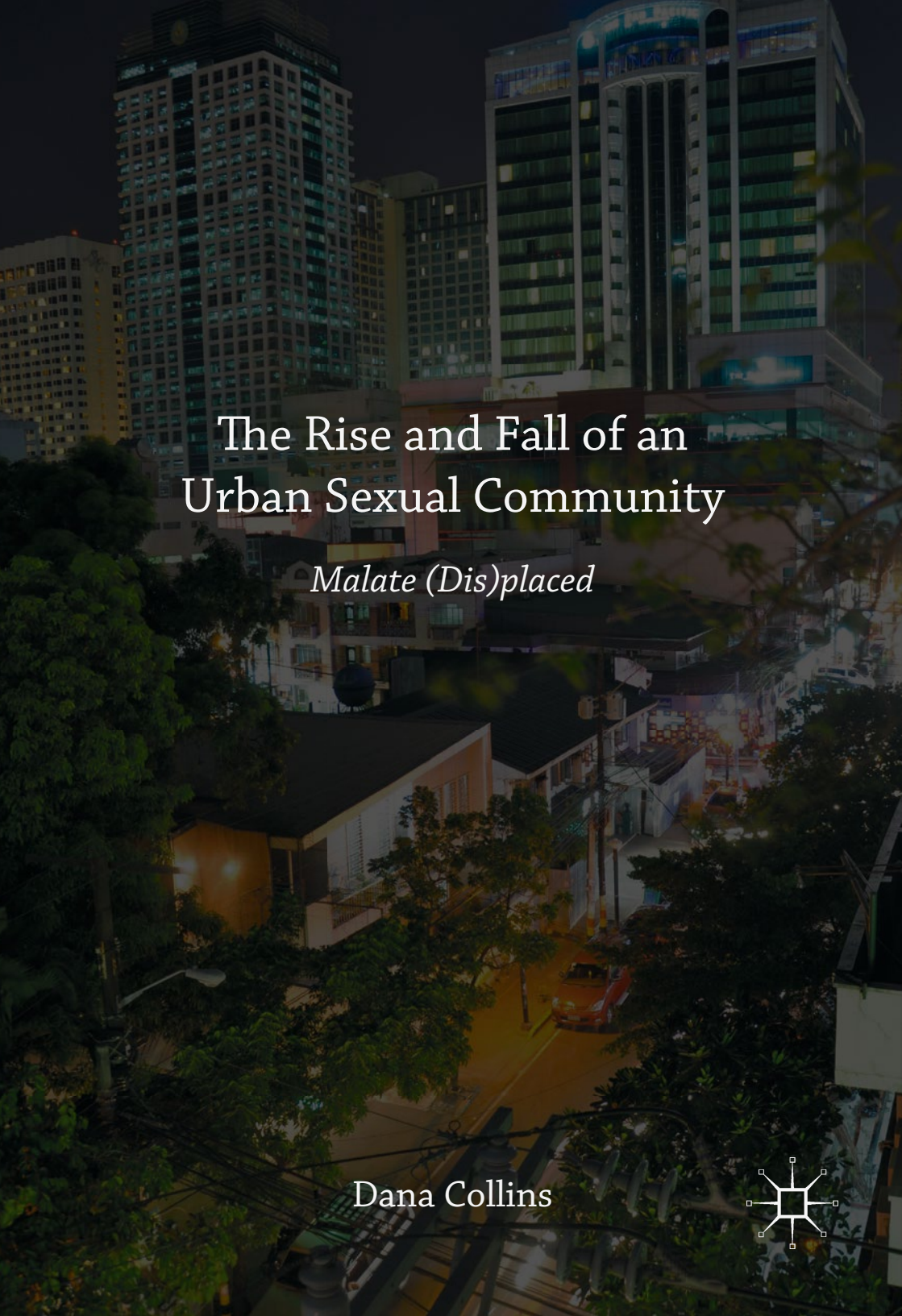

The Rise and Fall of an Urban Sexual Community

Malate (Dis)placed

Dana Collins

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Contents

Abbreviations

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CB	Call boy or commercial boy
CCA	Customer Care Associate
CCP	Cultural Center of the Philippines
DOT	Department of Tourism
EDCA	Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement
GRO	Guest relations officer
HCS	Heritage Conservation Society
IA	Intramuros Administration
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KTV	Karaoke Television
MSM	Men who have Sex with Men
NCR	National Capital Region
NGO	Non-government Organization
NOBRA	Nakpil Orosa Bar Restaurant Association
OCW	Overseas contract worker
Oxfam	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
SDD	Special Design District
TBBA	Tourist Belt Business Association
UN	United Nations
VFA	Visiting Forces Agreement
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

List of Map

List of Photos

List of Pseudonyms for Establishments and Participants

Bars & Dance Clubs
Amnesia
Baccus
Café Paradiseo
Café Sol
Club Fellini
Cornucopia
Down Under
Enclave
The Falls
Fritz
Hey Day
Juicy Fruit
Metro
The Pit Stop
The Play House
Playground
Cafés
Alvina's Cafe
Chicago
Conservation Activists
Aida
André
Angie
Carmen
Germaine
Madelin
City Councilor
Jorge
Fashion Designers
Arnel
Martín
Gay Business Owners—Filipino & Expatriate
Alfredo
David
Davido
Dirk
Erik
Jemuel
Juan
Lionel
Noah
Philip
Victor
Gay Expatriates
Bob
Charles
Christopher
David
John
Jon
Josh
Mark

Tom
Gay Filipinos
Eduardo
Hal
León
Louise
Micah
Omar & Teodoro
Gay Hosts
Adora
Alberto
Arman
Jay-Jay
Jasper
José
Lito
Mama Bong
Mama Miguel
Manuel
Meno
PK
Rafael
Ricky
Vicente
Wong
Lifestyle Stores & Spa
Bathing Relaxation
Luna
Pride's Place
NGO Workers & Malate Devotees
Abby
Angelo
Jaime
Jess
Luis
Marie
Valentin
Restaurants
Anas
Chez Tita
Coyote Grill
Marseille
Theatrical Café
Vivoli's
The Wild Goose

Map 1 Street map of the Ermita, Malate, and Paco Districts. Reproduced with permission from *Lonely Planet*, © Lonely Planet 2012.

CHAPTER 1

Why Place Matters: An Introduction

Saturday, February 5, 2000, 9:30 p.m.—Malate, City of Manila

The sounds of Chinese New Year—firecrackers, the backfire of a Jeepney, and the cheers of urban revelers playing in the streets outside of my window—conjure for me the uncertain world of urban spaces. I reflect on my movement into a space that rarely welcomes women. I take a deep breath, disregard my own internalized fears, grab my field notebook, hotel key, a 500 peso note, and head for the door.

The moment I walk outside the barrier of my air-conditioned hotel lobby and onto the street, I am greeted by groups of people strolling and engaging in lively conversation. My sense is that the night is bright, yet I don't know why. Firecrackers dramatically clap from indefinite parts of the district. I walk toward the cascade of light projected out from random business establishments, which line the street before me. This light places the street activity in a limelight as if the pedestrians' promenade is part of an elaborate play. Cars are frozen in this activity, as the crowds make it impossible for them to move down my street. Workers busily weave in and out of the establishments and crowds, foregoing participation in the celebratory Saturday night street life.

Rallying the commercial activity of formal business establishments are a plethora of food stalls surrounded by clusters of people consuming fish balls, Lumpia, or iced coconut milk. Cigarette and candy vendors attend to the rest. Cars form a bright line all the way up Adriatico Street toward

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what seems to be the horizon of the District of Ermita. These lights add a more predictable backdrop to the spontaneous bursts of color and activity arising throughout the neighborhood. The night is humid and heavy, and the car exhaust stings the back of my throat. The scent of frying fish balls from nearby food vendors mingles in the close night air. I feel both crowded and finally at ease, as I find the hum of human urban activity reassuring. I relish my anonymity, sensing this is the first time in two weeks that I have walked these streets without being stared at. There is too much happening in the District of Malate tonight for my difference to stand out.

Cars, people, businesses, consumer activity, and noise compete for space along Adriatico's intimate block down to Nakpil Street. Just this afternoon, this very space resembled something akin to a quiet, tree-lined neighborhood with moderate commercial activity. Yet tonight, Malate swells with activity, as people and vehicles descend from what I imagine to be all parts of the metropolis. The numbers push at the district's seams but somehow the neighborhood accommodates them. The crowd—overwhelmingly Filipino—moves along, consuming from the street vendors or clustering in groups at the intersections. The hotels and fine dining restaurants sit idly, ignored by the amazing presence of people in the streets.

I quickly reach the corner of Nakpil Street, turning and encountering a thickening crowd and even more performative street life. The business establishments lining the street are clustered closely together, well lit, and newly renovated. They cater to the steady flow of customers that spill in from side streets. There is little unused space on this block. I walk past art cafés, beach holiday bars, a "Gotham" nightclub, a Spanish Tapas restaurant, airport themed coffee shops, and French, Italian, Thai, European, Gourmet Filipino, Caribbean, and Chinese restaurants. I have the sense that the globe has invaded this narrow neighborhood street. I turn the corner at Maria Orosa Street—an intersection that is consumed by the crowd—and find it difficult to locate Baccus,[1] the gay bar to which I have ventured out tonight. Baccus is squeezed inconspicuously between two other food and drink establishments that demonstratively open to the street with large glass windows that connect the patrons inside to the festive street life taking shape outside. I can see the patrons gazing out at me as I approach a muscled young man in a tight patterned T-shirt who is sitting between me and the large metal door, separating me from the inside of this gay bar. He smiles, reaches for a bronze doorknob molded in the shape of a large swimming sperm, opens the door, and welcomes me in.

Thirteen Years Later on Saturday, February 9 at 6 p.m.—Malate, City of Manila

The Dragon Dance parade of the Chinese New Year has just passed my hostel at the corner of Nakpil and Adriatico Streets. The clanging, drumming, and shouts brought me out from my room and on to the balcony where I stood with the other hostel guests and workers, gazing down at the parade inching its way down Adriatico. The sun is setting, and it is still early for a Saturday night. The few patrons on the street stop their hurried walk to throw coins into the dragon's mouth, as it makes its way in quick starts and stops, gobbling all coins thrown in its direction. The dragon sneakily approaches unsuspecting patrons as if it will consume them as well. This is a playful dance that happens yearly throughout Manila. This is also the most activity that I have witnessed on the streets since my arrival two weeks prior.

I've met PK (a former gay host) and his partner, Louis, for dinner this evening, and as we make our way south toward the heart of Malate, we discuss how dead this Saturday night of Chinese New Year seems. We pass Korean and Japanese hostess bars; the women stand out on the street in evening wear or lingerie, calling out to potential customers to come inside. We pass without their acknowledgment. Neither is there a street party to greet us as we round the bend of Nakpil to Maria Orosa Street. We grab a seat at a plastic table and chairs pushed out onto the street outside of Fritz, a gay-owned bar and dance club, just steps away from the business establishment that used to be the gay bar, Baccus. That space is now a Korean KTV bar,[2] flanked by other KTV clubs and hostess bars. Street vendors stop by our table in intervals of approximately five minutes, requesting that we purchase anything from flowers to cigarettes to candy, or to ask that we make a modest contribution to their meal that night. The other five tables are occupied by small groups of gay men who are socializing, smoking, and drinking. Only two other foreigners were among this group tonight. Now and again, a gay man walks by our table and recognizes PK, offering his greeting. The street feels empty; there are only two other gay establishments and the Guest Relations Officers (GRO), who are now referred to as Customer Care Associates (CCA), and who work to encourage the public's patronage of the bars, do not have a crowd from which to draw. Most establishments make use of signs and billboards featuring young Filipina women to draw in an altogether different clientele from the ones clinging to the plastic tables on our side of the street.

PK gestures out at the slow nightlife, "Look at this; this used to be the heart of gay Malate." I ask him and Louis about Club Fellini, a gay bar and dance space, just across the street from where we are sitting. "You can't socialize in Fellini; it is a dance club and it is very hard to just hang out and talk. I took some friends from the call center to Fellini one night and we paid our 500 pesos (rolling his eyes) and there was no place to hang out! You go in, you sit, and you are separated from people. There aren't even chairs at the bar. There used to be a bar with chairs and you could hang out and talk. But now there are all of these dark secluded corners and you just sit there and wait to be picked up. And then you go. So we had a terrible time." Their experience confirms my experience of Club Fellini from the night before. Club Fellini announced their closure just two weeks later.

Louis had to use the restroom and he returns to our table visibly upset. The muscular doorman charged him the 200 pesos door charge to enter Fritz to use the toilet. PK leaps up from the table and demonstratively walks over to the doorman, claiming in English and loudly that he knows the owner and that he is like a gay mother to him. He proceeds to argue in Tagalog, gesturing inside the bar and raising his voice at the end of each sentence. He then stomps over to the top of the steps and looking down on the street-level tables where we are sitting, he starts to undo his belt, gesturing that he is going to urinate right there, down the very steps that mark the bar's entrance. Louis, who had been translating the exchange for me all along, stops and states, "I don't care if he does; he has a nice package." PK does not urinate on the steps; he angrily walks down the street out of our eyesight and finds a darker location to relieve himself. Upon his return, we collectively complain to our waiter, who repeatedly apologizes, and with a worried look on his face, tells us that he will bring some free beers for the night. I leave soon after, and note that the crowds in the street remain sparse, which leads the doormen from some establishments to focus their persistent energy on getting me to come inside. Later that night, PK sends a text message to let me know that they have received their free beer.

* * *

Malate (Dis)placed offers an ethnographic story of both the making and unraveling of urban sexual community in a global South city neighborhood. This story unfolds in a former sex and current tourist district, Malate, in the City of Manila, the Philippines. Malate is a prominent char-

acter in this story, as are the powerful and marginalized urban actors who make neighborhood change, "gay" community, and who forge a place in the conflicted racialized-class relations of this gentrifying district. The story offers a picture of these actors' place-making over a period of thirteen years, from 2000 to 2013, where I witnessed firsthand the rise and unraveling of gay-led gentrification.

I had arrived in Malate in 2000, prepared to study gay tourism and sex work in this former sex district. Yet as I spoke of this research interest, my participants' eyes glazed over and they communicated that too many, often global North researchers, had already descended upon their beloved neighborhood to study the sex trade, overlooking the powerful aspects of people's lives, work, and community—"You should study what is happening here, to our neighborhood"; "I'll tell you one thing, it's got soul"; "actually, … it is one of the few places in Manila that has a sense of place" they would all tell me. I did not *see* or experience place when I first arrived; yet time and again a wide range of urban actors—who were both Filipino and foreign, working and elite classes, gay-identified and straight—continued to assert that there was something special about Malate. It was through their lived experiences that I was encouraged to pay attention to place—or how people assert a right to access urban spaces; draw from urban magic, identity, memory, and belonging; and both collectively and informally struggle to make urban spaces meaningfully theirs in a rapidly globalizing city. Their encouragement eventually led to my exploration of place-making in the rise and fall of urban sexual community, and how place is powerful in people's imaginations and actions, yet loses out to the neoliberal forces of city government and global capital.

I tell this kind of story of urban change so that we can see how place-making is at once local, global, personal, political, and rife with neoliberal controls. A key theme that arises in this story of sexuality, neighborhood change, and struggle is what I am calling *intimate neoliberalism*.[3] Sexual community as it manifests in Malate, and within gay enclaves in cities globally, cannot exist outside of the neoliberal relations of tourism, global urbanization, and gay consumerism that offer both economic fuel and a late capitalist ethos of individualism and consumerism. Sexual community is a response to these neoliberal structures; but it is also something else entirely. It is the geographical, cultural, and imagined connection to a place that sexual others claim in the face of the marginalizing and homogenizing forces of neoliberal globalization. Intimacy shows the deep

penetration of neoliberal control into desire, identity, and lifestyle, all of which manifest within urban sexual spaces worldwide. But it also highlights how actors often employ intimacy—in the form of desire, identity, and relationships—to resist these alienating forces. These practices of intimate resistance, including key rejections of global homogenization and commoditization of urban space and identity, came to be the place-making strategies that are so central to Malate's story. The lesson of this story is that urban change projects need to be organized, through explicit politicization and grassroots organization, if place-based neighborhood change is to be sustained.

Through this ethnographic story, I answer the question of why and how place mattered to sexual community, particularly at a time when the forces of urban renewal and global homogenization were also at work? I therefore offer a different argument and focus than other studies on Metropolitan Manila that look at this rapidly urbanizing National Capital Region (NCR) as a postmodern, non-place, a space of flows and mobility, as well as a space that produces desires to be elsewhere and/or desires for an elusive modernity (Benedicto 2014; Tadiar 1995). I, too, was struck by the repeated commitment to place in this study by its participants, many of whom experience Manila—as have I—as an overbearing, rapidly urbanizing, crushingly unequal, global South city. I needed to understand why it was that people turned away from these forces and rather followed, and acted upon, their experience of city space in meaningful, intimate, and connected ways.

Where is Malate?

The City of Manila is the Philippines' national capital city. Despite Imelda Marcos' divergence of development funds into the capital city to create a world-class exposé in modern architecture and urban tourism, Manila serves two primary purposes for international tourism to the Philippines: it is a port of international entry and transfer to the beach resorts, military tourism hotspots, or rice terraces in this 7000-island nation; or, it has been a sex tourist destination. Today, there are increasing numbers of tourists and bus tours (mostly Korean) who travel to Manila for shopping in the many malls throughout the metro region, but more often tour guides encourage at most a two-night stay in what some travelers find to be a confusing, polluted, and sometimes dangerous city. Manila is simply one

of those dense urban spaces that tourists have to pass through to get to the more desirable and successful tourism destinations throughout the Philippines. Yet these travelers are relatively insulated in Malate and, for a time, experienced the intimacy, history, and vibrant neighborhood life that the district's urban renewal projects vied for.

Malate is a neighborhood within the City of Manila, and it is one that has been made and remade through a history of transnational mobilities, such as the movement of militaries, tourists, rural to urban migrants, overseas contract workers, and bohemian elites who had traveled to global cities and brought back with them a vision for a creative urban enclave within their home city, Manila. These circuits of mobility contributed to, for a time, the highly visible and foreign-catering sexual economy that dominated the Districts of Ermita and Malate from around the end of the Second World War until the closure of the sex strips in the early 1990s. It was in fact the sexuality, transnationality, and commodification of the sex strips that facilitated spaces for same-sex sexual exchange and alternative public gender displays—what came to be popularly understood as the seeds of gay community in Malate. This history of both sexual freedom and gay space, as well as the economic window of opportunity presented by the closing of the sex district, led a group of gay-identified entrepreneurs to open their cottage industry-style businesses in Malate, and to eventually shape the district's urban renewal. At the start of my research in 2000, and as Malate's urban renewal was exploding with metropolitan-wide popularity, there existed an understanding that Malate is "where the gays are," and gay tourism guides encouraged tourists to at least pass through the district to experience Manila's "gay" nightlife.

