (Cocola 186) of a CHamoru migrant moving first to California and then to Hawai'i.[3]

While the first half of the "lisiensan ga'lago" section just discussed demonstrates how Perez's poetry challenges colonial and imperial knowledges that reduce Guåhan to a strategic site of military and economic exchanges, the second half of the same installment (displayed in both editions of *[hacha]* on the next page but marked as a new installment of "lisiensan ga'lago" in the revised edition) underlines how such acts of epistemological flattening need to be upset by counter-hegemonic perspectives. Here and elsewhere in the series, these counter-hegemonic perspectives are, at least in part, perspectives shaped by Indigenous environmental knowledges that are evoked in poetry:

> geographic absence ∼ "the old cencus records show"
> because who can stand on the
> reef
>
> and name that
> below water or sky
>
> imagined territory ∼
> "a Spanish baptismal name and" burnt villages archipelago of
> "chamoru last names drawn
>
> from the lexicon of everyday language" ∼ bone carved word
> ∼ "it is possible they changed
> their last names throughout their lives" ∼ remade : sovereign
>
> ([*hacha]* 16)

Simultaneously experimental and lyrical, fragmented and highly figurative, the above passage expresses a place of many dimensions. Instead of looking at the

3 Instead of quoting the titles of the individual installments as "*from* tidelands" or "*ginen* organic acts," I refer to them as parts of an abstract larger sequence ("tidelands," "organic acts"). While the geographical connotation of the title component *from/ginen* gets obscured by this choice, Perez's variable use of *from/ginen* as title components for the individual sections in some sequence makes it impossible to refer uniformly to an entire sequence. In effect, it would neither be accurate to speak of the sequence "*from* tidelands" nor of the sequence "*ginen* organic acts." Similarly, it would be somewhat illogical to speak of a section of "*ginen* organic acts." In the first edition of *from unincorporated territory: [hacha]* (2008), which I quote from in this chapter, the titles of the individual installments are capitalized ("*from* TIDELANDS"), while they are in lowercase in all subsequent collections ("*from* tidelands"), including in the re-issued version of *[hacha]* (2017). To avoid unnecessary confusion, I use lowercase for all section titles mentioned.

island from above and from the distance implied by colonial maps, the poem's speaker imagines the perspective of someone standing on a "reef," that is, on the threshold between land and the open ocean. From the vantage point provided by such a liminal positioning, the speaker proposes, one might be able to "name that […] imagined territory." One might also familiarize oneself with all that is "below water or sky" and thus be "remade : sovereign" of the very terrain that was taken from the CHamoru in the process of colonization. Instead of flattening the contested territory of Guåhan through a colonial cartographic imagination, Perez endeavors here to chart the island's historical and environmental depths with his poetry. What is more, he refutes the colonialist idea of Guam as one small, isolated island among other small and isolated "islands in a far sea" (Hao'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands" 152), instead re-establishing Guåhan's cultural position within an interconnected "sea of islands" (152).

Rather than presenting Guåhan as a place of absence that invites colonial fantasies and imperial projections, *from unincorporated territory* evokes the island as a multidimensional place that is characterized by cultural richness and a strikingly beautiful, if endangered, natural world. The island ecologies evoked in Perez's poetry by far surpass any territory that could be measured by quantifiable data or by what "the old census records show" (*[hacha]* 16). Instead, his poetic work suggests that Guåhan is worthy of a caring attention that celebrates it as an Indigenous homeland rich in cultural traditions and natural resources and in need of critical attention that accounts for the complexities and contradictions resulting from its status as an occupied U.S. territory. Indeed, Perez's entire series can be read as a project of ecopoetic place-making that attempts to make sense of Guåhan as an increasingly degraded cultural and natural environment as well as of the possibilities of environmental and cultural restoration that a poetics of caring and critical attention like his own may help to engender. What emerges in Perez's poems in response to this degradation and as a result of his poetic project of restorative place-making is a "transoceanic" sense of place that draws from Pacific Islander place-based knowledges and practices, while also acknowledging the challenges that colonial histories of displacement and the ongoing U.S. occupation pose for twenty-first-century CHamoru environmental imaginaries.[4]

Perez's collections conceive of places as at-once lived-and-imagined spaces that encompass the land, the sky, and the sea and are shaped by various perspectives

4 For discussions of the decolonial dimensions of figurations of the "transoceanic," see for example Elizabeth DeLoughrey's influential discussion in *Routes and Routes* (2007) of a "transoceanic imaginary" (especially 20–30), developed, amongst others, from Derek Walcott's idea that "the sea is history" (4).

of mobility.[5] The sense of land-sky-ocean evoked in *from unincorporated territory* relies on what the poet himself calls "an oceanic préterrain" (*[saina]* 63). Perez borrows the notion of the "oceanic" from the writings of Tongan social anthropologist Epeli Hau'ofa, because it draws attention to "the deeper geography and mythology" of "an oceania, préoceania, and transoceania surrounding islands, below the waves, and in the sky" (*[saina]* 63). Perez proposes the concept of the "oceanic préterrain," as several scholars have noted, because his poetry is very much indebted to a "field" or "terrain" in both ethnographic and poetic terms.[6] The concept also resonates with his poetic work in environmental terms, I would add, insofar as it gestures toward the specific (trans)oceanic culture *and* environment that are at the center of his writing. Perez's insistence on the "oceanic préterrain" thus not only indicates how his poetry "imagines a larger oceanic world for Guam" (Lai 5); it also responds to the geopolitical and environmental problems of Guåhan with "new configurations of space that emphasize oceanic as well as terrestrial space" and, in doing so, "foregrounds indigenous and hybrid modes of perception and practice" (Hsu 297). For my analysis, I am especially interested in the ecological implications of Perez's poetics of the "oceanic préterrain" and in moments where the "forces that exist within and beyond the [traditional] ethnographic frame of the 'field'" (Perez, *[saina]* 63) that interest Perez are connected to human mobility and displacement. As I proposed here, Perez's explorations of Guåhan's oceanic préterrain are inextricably linked to a project of ecopoetic place-making that seeks to harmonize traditional CHamoru place-based imaginaries with the lived realities of intensifying environmental degradation and changing CHamoru cultures of mobility.

Perez's poetry can be called "place-based" and "mobile" in that it foregrounds both the island's natural environment and a long history of CHamoru continental migration.[7] Migration constitutes a considerable challenge for CHamoru culture,

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5 Drawing from Epeli Hau'ofa's influential anti-colonial reconceptualization of the Pacific as "a sea of islands," Vicente Diaz suggests that Australasian seafaring cultures such as the CHamoru rely on an "archipelagic way of apprehending self and space" (91) that depends in crucial ways on mobility. Taking an oceanic (Hau'ofa) or archipelagic (Diaz) approach to small island cultures and ecologies, both scholars insist, entails considering the sea not as empty space but as an extension of the islands and cultures it connects.

6 As J. Michael Martinez points out, Perez's notion of "préterrain" is highly conscious of the hierarchies and power dynamics in the kind of ethnographic research that Peter Pels and Oscar Salemink discuss in their work. Pels and Salemink, Martinez notes, "employ the préterrain as the apparatus whereby the fieldwork process is exposed as performing a colonial mediation upon the represented subject" (Martinez 332). As Martinez observes, Perez further "complicates this dialectic of the préterrain by echoing it against Charles Olson's field poetics" (332–333), which demands of poetry "full attentiveness to the range of objects (language, syntax and semantics, meter, space, and so on) operating in the field composition" (333).

7 As Faye F. Untalan explains, CHamoru migration to the continental United States started in the early 1900s when a small number of young CHamoru men, known as "*Balloneros*,"

not least because the departure of entire families from Guåhan puts to the test local communities as well as cultural frames of reference. Despite the fact that contemporary CHamoru mass migration to the West Coast of the United States continues a long tradition of Pacific Islander transoceanic mobility (Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 110), it calls for a revision of CHamoru cultural identity shaped by colonization. While CHamoru identity continues to depend on people's relationship to the specific (cultural) geographies of Guåhan, displacement has to be acknowledged as a key factor as well. After all, as Perez reminds us in *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* (2021), "[t]oday, more CHamorus live in the diaspora than in the Mariana Islands" (113). If there are indeed no traditional narratives of migration in CHamoru oral literature, as Perez suggests in a section of "(sub)aerial roots" (*[guma']* 17) in drawing from Robert Tenorio Torres, *from unincorporated territory* may be read as an attempt to produce a more mobile cultural and environmental imaginary for those CHamorus who live in diaspora as well as those left on the island. It is important to note that this new mobile cultural and environmental imaginary draws on Pacific Islander traditions of seafaring and evocations of such traditions in Pacific literature (see Heim 186–87, Hsu 300). Yet, in analyzing them one must heed the difference between contemporary transoceanic migrations and (pre-)colonial/ recovered forms of transoceanic and circum-insular travel, especially when it comes to their vastly different effects on place-based cultural practices and environmental knowledges.