Yet Malate is not a clearly bounded or singular gay space, despite the aspirations of gay entrepreneurs who imagined the development of a "gayborhood" in a global South city. Gay spaces exist in other parts of Metropolitan Manila, the urban region of Cebu, and in tourism hotspots throughout the Philippines. Malate had to be made into a gay space where understandings of "gay" and space were both struggled over and shifted alongside of neighborhood change as well as emerging global conceptions of gay. The imagination of Malate as a gay center also resulted because of increasingly diffused notions of sexual and gender liberalization that were taking shape throughout the Philippines. Such changes facilitated circuits of gay mobility and spaces throughout the region (which Benedicto's study of elite Filipino gay men elaborates,

2014) as well as a palatable yet fleeting gay urban space within what came to be labeled as "the gay heart of Malate"—the intersection of Nakpil and Maria Orosa Streets. Malate's gay circuits were also in part made up of a steady flow of foreigners, or *Afams*,[4] who traveled to or lived in Malate, as well as the transnational class of gay Filipinos who held aspirations for concretizing gay urban space there. There remains a local understanding that gay *Afamistas*[5]—a term used to describe working-class Filipinos who form commodified relationships with foreigners and who I am calling "gay hosts"—prefer Malate as the ideal neighborhood in which to form relationships, because of its intimate scale, access to tourists (or *Afams*), and imagined gay spaces.

Malate's urban renewal both marginalized and brought together gay hosts who are central characters in this story of sexual community and place. Gay hosts, like many people, expressively identified with Malate and claimed the district as their own. They could not, however, secure wage work, patronize the gentrified establishments, or afford to live in their beloved district because of its gentrification. While a transnational class of gay men—tourists and upper-class Filipinos—were welcomed in new commercial establishments and took up residence in upscale hotels, gay hosts were regularly turned away from these venues unless they were hosting a gay tourist. Gay hosts lived outside of Malate and traveled up to three hours each way to visit the district. They were economically compelled to participate in the informal sector by earning a living from tourism and so they could sustain their participation in the district's burgeoning gay community. Hosts' independent entrepreneurialism marked them as prostitutes from the perspective of gay entrepreneurs. They restricted hosts' movement among the commercial establishments, because gay entrepreneurs construed hosts as commercial sex workers and, hence, a threat to the refined cosmopolitanism of the neighborhood space that they were trying to cultivate among their businesses and out onto the streets. On the other hand, bar and restaurant owners viewed foreign tourists and upper-class Filipinos as legitimate consumers and as a lifeline to Malate's renewal. Hosts were conscious of these divisions of race, class, and nationality; they experienced firsthand the privileged construction of a foreign gay presence, while facing the stigma attached to their participation in the informal economy. Arriving at why and how gay hosts developed their beloved connection to place in a district that increasingly threatened their displacement is a central question in this story about sexual community and place.

What Is Gay Space?

I use the term "gay" to describe the spaces of Malate as well as my research participants because gay offers an emic (insider's) perspective that captures gay hosts' and gay entrepreneurs' very own descriptions of self and urban space. At the same time, the lived experience of same-sex relations in the Philippines are nuanced and cannot be captured by static notions of sexual identity; gay should not be confused with Western self-identifications (Benedicto 2008; Garcia 1996; Manalansan 2003; Tan 1995). Not all men who have sex with men claim gay as a coherent definition of sexual self. Some use gay and *bakla* interchangeably to identify effeminate working-class men who have sexual relations with masculine heterosexual-identified men. *Bakla* is also a term with a class connotation; it can be hurled at a man whose non-masculine gender presentation is viewed as too public, too feminine, and/or too cheap. Typically, upper-class gay men avoid public displays of non-normative sexuality and gender because this would compromise their class status, and they reject the *bakla* identity for themselves. For example, Bobby Benedicto (2008) discusses how *bakla* functioned as a regulatory status, keeping upper-class and masculine urban gay men in check in terms of their gender and class displays. Manalansan (2003), on the other hand, follows how these class regulations fall out as Filipino gays in the diaspora—from different class locations—reclaim *bakla* as an agentic identity to counter racism in New York's gay scene. Gay hosts distanced themselves from the identity, *bakla*, and embraced the range of gay masculinities that they encountered in Malate. Significantly, Malate was a space (from 2000 to 2013) where gay men, across classes and nationalities, experimented with openly and proudly claiming a gay identity. This claiming of gay in Malate coincided with the public visibility (in the streets, businesses, and the media) of a new urban sexual identity that offered gay masculinity as a possibility for gay men. For example, hosts spoke about wanting to leave the province to get away from the only available gay identity there—*bakla*—and with wanting to discover a range of ways to be gay in Malate, including being masculine gay men. Finally, the gay globality that emphasized urban gay masculinity and that came to dominate the networks of elite Filipino gay men that Bobby Benedicto studied in *Under Bright Lights* (2014) began to influence gender displays in Malate by around 2005.

I am arguing that the story of Malate shows that gay identity is not a given. In fact, the performance of gay identity within Malate's spaces as a

way to "become" gay was key for a range of gay men. For example, hosts, who after migrating to Malate, confronted an urban district that displayed a very unfamiliar and visible urban gay scene, went through a self-searching process where they arrived at an understanding of their gay identity. Such urban spaces and relations, in fact, troubled gay hosts' identity so that they had to craft and perform who they believed they had become in Malate. For example, Alberto shared that his encounter with gay gender identities in Malate led to a struggle over his sexual identity: "I would love to be a girl, but it never happened, and I'm prepared to be like a macho man, but my heart is real gay. I have the soft touch". It was through his drag/model performances at Café Paradiseo—a prominent gay-owed café that started Malate's urban renewal—that he was able to merge the masculine and feminine sides to his gay expression: "I liked Café Paradiseo. It's the most important place for me in Malate…. I find myself to be a model [in the drag shows], I find me, and I didn't know really who I am, and oh I am a gay now…. I'm doing this because I like this and I define my life as gay". This is one example of how gay identity was under construction within the context of Malate's gay space. Gay hosts' migration was in part a travel for such self-discoveries; they saw themselves as men who had arrived in a place to forge an identity. Hosts interpreted Malate's masculine, sexual, urban mix as allowing their sexual exploration. Malate was a unique urban space in that it was the only place in all of the Philippines in 2000 that harbored masculine and Out gay expressions in their experience. PK commented on Malate's spaces as "very open": "Even guys who appear straight (masculine) kiss each other just like in the streets, … they have the freedom. But in Quezon City and the province, they have that fear. In Malate, they don't care what other people would say about that. First, Malate has all the bars … and second, it is the best place to meet other gays…. [Malate] doesn't just have those bars for stripping men (male strip clubs), they have interactive bars where gays can talk…. They can do the stuff which is not secretive … but in Quezon City, it's very discreet" .

Hosts' interpretation of Malate as a gay place—and its power in setting parameters for identity—was so prevalent that hosts asserted that the district, as José indicated, "brings gay men Out." Some claimed that simply stepping into Malate allowed one to become someone else, to both imagine and perform an alternative identity and life. Interestingly, their mobility between rural and urban spaces as migrants and traveling guides encouraged them to experience Malate as more sexually open and, hence, as less regulated than other regions, even though they experienced class

regulation in Malate. Alberto claimed that Malate is "a gay area": "Malate is the center of the gay people … and comparing to other places only in Malate where you can hang out and relax and having fun…. You can really express your feelings as you being a gay, it's the only place where you can express your real feelings and you can show off to them who you really are…. There's the girlie girlie looking, there's macho men that is gay, and they don't mind kissing each other in Malate". Thus, the freedom to perform sexual identity in Malate and, hence, to realize sexual identity, contributed to hosts' understanding of Malate as an open urban place. To a great extent, Filipino and expatriate entrepreneurs shared similar stories of Malate's freeing spaces, which allowed them to come Out as the kind of gay men that they wanted to be. It was expressions such as these that continued to affirm for me the power of place in Malate's gay urban community, and for a range of gay-identified men who grew up, passed through, lived, worked, entertained, and came Out in its urban spaces.

All gay hosts shared migration narratives that elaborated their desire to take part in a more Out and gender-variant gay lifestyle in Malate. All claimed the identity of gay for themselves, and while distancing themselves from the identity *bakla*, some gay hosts reclaimed *Afamista* by using it as a positive self-identification, in direct opposition to its pejorative use. Gay identification allowed hosts to distinguish themselves from heterosexual-identified male sex workers who also participated in the informal sexual economy in Malate. Hosts claimed that they offered companionship to travelers because they are gay men who genuinely desire men; they do not go with tourists out of economic necessity like male sex workers. An important part of Malate's story is how gay hosts emphasized their hosting as desirable work in this way, and how this hospitality contributed to the imagination of Malate as a gay center. Hence, "gay host" is an emergent and placed-based identity rooted in Malate's urban gay spaces. It is also an identity that brings to light hosts' ongoing struggles with intimate neoliberalism in both their informal tourism work and the neoliberal relations of gay-led gentrification.

Gay space in the Philippines is also nuanced, and it cannot be encapsulated in Western understandings of the rainbow-clad gayborhoods of the global North, or a clearly demarcated gay sex district like in Thailand. In 2000, same-sex-desiring life in Metro Manila was not spatially centralized (it remains decentralized today as well) nor clearly institutionalized within bars, clubs, or tours that are explicitly labeled "gay." In fact, a "gay bar" was a male strip club where mostly effeminate (lower- to middle-class)

Filipino gay men patronized to meet and have sex with straight-acting male strippers who are heterosexual-identified. These were the discreet gay spaces that PK refers to in his quote above.[6] Sexual establishments for men who desire and have sex with men (MSM) existed throughout Manila, yet, unlike Thailand, for example, gay tourism had never been a primary organizing principle of MSM space in the Philippines. In fact, gay tourists found it difficult to decipher gay space in Manila given the very different understanding and spatial organization of same-sex desire. Angelo, a non-governmental organization (NGO) worker, explained this organization of gay space best to me:

> There is a lot of visible gay life here in Manila, but this is not an organized gay space. I mean, you can flirt and have sex in public—in movie theaters, parks, bathrooms, and some streets—but you won't necessarily go to a bar that is labeled "Gay Bar" (he means in the Western sense) to have encounters with men. Gays and gay activity are just all around you.

In 2000, the establishments in Malate where gay men congregated, and sometimes predominated, were not labeled explicitly as gay bars, given the commercial sexual connotation of a gay bar. Yet a powerful part of Malate's story is how gay meanings factored into people's experiences of Malate's urban place. But to understand how gay meanings manifested in Malate, it is crucial that we move beyond the binary of Western gay versus indigenous sexuality; rather, Malate's story is one that shows how sexual identities and space shift and emerge out of key struggles over urban place, as well as out of the national and transnational mobilities of gay-identified men (Collins 2005).

Jasbir Puar's (2001) Trinidadian-based concept of "circuits of queer mobility" and the networks of gay globality that Bobby Benedicto (2014) develops in his focus on elite gay men in Metropolitan Manila's bright lights gay culture show how gay is not a stagnant identity or identifier of centralized sexual space. Benedicto develops gay globality out of an auto-ethnographic study of privileged gay Filipino men who make up a global scene that touches down in Manila around 2006. He follows these men and their meanings as they travel—not only across the metropolis but also transnationally and into the gay scenes of the global North. Yet their experience of gay globality arises out of their class and national standpoints, as their mobility throughout the region, into a range of classed urban spaces, and then transnationally, is the movement of privileged gay men who also

confront racisms when they leave the Philippines. This focus on movement as a key identifier of gay space means that he emphasizes gay space as globalized non-place that is full of race–class–nation contradictions. For example, the men in his study relay meanings and quests to *get away from* the overbearing contradictions of global urbanization in a Third World city, or the failed promises of modernity. Makati's globalized non-place is one site where Benedicto finds and analyzes gay space. But what of those gay men who were running away from Makati's bright lights scene or who could never afford entry into these spaces? What about those gay men who sought gay space within a rooted place that exuded a sense of both freedom and intimacy, and away from the elitist eye of Makati's urban upper class?

These questions get at the spirit in which I use gay as an identifier of space and identity, and how place played a role in the rise and fall of Malate's gay community. I contend that gay manifests in relationship to actual places that have meaning to urban actors, even as global networks and mobilities are also at work in shaping gay space. Malate's gay spaces include sexual migrations, gay tourism, same-sex desiring communities, cosmopolitan gay urbanism, *baklas*, transgender sex workers, and transnational gay activism, which all created a hybrid and shifting use of gay within an urban neighborhood that held significance to those who lived, worked, and entertained there. Gay changed over this thirteen-year study of neighborhood redevelopment; yet, a constant is the use of gay as an identifier of Malate's freeing urban place.

Urban Histories, Neoliberal Globalization, and the Significance of Place

One key distinction between Malate and the gay enclaves in global North cities is the neighborhood's transformation within the context of what scholars refer to as a prototypical Third World city (Drakakis-Smith 2000). The urban experience of those who live, work, migrate, and travel to Third World cities is one that cannot be captured by "Western" and "Northern" experiences of urban modernity. Rather, urbanization in the global South offers a distinct path given the interlocking forces of colonialism, modernization and development, urbanization and primacy, and globalization. Although there are differing explanations for urbanization in the global South—and debate over whether such a region still exists in the face of

globalization (Dicken 1998)—most agree that cities are sites for surplus accumulation and global contact, as well as for the intensification of struggles over the local, national, and global. Some focus on how it is through such struggle that cities are most fundamentally made (Berner 1997).

Metropolitan Manila is a textbook example of urban primacy (Banzon-Bautista 1998; Bello et al. 1982; Caoili 1999), and its metropolitan form is one that critical geographers such as Tadiar (1995) and Benedicto (2014) describe as embodying the excesses and disorder of the false promise of modernity. The City of Manila developed as a linking settlement between first the Spanish and then the US colonial powers and colonized territories throughout the Philippines, which led to Manila's ascent as the economic, political, and cultural capital of the Philippines. The NCR today remains a prominent space through which raw materials, commodities, people, culture, knowledge, and capital flow (Banzon-Bautista 1998; Berner 1997). Manila is a primary port of entry for commerce and international tourist arrivals (Asian Institute of Tourism 1999), and both Manila and Makati City[7] house the national government and 86 % of the international diplomatic core residing in the Philippines (Berner 1997). The social and political actions that impact the entire nation occur within the NCR and most multinationals locate in the NCR due to the concentration of urban infrastructure, transportation networks, financial capital, and the availability of a cheap labor pool. The NCR region continues to contribute the most to the Philippines' total domestic output (Philippines Statistics Authority 2011).

Manila's origin as a colonial city means that it served as a major port for mercantile colonialists and was part of a shipping route that connected the Philippines with China, Mexico, and Spain (Agoncillo and Guerrero 1986). Although the Philippines was originally a Spanish colony of resource extraction, US colonization finalized the country's dependency through monopolizing foreign trade, transforming the Philippines into an export colony of agricultural goods and consumer of US-manufactured goods (Bello 1989; Schirmer and Shalom 1987; Sison and de Lima 1998). The post-Second World War transition period to "independence" began a related, yet modified neoimperial concern over the city's modernization (Escobar 1995; Evans and Stephens 1988; So 1990) in that urban economic, cultural, and political advancement became a focus for modernizing global South countries. Following Western models, modernization scholars posed urbanization as a necessary prerequisite for national development (Drakakis-Smith 2000; Potter and Lloyd-Evans 1998). The

social inequalities that accompanied urbanization were treated as a necessary and productive part of modernization because industrializing countries needed both the laboring and capitalist classes for economic growth[8] (Bello 1989; Evans and Stephens 1988; So 1990). The spatial concentration of capital within the NCR was expected to initially cluster and then trickle out to rural areas. Development theory and practice hence treated cities as the potential leaders of national progress (Evers and Korff 2000).[9]

Thus "development" led to a distinct mode of urbanization in the global South, described as *urban primacy*, or the political, economic, and cultural dominance of one region over others (Bello et al. 1982; Drakakis-Smith 2000; Potter and Lloyd-Evans 1998). Urban primacy points to the failures of development and modernization schemes that drowned urban regions with resources (while ignoring and depleting rural regions) with the logic that they would lead national development. The escalating urban inequalities (squatters communities living alongside high-rise condominiums), the rapid overdevelopment of urban areas that coincides with the underdevelopment of rural regions, and the pockets of concentrated production, finance, and trade that unsteadily mark the urban landscape (Banzon-Bautista 1998; Costello 1998; Tadiar 1995) are core markers of urban primacy in Metropolitan Manila.

The Philippine state has also implemented development agendas informed by the logic that urban growth should drive national economic growth (see National Economic Development Authority 2000) with development efforts focusing on the Metropolitan Manila region, and the City of Manila serving as a symbol of the nation's power and potential competitiveness in global markets (Evers and Korff 2000; Mullins 1999). The NCR exists in a starkly unequal relationship to its surrounding rural regions because, historically and today, its expedient growth happens at the expense of rural regions, which remain in a semi-feudal state (Bello et al. 1982; Caoili 1999). In fact, traveling from the global center of Makati City's financial towers—the NCR financial capital—to a rural location just two hours outside of the city is an experience that parallels a trip to another country. Metropolitan Manila also demonstrates the land absorption that is prominent of urban primacy where urbanizing cities such as Subic Bay/Clark Economic Zone[10] and Tagatay are on the verge of meeting the metropolis' expanding borders (Carley and Bautista 2001). Further, the pull of the NCR in terms of migration has made it one of the most densely populated areas in all of Southeast Asia (Banzon-Bautista 1998) and *the* most populated region in the Philippines with 11,855,975

people occupying only 0.2 % of the country's total landmass (Philippine Statistics Authority 2010). The 2010 national census indicates that the annual growth rate for the NCR is 2.02 % with the population projected to double in fifty years (Philippine Statistics Authority 2010).

Rapid growth, urban primacy, and population density shape urban environments, transforming land into a precious resource and more generally impacting quality of life for those living in the NCR. For example, approximately 43 % of all automobiles in the Philippines flow along only 2 % of the country's road networks (Banzon-Bautista 1998), making air pollution in Manila exceed the World Health Organization's recommendations by 300 % (Carley and Bautista 2001). Urban policies show an increasing public concern over the scarcity of resources necessary for healthy urban living, including access to clean air, water, and public space, garbage disposal, sanitation and plumbing, housing, and power supplies (see National Economic Development Authority 2000). The Philippine state tends to treat land as a scarce resource and strong cultural attachments to land, combined with a competition over urban space among multinationals, result in land speculation and exceedingly high land values. Drawing on World Bank statistics, Ma. Cynthia Tose Banzon-Bautista (1998) notes that "even in 1975, land prices in the Philippines were 'incongruously high' by international standards" (28). Berner (1997) argues that the city's most precious commodity has become urban space. The precious commodity of urban space continues to lie at the root of many of the struggles over place within Malate.

Metropolitan Manila is also an example of what global urban studies scholars explain as the concentration of globalization within urban areas (Dicken 1998; King 2000; Sassen 1991). Saskia Sassen (1991) has argued that the links between cities within the global economy has intensified with globalization and pushed to the fore global cities and world cities that manifest an increasingly rapid exchange of goods, finance, culture, ideas, people, capital, and production. Global cities tend to dominate these networks (Sassen 1991); however, the spaces and relations of both global and world cities tend to look more alike because they are primary sites for capital accumulation (Chase-Dunn 1989; Dicken 1998; Hoogvelt 2001; Massey et al. 1999; Pieterse 2000; Potter and Lloyd-Evans 1998; Ross and Trachte 1990). This convergence of urban social worlds where spaces and relations in New York and Manila, for example, begin to look similar rather than divergent is precisely the impact of globalization on cities—commodities, finance, identities, cultural forms, and lifestyles pen-

etrate and organize urban lives worldwide. This is what I am referring to as neoliberal urban space. Cities such as Manila which already serve as the hallmark of modernization become the sites for the construction of skyscrapers, malls, flyovers, and international airports as well as markets for Western movies, fashion, fast food, and music (Tadiar 2004). Convergence is also evident in the rise of an urban consumer class that consumes such global lifestyles. At the same time, there is a rise in informal and temporary labor and an urban poverty class. The lesson of neoliberal urban space is that globalization is creating environments and relations that are increasingly similar at the very same time that such convergence induces social struggle over the global, national, and local levels of capital's articulation.

On the other hand, globalization creates the contradictory relations of divergence (Dicken 1998; Drakakis-Smith 2000) because accumulation relies on the diversification of production within and between cities, between city and region, and between regions of the world. The conception that the world is becoming increasingly accessible and manageable in its "sameness" is the false promise of global integration. The reality of globalization demonstrates the exclusion of populations, cultures, and goods from global networks while imposing a kind of cultural hegemony and concentrating power and wealth in the hands of a global elite who no longer operate according to national interests (Pieterse 2000). This contradictory impact of globalization on cities leads to what Evers and Korff (2000) describe as the "similarities of diversity" within world cities. These social relations of divergence and urban displacement (Davis 2006), which are evident in gentrification, are also a part of neoliberal urban space.

This tension between convergence and divergence results in an unanticipated outcome of globalization because globalization implies that place and locale are becoming increasingly obsolete given the uprooting of production, consumption, and exchange from specific geographic locations (Bonacich and Appelbaum 2000; Castells 2000; Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994; Held et al. 1999). It suggests that world cities are losing their distinct histories, cultures, and national identities. Lefebvre and Enders (1976) claim that globalization leads to an increasing abstraction of space and locale because space is changed through global commodity exchange relations. As space and locale are remade through such abstract commercial relations, urban social life becomes increasingly fragmented. For example, Manila's urban neighborhoods used to be experienced as meaningful places, which fulfilled the demands of daily life (schools, churches, parks, homes, and businesses were spatially concentrated within neighbor-

hoods). However, commodified urban space fulfills isolated demands—suburbs are for residential life; financial districts for work; sex, tourist, and entertainment districts for pleasure; and shopping mall districts for consumption. These increasingly separate, privatized, and commodified enclaves create an alienation from urban life rather than the integrated, rooted, and public connection to local districts.[11] Urban dwellers move between disconnected city spaces, which results in their dissociation from place. The alienation of space is further compounded because these fragmented spaces become sites for pure consumption. The global phenomenon of gentrification, where urban place is transformed into distinct enclaves for the expression of neoliberal commodity culture lifestyle, is an example of this (Abrahamson 2006; Hae 2009; Lloyd 2006).

Yet even within these stark relations of neoliberal globalization, urban spaces continue to be sites of social creativity—people live, work, educate, and entertain in cities (Evers and Korff 2000). This use value to urban space facilitates the lived experience of place—urban dwellers infuse meanings, construct histories, produce identities and connections, and organize in relation to urban place (Jacobs and Fincher 1998; Knopp 1998; Massey 1994; Zukin 2010). Moreover, as Berner (1997) has asserted in his study of squatter struggles in Metro Manila, competition over commodified space has the effect of producing social cohesion and locality, not an abstraction from place. Further, the growth of the informal labor sector in global South cities is another example of the impact of the link between globalization and localization (Berner 1997; Drakakis-Smith 2000) because global capital's demand for cheap labor happens alongside of decreasing access to resources, land, and employment. These conditions result in the rise of informal labor including small-scale commodity production, tour guide services, domestic work, street vending, and sex work, for example. Berner (1997) points out that informal labor is more likely organized on a local scale, responding to localized demands, drawing from local networks, and contributing to the social cohesion of localities. This is evident in the informal labor carried out by gay hosts in Malate, particularly in how they integrate the local and global relations of tourism, draw on local networks and connections to place to make contact with tourists, and contribute to the social cohesion of gay family and community.

City and national governments, civil society, and a transnational business sector also struggle over which will assume precedence in shaping cities (Tadiar 1995), particularly given that global South cities are not simply bastions of globalization but serve as centers for national cohesion,

history, and identity. One such example of a capital city government's confrontation with global capital is the struggle between Manila's city government and sex tourism in the Districts of Malate and Ermita. Mayor Lim drew from nostalgic constructions of "Old Manila" in order to justify his purging the nation's capital city of one of the prototypical excesses of global capitalism—commodified global South sexuality.[12] The balancing act between urban history, culture, and modernization is powerful in Manila's case given that what constitutes history and culture involves a set of negotiations where Manileños struggle to make sense of the impact of Spanish and US colonization on their city's cultural, architectural, and urban planning imprint. Thus, struggles over place are an ongoing negotiation with Manila's colonial legacies.

I am arguing that the challenge to alienation within neoliberal urban space is a core practice in making urban place. Localities are the sites where urban dwellers, the urban poor, and city and national governments confront global capital over the use of urban space. These confrontations show the link between globalization and localization, as Sklair (1999) shows in his review of the global–local nexus. Globalization, in fact, creates an intensification of localization (Castells 2002; Dirlik 1999; Zukin 2010). As such, the rise in place-based struggle globally is an expression of the many resistances to global urbanization.

Although political economic theories of urbanization offer compelling explanations for the different paths of urban development and how neoliberal globalization creates conditions of inequality and struggle within urban environments, these analyses focus on the economic roots of urban change. For example, they offer an economic rationale for why there is a rise in the informal labor sector in global South cities, yet they say little about the diverse forms and meanings that such labor assumes for marginalized urban actors. Political economic approaches also do not address the cultural roots and meanings of gentrification to neighborhood actors (Ghaziani 2014) and why and how some shapers of gentrification may, in fact, critique mass commercialism in favor of protecting the history and sense of locale in urban neighborhoods (Brown-Saracino 2010; Lees 2008; Ocejo 2011). If localization is intensified with globalization, then what power does the local have in shaping neighborhood change? Malate's story is one that answers this question because the many claims to place are powerful illustrations of the importance of urban actors' identity, imagination, and local organizing in the remaking of an urban neighborhood. Malate's actors responded to the homogenizing forces of neolib-

eral globalization by applying distinct cultural, historical, national, and/or personal meanings to the urban locales in which they live, work, and play. These meanings were literally worked into the city space, creating a place that many experienced as transformative. Malate's lesson is that place matters to urban change because place-making helped shape a neoliberal gay urban neighborhood in the global South.

A Gay Neighborhood in the Global South?

As political economy can explain urban change, feminist geographers and gay urban communities research point to how cities and their spaces arise out of knowledges and regulations of, and struggles over, gender and sexuality (Aldrich 2004; Bell and Binnie 2004; Bell et al. 2001; Duncan 1996; Fincher and Jacobs 1998; Ghaziani 2014; Knopp 1998, 2004; Massey 1994; McDowell 1999; Rappaport 2000). For example, urban planning is both a gendered and a sexual expression of urban space; cities are not the result of a neutral mapping of built environment onto space but rather offer masculine and heteronormative ways of knowing and dominating spaces. Further, gender and sexual identities are not stagnant, ahistorical categories that exist prior to urban space; rather, identities arise and shift within the context of urban communities. Thus identity and urban place are most fundamentally mutually constituted.

John D'Emilio's (1983) analysis of capitalism, gay identity, and the rise of urban sexual community connects the emergence of the modern homosexual identity with capitalism's changing relations and sites of production, which pulled populations into urban areas and changed the way that urban dwellers formed kinship. Urbanization freed individuals from the more intimate controls of family in rural areas and alternative urban networks based on sexual identities and practice replaced these former kinship ties. Urban spaces manifested a convergence of diverse social worlds, including the unpredictable sexual encounters that transpire within those worlds. Research into the rise of gay enclaves in major cities of the global North also demonstrates that modern gay community arose out of the convergence between urbanization, urban autonomy, and identity constitution; gay enclaves functioned as a buffer zone that promoted both safety and cohesion for marginalized sexual populations (Aldrich 2004; Armstrong 2002; Boyd 2005; Chauncey 1994; Knopp 1997; Levine 1979). Yet these gay neighborhoods, as Amin Ghaziani (2014) argues, have had social,

economic, and political functions—they offer both community and the chance to form loving and desirable partnerships; they offer a concentration of gay residences, commercial establishments, and a lucrative niche market; they can function as a voting bloc, offer civic engagement, and social service distribution; they are a space of both protests and gay pride celebrations, showing off a city's commitment to diversity; and they influence city planning and urban real estate markets. In short, they are powerful urban spaces that contribute to the shaping of cities in the global North. For example, Lauria and Knopp's (1985) foundational research on gay neighborhoods in US cities show these neighborhoods not only as arising as a space of resistance to sexual oppression but as spaces of class struggle where middle-class gay men negotiated a window of opportunity in lower-income neighborhoods to purchase residences and open gay-oriented businesses, consolidating both capital and gay style, and which led to the gentrification of gay neighborhoods. More recent sociological inquiry into the debated disappearance of gay neighborhoods shows that gay enclaves develop and change alongside of shifts in wider societal attitudes toward lesbians and gays; gay spaces have changed from "the closet era" (Ghaziani 2014, 14) where queer peoples appropriated sexual spaces throughout the city to the "coming out era" (Ghaziani 2014, 15), when gay neighborhoods developed and served as sites of safety and community, to today's "post-closet" or post-gay era (Ghaziani 2014, 23), where gays and lesbians move out and integrate more widely within accepting heterosexual communities throughout the city and suburbs, while maintaining meaningful cultural ties to the gayborhood.

To answer the question why a gay *urban* space, we need to consider how cities can offer anonymous and diverse spaces for the expression of non-normative sexualities and genders and that queer identity and experience emerge within such contexts. As de Certeau (1984) has argued, urban life involves the lived experience of cities or the unpredictable and desirable use of the street and urban space, such as what transpires through "cruising," for example. Gay identity cannot be naively mapped onto spaces where there is a concentration of gay men (as in the "gay" neighborhood); rather, gay is produced through migration to and the lived experience within these urban spaces. Analyses of gay urban space in global South cities need to address how migration and mobility, including the struggles that such mobilities inspire (see Benedicto 2014; Manalansan 2003),

produce meanings of gay, which can dramatically differ from the sexual and gender identities in other urban and rural regions.

Moreover, understanding gay urban spaces in the global South requires a look at the impact of gay tourism on urban space. Gay tourists follow postcolonial paths of travel to both experience and make gay community globally (Alexander 1998; Altman 2001; Clift et al. 2002; Hughes 1997). These spaces of gay tourism are complex, constituting what Joan Nagel (2003) describes as contact zones or "ethnosexual frontiers" (11), which show a hybridization of identity, culture, and socioeconomic practice. On the one hand, urban tourism spaces can be queered in that they create the possibility for subversive space, where normative heterosexuality is brought into focus and problematized, opening up a space for queer expression and exchange. For example, it is not uncommon to find interspersed among the sexually saturated sex tourism spaces a range of queer relations, including heterosexual-identified male tourists who have sex with men, non-gay-identified male sex workers, and transgender sex work. Such sexually subversive spaces were very much a part of Malate and Ermita's sex district and were part of the creation of Malate's early gay space. Urban tourism spaces in the global South thus are interstitial zones—zones that are in between, both *and* neither, heterosexual and homosexual, local and foreign, urban and rural—that produce alternative genders, sexualities, families, and practices.

On the other hand, romanticized perceptions of gay tourism as creating sexually liberated urban space disregard a gay tourism industry that is neoliberal and which plays a part in the exclusionary forces of urban renewal (Rushbrook 2002; Spirou 2011). Tourism is part of the cultural and economic production of gay neighborhoods, particularly as these urban tourism destinations are advertised as spaces of consumption and cosmopolitanism, and therefore as markers of the neoliberal city's diversity and modernity (Bell and Jayne 2004; Binnie and Skeggs 2004; Florida 2005). These neoliberal inequalities become most apparent when we look at tourism development in the global South, such as in Vernadette Gonzalez's (2013) work, which explores the embeddedness of militarism with tourism development in Hawai'i and the Philippines. She shows how both of these global structures serve US economic and geopolitical interests in the Pacific; thus they require one another for their mutual development. For example, militarism opens a region for tourism and then tourism serves as the ideological justification for enduring militarism. Thus tourism as a

social structure of neoimperialism operates differently, and, perhaps more intensely, in the global South.

Gentrification is a precursor to the demarcation of a city space as a prime tourism destination even as urban tourism tends to result in "super gentrification" (Doan and Higgins 2011, 7) or the mass commercial development of later stages of gentrification. Gays play a role in the first wave of bohemian gentrification when the cottage industry-style business development that targets an urban gay consumer class, as well as well-traveled heterosexuals, predominates. There is often a link between gentrified gay districts and former sex districts where the interest in these urban spaces as sites to visit and live arose out of the thrill of sexual tourism but also because these were spaces where sexually marginalized gay men with disposable income moved in to lower-income neighborhoods and began their renewal. Yet, gentrified spaces are no longer sexually freeing because they are heavily policed—by the city that expects to protect these major income-generating enclaves and by the businesses and associations that protect urban aesthetics and consumers. One focus of policing efforts to "clean up" lucrative tourism hotspots is the crackdown on both queer sexual space and sex work; both are framed as dirty and dangerous and are pushed out (through state and economic forces), resulting in the marginalization of racialized, gendered, and classed Others (Manalansan 2005; Visser 2003). In sum, gentrified urban spaces are no longer the interstitial zones of queer travel; they have transitioned from subversive to *homonormative* space (Duggan 2003) and serve as key gay and heterosexual tourism destinations (Handhardt 2008; Florida 2002; Rushbrook 2002).

Duggan's (2003) concept of homonormativity works well to explain the neoliberal logic behind the new terms of inclusion and exclusion within gentrified urban space. Homonormativity describes a neoliberal era of sexual politics in the global North, which involves gays' and lesbians' movement away from a politics of resistance and confrontation and toward a cultural politics of inclusion. Gays and lesbians seek participation within heteronormative institutions, such as the military, marriage, and consumerism; they seek respectable identities; and they celebrate their visibility as participants in the lifestyle freedoms of the "West" including lifestyle enclaves such as gay neighborhoods. This assimilationist gay seeks to be "normal" and "real" by embracing only respectable conceptions of gay lifestyle and through participation in the cleaning up of a neighborhood

through lifestyle cultures (Florida 2005; Hanhardt 2013). Furthermore, homonormativity—like heteronormativity—is an exclusionary process; inclusion is for select bodies—white, middle-class, consumerist, Western, and often gay male bodies who have access to the consumer "freedoms" of the West and who have more to gain from respectable performances of gay masculinity. Homonormativity works through transnational relations as well, as inclusion of the homonormative "Western gay" is contingent on the exclusion of non-national, racialized, sexual, and gendered Others who do not comply with the standards of neoliberal consumerism, Westernization, and homonormative sexual and gender identity within the neoliberal city (Collins and Talcott 2011; Manalansan 2005; Puar 2006).

To date, little attention has been paid to gay urban communities and gentrification in the global South (see Tucker 2009 and Visser 2003 for exceptions). Focus remains on the visible and commodified gay urban neighborhoods of the global North. However, Amin Ghaziani's (2014) research into the decline of gay urban enclaves in the global North does show interesting parallels between gay urban spaces in Manila and the USA. As gay scenes and spaces globalize and as there is increasing acceptance of gay men, the draw of a centralized neighborhood that represents marginalized sexualities becomes less significant. Malate, in part, declined as a prominent gay urban space because gay life has become increasingly diffused throughout the metropolitan region. The Internet, circuit parties, and house parties, for example, play a role in the decentralizing of gay space because these new plural sites become the spaces where gay men meet. My project, however, involves understanding the role of place in the rise and fall of Malate's gay urban community, a neighborhood that was shaped by both *gay*-led urban renewal and the neoliberal relations of travel. Thus I employ frameworks of hybridity, resistance, and intimate neoliberalism in order to study place and gay community in Malate.

Studying Malate

I came to know Malate intimately through my precarious immersion in the neighborhood—I lived there for 20 months over four research trips in 1999, 2000–2001, 2005, and 2013. I "hung out" at the local mall and cafés where gay hosts spent their afternoons; I patronized the neighborhood gay bars, lifestyle stores, and restaurants, and I visited the

more ubiquitous urban sexual spaces: parks, neighborhood blocks, and strip clubs. I attended both street parties and dinner parties, some with Manila's urban elite who were spearheading historical conservation efforts in the district. I met the primary participants in this study by first befriending a group of gay hosts in Ermita's mall who then introduced me to their friends, boyfriends, and clients. I met the gay entrepreneurs through spending time at their establishments and by engaging them in conversation about Malate and their business. I met upper-class gay men while hanging out in gentrified bar space, and they facilitated introductions to longer-term Malate residents, older Filipino gay men, conservation activists, and other business owners. I completed 81 in-depth and recorded interviews; engaged in informal, non-taped field interviews, which I captured in my field notes; compiled field notes for each research trip and over the 20 months of research; and collected tourism and urban development documents from archives and over the Web. I focused some of this archival research on news reporting and campaign information for Mayors Alfredo Lim and Lito Atienza, including relevant city ordinances; I followed how the closure of the sex establishments in the early 1990s and Malate's entrepreneurial revival in 2000 was represented in the media and in the media's representation of Lim's campaign. My research participants constituted a range of urban patrons and leaders in Malate—gay entrepreneurs, hosts, tourists and expatriates; conservation activists; artists; long-term Malate residents; a city counselor; and Mayor Atienza. I used an interview schedule to guide my in-depth interviews, what Robert Burgess (1984) describes as a conversation with a purpose. I crafted most of my questions based on the direction of the conversation. These questions served as a point of departure in conversations, which allowed my interviewees to assume some agency in shaping the conversation and to emphasize what they deemed as important, drawing at times from stories, tangents, and memories to elaborate their answers.

I wanted to understand the role of place in the production of, and struggle over, gay urban community, including how urban renewal interfaced with that community. Yet my study of place-making among these wide-ranging participants in Malate's urban life was something at which I had to arrive through the exploratory method of ethnographic research, which carries with it the need to remain open to key shifts in research. For example, I had come to Manila to study sex work but it was through the urging of my research participants that I began to see and understand

their commitment to urban place. Understanding this commitment, and telling its ethnographic story, offered the key methodological lessons of this research.