When considered as a poetic project of CHamoru place-making that demands a critical engagement with Indigenous histories of im/mobility, the four volumes of *from unincorporated territory* enable an investigation into the ways in which cultural and environmental losses are inextricably entangled with displacement on Guåhan. The environmental imaginary of mobility that emerges from these collections depends on three interconnected themes: the CHamoru as an a historically mobile and forcibly immobilized people, present-day effects of CHamoru mass migration and environmental degradation, and problems that arise from these histories of displacement and current realities of mobility for intergenerational knowledge production and transmission. In the remainder of the chapter, I first engage with the

signed on as crew on U.S. whaling ships. The first CHamoru families began to migrate to the continental United States after WWII, when many CHamoru men entered military service. CHamoru mass migration to the mainland began, however, with Typhoon Karen, in 1960, a catastrophic event that Craig Santos Perez also mentions in his poetry. This trend has continued as growing numbers of young CHamoru left Guåhan to go to college from the 1970s onward. In 1980, 47,690 Guamanians (the census does not distinguish between CHamorus and non-Indigenous inhabitants of Guåhan) were living on Guåhan, while 30,695 were living in the continental United States. Twenty years later, there were 61,922 CHamorus on Guåhan versus 58,240 on the mainland. And finally, according to the 2010 census, around 45,000 CHamorus were counted in California alone, the state which has historically been the main destination of CHamoru migrants (Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 112).

ways Perez's poems draw attention to the connection between Guåhan's endangered ecologies and the precariousness of Indigenous cultural practices in the context of colonial enclosure and CHamoru immobilization. I then outline how Perez's poetry reflects on the precariousness of CHamoru genealogies and knowledges in relation to environmental degradation and CHamoru mass migration. Finally, I demonstrate how *from unincorporated territory* uses the documentary mode to reach out to non-CHamoru audiences in an effort to promote a deeper understanding of CHamoru history and culture as well as greater awareness about the political and environmental challenges Guåhan faces due to its colonial history and ongoing U.S. occupation. As I argue, Perez formulates a participatory ecopoetics that does not merely present readers with a CHamoru project of ecopoetic place-making, but actively engages them in a project of decolonial environmental pedagogy.

Endangered Ecologies, Colonial Enclosure, and CHamoru Immobilization

Following several centuries of colonial occupation, Guåhan's island ecologies continue to be devastated by the ongoing military buildup on the island as well as a growing tourist industry.[8] The richly figurative "tidelands" sequence in *[hacha]* highlights the longer histories of environmental loss, further aggravated by these contemporary developments. Divided, up until now, into eighteen similarly structured sections, the "tidelands" sequence revolves around eighteen CHamoru nouns that relate to the nonhuman world and organize the sections thematically. All except one of these nouns are translated into English at the end of their respective section, a fact that draws attention to these translations as glossaries to a poetic exploration of a distinctly *CHamoru* environmental imaginary. Amongst others, the natural phenomena evoked in "tidelands" include "*[tano : land, soil, earth, ground]*," "*[tasi : sea, ocean]*," "*[cha'guan : grass]*," "*[manglo'* : wind*]*," and "*[langet : sky, heaven]*" (*[hacha]* 25, 26, 42, 48, 62; emphasis original). Significantly, in the ninth "tidelands" section of *[hacha]*, no translation is provided for the word "tinaitai," the CHamoru word for 'tree,' an omission that hints at the loss of significant parts of Guåhan's tree population under Spanish and Japanese rule. Relatedly, this omission can be read

8 For more information on the projected consequences of the current military buildup on Guåhan, see the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) "Guam and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Military Relocation," published in July 2010 by the Department of the U.S. Navy on behalf of the Department of Defense. The statement consists of nine volumes detailing the proposed actions (such as the construction of a deep-draft wharf in Apra Harbor to allow nuclear-powered aircraft carriers to anchor in Guåhan) and their likely environmental effects, with a tenth volume documenting public comments on the Draft EIS. In the sequence "fatal impact statements" from *[guma']*, Perez invokes, and at times quotes from, these comments.

as an allusion to the significance of Banyan trees in pre-Christian CHamoru culture and thus to the loss of ancestral traditions as a result of colonization. Whether they are translated or not, the CHamoru terms inserted into the poems and the poems that environ them gesture beyond place as a mere geopolitical territory or site of natural resources and toward endangered small island ecologies as places of cultural significance saturated with meaning.

The fourth section of "tidelands," organized around "*[cha'guan : grass]*" (Perez, *[hacha]* 42; emphasis original), explicitly links histories of foreign occupation and environmental devastation to the ongoing CHamoru struggle for sovereignty and control of ancestral lands. The section reads:

this
chained ground—"does not constitute a
navigational hazard" but delves
"one witness"—"of different flags"

[cha'guan]

in dull ashes shining

~
[cha'guan : grass]
~

(*[hacha]* 42; emphasis original)

Using the language of conquest and enslavement, the above section points toward the mechanisms of colonization that have turned the island into "chained ground." Rejecting use-oriented discourses according to which the reefs and shallows surrounding the island "constitute a / navigational hazard," discourses that justify foreign management and destruction of Guåhan's natural environments, the speaker foregrounds a different notion of tidelands, one that recalls theorizations of "tidalectics." An idea originating with Caribbean poet Kamau Brathwaite and taken up by various scholars of Pacific literature, "tidalectics" describes "a dynamic model of geography" that can "elucidate island history and cultural production" by providing a "framework for exploring the complex and shifting entanglement between sea and land, diaspora and indigeneity, and routes and roots" (DeLoughrey, *Routes and Roots* 2). A liminal space perched between ocean and land, the tidelands in Perez's poems resist colonial control and act as "one witness" (Perez, *[hacha]* 42) to centuries of violent conquest as well as Indigenous survival.

Among the different foreign powers who planted their "flags" (Perez, *[hacha]* 42) on Guåhan were Spanish missionaries who burnt villages, canoes, and fruit trees to break CHamoru resistance (*[hacha]* 16, 37; Rogers 54–58), the Japanese who im-

plemented "forced agricultural and military labor in order to teach the CHamorus the Japanese spirit of 'hard work and devotion'" (Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 13), and, eventually, U.S.-American military forces who bulldozed and burned down vast areas of *ifit* trees during WWII in an effort to defeat the Japanese (Perez, *[hacha]* 65, 77; Rogers 177, 184). These strategic acts of environmental destruction would have left only "*[cha'guan : grass]*/ […] in dull ashes shining" (*[hacha]* 42; emphasis original), as the excerpt notes, crystallizing Perez's portrayal of how Guåhan's island ecologies have been disrupted and permanently changed by invading forces ever since the arrival of the first Europeans on the island.

Zooming in on the destructive effects of U.S. military invasion on the island, the seventh section of "tidelands" presents the U.S.-American expansion into the Pacific and the current military buildup in the Pacific as a continuation of the American rhetoric of "manifest" destiny in the "republic['s]" relentless movement "west" (*[hacha]* 48). By evoking the dual genocidal and ecocidal logic inherent in the nineteenth-century American search for new territories, Perez critiques the false ideal of an agrarian democracy predicated on Native American removal ("fields of arable light," 48). Section eight of "tidelands" further explores what Perez views as parallels between histories of colonization and the devastating environmental consequences of the contemporary U.S. military buildup and mass tourism on Guåhan's after WWII:

> knells
> "scaffold the course of submission"
> made landfill—"this bridge over salt"
> gardens—"dead fish occupying" the
>
> [saddok]
>
> of advent—"harvesting"
>
> ~
> *[saddok : river]*
> ~

(*[hacha]* 50; emphasis original)

Death bells ("knells") are ringing for Guåhan's mudflats, coral reefs, and rivers, which have been "made landfill" in the "course of submission" of the island, the poem showcases. Playing with connotation and consonance, the phrase "[saddok] / of advent 'harvesting'" ascribes the ecological devastation alluded to in the excerpt to the arrival ("advent") of masses of people from abroad (river "of advent" 50), as a result of advertising ("advent—'harvesting'"). What the poem denounces here, and what Perez explores in more detail in the sequence "all with ocean views" (*[saina];*

see Jansen 16–17), are the ecological effects of what *Kānaka Maoli scholar* Teresia Teaiwa calls "militourism" ("Reading" 251), that is, a "phenomenon by which military or paramilitary force ensures the smooth running of a tourist industry, and that same tourist industry masks the military force behind it" (251).