First, the research required my entry into a former sex district that is a hyperrepresented field, meaning that academic and journalistic renderings had contributed to Malate's reputation as a leading sex tourist destination in Southeast Asia. Ethnographers enter into such hyper-represented fields, and we learn on the ground how to become attuned to how our research could become a part of exoticized accounts and thus how to resist this reproduction through more radical methodologies. The sensationalist accounts of Manila's sex district had created dualistic representations that reinscribed sex workers as deviant, high risk, and helplessly victimized in the face of exploitative sexual and commercial relations (Brock and Thistlethwaite 1996; Hernandez 1994; Mathews 1987; Sturdevant and Stoltzfus 1993). Michael Tan (1999) has critiqued this academic fascination with the global sex trade for neglecting the lived relations among Filipino MSMs who forge a range of sexual communities and identities in Manila and elsewhere. I learned from my analysis of journalistic reporting on Manila's sex district that modernization discourses ultimately called for the "clean up" of urban sexual space in the name of urban development. These accounts also factored into city and entrepreneurial visions for Malate's urban renewal.

Second, this academic and journalistic objectification of Malate and of urban sex workers became evident as I entered the field to conduct yet another study on male sex work in 2000. I encountered gay hosts who mistrusted researchers, because the media, students, academics, and NGOs repeatedly descended on Malate to conduct studies and create exposés on the sensationalized lives of sex workers and gay men. My early conversations with hosts touched on their belief that their lives were already overstudied. In this neoliberal exoticized space, structured by the over-representation of sex work, I came to understand the importance of what hosts *chose* to share with me. This important methodological lesson involved my shift in attention to how their lived experience of place offered more agentic perspectives on how hosts worked, identified, and formed community within a neoliberal urban space. As I ceased to look for sex work, I came to understand how hosts' imaginations of place allowed for their celebration of desire and forged their connection to sexual community and gay host family. In other words, place-making allowed them

to forge identity, community, and desire within the neoliberal spaces of urban gentrification.

Third, this research cannot be understood outside of my own critical and limited location as a white, woman, queer-identified, anti-racist feminist researcher from a US university. I view myself as an insider to Western queer cultures and have formed close and conflicted relationships with gay men and gay space. I experience queer space as familiar, and I have romanticized urban spaces that facilitate non-normative sexual and gender expressions. Yet I have also experienced these same urban spaces in more conflicted terms—as masculine, classed, policed (through racism and police brutality), and gentrified. I am also troubled by the neoliberal logic and urban regulations that undergird gay gentrification and tourism (Alexander 1998; Manalansan 2005; Puar 2002). Yet being a queer-identified lesbian *did not* offer a privileged window onto gay men's lives, and neither did it secure my unproblematic access to their space in Malate. Rather, my queer location interconnects with other social locations—woman, white, passport-holder from a former colonial power in the Philippines—to create a fleeting proximity and, at times, acute distance in my relationships with gay men and gay space. Thus the lesson of queer methodology is that there *is not* an authentic and stable identity whereby gay commonality can be assumed in research, particularly in such transnational and postcolonial research relations. Queer methodology remains challenged by the need to both document lived experience and remain attentive to the power relations of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation in global research (Bhavnani et al. 2003). Despite the reflexive turn in qualitative work (Burawoy 2003; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Madison 2005; Wasserfall 1993), we continue to struggle with the enduring power relations laid bare in the postcolonial critique of ethnography. As Kum-Kum Bhavnani (1993) argues, global research can "reinscribe" people and spaces, freezing them within prevailing representations for the export of knowledge, rather than providing an opportunity to critically analyze such representations and the many counternarratives that arise out of their engagements with place.

The final methodological lesson lies in the possibilities of transnational feminist and queer ethnography to keep epistemology open by: (1) paying attention to the layers of power that constitute the hyperrepresented fields of ethnographic research; (2) discouraging distance, rational objectivity, and exoticization; and (3) drawing from critical reflection on the research

process and paying attention to dignity as a radical method of inquiry and knowledge production. Research that arises out of connections, relationships, and respect as opposed to separation, rationalization, and extraction offers a pathway to more radical and transformative knowledge. It keeps epistemology open to the contributions of lived experience, such as the performance of dignity within actual places, and counters the objectifying lens of research, creating a more visionary epistemology for change. This shift in representation is particularly critical for those who are most often gazed upon and spoken about and therefore silenced in neoliberal research relations. It can also bring into focus the importance of place as an enduring expression of Filipinos' commitment to community and change.

The Story Overview

I present Malate's story of place and gay community over seven chapters. Chapter 2, "The History of Place: From Urban Community to Heritage Conservation," tells Malate's neighborhood history and makes a case for how history matters to urban place-making. I tell Malate's urban history by weaving together academic renditions, with oral histories, memories, popular books, and news articles. When I first began the study I repeatedly encountered how much history mattered to my interviewees' contemporary interpretations of place. Malate's history does make the neighborhood distinct from other areas in the metro region, most notably Makati City, against which Malate's actors tend to build up the neighborhood's character. Malate's urban history also shows how its US colonial-era urban plan set the stage for contemporary place-making.

The second part of this chapter tells the story of conservation activists who draw from a place-based understanding of Malate's urban history as well as their own biographical experiences of the neighborhood—most notably Malate as a pedestrian-friendly, historical, mixed, and intimate neighborhood where some of them grew up—in order to articulate more popular connections to urban place, which set the stage for the district's revival. I argue that they offered place-making strategies—pedestrianization, adaptable reuse, heritage conservation, and advocating "pride of place"—as a way to popularize urban space and to resist the mass commercial development of the district, threatened by Mayor Lim in the early 1990s, and after the closure of the sex district. I follow their community

work, which resulted in a series of successful street parties in the 1990s and which highlighted the district's unique sense of place as well as its commercial viability for a wider base of urban patrons and entrepreneurs. They were also the first to encourage people to participate in a more public takeover of the streets. Their efforts to popularize urban place failed, in part due to their contradictory and elitist impulse to "clean up" Malate for broader public use and given their focus on built heritage over community—they envisioned an urban environment without the urban poor. Yet their stories of the "Malate Renaissance" mark a pivotal moment in Malate's history, which brought the district back into the spotlight as a viable entertainment enclave after the closure of the sex district.

Chapter 3, "The Magic of Place: Players in the Nakpil Revival," continues Malate's history by telling the district's gay history, following how a historical understanding of Malate as the urban enclave "where the gays are" factors into its emergence, by 2000, as a leading commercial gay space. I follow with an analysis of how the magic of place was mobilized for urban community change. To do this, I continue the story of the Malate Renaissance into the 1990s, after the conservationists had disbanded, and as the revival moves to the quaint residential street, Nakpil. This chapter examines how the strategies of place-making change under the direction of a key gay café owner, David, and a community development activist, Angie, who left the Heritage Conservation Society because of its elitism. David and Angie both promote discourses of urban magic through their encouragement of a spontaneous street culture that encouraged the mixing of pedestrians, street space, gay life, and creative performances with the local businesses on Nakpil. This moment in Malate's revival was transformative in that it laid the groundwork for the magical and freeing experiences of urban place that my interviewees emphasized in 2000; it was what they understood as the "golden age" of the Malate revival and one that they viewed as still bohemian and gay-performative. This transformative work also shifted the business development to Nakpil Street, making Nakpil the nerve center of Malate's renewal.

In Chap. 4, "The Sexuality of Place: Gay Hospitality and the Production of Desiring Labor," I shift the story of Malate to a group of place-makers who are often marginalized in urban studies—gay hosts—the informal sexual laborers who work as guides and romantic companions to gay tourists. Their story is one that shows how sexuality, gay host community, and informal labor play a role in the making of Malate's gay community.

This chapter follows the state crackdown on overt sexual labor during the closure of the sex district and how this "clean up" combines with the exclusionary forces of gentrification in 2000 to change the sexual labor in the district—gay hospitality, which emphasizes love, companionship, and pride of place over sex as work becomes the viable alternative to the overt sex work that used to predominate in the district. I lay out the characteristics of hospitality, paying particular attention to how gay hosts participate in place-making through their hospitality. Hosts move gay travelers around the gentrifying neighborhood and work as key translators of gay urban space for outsiders. Rather than treating hospitality simply as work, this chapter explores hospitality as an expression of place-based gay identity as well as the hosts' celebration of gay desire and community. My analysis of hospitality also elaborates some of the core tenants of intimate neoliberalism—hosts turn to love, identity, and desire to counter the alienating relations of informal tourism work and the marginalizing forces of gentrification.

In Chap. 5, "'Love, Autonomy, and Our Attempts at It:' Coming of Age in Malate," I explore the role of intimate neoliberalism in the life of an upwardly mobile gay host turned call center agent with whom I conducted oral history interviews in 2013. I follow PK from his childhood in Olongapo, where his father worked for the US Military and where he is first oriented to US culture; to his migration to Manila, which is compelled by his need to work and explore his sexuality; into his relationships and work as a gay host in Malate; his transition to call center work; and up to his life in 2013 and with his current Filipino life partner, Louis. In 2000, when I first met PK, he was 18. Now, at 31, he reflects on his former work as a gay host and how the cultural competencies he acquired while working in a tourist district translated into skills he used to secure call center work for a transnational service company, whose head office is in the USA. PK, despite his struggles, is one of the rare "success" stories of the many gay hosts whom I interviewed, which I address in this chapter. Yet his life, like those of other gay hosts, show the operation of intimate neoliberalism, as hosts migrate to Manila, find gay space, create sexual identity and community, learn hosting to economically survive, manage violence, and use hosting to either translate into another form of cultural work or "age out" of the scene altogether. This chapter offers the biographical background to the story of urban place, as actors make up Malate's spaces and they bring with them their histories and engage

with intimate neoliberalism as they go about their everyday lives in the district.

Chapter 6, "The Exclusions of Place: Gay-led Gentrification within Nakpil's Second Wave," follows the second wave of business development on Nakpil from 2000 through 2006, by gay entrepreneurs who seek to remake the neighborhood through commercial enterprise. My interviewees aptly described this group as the "cosmopolitan gays" who promoted an urban lifestyle that emphasized social distinctions and separation between differently classed gay men in Malate's formerly bohemian spaces. I tell the story of how this gay-led gentrification created the urban exclusions that led to the unraveling of place-based renewal, including the flight of gay establishments and patrons to other regions of Metropolitan Manila. The chapter traces the impact of cosmopolitan gay establishments that enforced a homonormative gay lifestyle out from the establishments and onto the streets, which marginalized middle- to working-class gays even as the new business development relied upon the wider appeal of the district to different classes of gay men. Finally, the chapter grapples with the impact of neoliberal globalization on place, showing how Malate's place-based urban renewal could not compete with the development of entertainment centers elsewhere in the metropolitan region, and how the struggles over the globalization of Malate's gay community ultimately led to the unraveling of the power of place in gay community.

Chapter 7 offers my conclusion, by showing Malate's shift in urban development: in 2013, Malate had become, once again, a foreign tourist neighborhood, with a reemergence of heterosexual sex tourism, within a neighborhood that is now dominated by high-rise condo construction for sale to outsiders. Malate's transition from a place-inspired gay urban community to commercialized tourist space in part arose out of gay entrepreneurs' contradictory relationship to urban community: they claimed that they located in Malate because of its hybridity, gay history, artistic flare, and lack of commercialism, yet they sought to harness place to promote an urban lifestyle with social distinctions. This cosmopolitanization robbed the neighborhood of the very force that jumpstarted its renewal, and that is the hybridity and specificity of place, as well as the popular appeal that such spaces inspire. Malate may have transformed with the influences of bohemian and gay-performative urban lifestyles in the late 1990s; yet by 2013, a convergence of mass commercialism, international tourism, and lucrative mall and condo development led

to the unraveling of gay space and place. The increasingly global commercial, consumer, and tourist elements of these spaces compromise—in the experience of my research participants—Malate's magic and unique fabrication of urban place.

Notes

1. I use pseudonyms for all business establishments and participants in this research. The names of cities, districts, and streets are the actual names of these locations.
2. KTV establishments—or Karaoke Television—are bars and clubs where Filipina women work as hostesses to male tourists. Hostesses entertain men while they patronize the bar, encouraging them to purchase drinks and songs, and to return to the club. Hostesses are hired to go out with a customer to perform sex work outside of the establishment. There are some "Family KTV" establishments where informal sex work does not take place.
3. I would like to acknowledge Sylvanna Falcón for offering this concept as a way to organize this central theme to the book's analysis.
4. *Afam* is Tagalog for foreigner.
5. *Afamista* is most typically a derogatory term used to describe Filipinos who prefer relations (which are often sexual) with foreigners because they stand to earn economic support.
6. Cubao's and Quezon City's "gay bars" are quasi-legal male strip clubs where customers watch shows, meet a dancer, take him out after paying a bar fine to the management, and negotiate sexual services with the dancer. A "gay bar" is understood to be a "seedy" sex establishment where male prostitution is facilitated. Gay hosts often guided gay tourists to these establishments because they were not accessible in Malate.
7. Makati City is the financial (and wealthier) city of the NCR, located southeast of the City of Manila.
8. Urban inequality was supposed to dissipate with increasing productivity and consumption, resulting in an urban middle class. Herein lies one of the distinctions between Third World cities and cities in the global North. What has resulted from modernization in the global South are more dramatic structures of urban inequality, including the proliferation of a landless poverty class with rural to urban migration that arose in place of the anticipated urban middle class.
9. National urban master plans were development schemes designed to centralize urban governance and focus national development on urban areas. The master plan, as Drakakis-Smith argues (2000), is a holdover from

colonial governing whereby top-down development planning frames development as economic development and focuses on urbanization as a way to achieve national economic growth. Yet urban economic growth has not trickled out to rural regions. These master plans worked alongside of metropolitan governance with the goal of integrating cities into global markets by making urban regions in the global South more hospitable to foreign investment (Bello et al. 1982). Third World cities competed for international investment; development funds were focused upon improving the structural environment of cities to encourage transnational corporations to relocate there.

10. Evers and Korff (2000) explain that development policies that focus on a city's integration into global markets result in the transformation of primate cities into metropolises.
11. I do not intend to romanticize urban neighborhoods here as spaces for democratic integration. Neighborhoods also arise out of the histories of racism and anti-immigration that create a racially segregated urban landscape. I mean only to highlight the insight from Lefebvre that shows other forms of urban segregation into distinctly commodified urban districts, in place of heterogeneous urban communities.
12. The majority of the sex establishments that made up Ermita's and Malate's red light district were foreign-owned and catered almost exclusively to foreign sex tourists (Amba 1983; Buillantes 1988; Salcedo 1988).

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CHAPTER 2

The History of Place: From Urban Community to Heritage Conservation

Malate's Sociohistorical Life: A Neighborhood History

Malate's and Ermita's urban history show cycles of development and decline in two of the oldest districts in the Metropolitan Manila region. Although distinct districts with separate neighborhood statistics, they are often viewed and used as one and the same. They share a spatial proximity, forming an urban rectangle in the City of Manila, and they share the major thoroughfares of Taft, Mabini, MH del Pilar, and Roxas Boulevard, which regularly move patrons and vehicular traffic across their borders. Tourism guides send travelers to Malate and Ermita, marking them prominent tourism destinations in the metropolitan region. Thus, their spatial relationship means that the districts have shared the industries of tourism, sex work, arts and entertainment, and overseas contract work, with the frequent movement of workers and patrons between them.

Yet Malate and Ermita have distinct neighborhood histories as well, which have influenced their neighborhood redevelopment. They went through commercial growth and urban flight during different decades, following the Second World War. Postwar development in Ermita, which resulted in its commercial zoning prior to Malate's, pushed Ermita to the fore as the center for banking, commerce, entertainment, and eventually tourism, while Malate remained primarily a residential district up through the 1980s. What is evident in the districts' neighborhood changes is the economic, cultural, and spatial relationship between them; patrons and

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commercial activity flowed between the two districts with concentrations of commerce and neighborhood development taking shape at different times in one district over the other.

Despite their rich urban history, there is little written history or urban research that focuses specifically on these two districts. Yet, where there is a lack of written narrative, there is an abundance of popular oral history—Malate and Ermita are two of the most talked about districts in the metropolitan region. Thus, I witnessed a neighborhood folk history come to life in this research, and often in the form of gossip and memories. It was almost as if Malate's spirit was being crafted as patrons reveled in their experience of urban place—memories of commercial establishments, reflections on street parties, thoughts about coming of age, and considerations of identities—all the while highlighting the scandals and key figures who made Malate so unique. Even those patrons and expats who had only recently moved to or started to entertain in Malate tended to recount the same talking points of this popular neighborhood history. For example, a long-term resident of Malate, who is also gay and Filipino, responded to my trouble with finding written history and research on Malate by claiming that Malate is where people come to have their affairs, and it is where the sex tourists and sex workers can be found. Such relations were not, in his opinion, significant historical events. But really, he retorted with some irony, "these stories are more fun to *talk* about" .

Malate's and Ermita's neighborhood change, on the surface, appears to lend itself well to a master narrative about urban change not that unlike neighborhoods in global North cities. Thus, their history is often framed in terms of the Janus face of urban development and decay, yet they are also uniquely marked by the massive destruction wrought by the Second World War. Following the war, they are framed in terms of a narrative of decline into commercial districts, which is blamed on the reconstruction period. My interviewees offered romanticized depictions of pre-war Malate, drawing upon an image of neighborhood gentility of the upper classes in a district "by the sea" and "where the streets were lined with Acacia trees" (Ira and Medina 1977). These depictions were also drawn upon by upper-class Filipinos as a moralizing critique of what became Ermita and Malate with the rise of the sex district in the 1960s and 1970s.

These "Old Manila" devotees not surprisingly were enamored with Manila's colonial urban plan. Ermita and Malate (also sites for the first pre-Spanish settlements in what was then called Maynila) were the result of city planning efforts during the American colonial period of 1899–

1946 (Francia 2010). Daniel Burnham (a US architect and urban planner) designed their neighborhood plans as a colonial experiment in City Beautiful urban planning,[1] or what Cristina E. Torres (2010) has called the configuration of "Manila into the Washington DC of the Orient" (56). William H. Taft—Civil Governor of the Philippines—sought to accommodate the practitioners of US colonialism by offering an American-style neighborhood during their influx to the Philippines at the turn of the twentieth century (Francia 2010; Torres 2010). Thus, Malate and Ermita were designed to be residential communities for the newly arriving colonial class and the up-and-coming Filipino mestizo class who chose not live in the damp and gloomy environment of Intramuros—the Spanish colonial walled city directly north of Ermita. Their spatial configuration thus came about in opposition to what the US colonial government saw as the deterioration of Spanish colonialism—the lifeless and explicitly colonialist walled city of Intramuros. Yet the US colonial imprint remains in Ermita's and Malate's unique spatial constitution—the expansive stretch of Luneta Park that separates Ermita from the walled city, the districts' intimate neighborhood scale, as well as the remaining presence of the US embassy, which stretches along Manila Bay on some of the most expensive real estate in the metro region.

Thus, some described Ermita and Malate as Manila's first suburb because this second wave of colonizers fled Intramuros' dark interior to live on the sunny and breezy shores of Manila Bay. Granted, Malate was a swamp during this period; yet, the Americans wanted a neighborhood by the sea and one that resembled the familiar neighborhood communities of home. So in 1902, Governor Taft recruited Burnham to apply his City Beautiful ethos as central to planned urban development for Manila (Torres 2010)—that is, to design city spaces that allow for the flow of light, air, and nature in planned urban neighborhoods that would entice the wealthy to take up city residence. The City Beautiful ethos, which espoused something akin to a culture of poverty approach in its concern over the impact of urban poor communities on the inner city and the need for an upper-class cultural presence to "uplift" deteriorating neighborhoods, fit well with Taft's colonialist plans. Yet the City Beautiful movement also held utopian aspirations—the creation of public urban spaces that could facilitate the mixing of classes and genders and which could challenge the exclusivity of private spheres—which were worked into Malate's and Ermita's urban plan.

In 1904, Burnham completed the Plan of Manila, which laid out broad, tree-lined streets that interlocked in a grid pattern and which offered

unimpeded street access to Manila Bay. Further, Burnham's streets led directly to his spaciously planned urban parks—Luneta Park borders the northernmost end of Ermita and Harrison Park the southernmost end of Malate. Burnham's plan required the reclamation of bay front land in order to construct his first major boulevard, MH del Pilar. His goal was to connect Manila with Cavite, the major naval port to the south of the City of Manila. The construction of this thoroughfare along with the parallel construction of Taft Avenue connected Manila with Cavite, facilitating the transport of goods and people, and hence, the development of Manila.

Conservation activists heralded Burnham's plan because it emphasized the intimate blocks with sidewalks, large plots for houses with yards, and the open green spaces as part of an urban environment. They espoused the sentiments of the City Beautiful movement, in particular, the elitist impulse to "uplift" Manileños by attempting to save City Beautiful urban infrastructure, including the intimate neighborhood blocks of Malate. They emphasized how Malate was designed to be a walkers' district for residents—the location of churches, parks, schools, and medical facilities were planned to be within walking distance of major residential blocks. And urban patrons were intended to have unimpeded access to both parks and Manila Bay under the plan. Conservationists valued all of these features of US urban planning because they met their class interests. Malate was a neighborhood designed specifically to accommodate particular classes and all of the conservationists were in fact legacies of those rewarded mestizo classes under US colonization.

Conservationists held this deeply bourgeois love affair with colonialist city planning, which instilled a vision of Malate as a genteel residential walkers' district that remained even after the district's destruction during the Second World War. These timeless memories of the neighborhood were repeated in my interviews, in newspaper reporting on "Old Manila" (Panorama Staff 1993), they were mobilized in conservation discourse, and they entered into a popular lexicon about the unique quality of the district. Malate was reflected upon as an intimate city space where anything of relevance to residential life was not more than ten minutes walking distance from homes; as Carmen, one conservationist claimed:

> [T]hat's how I grew up. The church was ten minutes from the house. And then my school was five minutes walking. I used to come home for lunch. So did everybody else because they all lived there. And your neighbors were your teachers. You knew your teachers. They lived beside you, etc. It's not

like what has happened now where the children generally live in gated communities and your teachers live with the urban poor.

Although residents began to slowly leave Ermita and Malate just prior to the Second World War and during a period of reported residential growth and crowding, most accounts claim that Manila's near destruction after the US bombings (Ermita and Malate were the hardest hit areas) led to the primary exodus of Manila's elite to residential areas outside of the City of Manila. The devastation was so great that Ermita and Malate had to be practically rebuilt. Ermita was rezoned as a commercial district to facilitate its reconstruction, and became by the late 1940s a leading commercial and banking center. Other businesses opened to service the district's growing entrepreneurial crowds, and because property costs were low following the war, facilitating this growth. As Ermita grew into a commercial and banking center, Makati City began and grew with the reclamation of swamplands, and as a planned residential suburban space, designed to receive the steady flow of former Manila residents in search of a quieter bedroom community to the increasingly commercial City of Manila. Malate, on the other hand, remained a residential district relatively free of commercial activity until the 1960s when it to was rezoned into a commercial district.

Even though Makati City started as a suburb to the City of Manila, by the 1960s, it began to lure both residents and businesses with its modern built environment that promised the amenities of a rapidly developing and financially promising urban center (Berner 1997). An elite landowning Filipino family—the Zobel de Ayala's—salvaged their hacienda from what many remember to be swamplands, and began, in the late 1940s, a carefully calculated development and zoning of Makati's urban space. Berner explains that Manila lacked the space to house the rapid influx of international investment and development funds (1997); hence, the spillover took root in the more modern and appealing Makati. The urban flight to Makati further drained Ermita and Malate of revenues and residential life. Some argue that this drain paved the way for the sex industry to take root in Ermita and Malate.

The sex industry's development within the districts, however, was also connected to the presence of the US military there following the Second World War (Francia 2010; Gonzalez 2013; Richter 1989; Tadiar 2004), and through the increasingly frequent sex tourism of US Rest and Recreation soldiers, Australian and New Zealand overseas contract work-

ers, and international business and leisure tourists. Manila housed the honky-tonk bars and dance halls where the US peacekeeping forces after the war were witnessed spending their evenings drinking, playing cards, and dancing with local women. Further, an unanticipated outcome of Burnham's construction of MH del Pilar as the main boulevard to connect Cavite's port with the City of Manila was the steady flow of US Rest and Recreation military men who would travel this thoroughfare from the naval port to access Manila, growing during the Vietnam War and lasting until the 1991 closure of US bases in the Philippines.

Sex and entertainment establishments initially clustered along MH del Pilar. By the 1970s, Ermita had transformed almost exclusively into a foreign sex tourist district, which drew from internationally organized sex tours to what came to be called "Sin City" (Gonzalez 2013; Tadiar 2004) The consolidation of sex-specific establishments and spaces along MH del Pilar (for sexual contact with women) and then Mabini (for sexual contact with men) as well as the sheer concentration and penetration of sexual commerce into almost all aspects of Manila's tourism industry led to the capital city's international reputation as a leading sex tourist destination in Southeast Asia. The sale of sex to foreigners was such a predominant commercial activity in Ermita that some accounts describe the strip as almost "crawling with foreigners." The growth of this sex industry in Ermita, and then into the northernmost part of Malate, was the final straw that contributed to urban flight. Carmen described a friend's decision to move away from Malate, which was the neighborhood of his childhood: "One day he woke up and there was a girly bar next to his house. He said he had no desire for his children to grow up like that and he moved out".

The history of Ermita and Malate as a vibrant sex district, which drew in foreign tourists, is only part of Manileños' understanding of Malate's story. Manila's reputation as "Sin City" may have international currency; however, many interviewees who did not take issue with the sex district more often treated it as an afterthought, framing the sexual presence as simply one part of the mix that made up Malate's cultural variety and uniqueness. In their imagination, Malate was also a bohemian, entertainment, and arts district—Metropolitan Manila's creative and spontaneous urban enclave. This is where Malate's distinction from Makati becomes most acute—my interviewees across class, nationality, and regardless of commitment to conservation, repeatedly contrasted Malate's creativity and freedom to the controlled, sterile, and mass commercial spaces of Makati.

Having served as the first financial and commercial center in Manila, Ermita was a prime space for the development of the theater, arts, and fashion industries. It was an older district in comparison to Makati and held the commercial infrastructure for these industries. In the 1950s, it sustained a steady flow of both weekday and weekend patrons who would attend movie houses and theaters along Escolta and Avenue de Rizal—two of Ermita's main business streets. The concentration of an international presence of tourists, military, and embassy personnel continued the steady flow of foreign dollars, contributing both materially and culturally to the fashion, arts, and entertainment industries.

Ermita's prominence as a theater district shaped it into a neighborhood with an active night life with cafés, restaurants, and bars serving not only the daily business crowds but also the theater patrons who entertained in the district on the weekends. An interviewee who had been involved in theater arts and fashion in the 1960s through the 1970s indicated that fashion designers chose to locate their shops close to Manila's theater district, first along Escolta, then Mabini, and then around Remedios Circle, which eventually led to Malate's rise as the top couturier district in Metropolitan Manila. For example, a famous gay fashion designer, who later opened the internationally renowned club, Cornucopia on Remedios Circle (I tell Cornucopia's story in Chap. 3), got his start by first working as a costume designer and theater aide to a popular vaudeville actress who performed in one of the theaters along Escolta in Ermita's theater district. Fashion designers moved in and exerted a stylistic presence to Malate and it was the remaining old wealth in Malate that sustained their businesses. In Chap. 3, I develop a discussion of the fashion industry as a prominent gay industry in Malate, and one which contributed to the initial production of gay spaces and entertainment in the district.

By the 1970s, urban flight had reached its height and artists and bohemians also discovered that they could relocate to a cheaper and transitioning theater arts district that was removed from the stuffy suburban feeling of Makati. The older architecture and urban plan in Malate and Ermita added to the districts' historical and aestheticized urban environment, which was also appealing to this creative class; as Carmen claimed, "A lot of the dressmakers did open their shops here, and also, the painters and the art galleries…. It's just that a lot of people have told me what they like about Malate is that it's real…. Yeah, they find, according to they find, according to them, Makati to be fake and it's too cold. But then Makati is of course patterned after LA". Further, Imelda Marcos' construction in

1972 of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) in Malate increased the number of artists and performers who took up residence. Interviewees discussed this symbiotic relationship between artists being drawn to the entertainment and arts spaces of Manila, finding work there, and then finding Malate to be a more affordable urban neighborhood to live in. Jorge, a Malate city counselor, claimed:

> The CCP is also a huge influence on the artistic community in Malate…. Most resident artists, ballet companies, theater actors, writers, were all based here and working here and this was the golden age of Philippine art. And Malate was so near. So they started getting little apartments; it was cheaper to stay here…. That's why we all stay here.

Yet the hypervisibility of foreign sexual commerce in Ermita and Malate eventually led to the districts' demise as a sex district. In the early 1990s, Mayor Alfredo Lim led a crackdown on sex establishments and sex work with the explicit objective of cleaning up the nation's capital city. This was an urban political event that many of my interviewees claimed killed the District of Ermita, transforming it into a commercial district with almost no economic activity and one that they likened to a "ghost town." Tourism and sexual entertainment were such predominant industries that Ermita and Malate had to be reinvented to save them as commercial districts.

Mayor Lim's closure of Ermita's sex strip, as well as other state-sponsored attempts to deter sex tourism, represented changing policy perceptions, which no longer implicitly supported commodified sexuality as an inevitable part of international tourism, urban growth, and national economic development. Whereas state leaders, particularly under the Marcos regime, used to accept sexualized entertainment as an inevitable part of tourism—in some cases, as a powerful commodity for tourism development and major draw of foreign currency—by the 1990s, the state was beginning to embrace sustainable development, defined by harnessing the support of urban communities servicing tourism and aiming for an urban renewal that does not negatively impact such communities (Department of Tourism 1998, 1999; Ortiz 1998; Rieder 1997). Additionally, there was a new focus on domestic tourism and on confronting the problems of rapid urbanization. Hence, the language of sustainable development replaced the focus on unbridled economic development. Even national bodies and policies began to pay attention to the conservation of built heritage and the natural environment in cities with an understanding that

culture and nature are important components of urban populations' basic needs (National Economic Development Authority 2000; Panorama Staff 1993).

Despite these efforts, the Philippines still struggled with a national image as a leading sex tourist destination in Southeast Asia (Bernardo 1998; Gordon 2001; Lim 1998; Pettman 1997) and decades of such tourism to Manila had established a social and economic infrastructure whose tentacles ran deep into the sex trade. Mayor Lim countered this international reputation by focusing his plans for Ermita and Malate's urban renewal on mall and high-rise condominium development, and on the more socially acceptable domestic tourist venues such as restaurants, hotels, souvenir, and flower stands (Lim 1995, 1993; Zulueta 1992). Lim publically advocated for the resurrection of "Old Manila," which placed Malate and Ermita in the urban renewal limelight; he vied for their transformation back into respectable residential neighborhoods with "decent" businesses (Panorama Staff 1993). These images of "Old Manila" fit with the state's focus on domestic tourism because they harnessed nationalist understandings of urban tourism destinations. But many believed that Lim's primary motive was economic; construction remains today the most economically lucrative industry in the districts and Lim simply needed to push out the small sex establishments to make way for primarily Chinese-led mass construction projects. Critics emphasized that Mayor Lim's "Old Manila" urban renewal plans really served as a smoke screen for unbridled urban development.

The closure of the sex strip and the threatened mass urban development did create a political and economic window of opportunity, which galvanized a group of local business people, residents, and conservation activists who had sporadically engaged in conservation efforts in Malate since the late 1980s. Conservation activists mobilized to protest Lim's approval of condominium high rises, his threats of privatization of its public spaces, the demolition of built heritage, the reclamation of bay front land as well as the influx of corporate and franchise big businesses into what they saw as a quaint neighborhood that could not withstand such dramatic urban development. The conservation groups the Tourist Belt Business Association (TBBA) and the Heritage Conservation Society (HCS) organized to assert their vision for the urban renewal of Malate; I develop their story in the second part of this chapter. Further, gay-identified expatriate and Filipino entrepreneurs moved in to Malate from the mid-1990s through 2006 to open cafés, bars, restaurants, and lifestyle

stores because the district was both cheap and socially and historically eclectic with a long history of gay presence. These gay entrepreneurs actively organized to create a cosmopolitan aesthetic that spilled over into the streets, also shaping the urban renewal of the district. A central feature of this gay-led gentrification were the street parties that were organized by gay bar owners and that brought drag shows and an explicit gay visibility to the streets. Thus city-directed urban renewal and gay-led gentrification converged as forces of urban transformation, displacing the district's overt sexual commercialism and replacing it with the more palatable and cosmopolitan gay urban lifestyle in gay-owned businesses.

An important part of my story about the relationship of place to urban sexual community is the story of conservation and how a group of upper-class women and one man organized to protect and invigorate their beloved neighborhood of Malate. It was in fact their efforts at community and small business revitalization, particularly in planning the first of Malate's famous street parties, that initially renewed interest in the neighborhood and envisioned a new relationship to urban space. For the rest of this chapter, I offer a case analysis of these conservation activists, paying particular attention to how they harness Malate's unique sense of place in order to articulate a wider public connection to urban space. They offer concepts of pedestrianization, adaptable reuse, heritage conservation, and pride of place as central to their practices of place-making and as viable strategies to resist the mass commercial development of Malate.

"You Stand in Tiananmen Square and You Know Where You Are": The Power of Place and the Emergence of Conservation Activism

Conservation activists overwhelmingly drew on their early memories of Malate as well as their current lived experience of living and working in the district as motivation for engaging in efforts of conservation and neighborhood renewal. Most grew up in the neighborhood yet moved away with family during the waves of urban flight. About half returned as young adults and continued to live and work in the district; others worked in Malate yet lived in some of Metropolitan Manila's wealthiest suburbs. One interviewee, Carmen, owned a small restaurant in Malate within an older building that she also owned and Germaine worked as a CEO for a family-owned shipping company whose headquarters is located in Ermita

and on one of the more commercially developed streets lining Luneta Park. All expressed a personal connection to Malate and how that connection factored into their desire to conserve its unique sense of place.

Both Angie and Madelin talked about their moving back to Malate as young adults and discovering the district through long walks around the neighborhood. Both realized that walking a district for the sake of walking was not a common practice among the people they knew who lived in other parts of Metro Manila; they experienced something different about Malate's spatial layout, its architecture, public spaces, and vegetation that made their neighborhood walking special. Madelin began her visits to Malate first as a strategy to get away from her mother's house, which was located in another part of Metropolitan Manila. During the mid-1980s, she traveled via public transportation to Malate just to wonder about the streets, gaze at the sex strip, and experience the bohemian life in its bars and coffee shops. She found Malate to be an exciting and different neighborhood far away from her home. Angie moved back to the district as a young adult and wandered the neighborhood, much as she had promenaded in European districts while studying abroad. For both of these women, their sense of place began with these walks and led to their involvement in community work in the district.

Carmen, on the other hand, grew up in Malate, and owned a tiny older building that was sandwiched between two large and modern concrete structures on Adriatico Street, just off of Remedios Circle. The building had been her family's residence, and at the time of our interview in 2000, the first floor was transformed into an Italian restaurant; Carmen's father was an Italian immigrant to the Philippines. Many developers had offered to buy her building for several million pesos; yet, her brother refused to sell it even though it had an almost unnoticeable presence in its positioning between two prominent commercial structures. Carmen explained that their family wanted her mother to live in Malate until her death. "My mother died in 1984, but she had lived all her life (in Malate) and she said, 'I want to die near the church, I mean the way I always lived'". The Malate Church is one of the oldest churches in all of Manila and it is situated just two blocks parallel to Carmen's building. The church is for many a powerful symbol of Malate's place, and Carmen was motivated to maintain her mother's lifelong residence geographically close to that space.

The draw of place also factored into Germaine's involvement in community development and conservation work, as her concern began with

the street on which her work building was situated. She claimed that at that time she knew little about planning and urban renewal:

> All I wanted to do was to fix my street, this street [gestures out the window]. All I wanted was to make this side look like that side. It has all these wires and I wanted to get rid of them. So I called a meeting with everybody I knew who owned buildings around here and we said why don't we get together and fix the street and make it look nice and before you knew it became bigger and bigger and they said well to get funding like this you need to have a critical mass.

By the late 1980s, Germaine had brought together enough concerned businesspeople and residents to officially form the TBBA with the initial goals of revitalizing the commercial viability of Malate and Ermita and preventing the demolition of older buildings and public spaces. They sought international funding as well as sustained support from the city government. Germaine explains that after having trouble securing international funding because international agencies were concerned about the potential displacement of squatter communities, the TBBA focused its efforts on solidifying support from the city government given that much of their work could not be realized without sustained backing from the city.

The TBBA believed that Manila could become competitive with Makati if its urban renewal drew in tourists and residents to support local and smaller-scale commercial development. Early on they saw the power of place and that they should focus urban renewal around it. Hence they looked at Malate's unique local features—its history and architecture; its intimate neighborhood plan; its existing tourism, arts, and entertainment infrastructure with a critical mass of hotels, entertainment, and dining establishments; and its open public spaces in the form of parks and bay front property. Germaine explained that if Manila's unique features were not protected, the city "otherwise, would just be a very poor copy of something else. If we tried to be a Makati, we would never make it". There was a populist element to this moment in their conservation vision because urban renewal for them meant pushing back on the privatization of urban space that accompanies mass commercial development by protecting public spaces for all patrons; as Carmen claimed here, "Parks are not necessarily for the rich". Thus TBBA saw the seeds of Manila's urban renewal as most strongly residing in the capital city's power of place, which was distinct from Makati because Makati was commercial and a global rep-

lica of urban spaces that could be anywhere. Germaine explains that they treated place as a core Malate asset and simply proceeded with "working on the package". She said that they hoped city government could "look past the desolation, signage, and the grime" left after the closure of the bars and "see the art deco buildings" and other important architectural forms worth saving. They sought backing from Mayor Lim in order to begin efforts to protect and refurbish Manila's architecture, city layout, sidewalks, open spaces, waterfront, and streetscapes.