Despite the dramatic impact that three centuries of foreign occupation have had on Guåhan's ecosystem, the "tidelands" sequence of *[guma']* suggests, the island may presently be facing its greatest challenge yet. The reason is the environmental degradation associated with current plans of a "mega-buildup" that would entail "the creation of a deep-draft wharf in Apra Harbor for nuclear-powered aircraft carriers" (Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 59). After pointing to the fact that the bay had served as "fishing/ grounds" (Perez, *[guma']* 41) for islands' precolonial Indigenous inhabitants, as a transfer site for Spanish colonial traders, and as a "naval / coaling station" (41) under U.S. rule after the American-Spanish War, the poem turns to the bay's current use as a military harbor and the "proposed/ dredging" (41) intended to make the harbor accessible to even bigger military and commercial vessels. This dredging ("veils of sediment / and silt will / plume / smolder and // shield all / light" 41–42) will be even more harmful to the local environment than the many strategic fires started on the island by former occupying forces or previous buildup in the Apra Bay. As government reports confirm, inner Apra Harbor is a particularly damning example of the disastrous levels of pollution that U.S. military presence and mass tourism have caused on the island over the past century (Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 59–60). As military and commercial traffic increased in the bay, Apra Harbor turned into a pivot for "fuel transfer; nuclear and conventional weapon transfer; fishing, recreational and tourist ship support and import of all kinds of commercial and construction cargoes" (GEPA 3), producing "some of the most polluted harbor sediments in the world" (4). Dredging these sediments, the "tidelands" sequence of *[guma']* warns, will leave "coral weaves dead" and cause "permanent/ loss" (42) of ocean habitats that cannot be redressed by governmental mitigation efforts consisting of plans to "build / an artificial reef" out of "concrete / debris and plastic / pipes" (43).[9] Selecting one of the island's most iconic endangered marine animals as an example, "tidelands" warns that sea turtles will suffer from the infringement

9 Current research on the ecological importance of coral reefs highlights the crucial role they play in sustaining oceanic species diversity as well as hundreds of millions of people worldwide (see Rinkevich). At the same time, scholars stress that roughly forty percent of the global coral-reef system has been destroyed over the past four decades, a process that is projected to accelerate in the future. As a consequence, instead of attempting conservation, environmentalists aiming to protect coral reefs throughout the world are increasingly turning toward ecological restoration efforts. One of the most promising restoration methods today is the so-called "gardening concept," which rejects the kind of artificial rebuilding referred to in Perez's text or earlier controversial approaches such as "assisted colonization" (the transplantation of harvested coral colonies from one place to another) and instead relies on nursery-

on their habitat not only due to pollution, but also because they "use natural light / cues / to navigate" (*[guma']* 42; emphasis added). The use of the word *navigate* in this passage points beyond the nonhuman world and toward human activities in Apra Harbor. Specifically, it points to traditional practices of fishing and "pacific island navigation" (*[saina]*14), that is, to those CHamoru place-based cultural practices that colonization and current military buildup have been disrupting for centuries now.

As a number of scholars have noted, Perez repeatedly uses endangered species to link environmental destruction to matters of environmental injustice (Lai 6, Cocola 189). The sequence "the micronesian kingfisher *[i sihek]*" for instance evokes parallels between endangered animal species and Guåhan's Indigenous population, while also expressing the tensions that arise from colonial practices of enclosure and immobilization that have shaped Guåhan since the earliest days of the island's colonization.[10] A local endemic bird species, the Micronesian kingfisher became extinct during the 1980s after an American cargo ship accidentally introduced the brown tree snake to Guåhan shortly after WWII (see Colvin et al.; Rogers 261–62). Jim Cocola reads the kingfisher as a "symbol and symptom of Guam's vulnerability under U.S. rule" (189) and Anne Mai Yee Jansen suggests that Perez's kingfisher sequence "maps parallels between the natural world and the effects of militarization and oppression" (11). As the sequence "the micronesian kingfisher *[i sihek]*" emphasizes as well, the tragic tale of the endemic bird did not end with the arrival of the brown tree snake on Guam. Indeed, much of the evocative power of Perez's kingfisher poems depends on the survival, or perhaps more accurately, the curious *afterlife* of the bird in captivity, which raises pertinent questions about the survival of Guåhan's endangered ecologies and CHamoru place-based cultural practices under conditions of colonial enclosure.

The first section of "the micronesian kingfisher *[i sihek]*" begins with a brief account of how the last twenty-nine surviving Micronesian kingfishers were taken to U.S.-American zoos to save the species from extinction. This history is followed by, and partly interspersed with, detailed instructions on how to build an artificial nesting place that will coax Micronesian kingfishers into breeding in captivity. Mixing technical and poetic language, the text evokes both scientific reports and Charles

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farmed coral that is grown outside the reef and later integrated into the reef in need of reconstruction (Rinkevich 29).

10 Describing the practice of fencing in a certain piece of land as well as the land that has been fenced in, the term *enclosure* is historically associated with the privatization of the commons on the British Isles, from where the practice spread throughout the British colonies, including the United States. For a detailed history of the ideology of enclosure and the resulting assumptions about how land rights affected settler-colonial relations in North America, see Allan Greer's article "Commons and Enclosure in the Colonization of North America" (2012). For a discussion of "enclosure" from ecocritical and postcolonial perspectives, see, for instance, Robert P. Marzec's *An Ecological and Postcolonial Study of Literature* (2007).

Olson's subtly environmental anti-imperialist poem "The Kingfishers" ("what does not change / is" and "is born and fed"; see Cocola 189). By bringing together these seemingly contrary references, the poem presents a critique of initiatives such as the Guam Bird Rescue Project, an American-led conservation project that was started in 1983 by Larry C. Shelton, who, at the time, was Curator of Birds at both the Houston and the Philadelphia Zoo. Even while acknowledging that non-CHamoru rescue efforts saved the Micronesian kingfisher from extinction by raising individual birds in captivity, Perez presents continental conservation projects as a continuation of the same imperialist logics that ravaged the island's ecosystem and pushed the birds as well as CHamoru culture to the brink of extinction. The analogy between the birds and the CHamoru suggests that Guåhan's Indigenous people too are living under precarious conditions of containment or "enclosure" (*[guma']* 31), conditions acerbated by environmental degradation and ongoing U.S. land seizures.

Forced immobilization and relocation by colonizing forces have not only meant an infringement on Indigenous land rights, they have also meant a disruption of Indigenous place-and-ocean based practices. As the last section of "the micronesian kingfisher *[i sihek]*" stresses, colonial enclosure has harmed Guåhan's nonhuman world and CHamoru culture in ways that not only affects life on the island in the present, it will also have harrowing effects for the island's future:

—of trespass—*[i sihek]*

when land is
caged [we]

—of theft—*[i sihek]*

are caged within
[our] disappearance
[…]
invasion is
a continuous chain of
immeasurable destructive
events in time—

is death of *[i sihek]*
origins—
is a stillborn *[i sihek]*
future—is the ending of

all nests this
choked thing [we] *[i sihek]*

(*[guma']* 71; emphasis original)

Due to centuries of "invasion," "trespass," and "theft" of ancestral lands, the CHamoru are "caged within/ [their] disappearance," that, is threatened by cultural extinction. Immobilized literally and figuratively by the material and nonmaterial constraints imposed on their everyday lives, including their engagements with the natural environment, CHamorus are confronted not only by the threat of a "stillborn […] future" but also by the threat of an "ending of/ all nests," that is to say, the very survival of Guåhan's endangered ecosystem on which many of their cultural practices depend.

In order to prevent further destruction of CHamoru ancestral lands, culture, and community, present and future generations cannot rely on half-hearted preservation measures undertaken by the U.S. government (such as the construction of artificial reefs or the breeding of Micronesian kingfishers in captivity). Rather, the end of the "the micronesian kingfisher *[i sihek]*" sequence of *[guma']* insists, CHamorus themselves have to begin to act and fight for the survival of Guåhan's nonhuman world and, in consequence, the cultural practices it has sustained. In light of the island's increasing militarization ("as weapons / mount"; Perez *[guma']* 72), the poem implores, the Indigenous people of Guåhan have to "rise / above fences" and "risk / being Chamoru" (72). They have to contest colonial practices of enclosure and to participate in community efforts to keep Indigenous knowledges and place-based practices alive. Poetry emerges as a crucial tool in this project, especially for CHamorus living in diaspora. Indeed, as the sequence "island of no birdsong" from Perez's most recent collection *[lukao]* maintains, what makes the situation of CHamorus similar to that of the Micronesian kingfishers is not only that both have suffered from the environmental impact of U.S. occupation or that both are surviving but not thriving under conditions of colonial enclosure; rather, it is also that many CHamorus do not live on their native island but in the continental United States:

fanhasso : *remember* studying native birds of guam in school //
"the micronesian kingfisher, or sihek, can see into the water" \\
"added to the endangered species list in 1984" // "the last wild
birds were captured and transferred to American zoos for captive
breeding" \\vocabulary test : "invasive, colonize, extirpate,
extinct" // 44, 000 chamorros now live in california \\ 15,000 in
Washington // what does not change \\st gail, tayuyute [ham] :
pray for [us]

(*[lukao]* 22; emphasis original)

Emphasizing the resonances of the story of the Micronesian kingfisher with the relatively recent phenomenon of Chamoru mass migration, this passage evokes two different scenarios of knowledge transmission: the "vocabulary test" of conventional schooling and, on a meta-level, the "vocabulary test" on the U.S. language of imperialism that Perez's poetry administers to its reader. If Guåhan is, as the sequence's title suggests, an "island of no birdsong," it must remain an island of song in order to ensure cultural and environmental survival and, even more, work toward cultural and environmental flourishing.