One of their first projects was a Remedios Circle beautification project, where they sponsored a series of street parties as pilot projects that could draw in patronage and generate interest in "Old Manila."[2] If they could encourage Filipinos to come back to Old Manila then city government might pay attention to Malate and support their conservation efforts. In the short term, Germaine explained, they wanted the city's commitment to sidewalk repair, increased lighting and police presence, and the conservation of public and natural urban spaces such as parks and waterfront property. To them, this was the groundwork for Malate's urban renewal into a safe and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood. Longer-term plans consisted of better zoning to counter the encroaching larger-scale development projects already happening under Mayor Lim. The TBBA supported the development of small local business, a cottage industry that could replace the global commercial development that threatened the historical and intimate character of the district. The natural environment within the city was a concern as well and the TBBA proposed that improved city planning with stricter zoning could alleviate the problems of pollution, traffic, waste disposal, structural and population crowding, and the depletion of resources, such as water and electricity.

The TBBA focused on urban aesthetics—or "beautification"—as central to their vision of urban renewal. Reminiscent of Danielle Burnham's City Beautiful philosophy out of which Manila's urban plan began, and specifically noted by most of my interviewees, the TBBA encouraged community and local business involvement in a planned aesthetics for the neighborhood. What this meant to them was an organized effort at systemizing the look of the city blocks. For example, they proposed tax incentives for residential and business owners who painted every ten years and who repaired sidewalks and buildings all with a vision toward producing a streetscape.

Beautification efforts also involved the conservation of historical structures. Their top three goals for urban renewal—heritage conservation,

beautification, and community participation—came together in their advocacy of adaptive reuse, which is the use of older buildings and existing urban infrastructure for business and living. Adaptive reuse was a core strategy of place-making because it asked Filipinos to take part in the visioning and shaping of place-based urban community by forging their connection to place through working with (not against) the city's unique built environment. Adaptive reuse required a commitment to the historical structure and urban place and then to renovate for contemporary use.

The TBBA turned to the national government—the Department of Tourism (DOT)—to commission a study that would look into the potential of urban tourism for Manila's urban renewal. The DOT's attention was already focused upon domestic tourism, as the state embraced strategies of sustainable tourism development in the wake of former administrations' implicit acceptance of a sex tourism economy throughout the country. The study drew from national and international architects, city planners, and business consultants, and produced a master plan for urban renewal called the Urban Renewal Tourism Development Plan for Central Manila, which was completed in 1999.

This master plan broke with previous tourism plans, by addressing the unsustainability of international-focused tourism development. At the time of the study, Manila housed several luxury hotels, many from Imelda Marcos' misappropriation of development funds for world-class tourism and arts development. Even middle-class Filipinos could not afford to pay the high prices of these hotels or eat in their restaurants. Former tourism development plans, which were supposed to invigorate the national economy, actually focused on encouraging international tourism, and ultimately created a tourism infrastructure that was inaccessible to most Filipinos who could not afford to be tourists in their own country. Therein was TBBA's nationalist concern with urban renewal—they envisioned Malate's renewal into a domestic tourist destination where Filipinos could visit and cultivate connection to history and place through a promenade district. The discourse of "pride of place" fit, not only with TBBA's conservation goals, but also with the national governments' focus on sustainable tourism, which saw the support of local urban communities as central to tourism development. Urban renewal efforts that hinged on advocating pride of place also kept these efforts local and away from the mass commercial development plans that had plagued the district. Carmen explained that the TBBA was not against international tourism; rather, they supported an urban renewal that took its shape on more place-based

terms so that they first laid the groundwork for a vibrant urban district, and then international tourists would want to visit. She maintained:

> You go to a country to see something that pertains to the country. Now if I'm in a country and the architecture is of nowhere, because there are generic buildings, I can be in Hong Kong, I can be in Taiwan, I can be anywhere, and it doesn't matter. I mean you stand in Ayala Avenue [a main avenue in Makati], where are you? It could be anywhere. It's a different thing with Beijing; … *you stand in Tiananmen Square and you know where you are*.

One strategy of the Urban Renewal Tourism Development Plan was to reinvigorate business in Manila's historic core by focusing urban renewal in Special Design Districts (SDDs); Malate's Remedios Circle was designated as a design district. SDDs are a common feature of urban renewal plans and they are typically areas that are rich in cultural and historical resources, which can be harnessed to promote tourism. For example, renewal could focus upon existing tourism infrastructure, waterfront property, community, heritage, and urban quality of life in Ermita and Malate with an eye toward how these existing resources could sustain tourism to the SDD. Central to this plan was a vision that urban development should not negatively impact the heritage, urban plan, public spaces, community, residents, and local businesses of the SDDs. Thus the plan offered an alternative vision to the unbridled urban development taking shape elsewhere in Metro Manila—it showed that urban development need not corrupt, exploit, or dramatically change local community life or the historical fabric of urban environments. The plan also broached the idea of sustainability—that urban spaces need to be able to sustain the development taking shape within their environment.

This was significant for the TBBA because developers were already encroaching on Remedios Circle when the DOT study was commissioned. The TBBA recognized the urgency for pushing architectural-style guidelines and zoning that would protect what they labeled as the "human scale" of Malate. The report emphasized how urban renewal could sustain local businesses and workers, built heritage, and the existing city plan, and that mass commercial development was not necessary for successful urban renewal. It also emphasized the importance of the pedestrianization of SDDs; it recommended the widening of sidewalks, maintaining the original city blocks (which were designed for walking), and developing

promenades that connected heritage sites, and which assured unimpeded pedestrian access to waterfront property.

Yet with the entry of a new president (President Estrada) in 1999, the master plan was not supported by the new national government so the TBBA never saw its implementation. In its place, and to the chagrin of conservation activists, President Estrada began a boardwalk project on Manila Bay that contradicted the report's recommendations—the Luneta Boardwalk project blocked the view of the bay from Luneta Park; it impeded pedestrian access to the bay from the neighborhood; and it did not follow the architectural-style guidelines that would allow it to fit with the fabric of the city. Being able to witness Manila Bay's infamous sunsets from Ermita was one of the key natural resources for the SDD. President Estrada's boardwalk was the first in a series of flagship projects by newly elected presidents and mayors that explicitly countered the renewal plans of a previous administration. I witnessed the impact of similar flagship projects in Malate's rise and fall over the thirteen years studying the district. Repeatedly, I saw projects that focused on building the image of political leaders, and to assure their reelection, yet at the direct expense of resources, urban space, and community. Newly elected leaders used their flagship projects to dismantle the urban renewal projects of previous administrations. These projects were flashy demonstrations of the state's or city government's power to develop urban space. Yet little about them actually focused on sustaining urban community in Malate.

At the same time the master plan's SDDs served as a symbolic recognition of Malate's potential, and demonstrated how tourism and urban renewal could integrate local and national concerns before international ones. The plan also demonstrated an alternative strategy to mass urban development that set local-scale parameters for urban renewal. Yet how the TBBA ultimately imagined urban community also created the limitations to their conservation work. Their concern for the built and natural environment took precedence over a truly populist concern for the people who already lived, worked, and struggled in Manila, and for those working-class patrons and informal workers who were making Malate home. The concerns of international funding agencies that Malate's urban renewal threatened squatters' communities were well founded, as this community did not factor into the TBBA's idea of urban community. In fact, the crowded and environmentally unsustainable foundation of Malate's squatter community, which was built right up to the southern tip of Remedios Circle's SDD, is the perfect example of the urbanization

against which conservationists were struggling. Furthermore, the class bias of this plan is apparent because the idea of "drawing Filipinos back to the historic urban core" begs the question of who exactly are they hoping to draw back? What emerges in the master plan is an ideology of the "ideal patron" for urban renewal—the cosmopolitan patron who desires to travel to a SDD and who has the monetary means to consume dinner, drinks, and entertainment for the evening. This ideal patron factored prominently in the gay-led gentrification that shaped the district from 2000 to 2006, and set new terms of urban exclusion for those working-class gay men who could not fit within this cosmopolitan consumer-class ideal.

"Once Upon a Time There was a Manila Bay There": From Saving the Bay to Music in the Streets

As I showed in the previous section, conservationists emphasized the importance of urban planning as a way to control unbridled urban development. To them, Malate was an American period neighborhood whose best qualities arose out of Daniel Burnham's commitment to the City Beautiful movement in his urban plan for Manila. Manila was designed to be a livable urban space, and a central part of Malate's livability was Burnham's planned pedestrian access to Manila bay. The Bay was one of Malate's key resources because, in combination with its famous sunsets, it provided an experience of a "breezy neighborhood by the sea." Further, urban waterfronts are particularly important for cities seeking to be framed as tourist cities that offer a unique sense of place. Conservationists who were committed to this livable urban fabric and sense of place thus focused their attention to "saving the bay" by halting the development of high-rise condominiums that were to be built on reclaimed land from the bay.

Developers' proposed land reclamation and high-rise construction would have not only blocked the view of the water from Malate, but also compromised Burnham's city plan such that Malate would have no longer been a neighborhood on the bay. A disparate group of concerned residents, business owners, and conservationists met this proposal with organized protests to "Save the bay." One of the TBBA's early members, Madeline, explained that developers intended to build a "whole new city" on the reclaimed land even though Ermita and Malate could not support such massive development. The districts already faced problems with sewage and waste disposal, water and power usage, pollution, and crowding.

Conservationists understood that bay front development was a problem of the city's relaxed zoning. Madeline described a spontaneous coming together of conservationists and their actions to save the bay:

> One morning we saw they were cutting trees down on the boulevard. So we went down there and began very intensive media awareness. That was during Corey Aquino's time. We couldn't get access to her because the ones who were planning to do this [land reclamation] was a big group of wealthy businessmen and kind of close to her. And so we monitored her activities. When we knew she was in the Cultural Center Complex and on her way back every noon, for a month we were standing there with our placards "Save the Bay." And she was suddenly aware that there was something going on. One time, when she was coming back from the trip and she drove down the wrong boulevard and we were like a throng there. And so, finally, it got stalled and we lobbied for a law, preserving Manila Bay as a national treasure.

It was not difficult, Madeline explained, to garner support from additional residents and small business owners because reclamation and high-rise development was an issue that most immediately affected Malate's community. The media's take on the "Save the Bay" movement was far more precarious because the wider metropolitan region did not know what to make of a group of upper-class women and men who were represented as impeding modern urban development. A popular discourse that explained why wealthy families were speaking out against money-making ventures in this scenario did not exist; hence, their actions seemed oxymoronic to the wider region and against the backdrop of Makati's rapid development. Germaine joked about the headlines that represented her as a "tree hugger" and Madeline described the following media representation of herself and a famous gay fashion designer who got his start on Remedios Circle:

> There was an icon of a fashion designer … and me hugging this huge Acacia tree while this monster of a bulldozer attacks it.… [It was] planted in all the papers, even the tabloids and it was so funny. But never mind; we were successful because we were able to protect the bay. I mean this is the last remaining waterfront property in the city. It is after all something.

Saving the bay was an important victory in the eyes of community members who lived and operated businesses in Malate and it was one of the first successful actions on the part of conservationists. They dem-

onstrated that they could stop the most powerful and lucrative business in Manila—real estate, demolition, and construction—on behalf of a less powerful and more abstract public who did use this urban space. Conservationists argued that Manila Bay is a powerful symbol of place for the City of Manila and it is a unique geographic space within an urban area where Manileños form a connection to place despite the rapid urbanization elsewhere. Germaine also asserted the strategy of "Saving the Bay" as part of a wider global trend in urban renewal efforts that capitalize on renewing city waterfront properties—it gave "people a sense of creation. A city that is beautiful [has] a beautiful waterfront. All cities are reclaiming and protecting their waterfronts right now". Conservationists also had a personal connection to the bay where many of their earliest memories of urban life were connected to it. Below, Madeline elaborated a story of urban development and change, as explained to her by her grandmother. It was in fact this story of urban change that drove her to become involved in the Save the Bay movement because she did not want to have to tell a similar story of Malate's losses to development to her grandchildren:

> [W]e were saying what will happen with our children's children, and they'll say "Once upon a time there was a Manila Bay there." Like what our grandparents were telling us as we drove down the boulevard and pointing at Malate Church and saying "this was water before."… When my father was driving my grandfather's car, a Chevrolet, ... it was right down Roxas Boulevard. I was so tiny and you know how Chevrolets, [they're] like curved, and I was like falling off a wishing well because it was so big. And I was sitting there, little me, staring up.… My childhood memories are just full of trees, blue sky, because I couldn't see the road, you see.… It was just water to the left. But my grandmother used to tell us that this [to the right] was just water—Mabini was water. And then, there was the Church and Remedios Circle was a cemetery. This is how the turn of the century was. And so, that was one big cause that I really involved myself and we won it. We just killed [the development].

There were further threats to the bay after this initial victory. Madeline explained that during President Ramos' administration, developers sought to construct skyways as a solution to traffic problems in Manila. As a shallow gesture to get conservationists involved, the administration formed the Old Manila Commission that would oversee this bay side development. The real plan, however, was to develop Roxas Boulevard into a formal highway and to construct skyways that would facilitate the movement of

traffic along this increasingly significant waterfront thoroughfare. Internal struggles arose within the Old Manila Commission between conservationists, city government, and the private sector over the scale of this development. Mayor Lim vied for the development of high-rise condominiums along Roxas Boulevard and pushed for the rezoning of the district back into a residential area, which compromised the small business owners located there. Germaine critiqued the commission for its use of the rhetoric of "respecting history" while pushing forward with plans to "modernize" the City of Manila—constructing flyovers to solve traffic problems, reclaiming land from the bay for the development of condominiums, and taking part in the profitable business of demolition and construction. Thus conservation activists eventually saw that the Old Manila Commission was a strategy on the part of the state to incorporate and pacify their conservation concerns. Although the Old Manila Commission fell apart, its existence was a first example of the state's attempt to rhetorically co-opt conservation in urban renewal plans.

With the dissolution of the Old Manila Commission, TBBA members became galvanized in their opposition to Mayor Alfredo Lim's proposed development of high rises throughout Ermita, Malate, and along the bay front. This resistance helped direct their actions—they saw that they could have a hand in shaping urban renewal to ensure its attention to a local scale. City officials tried to characterize conservationists as anti-progress. City officials approached urban development as both inevitable and desirable, whereas the TBBA (who did not view their philosophy as anti-progress) wanted more control over the path of urban development given that unbridled demolition, construction, and mass commercialism destroyed local communities. They conceptualized how urban renewal could be accountable to the public and place. As Madeline strategically explained, this is a matter of national reputation:

> If we give away this last remaining waterfront property then what is really the people's property? How many people walk there, enjoy the sunsets, and enjoy the breeze? It's like there's a life there in the mornings. The people, the residents here would walk and just enjoy the view and the breeze.… I was telling this guy, the contractor, "Look at it, try to imagine it, it's going to be land filled with all the bulldozers there. Is that the sight that you want to have in a year or two when we celebrate our centennial?"

Conservationists were partially successful in their pushback on Lim's proposed development—only one skyway was constructed just south of

the CCP; Roxas was not transformed into a highway; and the bay reclamation project was abandoned over investors' growing concerns about costs and mounting public resistance.

Perhaps more significantly, conservationists experienced success in saving the bay, which led to their organizing one of the first street festivals in Ermita and Malate. The TBBA planned a celebration in Manila Bay Park in honor of saving the bay. The festival stretched along the waterfront property from the US Embassy in Ermita down to the CCP in Malate. They drew from local talent to perform at the festival and encouraged local businesses to set up food booths to serve patrons. The festival demonstrated the feasibility of local community collaboration in creating a new use of urban space—conservationists, business owners, residents, local artists, and patrons came together to offer a new experience of Malate's urban community that did not involve either sexualized consumption or mass commercial development. It was this spirit of local collaboration strategically located within a unique urban space such as a waterfront urban park that became the driving force behind the famous Remedios Circle street parties.

The TBBA envisioned these street parties at a time that Germaine described as ripe for city beautification and conservation work. In the early 1990s, First Lady Mrs. Ramos expressed concern for "cleaning up" urban environments and making Manila a green and livable city. This state concern for urban renewal fit with Manila elites' desire to resurrect "Old Manila." Hence the TBBA articulated their beautification plan to align with these national and local elites' concerns and designated Remedios Circle as the most ideal urban spatial resource area to begin their beautification efforts.

The area was strategic for several reasons. First, a café culture had already made an imprint and had contributed to the area's reputation as bohemian. Second, Malate had more artists and musicians in residence than any other district in Metropolitan Manila at that time. The TBBA recognized the potential in drawing from local talent as a way to showcase Malate as an arts and entertainment enclave, and as a way to imbibe a local feeling to the street festivals. Third, Remedios Circle's intimate spatial layout (several roads lead to the circle and one road, Remedios, offers an unhampered view of the bay), built heritage, and the green and open space of the circle's park held the ideal ambience for transforming the circle into a model of what "Old Manila" could look like. Fourth, and most importantly, the wider neighborhood of Malate had the infrastructure to

become a walkers' district—its sidewalks were run-down yet extensive, its lighting was broken yet repairable, and its blocks were small and intimate enough to facilitate the movement of patrons among a handful of existing local businesses. Fifth, the success of Cornucopia during the 1970s (an internationally famous gay-owned night club on Remedios Circle that I speak more of in Chap. 3) had demonstrated the viability of the Remedios Circle area for drawing in patrons from other parts of Metro Manila, including the wealthier city of Makati. Sixth, Malate already had tourism infrastructure, which meant that even international tourism, in the long run, could help sustain the local business development that TBBA was aiming to reinvigorate. In all, Remedios Circle was a prime location to begin the renewal of "Old Manila"—it was spatially central, culturally and historically rich, and replete with tourism infrastructure.

First, however, the TBBA had to demonstrate the viability of the area to potential funders and city government. They needed both economic and policy support for their longer-term urban renewal plans. Germaine claimed that they could do little without such backing; they had to prove that Malate was worth the investment from public and private sectors. The Remedios street parties therefore were a short-term strategy to stimulate interest in the area and to prove its potential for metropolitan-wide popularity. In the short run, such interest would help sustain the existing local businesses and the target patron was initially the suburban resident and the domestic tourist visiting Manila for weekend entertainment. Malate would have to compete with Makati, which Madeline claimed was "the entertainment nerve center" at the turn of decade (late 1980s to the 1990s). Likewise, Quezon City was just starting a restaurant row to entice visitors.

Those who remembered the Remedios Circle street parties described them as spontaneous, diverse, and vibrant, which my interviewees understood as Malate's expression of magical urban community. Yet when conservationists recalled how the TBBA organized the parties, their class position and connection to elite circles played a definitive role in the street parties' fruition. For example, Madeline discussed her involvement with an upper-class salon that gathered for drinks in Malate. She remembers raising the TBBA's concern for lighting the area to the group, emphasizing how its dark streets encouraged petty crime. "There were many lamp posts in Remedios Circle but few worked," she explained to the group. She shared how TBBA was involved with beautification efforts in the area and how they wanted to encourage patrons to visit Old Manila but that the dark streets tended to keep pedestrians away. An executive from a major

energy company in Manila was a patron of her salon and he expressed interest in the project. He suggested that they allow his energy company to repair the lighting and provide new street lamps in Remedios Circle; "within seven days he had brought back the light in that area". From that moment on, Madeline claimed, the energy company executive served as the TBBA's "patron saint of lighting."

The TBBA's secondary goal was to foster the connection between Malate patrons and their urban environment by promoting an active and experiential street life. This connection, they hoped, would generate a wider interest in conservation. Further, and by advocating for the public's connection to urban place, TBBA hoped to foster public support for urban renewal, which was a new approach to urban renewal in the Philippines. Thus they saw that their promotion of a series of street festivals around Remedios Circle could help form these strategic connections to urban place.

They planned their first event—a Christmas festival in the circle—after their success with lighting the circle through Madeline's salon connections. They avoided corporate sponsorship of the party because a main goal was to keep the festivals local (though subsequent festivals did use funding from San Miguel Beer). Instead, they enlisted restaurants, cafés, and hotels connected to the area to sponsor food booths so local businesses could sell drinks and food. They wanted local businesses not only to earn money from the festivals but to promote their Malate-based establishments to patrons who may return on another weekend for dinner. Businesses paid a small fee to the TBBA for an electrical connection and set up booths for the street party. The TBBA organized the entertainment from local talent.

They followed some guidelines when organizing and promoting the festivals, which respected Malate foremost as a residential area and because they did not want the festivals to interfere with the existing community. For example, they chose instrumental bands for entertainment whose music was less likely to disturb residents. Madeline remembered the following symbolic action of lighting up Malate as an effort that demonstrated the successful collaboration between their urban renewal efforts, the festival, and community:

> We would always start off the first weekend with a candle parade; … the community would participate from the church all the way down and at sunset [just off Manila Bay]. It's dark and the candles would be the only one

> [lit]. And at a certain time, the mayor turns on the switch and everybody automatically turns on their lights in the restaurants [and booths]. And you know we made a big thing.

Madeline described other important community cooperation efforts that contributed to the success of the festivals. The festivals facilitated a strong working relationship between the hotels, restaurants, cafés, the TBBA, and residents; up until this point, there had been little cooperation among these entities. She explained that the neighborhood actively came together in weekly meetings, divided work, and followed through with the plans for the festivals.

They were immensely successful. By the second year, corporate sponsors began to contribute in exchange for securing singular rights to sell their commodities. Madeline and Germaine explained that the TBBA would not allow these sponsors to determine the event—they could only sell their San Miguel Beer, for example, without the competition of another vendor. Yet Madeline saw the entry of corporate sponsorship as a transitional moment for the festivals because subsequent events were more "spruced up" while toting corporate banners. Although she understood corporate sponsorship as necessary—the TBBA could no longer meet the festivals' expenses—Madeline acknowledged that she disliked the commercial appearance that corporate sponsorship brought to the festivals. She discussed preferring the ad hoc, grassroots appearance of previous festivals, which reflected Malate's eclectic community involvement. At this transitional moment, Madeline and others began to lose interest in the Remedios Circle street festivals.

Madeline, Angie, and Germaine explained that the street festivals were intended to be a short-term strategy to generate interest in Malate and to help local businesses—they did not want to create a commercial venture in itself. Yet the success of the street festivals attracted the attention of the DOT; state officials wanted a project that could regenerate tourism to the area after the closure of the sex strip. With their eye on the longer-term benefit of state involvement in urban renewal, the TBBA transferred their street permit for the festivals to the DOT. Yet conservationists soon saw this to be a major mistake on their part because the street festivals deteriorated under DOT direction.

First, the DOT did not do the necessary study and planning to effectively use urban space in Malate. They moved the street festival from Remedios Circle to Adriatico Street, with the hopes of creating a street

promenade that would end at the circle. Adriatico businesses were asked to sponsor music along the promenade to create "Music Streets" and to encourage patrons to walk among the establishments and down to the circle for food and drink. Yet Adriatico was a poor choice for the promenade because, in 1993, it did not have the critical mass of businesses, restaurants, and cafés to create a successful link of establishments for a promenade. Instead, businesses sparsely set up booths along Adriatico, which gave a random appearance to the street festival. Music Streets failed because organizers did not use urban space wisely.

Second, the DOT sold the festivals to corporate sponsors and allowed these sponsors to play an active role in shaping them. Madeline explained that the organizers needed stricter parameters for corporate sponsors so their involvement was limited to funding and to inhibit corporations from bringing in extravagant entertainment and mass-produced food, drink, and souvenirs stands. Yet Music Streets became increasingly commercial and non-local because corporate sponsors did not have an interest in supporting local business; conservationists claimed that the festivals became money-making extravaganzas that contributed little to the community. Madeline explained that "they had the money but the people organizing it were not from here. They didn't know the concerns of the community and they did not take into consideration the community".

Third, the DOT sponsored street parties with alarming regularity in place of organizing a few key festivals that could be sustained by local business involvement. In fact, local businesses were pushed out because they could not afford to sponsor a booth every weekend. As local businesses pulled out of the street parties, non-local vendors opted in, selling food and beverages at a lower cost. Thus the street parties ended up drawing away the consumers from the local restaurants and cafés rather than reinvigorating Malate's local businesses. In all, the DOT-sponsored street parties led to a loss in revenues for local businesses even though the street parties were gaining metropolitan-wide popularity and increasing Malate's weekend patronage—as the consumer base rose, local business revenues declined.

The TBBA did not foresee that their efforts at drawing attention to Malate and harnessing the support of state bodies such as the DOT would end with the area's commercialization and undermining of local businesses. This was not the vision of sustainability that they had in mind when they became involved in the area's urban renewal. The success of the street festivals ultimately contributed to their demise because the increasing popularity of the

area brought in non-local sponsors, artists, entertainers, and entrepreneurs who did not necessarily share TBBA's vision of place-based urban renewal. This new street party market in fact squeezed out local artists and businesses, and alienated residents who did not want loud parties in their neighborhood every weekend. My interviewees noted that the DOT's motive was to transform Malate into a popular entertainment enclave, yet in TBBA's opinion they transformed Malate into a crass commercial area, with no plans for beautification. The culmination of this pathway of urban renewal was ironically captured in Madeline's claim that "One Christmas, I woke up to a giant beer bottle in the middle of the circle".

"You Don't Allow the Squatters to Just Proliferate": Heritage Conservation and the Focus on Built Heritage

Germaine decided to dissolve the TBBA in the face of an increasingly fragmented group of conservationists and with the hopes of delineating a new organization's goals after the disappointing outcome of Music Streets. A core group wanted to extend conservation outside of Manila and into important historical regions nationally. Germaine also saw the limitations of the TBBA in its functioning as a businessmen's group, which lacked the legislative know-how to concretely influence urban renewal and heritage conservation. They viewed the lesson of the Remedios Circle street festivals as there being no guarantees to the direction of Malate's renewal into a special design district—or any successful waterfront tourism destination—if urban renewal only focused on local business, community participation, and generating metropolitan-wide patronage to an urban enclave.

The new group wanted to bring together a critical mass of Manileños who were becoming aware of the need for conservation with a key group of conservationists who could author and lobby for conservation laws, network with transnational urban conservation groups, and apply for international funding. Germaine transformed the TBBA into a non-governmental organization, renaming it the Heritage Conservation Society (HCS). She explained that she chose "society" because the organization's new goals were to vie for protective districts and national landmark laws. The organization determined that, in 1999, there were no such landmark laws protecting historical and natural sights in the Philippines; hence, the HCS focused their attention on protecting built and natural heritage, turning away from their earlier interests in renewing urban community.

Carmen, one of the members who transferred over from the TBBA, saw a global influence on the organization's agenda—HCS founding members had traveled internationally and were exposed to urban conservation groups that were working to protect original city plans and architectural landscapes in leading global cities worldwide. André, also a member, explained the emergence of the HCS out of the organization's need to refocus on the conservation of built heritage, which he saw as a necessary first step in building conservation consciousness and practices nationally. He explained that such a focus on built heritage would relieve the organization from having to engage with the more fragmented practices of protecting all community sites. He also saw that a focus on built heritage would allow the HCS to extend its reach to non-NCR areas. He claimed that conservationists had been "distracted" from the longer-term goals of protecting national heritage by having to "put out little fires" where there were reoccurring threats to buildings, parks, and scenic views, such as Manila Bay.

Despite the HCS's focus on built heritage, Germaine claimed that they did not espouse a "monument approach to conservation" because such an approach focuses on protecting the raw building while offering little to a wider cultural connection to built heritage. HCS continued to apply a sustainability framework to conservation because they viewed conservation as needing to be sustained by the communities that could benefit from conservation. Germaine used the example of Intramuros to make her point about the limitations of the monument approach to conservation and why developing a wider cultural connection to built heritage was necessary. The Philippine state designated a body of officials called the Intramuros Administration (IA) who were responsible for conserving the Colonial Spanish-era walled city; Intramuros was not under the governance of the City of Manila, despite it being located in the city. This state organization's conservation focused on making Intramuros "look old" at the expense of encouraging the development of a sustainable urban community within its walls. Intramuros, she remarked, is truly a dead city—there are no vibrant businesses or active community life taking shape within its walls. The HCS defined its conservation differently by rejecting rigid historical definitions, by contextualizing built heritage within community, and by raising the importance of place to conservation; Germaine explained "most very successful communities in the world have really wonderful feelings of a sense of place". Although this non-monument approach shows HCS's interest in urban community, urban community is no longer the focus of

conservation; rather, conserving built heritage, alongside of encouraging public interest in built heritage, became HCS's new focus. Further, this new philosophy of place focuses on what older buildings and a protected city plan could lend to urban spaces. Place is no longer the work of a diverse urban community, exploring what quality of life could look like in urban renewal. Thus the organization's philosophy shifted away from what urban communities needed to make urban renewal sustainable to what an urban community had to gain from conserving built heritage.

The HCS also wanted sustained backing from city hall because they came to believe that successful conservation happens with key legislative efforts. Yet they faced the problem of persuading a sequence of city government administrations—all who had demonstrated diametrically opposed urban renewal projects—to back their conservation efforts. Mayoral terms span only three years, and Manila mayors were notorious for undoing "pet" projects of previous administrations, as I discussed earlier. All along conservation had been a hard sell because its outcome could take years to materialize. They settled on getting across two key conservationist frameworks to city government: heritage conservation and the idea of a public domain.

They framed the need for heritage conservation as protecting the cultural fabric of built heritage, which, in their renewed philosophy, would allow Filipinos to experience pride of place where they live. Their framing of public domain sought to encourage public officials to see urban space not in terms of private development but as places that people use—spaces of residence, work, and leisure. For example, the HCS advocated for the protection and rehabilitation of sidewalks so urban patrons could walk the city. Germaine discussed the importance of walking a city as a strategy that secures the public's right to urban space:

> You make walking a very exciting experience. You don't allow blank walls; you don't allow an empty lot to put up a big wall and then say "Do Not Enter"; *you don't allow squatters to just proliferate* there on those empty properties that look like they have been bombed by a war, and that generators don't take over the sidewalk. [You ensure] the person feels empowered to walk down that street.

This quote most clearly demonstrates the HCS's concern for built heritage at the expense of people, as, in this case, the sidewalks and the ideal pedestrian's neighborhood plan. Their discourse clearly shows who counts

as part of the "public domain"—the abstract urban patron who uses the districts as a space of leisure and residence, yet not the people who make the sidewalks their homes and/or spaces of informal work. Germaine did not live in Malate at the time of this interview but she used her own upper-class experience of working long hours in a commercial building along one of the busier streets in Ermita as an example of how the poor sidewalks limited her use of a public domain, "I live across from the park. I've worked here for twenty years. I have never crossed the street to get a sandwich there; can I tell you why? There's no entrance along the whole street; there is no entrance". Following the interview, I sat outside of Germaine's building and witnessed many urban patrons crossing the traffic-congested street to walk down to the entrance of the park where food vendors sold lunch to the crowds. I have experienced this very route to be unpleasant—the pollution, congestion, and spatial distance to access the park is discouraging for pedestrians, particularly during the midday heat. Yet people do use this urban space in a diverse set of ways—as spaces of walking, working, and living. I agree with Germaine that the park is better serving of the public domain if it is open on all sides and if the streets were not overbearing so as to inhibit people crossing the street to get to the park. However, her vision once again lacks a sense of how people, right now, use the very spaces that the HCS was trying to conserve.

While the HCS was learning how to frame conservation to secure city and state support, the group faced the equally difficult question of how to define conservation for a country that was struggling with development more broadly. How could a group of upper-class and landed Filipinos argue for the conservation of older buildings and open public spaces when a pertinent issue for many Filipino politicians is meeting the basic needs of the urban poor and modernizing Manila into a competitive world city? Conservation couldn't be measured and therefore it didn't fit with conventional understandings of what constituted urban development—it didn't demonstrate economic growth nor did it advocate for modern urban infrastructure. The HCS faced having to sell very abstract benefits, so they reframed conservation as important to national identity and as a strategy of sustainable development.

They offered that conservation could inspire pride in being Filipino, a pride that would arise out of encouraging a historical connection to place. In a position paper written on behalf of the HCS, André claimed heritage as a collective right; better conservation would not only help build a collective consciousness about, and responsibility for, built heritage, but it

would protect Filipinos' right to their heritage. A greater collective consciousness about built heritage would generate Filipinos' pride of place, and place is always specific to particular national histories. Carmen claimed that people's identities are tied to places: "my identification with this is there [gestures towards a building]. But for you to tear it down totally, I mean where are my origins? I don't have any". André also elaborated this idea about the interconnection of identity and built heritage:

> The HCS defines conservation in a very simple way actually. It basically advocates re-using old structures for new purposes. Rather than saying that this is a monument and it must be preserved because architecture has cultural value, … all that would go above everybody's head. It's a very simple thing of saying that this comes from our past. If we let it go, part of you goes with it.

André added that heritage is a subconscious thing that makes one feel good about being Filipino. Thus the HCS embarked on an awareness project where conservation could teach Filipinos about what they valued, as Filipinos, and offered a discourse that delineated links between history, place, identity, belonging, and national pride.

To demonstrate how conservation could intersect with sustainable development, they developed guidelines for developers, city government, and building and property owners that showed how conservation could be practiced with limited funds. These guidelines advocated for the economic benefits to using existing infrastructure—adaptive reuse—in place of always demolishing and constructing new buildings; as Germaine elaborated, "convince owners that you could probably make more money if you make yourself unique, it's the whole idea of adaptable re-use … [that helps] make a vibrant community". Thus HCS introduced an economic argument for conserving built heritage by framing conservation as economically viable in a country struggling with development; as André claimed, "we're using the current financial situation [in the Philippines] to our advantage to say 'Don't tear it down and build your 50 story building because nobody can afford it right now. Just re-use this house for something, make it a drugstore, make it a lawyer's office, make it whatever'". Carmen acknowledged that they needed to start with property owners because they had the resources to practice adaptable reuse. She argued that adaptable reuse was sustainable because it saved money for community needs and it countered one of the most lucrative and corrupt industries in

Manila—real estate, demolition, and construction—"The building should be re-used instead of constructing something new, and the 50 percent that would be going into the wrong hands, could be spent on the development of roads, education—the things that communities need".

There remained, however, many resistances to their conservation efforts. For instance, protecting built heritage is a hard sell in a national capital region where real estate holds incredible market power. In a district like Malate where there is little other industry, real estate is the most secure way to make money; as Carmen claimed, "It's the only game in town". Real estate was also a secure source of city revenue; hence, city government tended to lean on the side of supporting new construction projects. Conservationists lacked confidence in city government, given this support and given its track record of corrupt commercial development dealings. Additionally, conservationists had a hard time securing support from development agencies because they lacked hard figures that showed a positive relationship between heritage conservation and development. André also pointed out how the HCS was working against the wider popular consciousness that old is bad and new is good:

> If you take somebody who lives in the province in a traditional house and he has a relative that's an overseas worker (OCW), the first thing that they will do once they have money is replace the house. You've seen the houses with the low tin roof and concrete walls. Without realizing that it is an oven in the summer and when it rains on the tin roof it is so noisy, you can't hear anything inside. But they'll put up with that because it's the image of prosperity and modernity. Whereas the old house, which may have a tile roof or a high ceiling, which is more suited to this climate, is seen as old.

Finally, the HCS had problems framing conservation as a nationalist concern because there remained questions over what exactly constituted Filipino heritage given that much of the built heritage that they were attempting to protect was built under either Spanish or US colonial rule. Madeline recognized this contradiction when she explained that heritage is a complex concept in the Philippines because it involves a mixture of influences from colonizing presence. It was difficult encouraging the average Filipino to support the conservation of something that may not be Filipino in the first place, "What is heritage? Preserving old buildings? Sorry, designed and built by our—what do you call this—colonizers? It doesn't make sense to me. So what if you land in LA and there are build-

ings by the same architect". Her recommendation to address this problem was to practice adaptable reuse and employ Filipino architects to assert a distinctly Filipino architectural imprint in the adaptation.

The HCS was thus positioned to conserve the heritage of place, to promote a popular connection to built heritage, and to integrate conservation into sustainable development plans. They argued that the development of cities can be sustainable if buildings are reused, and if there was a serious reinvestment into urban communities in place of the passive support of mass commercial development. They advocated for non-economic measurements of urban development, given the failure of economic-focused development that implicitly supported the sex districts of Ermita and Malate. Rather, their version of a vibrant district was one that maintained built heritage, popular connections to place, and pride in being Filipino. Germaine explained, "our cities do not allow our people to become empowered … [empowerment comes from] the right of the people to have a heritage and the right of the people to have public space".

Yet this shift in focus to built heritage moved conservationists away from the very community work that could empower urban populations. Their efforts at discursively redefining the nationalist concern for conservation tended to overlook the very urban populations that were using the spaces they wanted to conserve. Their organizing did not integrate existing urban economies and classes into an urban renewal that empowered all people in Malate. In fact, the TBBA and HCS contributed to the delineation of an ideal consumer class that could sustain Malate's urban renewal and which, in fact, was targeted under the soon to emerge gay-led gentrification of the district. Yet the TBBA's and HCS's work did push to the fore place as an important component of urban renewal. The street festivals did encourage urban patrons to identify with, and become a part of, their urban places of work, residence, and leisure, offering a distinct experience of urbanism from the sexually saturated experiences of Malate during the heyday of the sex district. The street festivals were a pivotal moment in Malate's renaissance in that they encouraged urban patrons' identification with place, which kept them coming back to experience the magic of Malate. I will turn now to one unanticipated outcome of this place-based empowerment—that is, the production and co-optation of urban magic in the Nakpil revival.