Exploring poetry not only as a means to help along such cultural and environmental flourishing, but also as a means of place-making in the context of displacement, the first section of the sequence "sourcings" from the collection *[saina]* brings together Indigenous as well as non-Indigenous poetic traditions:

> '*[hanom] [hanom] [hanom]*'
> ~
> what echoes across waters :
> taotaomo'na –
> *from* 'taotao' ['people'] *ginen* 'mo'na' ['precede'] –
> 'people of before' 'before time ancestors' 'ancient people' 'people before recorded time' etc
>
> while my ancestors did live breathe love die *before*
> contact *before*
> colonialism *before*
> history
> taotaomo'na also exists
> *in* time *in*
> our histories remembered forgotten
> *in* our bodies homes words *in*
> every breath '*in*
>
> *relation to my own body by wave of the page*' and [we]
> will continue *after in*
> all *afters*
>
> ([*saina*] 13; emphasis original)

The first line of the quoted passage repeats the penultimate line of *[hacha]*, formally connecting the first and second collection of the series, emphasizing Perez's long-term investment in his poetry and the cultural work he intends his poetry to accomplish. The CHamoru refrain "*[hanom] [hanom] [hanom]*" ('water – water – water'), establishes a literary genealogy that links Perez's books of poetry to the CHamoru oral tradition of *kåntan chamorrita*, "a call-and-response, extemporaneous, commu-

nal oral poetry that was displaced and suppressed by colonial forces" (Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 131). The line has also been read as a reference to—and hence a response to the call for peace and new insight made in—the ending of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (Cocola 192). As a poetic project that mixes and carries forward different poetic traditions, including Pacific Islander and Euro-American ones, and as a text that frequently addresses matters of nature and mobility, *from unincorporated territory* can be read as a meditation on the importance of tradition in times of cultural crisis and environmental devastation. It may also be read as a commentary on the fact that CHamoru cultural traditions and the Anglo-American cultural traditions do have things, such as a spiritual-philosophical concern with water as a source of life, in common and may be combined productively, if the hegemonic impulse of the latter and its tendency to erase Pacific Islander knowledges and practices is overcome.

Perez claims his position as heir to the American poetic tradition from a perspective of migration without turning his back on CHamoru cultural practices. It is in this conflicted cultural territory and as a response to the threat that Guåhan's culture and environment are facing that poetry emerges as a particularly useful tool of environmental knowledge production and transmission that can resist imperial logics of homogenization through openness and ambiguity. The second part of the "sourcings" section quoted above explicitly reaches back to the "ancient people" who lived "*before* / contact" and "*before* / colonialism" (*[saina]* 13; emphasis original). The excerpt begins with a homage to the "taotaomo'na" (13), the ancestors, and thus to a meaningful, common past; it ends by directing the reader's attention toward a present and future in which CHamoru culture, traditions, and "histories"—while still facing the danger of being "forgotten"—can survive "*in* our bodies homes words" (13; emphasis original). The enumeration "bodies homes words" evokes a triangulation of the material self, the natural environment, and the poetic language (Martinez 336). Specifically, the above excerpt proposes that ancestral CHamoru histories, and, as I would add, place-based practices and the environmental knowledges associated with them, will live on "*in* / every breath" and "*in / relation to [*the poet's*] own body by wave of the page*" (Perez, *[saina]* 13; emphasis original).

By making the physical as well as the cultural conditions of the tradition/ transmission of contested histories and precarious knowledges a key concern of his poetry, Perez's poems interrogate both Indigenous and hegemonic American epistemologies (Martinez 338). In and through poetry that expresses the embodied perspectives and affective dimensions of a life lived on the move that still remains deeply connected with Guåhan's endangered oceanic préterrain, Perez emphasizes that the histories and knowledges of the "people of before" may again "echoe[/] across waters" and reach even those CHamoru living in diaspora far from Guåhan. Even though it is implied in "sourcings" that these echoes risk fading away or being distorted, the poem insists that they will reach other shores, if necessary, after being rerouted

in one way or another. This is an important point repeatedly addressed throughout *from unincorporated territory*, as Perez writes from a perspective of migration about the precariousness of human and nonhuman life on his native island of Guåhan and the precariousness of CHamoru place-based knowledges and practices.

Precarious Genealogies, Rerouted Knowledges, and CHamoru Mobility

References to ancestral figures and lines of descent are omnipresent in *from unincorporated territory*. They often appear in connection to evocations of (disrupted) human-nature relations and (family histories of) mobility. Perez's second collection *[saina]* is dedicated in its entirety to various "elders." The volume's focus on CHamoru genealogies and ancestral knowledges is not only indicated by its title but also implicit in the question that prefaces each of the volume's five parts. The sentence "*gue'la yan gue'lo, kao siña malufan yo?*" (*[saina]* 12, 38, 61, 85, 109; emphasis original) translates as "grandmother and grandfather, may I enter?" and is said to have been used by pre-colonial CHamorus to ask banyan trees—alternatively believed to house ancestral or malevolent spirits—for permission before entering unfamiliar parts of the jungle (Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 41). This prefacing to the different parts of *[saina]* not only conjures up a deep veneration for both ancestors and the natural world, it also serves as a poetic refrain that relates Perez's own poetry back to nature-oriented CHamoru cultural and spiritual practices. In his collections, Perez most frequently evokes Guåhan's jungles in relation to the island's occupation by the Japanese, a time when thousands of CHamoru men, women, children, and elders were forcibly marched to poorly equipped prison camps at the interior of the island (see Rogers 167–68), an ordeal that some of them did not survive (Rogers 178–9). These violent acts of forced CHamoru relocation, which recall the forced resettlement of CHamorus under the Spanish (Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 12, 104), and their imprisonment in places ill-suited to inhabitation not only demonstrates the Japanese's disregard for their captives' physical well-being, in particular that of the children and elders; they are further symptomatic of the invaders' disregard for Indigenous environmental knowledges and, more broadly, for established CHamoru ways of relating to the natural world.

CHamoru genealogies and environmental epistemologies are not only depicted as closely linked in Perez's poetry; they are also highly precarious. In the "organic acts" sequence of *[saina]* the resulting layering of meanings is particularly complex. On the one hand, it points to the establishment of the first Spanish mission (*[saina]* 24, 49) and the condemnation proceedings brought on by the *Guam Organic Act* of 1950 (*[saina]* 26, 31), the federal law that codified U.S. land seizure and CHamoru dispossession. On the other hand, "organic acts" tells the story of the speaker's grandmother, who left Guåhan to be with her relatives, and suffers from an ag-

gressive degenerative disease (*[saina]* 54, 71, 75) as well as from painful longing for her place of birth. Throughout "organic acts," Perez uses CHamoru myths that evoke human-nature relations to associate the speaker's grandmother closely with the island. Guåhan is accordingly framed both as a place CHamoru lineages point back to, even in the context of migration, and as a place whose environment is in decline due to U.S. land grabbing and the resulting environmental deterioration. As "organic acts" outlines, both the poet's grandmother and her native island are about to undergo invasive procedures: the grandmother is waiting for surgery, while the island is about to witness the realization of a number of large-scale military construction projects. But whereas an operation may improve the grandmother's condition at least temporarily, even though the poem itself only speaks of her fearful resignation, the "tunneling" (*[saina]* 76) of the island for the benefit of military development is guaranteed to cause more environmental destruction. Although it is not clear whether the grandmother's illness is merely the consequence of old age or whether it results from environmental factors, her identification in the poem with Guåhan's geography and precarious natural world points to the latter, as does Perez's commentary on the detrimental effects of pollution on CHamoru health in other parts of *[saina]*.

What is more, the grandmother's fate as a CHamoru migrant who is unable to return to her place of birth because her body is failing her, and the possible collapse of Guåhan's ecosystem are interwoven in "organic acts" by way of the CHamoru myth of "I guihan dånkgolo" (Perez, *[saina]* 26). In the CHamoru legend of *I guihan dånkgolo*, a giant fish is gnawing at the island's foundation (*[saina]* 26–29), paralleling the way in which military buildup, touristic development, and climate change are increasingly compromising Guåhan's natural environment. As Perez puts it in one of the sections of "organic acts" that comments through ellipsis on the erosion of CHamoru lands and language: "[we] afraid/ be no earth" (*[saina]* 33), only to add in a later one: "*if this goes on/ [we] will fall to pieces*" (*[saina]* 76; emphasis original). The bracketed "[we]" in both quotations identifies the island with its people, conjuring a community united by a special relationship to and responsibility for the land as well as a community and a culture that has come under threat. The implicit threat here, articulated in the legend via an island about to be broken apart by a giant sea monster, is not only further loss of land and culture, however, but also mass migration which has literally split the CHamoru population in two: as it was pointed out before, barely one half of CHamorus still lives on Guåhan, while more than half reside in the continental United States (Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 113).

According to the version of the story the speaker's grandmother tells her grandson, a story she believes to have heard from "[her] mom [his] great grandma" (29), *I guihan dånkgolo* was defeated by the Virgin Mary (Perez, *[saina]* 26–29). In an alternative version of the same legend presented by the grown-up speaker later in the sequence, the giant fish is instead caught by a group of young CHamoru women

who braid their hair into a net using traditional CHamoru weaving techniques in order to catch the fish (*[saina]* 55, 75). Significantly, the grandson's version locates the power of protecting the island not with a Christian Saint, but with the CHamoru and specifically in women's bodies, implying that the large-scale efforts necessary to save Guåhan will have to involve communal action rather than interventions by non-Indigenous entities or the U.S. government. In juxtaposing the mythical CHamoru maidens' hair with the grandmother's hair loss, "organic acts" gestures toward the loss of culture and strength that comes with the loss of elders and shifts the responsibility for protecting the island and the CHamoru community to the younger generations. This shift is significant, because on a more abstract level, the two competing versions of "I guihan dånkgolo" highlight not only the precarious nature of cultural knowledges transmitted from generation to generation in CHamoru families but also the fact that even Indigenous knowledges transformed by colonial influences—here knowledges rerouted by Christianity—may be useful in some instances for drawing attention to the geopolitical and environmental threats the island faces in the twenty-first century.

How the preservation of precarious Indigenous place-based practices and knowledges is made difficult by both CHamoru immobilization and migration is addressed in the "ta(la)ya" sections of *[hacha]*. In one of the passages in question, the speaker's grandfather teaches his grandson how to recognize the location of fish in the ocean by studying the water's surface and how to weave the traditional CHamoru fishing net, the *talaya*, which in the poem, as Paul Lai notes, "embodies the transmission of Indigenous practices" (8). As the text stresses, the grandfather did not learn these skills from his own father, as one might suspect, but from a group of "minor offense prisoners" (Perez, *[hacha]* 32) living at a prison farm on Guåhan, where the grandfather's father worked as a guard. According to the poem, the poet's grandfather regularly met with the prisoners, while they sat "in their barracks at night […] and talked and wove the [thread : nasa]" (32). This unconventional moment of intergenerational learning occurs in the context of imprisonment as a prime instance of institutionally enforced CHamoru immobilization. The successful transmission of Indigenous knowledges from one generation to the next under such adverse conditions can be read, if not as an act of active resistance against colonial oppression, then at least as an example of how colonized Indigenous peoples like the CHamoru have always found ways to circumvent measures intended to suppress their culture by passing on precarious knowledges, if necessary through alternative genealogical routes—a dynamic that lies at the heart of Perez's poems.

In contrast to the informal lessons the speaker's grandfather received at the prison farm during his childhood on Guåhan, the conversation between grandfather and grandson also described in the same "ta(la)ya" section takes place in the continental United States, and thus in the urban context of the CHamoru diaspora, far away from the two men's native island. It also occurs far away from any place

where the grandfather's traditional place-based knowledge about fishing and net-weaving would possess any obvious practical function:

> threads suspended from ceiling hooks
> ~
> [my grandfather] points to the ceiling of his small apartment in fairfield california
>
> "you hold the nicho like this" he says "and the nasa around your finger like this"– his hand of
>
> ghost knot
>
> tight weave and pull cross-
> "like this" he says ~
> […]
> his hands begin to cramp
> he looks at them, surprised they are empty [taya]
> he looks at the empty ceiling "you have to imagine" he says
> (*[hacha]* 31–32)

Like the scene in the prison camp, this scene too highlights the irregularities imposed on CHamoru lines of knowledge transmission. This time, the interruption is caused by migration. Living far from Guåhan and removed from CHamoru fishing grounds, the grandfather appears as a "ghost" of a long-gone past who stiffly demonstrates an almost forgotten skill but ultimately cannot fully succeed in his demonstrations, because they occur out of context. Yet, in the end, the poem seems to offer a glimmer of hope. By establishing a correlation between the act of net-weaving and the act of poetry writing, the poem submits that the speaker will honor the ancestral traditions his grandfather struggles to pass on to him with his very own kind of imaginary net-weaving, one that can be practiced in a meaningful way from a position of migration: he will "imagine," writing environmentally attuned poetry that both investigates the historical, material, and metaphorical "threats" and connects an Indigenous migratory subject such as the speaker to the traditions, cultural practices, and environmental imaginaries of his ancestors, even in the context of mobility.

It is significant for my reading that Perez chooses the practice of net-weaving for this poem in which the transmission of knowledges about Guåhan's natural world is so central a theme. It is also significant that the sequence about net-weaving is called "ta(la)ya." In Perez's spelling, which brackets the middle-syllable, the title of the sequence is itself a chain of interrelated CHamoru words *ta* 'our,' *taya* 'empty,' and *talaya* 'throwing net' (Jansen 26, n. 17), forming the phrase 'our empty throwing

net.' The poem's title can thus be said to reference the depletion of CHamoru fishing grounds as a result of industrial fishing and pollution. At the same time, it alludes to the challenges of knowledge preservation in an endangered culture and environment. The title captures this double threat/d and the speaker's response to it with an economy that only poetic language is suited for. Using a single word with an altered spelling, the poem calls attention to the literal and the metaphorical empty throwing nets of Guåhan, that is, to the imminent loss of CHamoru culture and to the ongoing degradation of the unique natural environment that shapes and sustains it. Yet, the poem, like the collections as a whole, does not simply meditate on an endangered local environment. Because Perez highlights not only his CHamoru roots but all kinds of transpacific networks in his poetry—networks woven through the migration routes of his people, the itineraries of invasive species such as the brown tree snake, the travels of plants such as the *achiote* or the mobility of toxins and viruses.[11]

All four collections of *from unincorporated territory* published so far contain passages that explore precarious CHamoru genealogies and disrupted environmental knowledges in relation to different forms of mobility. Perhaps the most fascinating passages in this regard are those sequences from *[hacha]* and *[saina]* that deal with the so-called "flying proas," the legendary CHamoru sailing vessels, the largest of which were called "sakman" (Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 103). As Hsuan L. Hsu notes, Perez uses the image of the *sakman* in order to address "the uneven regimes of mobility, housing, and environmental well-being imposed upon Guam" (300). Environmental knowledge production and transmission too are crucially affected by these uneven regimes of mobility. As Perez explains in one of the "sourcings" sections of *[saina]*, larger outrigger canoes allowed the precolonial peoples of the Mariana islands to travel the open ocean, a practice the Spanish colonizers eradicated by destroying all existing canoes and by prohibiting the construction of new ones (*[saina]* 14–15; see also Denoon 249; and Perez, *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 104). By the nineteenth century, this particular Pacific Islander tradition of boat building had been lost to the CHamoru, together with much of the ancestral knowledge concerning open-ocean navigation. After this significant part of CHamoru culture had been suppressed for more than 200 years, the first modern-day *sakman* was built between 2007 and 2008 and let to water a year later by the Pacific Islander heritage organization *TASI* (*[saina]* 14–15).[12] Because no CHamoru had constructed a full-sized *sak-*

11 For evocations of the movements and conflicted cultural meanings of the achiote plant, see the "from achiote" section of *[hacha]*, (17–20) Similar to this section, the sequence "understory" from *[lukao]*) and the "ta(la)ya" sequence of *[hacha]* too can be read as a warning about how the cultural and environmental losses on Guåhan may come to affect larger networks and relations, that is, not only local but in fact global ecosystems.

12 The acronym *TASI* stands for *Traditions About Seafaring Islands*, but also "means 'ocean' or 'sea'" in CHamoru, as Perez explains in the first "sourcings" section of *[saina]* (14). Next to *TASI*, there is also the organization *TASA (Traditions Affirming our Seafaring Ancestry)*, which Perez refers to

man in centuries, *TASI* had to enlist the help of a non-CHamoru canoe builder from the island of "polowat [in the federated states of Micronesia" (*[saina]* 15; *Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 127–28) to complete the task. As Perez points out in his *sakman* poems, this master canoe builder by the name of Manny Sikau relied for his work on descriptions and drawings taken from historical colonial documents (*[saina]* 14–15), the only detailed source on *sakman* design still available (*Navigating CHamoru Poetry* 106). By stressing this ironic circumstance, the text foregrounds how, as a result of disruptive colonial histories that have eroded and erased CHamoru histories and stories, non-linear genealogies of knowledge are crucial in sustaining CHamoru culture today. It also speaks to the value of such non-linear genealogies in places such as Guåhan, where knowledge preservation remains a crucial project that cannot rely, at least not exclusively, on traditional methods and modes of transmission.

Once completed, the reconstructed CHamoru outrigger canoe was baptized "Saina" (*[saina]* 14), that is, 'ancestor' or 'elder,' a fact that points directly to the collection's main theme. Throughout *[saina]*, Perez's words show great interest in the *sakman* Saina, in the revitalized CHamoru culture of transoceanic mobility it represents and in the rerouted environmental knowledges connected to the tradition of open-ocean sailing that the mention of the famous outrigger canoe recalls. As he notes in the first "sourcings" section of the collection:

> [the] art of traditional pacific island navigation […] includes the geographic knowledge of the locations and inter-relationships of islands, the physics of wind and wave processes, the astronomical alignments and seasonality that provide orientation, as well as the subtle human interpretations of all of these phenomena.
>
> (Perez, *[saina]* 14)

Without modern instruments and navigation technologies, Chamoru seafarers depended entirely on an intimate knowledge of their environment and various natural phenomena for sailing the open ocean. Especially the sequence "aerial roots" in the same volume expresses the speaker's admiration for "traditional pacific island navigation":

> **[hila': tongue :** once fly
> oceania free in
> 'galaide' 'duduli' 'dudings' 'lelek' 'ladyak' 'sakman'
> *hunggan hunggan hunggan magahet*
>
> until fires anchored *without bow or stern*
> in reef in- *lateen sail of*

in the collection *[guma']* (40). Like *TASI*, the Guam-based organization *TASA* has as its mission to preserve the cultural heritage of the Mariana Islands.

sular words

[pachot : 'tasi' dreams'
'tasi' hands carved
and cast
keel

finely woven
pandamus matting
outrigger balancing
does not rely on force
but on ability
to draw water

[…]

[lengguahi : bowsprits cut planks cut
fitted to form
hull—

[bos : voice : teach me
to read the currents

skin friction and
wave drag
to fly'

([*saina]* 20–21, emphases original)

The speaker here celebrates CHamoru mobility and the traditional knowledge of open ocean navigation; he links it with his family's migratory history, which is recounted in a longer prose passage omitted from the above excerpt. The poem opens with an ancestral CHamoru chant that emphasizes the truthfulness of the account that is to follow. At the same time, the beginning evokes a much larger Austronesian tradition of seafaring chants, that is, the practice of using songs as a "mnemonic map for travel" (Diaz, "No Island" 92) referencing the landmarks and natural phenomena encountered on the way.[13] In the passage just quoted, the speaker juxtaposes a description of the different types of CHamoru outrigger canoes with phrases that evoke the "'tasi' dreams" of an "oceania free" of "fires anchored/ in reef" (Perez, *[saina]* 20), an image linked to Spanish attempts at securing what they considered the island's hazardous coastal waters through signal fire. This supposedly preventive strategy once again directs attention to the colonizers' dismissal of the precolonial place-and-ocean-based knowledges of the CHamoru, who, thanks to navigating

13 For a more detailed account of how Pacific Islanders used chants to remember and pass on information about ocean currents, astronomical constellations, characteristic wave patterns and winds, the distribution of certain marine animals and plants, and other natural indicators to navigate the open ocean, see, for example, Vicente M. Diaz's article "No Island Is an Island" (2015). Diaz discusses Indigenous technologies of travel and practices of narratological mapping, arguing that they can help to "challenge prevailing assumptions that underwrite conventional apprehensions of land, indeed, of place and space" (90–91) and urge us to rethink "the underlying terms and assumptions about indigenous subjectivity and locality" (102).

them for generations, would have been familiar with the reefs and shallows around their island.

Aside from honoring an ancestral Indigenous cartographic practice, Perez's evocation of seafaring chants points to a longer Indigenous tradition of ecopoetic place-making in the context of mobility that his poetry hopes to continue. At the end of the passage quoted above, the speaker begs an unidentified addressee – maybe his grandfather, another elder, the *sakman* Saina, or even the ocean itself – to "teach [him] / to read the currents" and, if one reads across the gap in the middle of the page, also "*to fly*" (Perez, *[saina]* 21). By juxtaposing text fragments that can be read either separately from each other or in varying combinations and by stressing the "in-/sular" CHamoru words *hila, pachot, lengguahi,* and *bos* (20–21; 'tongue,' 'mouth,' 'language,' and 'voice'), this section of "aerial roots" connects the ancestral art of seafaring to the art of poetry, that is, to the art of producing carefully crafted language "fitted to form" (21) just like the individual parts of a *sakman*. By making this connection between seafaring and writing, the text imagines culturally conscious and environmentally oriented poetry as a continuation of the ancestral CHamoru tradition of open ocean navigation, and thus as an act of resistance. Like in the "ta(la)ya" sequence discussed earlier, the poet's efforts at celebrating traditional Pacific island navigation in "aerial roots" are hindered here not only by colonial erasures, but also by his family's migration history. Living in California, the speaker cannot actually feel the "*skin friction and / wave drag*" produced by a CHamoru *sakman*, or a similar outrigger canoe, as it is sailing the open ocean. He can only imagine the experience. Be it traditional open ocean navigation based on currents, winds, and the location of reefs, the practice of fishing with a *talaya* in Guåhan's rivers and bays, or the act of writing environmentally suggestive poetry about the island, many CHamoru cultural practices depend on an intimate knowledge of natural phenomena and complex ecological systems. If these ecological systems change too drastically, or are destroyed, so are century-old place-based practices and knowledges, knowledges that are not only important for the survival of Indigenous cultures and lifeways in the Pacific but that may be able to teach valuable lessons about more sustainable ways of living near and with the ocean to humanity at large.

Participatory Ecopoetics and Decolonial Environmental Pedagogy

Preoccupied with themes of knowledge production, transmission, and recovery, Perez's poetry constantly confronts readers with their own knowledge gaps regarding the history of colonization and U.S. imperialism in the Pacific. At the same time, the countless quotations from diverse sources in his texts—among them colonial histories, political documents, newspaper articles, activist websites, personal accounts, and works of poetry—highlight the need to consider multiple perspectives

when trying to close these gaps. The poets alluded to in *from unincorporated territory*, for instance, include Walt Whitman, the American modernists Gertrude Stein and Charles Olson, the Jamaican American Modernist poet Claude McKay, the American post-war poets Robert Duncan and George Oppen, the Asian American poets Theresa Hak Yung Cha and Myung Mi Kim, Caribbean poet Derek Walcott, Pacific Islander poets such as Haunani-Kay Trask (Native Hawaiian/ Kanaka Maoli) as well as Native American poets such as Joy Harjo (Mvskoke). In his references to Cha and Kim, as Jim Cocola suggests, Perez "thinks their transpacific displacements in connection with his own diasporic trajectory" and in doing so arrives at "more elusive, evocative, and extensive networks of places that help make up the larger planet" (198). A similar argument can be made for many of the other poets mentioned. In other cases, such as in the case of Duncan or Olson, the intertextual references constitute a "writing back to" in addition to a "writing with or toward."

Many of Perez's poems can be understood as didactic in that they try to educate readers by presenting information and commentary on the history, cultural contexts, and current political situation of the CHamoru. Yet, the collections also prominently feature poems that make readers assume a more active role in their own learning process, inviting them to reflect on their own position in relation to the power inequalities, histories of oppression, and competing epistemological traditions explored in the texts. What is at work in these sections can be called a *participatory ecopoetics* that experiments with documentary modes to foster anti-colonial and anti-imperialist critique as well as a more complex understanding of human-nature relations that acknowledges perspectives of mobility. Ultimately, I argue, Perez's participatory ecopoetics stands in the service of a decolonial environmental pedagogy that demands of readers to take responsibility for their own knowledge acquisition and encourages them to understand the reading of poetry as a process of questioning, negotiating, and re-contextualizing information from a vast variety of sources, while also urging them to develop a deep-rooted emotional investment in the matters of social and environmental justice presented.

from unincorporated territory harkens back to a documentary tradition that has characterized American poetry for over a century now (Cocola 109, Suzuki 175). First fully developed in the United States in the socialist poetry of the modernist period, poetry in the documentary tradition is characterized by poets' desire to testify to the injustices of their times, while remaining respectful to the perspectives and voices of the victims of violence (see Metres, "From Reznikoff to the Public Enemy" n. p.). Documentary poetry is interested in "the linguistic authenticity of the oppressed" as well as "in their capacity to tell the truth about themselves, and, as such, about us, their oppressors" (Earl n. p.). In comparison to lyrical or narrative forms, documentary poetry is more information driven and often employs collaging techniques, producing works that consist either entirely or in significant parts of re-arranged quotations from official documents and victims' testimonies. Thanks to this practice

of sampling and rearranging, poetry in the documentary tradition "raises complex issues of voice" (Swensen 55). Poets invested in the documentary mode are driven by the urge to speak for those who have suffered injustices, while at the same time struggling to avoid "appropriating the experience or voice of another" (Swensen 55). Frequently writing in this mode, Perez combines personal and family experiences with the voices and stories of others, while also addressing the relative privilege and the particular challenges that follow from writing about Guåhan as a highly educated member of the CHamoru diaspora. Rather than using the documentary mode to compensate for a lack of personal experience, Perez employs it to interrogate the gap between experience and knowledge, processes of knowledge production and transmission as well as the complex interplay of discourses of oppression and empowerment that disrupt or reroute these processes.

According to Philip Metres, documentary poetry is "fundamentally concerned with cultivating historicity" and is inclined toward "the pedagogical or didactic" (Metres and Nowak 10). In the same conversation, Mark Nowak describes documentary poetry as "a poetic version of critical pedagogy" (Metres and Nowak 11). It is this critical pedagogical dimension of Perez's poetry that I want to explore in relation to his joint treatment of environmental issues and questions of mobility. In Perez's poetry the documentary impulse comes to the fore in sequences such as "organic acts," which quotes extensively from historical and legal sources addressing the occupation of Chamoru territory by different foreign powers (*[saina]* 26, 31–33, 49, 50 77–78), or in the "fatal impact statements" sections from *[guma']*, which sample online comments on the 2009 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The ecological devastation of the island following from U.S. military buildup is also addressed in documentary passages in the "tidelands" sections of *[saina]*, where each section is accompanied by a visibly crossed-out footnote quoting Perez's 2008 speech before the UN Special Political and Decolonization Committee, in which the poet-activist detailed the dramatic effects of pollution on the people, the wildlife, and the ecosystem of Guåhan (Knighton 344; Heim, "How (Not) to Globalize Oceania" 138).

Throughout *from unincorporated territory,* documentary passages provide evidence for the endangerment and exploitation of CHamoru lives and lands, portraying them as interlinked issues of social and environmental justice that affect individuals and the community alike. Presented with carefully arranged materials and more traditionally lyrical passages, Perez's readers are not only tasked with piecing together relevant background information, they are also encouraged to examine their own relationship to and—especially in the case of non-Indigenous readers from settler nations—their tacit, often unchecked, complicity with the structures of oppression and exploitation addressed in the collections. As Perez's work testifies, poetry in the documentary mode is never purely informational. Instead, language becomes "performative, making it an action with the potential for real effect in the

world" (Swensen 57), an effect that will in turn "be another action, this time on the part of the reader" (57). The performativity of poetic language described here, its potential to call for not only a change of consciousness but also a change of conduct and indeed of collective action, is crucial to Perez's work. Indeed, as Otto Heim suggests, Perez pushes his readers toward "an active participation in his [poetic] project" in order to "realize a sense of political community" (Heim, "Locating Guam" 189). Precisely where his poems presuppose action and community formation on the part of his readers, Perez's poems most fully exhibit his participatory ecopoetics.

The fact that "Perez's poetry frequently performs the dual work of educating and critiquing" (Jansen 6) links it to a longer history of politically-minded Indigenous literary production. It also links it to what Anne Mai Yee Jansen describes within the context of Oceanic literary studies as an "affinity poetics" that seeks to "engage hearts and minds toward antihegemonic theory and praxis" (21) by "creating [a] sense of solidarity across identities and across distance for the purpose of advancing a decolonizing agenda" (8). At the same time, Perez's ecopoetry of mobility also builds on the poetic innovations of an (Anglo-)American experimental tradition most visible in his work in the many references to the Black Mountain poet Charles Olson. Perez does not only include intertextual allusions to one of Olson's poems in the "the micronesian kingfisher *[i sihek]*" sequence of *[guma']*, the "stations of crossing" sequence of *[hacha]* (54) or the "island of no birdsong" sequence of *[lukao]* (38), he also references Olson's poetological reflections. In the same metapoetic "sourcings" section in which he presents his own theorizations of a poetics of the oceanic préterrain, Perez discusses Olson's programmatic "essay 'projective verse'" as well as the poet's theory of "FIELD COMPOSITION" (*[saina]* 63; emphasis original). In mentioning Olson's poetological work, Perez's establishes an explicit (meta)poetic genealogy that, amongst other things, speaks directly to what I describe as his participatory ecopoetics.

In *Paratextual Communities: American Avant-garde Poetry Since 1950* (2001), Susan Vanderborg argues that Olson's "elliptical, open-ended field composition of archival references, anecdotes, and mythic fragments"—a description that fits Perez's poetry just as well as Olson's—"emphasized the participation of both author and audience in '*istorin*,' an active process of investigating local events and cultural documents on one's own rather than accepting an authorized version of history" (Vanderborg 23). In enlisting readers in such a project of "finding it out on their own," Vanderborg suggests, Olson proposed a "participatory poetics" (Vanderborg 23). Perez too challenges readers to question "authorized version[s] of history" and invites them to participate in an "active process" of investigating a variety of events and documents, be they U.S. executive orders, newspaper articles, websites, scholarly publications, as well as other works of poetry. Invested in the transoceanic and environmental dimensions of "local events" and in the hegemonic as well as the counterhegemonic dimensions of "cultural documents," Perez puts his participatory *eco*poetics at the

service of a decolonial environmental pedagogy that seeks to involve readers from a variety of backgrounds and with a broad range of prior knowledges about the history and current situation of Guåhan, while at the same time keeping precarious Indigenous genealogies and epistemologies in view.

One way in which Perez's participatory ecopoetics expresses a critique of the destructive knowledge regimes of colonialism and imperialism is through the use of multilingualism. Poem sequences like "lisiensan ga'lago" and "tidelands" from *[hacha]* are full of phrases in CHamou, many of which remain untranslated, marking Perez as a poet who is, as Jim Cocola describes it, "uneasily Anglophone" and "resolutely polyglot" in his writing practices (175–76). As Juliana Spahr notes in a scholarly article on "Multilingualism in Contemporary American Poetry" (that also mentions Perez), the use of multiple languages is a strategy that enables "a questioning investigation of what it means to be a writer in English when English is a global and imperial language" (1125). Precisely such a "questioning investigation" occurs in poems such as one of the "aerial roots" sections from *[saina]*, which reflects on the limits of poetic language as a means to keep record of traditional cultural and environmental knowledges threatened by colonial violence and U.S. imperialism by representing both poetry and traditional CHamoru open ocean sailing as embodied practices. The second section of "aerial roots" reads as follows:

[gofes : lung : if breath
is our commonwealth

if we are evidence of
what words bury **[apuya':** "sakman" i say
it say it
navigates the air—

after measured and form disassembled to sand

—sanding—sanding—sanding—

is remembered the first time i paddled—freshman year at chief gadao academy
[...]

[pecho : prayers flay

wood treated

to strengthen—
hunggan hunggan hunggan magahet

signs
of crossing—

'mast' 'yard' 'boom' 'sail' 'rigging'—

[patnitos : they can't bury light
even if they burn
our word for light—
even if we have
no nation—
(*[saina]* 34–35, emphases original)

Visually evocative of waves, this passage seems to underline the precariousness of isolated CHamoru words in a predominantly English poem. Using the CHamoru words for 'lung', 'navel,' 'chest,' and 'heart,' the poem conjures the physical exertions of rowing, while also drawing attention to the fact that language is anchored in the body by way of breath. Breath, in Perez's poem, is described as "our commonwealth," that is, as a constitutive element of a global ecological community of shared interests, also in political terms. Although the poem seems to conceive of cultural practices such as traditional open ocean sailing as a means to resist forces of oppression and colonial enclosure, it also highlights the extent to which CHamoru culture and communities remain precarious both as a result of Guåhan's colonial history ("they can't bury light / even if they burn / our word for light") and the island's ongoing status as an occupied territory ("even if we have / no nation"). Celebrating poetic language as a tool of resistance ("if we are evidence of / what words bury [apuya': 'sakman' I say / it say it / navigates the air"), the text links the act of speaking to TASI's attempts at rebuilding the CHamoru "sakman" Saina. By including CHamoru words and by using highly fragmented, figural, and frequently meta-poetic language to familiarize readers with TASI's work and the larger struggle it represents, Perez's poem resists facile consumption. Instead, it encourages a critical examination of the conditions and pressures—whether linguistic, socio-political, cultural, or indeed ecological—under which poems like the second section of "aerial roots" quoted above are being produced as carrier of precarious Indigenous *and* migrant knowledges.

In order to uncover the many layers of meaning in poems such as "aerial roots," readers who are unfamiliar with the CHamoru language either have to consult a CHamoru dictionary or turn to other passages in Perez's collections in which the same words appear together with a translation or in a context that hints at their meaning. Paul Lai has commented on this activating effect of Perez's poetry. When discussing the prevalence of what he calls "deictic lines and pages" (13–14) in *from unincorporated territory*, Lai points to passages that encourage readers to jump back

and forth between the different sections or volumes of the series as well as to passages that invite readers to consult sources outside the pages of his books. One of the most striking moments of paratextual deixis occurs in a section of "Lisiensan Ga'lago" from *[hacha]* (Lai 14). The section in question lists the URLs of three websites dedicated to the decolonization of Guåhan and appeals to readers to "please visit" (*[hacha]* 83) these websites for further information on different social and environmental justice initiatives led by CHamoru and non-CHamoru activists from Guåhan. On the same page, Perez presents a language puzzle without an obvious solution that raises questions about the linkages between poetry, the body, natural environments, and U.S. militarism. In order to solve the puzzle of Perez's poems, readers of *from unincorporated territory* have to participate actively in their own education about political, cultural, and environmental issues in Guåhan, whether by following the alternative trajectories of knowledge presented in the collections, searching for translation clues in the pages of Perez's collections or by researching background information for some of the more fragmented and hermetic passages of his poems.

Much like the "aerial roots" sequences, the section "*ginen* tidelands [latte stone park] [hagåtña, Guåhan]" in *[guma']* explores the potential of poetry as a means of (teaching modes of) resistance. More explicitly than the sequence "aerials roots," "tidelands" presents poetry as one of the most effective archives of Indigenous knowledge and means of knowledge transfer available to colonized, dispossessed, and displaced peoples such as the CHamoru. It offers readers a lesson about a key element of traditional CHamoru architecture, the so-called "latte stones," many of which, the text laments, were "removed from [the island] / to museums" (*[guma']* 16; emphasis original) during colonial rule. The poem first elaborates on how to "carve/ limestone" and "outline forms" at the "quarry;" then, the text relates how the speaker's father taught him to "make rope" from "coconut/ fibers" (*[guma']* 14–16). By reflecting on the traditional CHamoru crafts of stonecutting and ropemaking together, the poem proposes that the speaker must right the fallen latte stones ("pull, son" 15) and thus, metaphorically, keep alive the cultural practices and practical knowledges of his ancestors. In the poem itself, this responsibility is passed on from one generation to the next. At the same time, the mode of transmission in the poem switches from instruction by example and emulation to instruction by poetic language and interpretative work.

In contrast to his father, the speaker's choice of craft is not rope-making but poetry-making. Poetry, and especially one that predominantly uses the colonizer's language, English, certainly operates under different premises than the more obviously place-bound cultural practices of latte-stone building and the kinds of net-weaving and ropemaking associated with traditional CHamoru forms of fishing and sailing. Yet, when poetry pays careful attention to the specific environmental challenges and the history of a place and its community, including histories of forced and

voluntary mobility, while simultaneously reaching across ethnic and cultural borders, as Perez's poems do, when it is both nature-oriented and mobile, then poetry can help to disseminate precarious knowledges about endangered environments and even gesture toward embodied experiences where those knowledges and experiences might otherwise be lost to the violence of history. Reading Perez's poetry and doing the necessary work of contextualization and cross-reading that it demands means responding to the rallying call of Perez's participatory ecopoetics. It means accepting the invitation "*to sing / forward* […and] *to / sing past* […] with [our]/ entire breath" (*[guma']* 15; emphasis original) as in the ancestral CHamoru "communal poetic form / [of] kåntan chamorrita (which translates as *to sing both forwards and/ backwards*)" (*[lukao]* 19; emphasis original). What is at stake in this rearticulated version of the chant that *from unincorporated territory* represents is nothing short of the survival of CHamoru cultural practices and environmental knowledges and, with them, the survival of the transoceanic terrains on which these practices and knowledges depend.

Like the juxtaposition of reflections on the function of poetry with latte-stone carving and rope making in the "tidelands" sequence, the comparison of the role of poetry in the CHamoru struggle for cultural and ecological survival with the speaker's memories of rowing lessons in the "aerial roots" sections from *[saina]* draws attention to the precariousness of traditional CHamoru environmental knowledges. More so than the former, the latter turn not only to the past, but also to the future. As a later section of "aerial roots" notes, the ultimate goal of these rowing lessons was for the students to take the canoe out onto the open ocean: "*—we paddle—the current—our bodies aligned—row /—in the apparent wind—past the breakwater—past the reef*" (*[saina]* 105; emphasis original). The mention of the "*reef*" in these lines is significant, because it brings to mind all the other passages in Perez's collections that denounce the ongoing destruction of Guåhan's ecosystem by U.S. military buildup; it is also significant because it once more evokes a liminal position from which to indict acts of colonial violence. Contemplating ecological devastation as well as colonial violence, the following passage from "aerial roots" puts particular emphasis on how the U.S. military's careless handling of Guåhan's natural resources will affect many generations to come:

> **[attadok** : one second of damage
> to coral can take centuries to repair—
> saina,
> does time sail in straight lines
>
> *is said [chief] gadao's broken half [of the canoe] struck the reef near asgadsa bay and became asgadsa island*— […]
>
> (*[saina]* 94, emphases original)

The destruction of the reef for the sake of short-term political and economic advantages, the poem suggests, is not only wasteful and irresponsible from an environmental perspective, it also reveals the decision makers' complete disregard for the cultural significance Guåhan's reefs hold for the CHamoru, as implied through the mention of a CHamoru creation myth in the passages in italics. Facing the threat of permanent cultural and environmental loss, and thus an uncertain future for his people, the poem's speaker seems to call to the elders for guidance. However, because genealogies of knowledge have been violently interrupted, as the allusion to the *sakman* "saina" emphasizes, the most immediate response to this call for help comes not from an elder. Instead, Perez's poem has to arrive at its own answers as the ambiguous lack of punctuation in the above passage implies. It is poetry, then, and more specifically the participatory ecopoetics of *from unincorporated territory* that becomes a means of environmental and decolonial awareness-raising, engaging CHamoru readers as well as readers outside the CHamoru community through active reading practices that turn them from uncritical consumers of knowledge into critical and caring interrogators of dominant epistemologies and self-aware actors in the circulation of precarious knowledges.

The more fragmented, figurative, and allusive poems in Perez's collections rely on the potential of experimental poetry to produce critical, self-aware, and active readers (Retallack and Spahr 3). The sequence "preterrain" from the collection *[saina]* is especially interesting in this regard, because it reflects on questions of knowledge production, preservation, and transmission in the context of environmental and cultural catastrophe, while also thinking about the possibilities and limits of poetry as a substitute for bodily experience. The first section of "preterrain" in the collection begins as follows:

> [we] reach the unwritten point of arrival
> learn 'body
>
> language' is more than a 'litany
> of signs' each sound turns to us
>
> returns to 'salt-
> water'
> because names are preparatory
>
> name everything
> "saina"
> the root

(*[saina]* 18)

Initially, one might read this passage as a celebration of that which is "unwritten," which is to say of an immediate bodily experience of the natural world conceived of as a primordial return "to 'salt-/water'" and thus to a place before language. However, the poem counters such a surface reading by emphasizing that language is not what must be left behind, but what prepares any such "arrival." "[B]ecause names are preparatory," the speaker urges the reader to "name everything / 'saina' / the root" and thus to engage in a performative speech act that produces feelings of kinship and respect rather than relations of ownership and control as in the map of names discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The poem acknowledges that "'body / language' is more than a 'litany / of signs'" and suggests that the poet must "learn" how to use poetic language to communicate experiences of embodiment and emplacement that conventional language fails to express. The "unwritten point of arrival" of embodied and emplaced experiences is not the endpoint of Perez's poem, then. While "each sound turns to us," which is to say, while sound—in particular of poetic language—makes everyone reading in solidary aware of their respective body by way of breath, this awareness becomes the basis for a poetry that is concerned both with the struggles of different individuals and with the collective struggles that are larger than the individual:

> i want to say *belief is almost flesh because flesh holds song*
> each memory of
> what our house was in what
>
> is never lost

([*saina*] 18; emphasis original)

The embodied and embedded, thinking and caring subject is central to Perez's participatory ecopoetics insomuch as "*flesh holds song*." Accompanied by other voices, it is such an embodied and embedded subject, which in Perez's case speaks from a perspective of migration but may also be speaking from a different cultural position, that can hope to preserve "each memory of / what our house was." Imagined as "song," which is to say as a cultural practice that must be enacted to develop its full potential, whether individually or communally, but that can also travel in its written form to be taken up by people elsewhere if circumstances require it, poetry is tasked here with archiving at least some of the cultural and environmental knowledges that would otherwise be lost to the CHamoru, along with the intellectual and affective lessons they may be able to teach to non-CHamorus.

Of course, poetry is not always "what / is never lost," as the speaker must eventually admit, even if he likes to pretend otherwise. Many sections of "preterrain" thus appear torn between a belief in the power of poetic language and the recognition that a poetry of place too is precarious insofar as it depends, like so many CHamoru

cultural practices and knowledges evoked in Perez's collections, on a precarious natural environment:

> [we] watch the tide
> at poise the tide wounding
>
> a song
>
> that becomes less and less forgiving
> i imagine 'surfacing'
> where lines end
> 'tell even us' what does 'driftwood' know about geography
>
> that [we] have never learned
>
> (*[saina]* 57)

In this excerpt, like in several others in *from unincorporated territory*, Perez evokes a sense of place that calls for deep immersion and intimate engagement with the natural world, exactly because doing so can teach lessons "[we] have never learned" but that readers might learn in the future. This immersion and engagement—this place-making—is figured once again as the liminal space marked by "the tide / at poise," while also calling for a mobile perspective on "geography," figured here as the "knowledge of driftwood," an image that recalls the ancestors associated with banyan trees and open ocean travel throughout *from unincorporated territory* as well as CHamoru histories of displacement and contemporary CHamoru cultures of migration.

More so than in other poems, the different sections of "preterrain" foreground poetic language as the material that allows for a deep immersion and intimate engagement in the context of displacement, even if the "song" that emerges "becomes less and less forgiving" (*[saina]* 57). As Perez writes elsewhere in the poem sequence: "i don't know if i can say *our language / will survive here*" (*[saina]* 36; emphasis original). Given the dramatic degree of cultural and environmental loss on Guåhan, poetry seems to hold the possibility that "language" might survive elsewhere, geographically outside Guåhan and imaginatively within the poem. The "language" evoked here does not only stand for the CHamoru language but also for other forms of mobile place-making and community formation that evoke embodied experiences along with environmental knowledges. Through ecopoetic place-making, embodied experiences and environmental knowledges that have been made precarious by colonial violence, displacement, and environmental degradation can be transmitted to future generations along with an appeal to care and a call for (collective) action. Because of the genealogies that Perez's poetry traces and the alternative genealogies it constructs, readers in the continental United States or elsewhere in the world

too are able to come to learn about Guåhan's endangered natural environments and CHamoru cultural practices and, in so doing, enter a place of learning and critical self-examination of the poet's design, or, as Perez's puts it, a "place called 'voice'":

return

it is true that you can live with thirst
and still die from drowning only to have words
become as material as our needs
i want to ask you *is it still possible to hear our paper skin opening* [we]
carry our stories overseas to the place called 'voice'
and call

to know our allowance of water

(*[saina]* 126; emphasis original)