Notes

1. The City Beautiful Movement (1900s–1920s) was a key moment in urban planning where cities (such as Chicago, San Francisco, Washington DC, and Cleveland) were imagined as potentially livable and beautiful environments. Planners designed open spaces through parks, boulevards, blocks, and plazas and to allow light, air, and nature to become part of the urban experience. Guided architectural construction ensured that buildings were constructed in relationship to the surrounding environment and to allow urban patrons to experience both city and nature as part of urban community.
2. This representation of "Old Manila" is one that arose out of the conservation efforts of a previous, though short-lived government organization called the "Old Manila Commission." I discuss this organization at a later point in the chapter. Mayor Lim's closing of the sex strip and the following decline in commercial life brought together a disparate group of conservation activists, local businesses, private development agencies, and city government to dialogue about the shape of urban community in Manila. The state's answer to reviving the nation's capital was to take the city back from global sex tourism. President Ramos organized public and private sector leaders into the Old Manila Commission with the hope of producing a new vision for Old Manila. Their goal was to develop a marketing plan to promote investment in the area and to bring in new business. Another goal was to encourage domestic tourism where Filipinos would visit "Old Manila" as a national historical destination and entertain in Malate as a restaurant and café district. The Old Manila Commission was a strategy for encouraging private sector involvement because city government could not afford to fund urban renewal. Short-term plans consisted of the city leasing land at a lower cost to smaller businesses with tax incentives for businesses that renovated buildings, worked toward consistent streetscapes, planted vegetation, and cleaned the public property around their businesses. The long-term plan was to secure international grants to redesign and adapt the area into a historical district.

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CHAPTER 3

The Magic of Place: Players in the Nakpil Revival

"Makati is Like Sterile and Malate is Like a Stew": Encountering Malate's Urban Magic

As I moved throughout the district to conduct my field research in 2000, time and again my interviewees claimed that Malate had magic. I did not initially understand this magic, or Manileños' love affair with the district, which they repeatedly insisted was worthy of my attention as a researcher. I witnessed Malate's ascension into a prominent entertainment district that drew patronage from the wider metropolitan region, and which successfully outpaced Makati as the region's most popular entertainment and tourism destination in 2000. Yet there was something deeper to Malate's magic than its economic renewal; there was something to its unique sense of place—its history, intimate space, urban mix, and neighborhood identity—that conjured magic for a wide span of people who regularly visited, lived, or owned businesses there. The magic of place drew patrons back every weekend, encouraged people to take up residence, and led to the opening of small cottage industry-style leisure establishments, despite people having to traverse a spatially expansive and traffic-dense metropolitan region to get to this up-in-coming entertainment enclave.

The meanings of magic arose out of two experiences of Malate's diverse city worlds (Massey et al. 1999). First, my interviewees emphasized Malate's mix, which they experienced as an uncanny convergence of urban contradictions that they regularly encountered within the neighborhood's intimate urban space—Malate was urban and intimate, gay and straight,

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bohemian and yuppie, rich and poor, international and local, historical and modern, and both real and magical. Second, Malate was an enclave where they experienced freedom. For many, Malate was a district that was dissociated spatially from their neighborhoods of residence, extended family, and work. By making the long trek to the district, they distanced themselves from their everyday social regulations and experienced becoming someone else entirely. Significantly, this freeing experience took shape within a former sex tourism district where discourses of "travel as escape" and "foreign playgrounds" held over from the era of the sex district. In my interview with Jorge in 2000 (a Malate city councilor), he communicated this popular experience of Malate's mix:

> The sidecars[1] are ugly but it's all part of the broth. It's a broth of spices—good stuff and bad stuff—that when you taste it together it's good. [There was] this conference in Germany of young politicians from all over the world. And Germany is so clean…. And I'm used to all this stress, the mixture of smells coming from Manila and from Asia…. There was this councilor; he took off his shoes … his feet just permeated the air and everybody just [inhales] because [we're in] a scentless room. Smell the feet; some people are going ahhh…. "Where we're from" I said, "we smell a sewer, we smell the spices in the food, we smell the pollution, we smell the flowers. It's a mixture … and the bay. It's a beautiful smell all put together. But here, you know [it doesn't] smell very good because it's so sterile." *Makati is like sterile and Malate is like a stew.*

The intimacy of Malate's urban plan, in part, forced this mixing. In fact, this urban intimacy established Malate as a unique urban space from other neighborhoods in the metro region. Urban patrons were often having "their minds blown away," as Jorge claims below, because Malate's urban space functioned as an enclave where vastly divergent social worlds mingled in the streets:

> I'll tell you one thing, … it's got soul. Look at that (gestures out the window of our restaurant); that's a beggar with a baby. It shocks your senses. It shocks you into reality.… No other place in the Philippines offers something like that. You're having fine Bordeaux wine in Portico and then a beggar passes by and people look. Where else can you see that? In Makati, can you see that? You come from the ballet, the CCP, and you're all dressed up in your formal outfit and you're drinking wine with your friends in Matina (a restaurant on Nakpil Street) and vendors are selling cigarettes at five

> centavos each. And then you see these drag queens walking all over the place. It blows your mind away.

Significantly, this mix that Jorge spoke of was one that encapsulated all elements of city life—street poverty, fine wine, gays, *and* entertainment, for example. This bohemian renewal discourse advocates for a balance in the mix, in place of cleaning up or privileging one element or consumer class. Other renewal discourses emphasized the cleanup of that which offended the incoming consuming classes.

What was evident in 2000 was that Malate's renewal featured adaptive reuse renovations of smaller businesses that encouraged, not a covering up of street life, but an increasingly voyeuristic relationship to it. For example, Portico—the fine dining restaurant on Adriatico Street out of which Jorge gazed—was part of a former family compound building. Portico's owner, and son of the family, divided the compound into three establishments: Portico, which was a sidewalk café-style restaurant; the Glass House, which was an enclosed restaurant in a glass gazebo surrounded by a garden; and the Malate Pensionne, which is a popular budget hotel with international travelers. The compound renovations connected Portico with the street; the front wall of Portico was knocked down and replaced with a large mobile glass door that was opened to the street during business hours. A low black iron fence, which extended slightly out onto the sidewalk and enclosed the restaurant's tables and chairs, demarcated its space. Travelers could access Malate Pensionne by way of an intimate walkway that passed by a garden that was nestled in the courtyard of the compound. When I flew into Manila in 2000, and made my way to the Malate Pensionne where I stayed for a week, I experienced a sense of escape from the grueling city to which I had just arrived, and as I walked the green pathway away from the street and back toward the hotel. Yet the compound sat only a half a block from the spectacular neon lights of Remedios Circle and it directly faced the mouth of Nakpil Street, where urban renewal was well under way.

This urban renewal and Malate's intimate city plan encouraged patrons' to interact with the street, which helped foster their magical experience of place. For example, my interviewees spoke about how they felt as if they were magically lured around the district, walking from one building and street to the next. Both news articles reporting on the 2000 boom and my ethnographic observations highlighted how establishments encouraged Malate's patrons to form a new relationship to, and use of, urban space.

Large windows, patios, balconies, and sidewalk tables became an increasingly common feature of the built environment. Business owners spoke of encouraging patrons to "sit and watch the street life," which my interviewees explained as a comparatively new urban activity for the Philippines. New entrepreneurs overwhelmingly claimed that they specifically chose to locate in Malate precisely because of the intimate street culture already present in the district. This culture of street intimacy was then adapted as a business style for the emerging establishments—entrepreneurs emphasized the "cozy" and inviting atmosphere inside their establishments and as well as their desire to offer a more "personalized" service to patrons. And, they often framed this offering by comparison to what patrons encountered in Makati—a cold commercial environment where eclectic street cultures and patrons were suppressed. Thus, Malate's intimate street culture and local commercial establishments encouraged a freer-spirited—if voyeuristic—patron, who transformed through their interactions, not only as consumers, but with other patrons, the streets, and the generalized magic of Malate. The district, as so many recounted, "simply had soul."

Malate was magical because patrons experienced freedom, and self-transformation, within an urban place. My interviewees spoke of how the actual spaces of Malate encouraged them to act differently than if they were in other parts of the metro region, and that Malate simply allowed them to "let go and discover themselves." Jorge extended this freedom to any person who was looking to escape from the demands of having to appear presentable to a very strict public eye. He explained that Filipinos are a lot like Americans in that they are overly concerned with style and appearances; but deep down, Filipinos want to be "shocked into reality" and they are drawn to spaces that inspire freedom of self-expression, "It's different. It's reality. All these other places, you see, are sugar coated see, are sugar coated. This is the real McCoy; this is the Philippines. I think people are more relaxed to be who they are because of that pervading vibe". Jorge speaks about a specific class of Filipino, a transnational class that has traveled and experienced the anonymity and eclecticism of global cities. This transnational class was the reformed patron of Malate's urban renewal. Like the former sex tourists, they were a transnational class that wielded the power of consumerism to shape the district's economy. Unlike sex tourists, they were Filipinos who sought a voyeuristic eclectic urbanism alongside of cosmopolitan consumption. Yet the fact that Malate, for a period, encouraged the intimate mixing of patrons meant that the practices of "freedom" and "self-expression" actually cut across classes.

This freedom of self-expression that is rooted in a place is tied to a popular understanding of Malate as the gay bohemian neighborhood where one can both imagine and perform being someone else, a performance with which gays and lesbians are well acquainted. David, the gay café owner who helped shape the Nakpil revival by encouraging gays from different class backgrounds to bring performative drag to the streets, explained that Malate gives all people "that sort of free wheeling feeling when they're there; it brings out answers to their inhibitions.… That's why it's … bohemian or cutting edge because I think it brings out more self-expression in people. Malate was very instrumental in that purpose". Pretending you are someone else on the street does not cost money, and neither can such personalized performances be regulated by private businesses or the police. In fact, many of the gay hosts in this study spent much of their time performing their vision of gay urban lifestyle while walking the streets—dressing nicely, interacting with Malate regulars, and cruising gay men along intimate city blocks—even though they did not have the income to regularly patronize the gay-owned businesses. Hosts overwhelmingly claimed that Malate was freeing because they could perform the type of urban gay that they wanted to be (and couldn't be in their home provinces) even if they were economically marginalized from the gentrifying gay spaces. Malate as the place for such performances of self-expression therefore encouraged a range of patrons' imagination and actions—one could both reimagine oneself among the mix and act out that imagination. Mari, an avid Malate patron and lesbian, claimed this about the magic of Malate's space:

> I have to mention again the idea of freedom. You can perform what you're thinking and be that character. And you can be soooo into what you're doing.… And you see like-minded people. And if you have prior inhibitions with whatever you're doing, you get encouraged [not to be inhibited] because other people are being open.… If you think of it, it's like you stay here and you just happen to kiss her or whatever. If it happened in another place, you'd think "Uh, it's probably the beer." But if it happens in Malate … it's because it's Malate. You know, that kind of magic.

Thus *that* kind of magic arose from a grouping of business establishments that were concentrated within a three-block radius and whose built structure encouraged patrons' connection to the street performances taking shape outside. That kind of magic also emerged out of both the

spontaneous and organized street performances that arose with a history of street parties, encouraging the comingling of patrons, art, business, and gay urban life. The magic was also a part of the concentration of urban and global social worlds within an intimate neighborhood enclave where sex tourism left behind voyeuristic urban practices. Finally, that kind of magic arose out of patrons' lived experience of a place where they both imagined new identities and took advantage of the freedoms available to perform them. In short, that kind of magic was connected to their lived experiences of urban place.

But isn't there also a history that contributes to this urban magic? And, how did this love affair with Malate begin? To answer these questions, I turn now to a historical exploration of gay space in Malate, drawing out how gay space contributed to the freeing, sexual, self-expressive, and performative aspects of Malate's urban place. Malate has a sexuality and it was very much the public expressions of sexuality that took shape on the streets that allowed for such magical experiences of urban place.

Gay History and Urban Sexual Space

My oral history interviews point to the earliest gay space, as forming around Remedios Circle in the 1960s, when Malate was still a residential district with the beginning of urban flight. Interviewees remember the district as "dark and undeveloped" in terms of nightlife yet they recall that Remedios Circle was a known cruising area for gay men, male and transgender sex workers, and the "adventurous" tourist. Remedios Circle was overgrown with weeds and bamboo at the time, which facilitated clandestine encounters between men.

This discursive aura of Remedios Circle as "wild and undeveloped" is oppositional to its 2000 representation in tourism literature and news articles as the "entertainment nerve center" of Metro Manila. My interviewees claimed that the presence of transgender sex workers—in their gender and labor ambiguity, who worked the circle and shared a house on Remedios Street—marked Remedios Circle as a "no man's land" in the popular imagination. Early gay space thus began as an interstitial zone where the commodified exchange of gender and sexual differences within the overgrown park of Remedios Circle created an urban space for sexual Others. Martín, a gay fashion designer who eventually established a fashion design business along Mabini Street in the 1960s, explains that he was drawn to Malate at sixteen because he knew that different sexualities

existed there. His early childhood memories of Remedios Circle were the transgender sex workers, who he saw working, when his family drove past the circle on their way to Manila Bay. These memories drew him back to the district because, at sixteen, he simply wanted to be with "the gays." Yet like many upper-class Filipinos, he hid his visits to Malate as well as his sexuality from his family who saw the district, its sex work, and transgender women as scandalous.

Although there have been other urban spaces throughout Manila where the visibility of same-sex-desiring men manifest—such as Parloristas' beauty salons, gay beauty pageants, male strip bars, and streets where male sexual laborers work, for example—Remedios Circle gained a cultural currency as a visible gay space. In part, this is because of the presence of gay tourists who patronized the circle in search of gay sex workers. Gay and heterosexual tourists would regularly leave the bright lights of Ermita's sex strip to "take a walk on the other side," practicing same-sex sexual exchanges in the circle. Malate's history is heavily marked by international tourism in this way, which brings a global imprint to its gay spaces long before the rise of gay-led gentrification there.

I found these early descriptions of Remedios Circle as "dark and wild," and Malate as "residential and undeveloped," as striking given that the internationally renowned sex district developed just one and two blocks removed from the circle on Mabini and MH del Pilar Streets. Most people understand the sex district as having been contained within Ermita yet Mabini and MH del Pilar extend down into Malate, which meant that the sex strip developed in the northern part of Malate as well. My interviewees and news reports describe the sex strips on Mabini and MH del Pilar as fantastic, otherworldly, carnivalesque, and densely populated with sex establishments. The sex strips stood in stark contrast to the residential spaces of Malate. Jon, a gay expatriate who had often traveled to and eventually lived in Manila, described the sex district as follows:

> That street (MH del Pilar) really was the booming area. Along that street most likely you had a few hundred girly bars.… People have said that [Angeles] is much like MH del Pilar but [Angeles] is much smaller. On MH del Pilar you could walk from one bar next door to the next bar; it was every opening in every door on the whole street from UN Avenue all the way down [there were] these girly bars. Actually it was quite fun in those days because they weren't that commercialized; [they were] for anyone to go, have a beer, and stay for a while.

What Jon understood as the "not very commercial" sex establishments were in fact commercial sex spaces where foreign travelers visited, consumed alcohol, engaged in conversation with women and men hospitality workers, yet felt little pressure from the establishment to purchase sex for the evening. In other words, these commercial spaces offered alcohol, sex, and hospitality to foreigners yet travelers such as Jon did not interpret hospitality and alcohol consumption as commodified exchanges. Foreign tourists experienced Ermita as simply offering exciting and entertaining spaces for them and where they could sexually explore while traveling away from home. It was within this hypersexualized urban commerce that Malate's first gay bars appeared. My interviews with gay tourists show overwhelmingly that they visited the sex district with the intent of finding a gay bar; they knew they could find gay space within the already sexualized commercial spaces of a sex strip. The gay bars offered commercial sex to men, ranging from gay hospitality and sex work, male exotic dancing, to live sex shows. Micah, a gay Filipino who initially visited these bars as a young college student, described them as follows:

> The red light district has been there … [since the] late 60s and early 70s and then you have pockets of gay bars which, when you say gay bars it's not like a place where you wear your Armanis and show up there, drink your fancy cocktails, and look pretty. Gay bar, at that time, was like a meat market. Like you have raw meat, fresh meat, cold meat, all sorts of things…. It's a cross between a circus, freak show, a brothel, and a meat market. I mean the place is grungy, dirty, filthy. You won't even drink from the glass.

These non-normative spaces within an international sex district thus allowed room for the development of gay space as well. Filipino and foreign gay men, and the early Filipino bohemians who patronized the sex district from the 1960s through the 1980s, remember Malate as both exotic and removed. The sex district was a place where they could find gay life in Manila as well as a space where they were not subjected to the watchful eye of family, friends, a heteronormative public, and the state. Even under the Marcos-era martial law, my interviewees claimed that the establishment owners simply locked the door after curfew and kept the party going all night until the next morning when the curfew had lifted. The state rarely raided these establishments because they were the playground of foreign tourists and well-connected Filipinos. Most of my interviewees recall traveling to the district as a way to escape the sexual

marginalization they experienced at home, whether "home" was another part of Metropolitan Manila or another country. Furthermore, they characterize this urban sexual space as a kind of frontier because the district's fantastic and undefined nature allowed for an emergent urban space that was deeply experiential. This experiential and emergent urban space plays a part in my interviewees' early memories of Malate's magic, as Micah recounted here:

> For me, it was like bright lights and big city, magical.… Malate for me was some sort of magical kingdom.… I discovered myself in Malate. But of course being in Malate at that period enables me to choose things because, you know, Malate was a black hole. You had all sorts of people in Malate at that time.

This discourse about Malate's magic does exoticize the sex district—it was an urban space where there was a concentration of both public sex and "foreignness" in an already spatially intimate urban district. In other words, the presence of foreign tourists consuming public sex was a large part of what made the sex strip "exotic." This made Malate appealing to foreigners and Filipinos alike. Contrary to a mass-mediated representation that the sex strip was simply a place where Filipinos sold sex and foreign male tourists consumed it, my interviewees remember a variety of urban tourists patronizing the district including Filipino bohemians, husbands and wives, diplomatic families, male and female tourists, domestic tourists, and heterosexuals and gays. My interviews showed that the appeal of visiting a sex district for those who did not necessarily want to consume sex resided in urban patrons' desire to be visual consumers—or voyeurs—of urban difference. Jon, the gay expatriate, recalls a strip club that the expatriate community in Manila attended for entertainment, including husbands *and* wives: "The particular place was called the Firehouse in Ermita and it was well known; … the expat community and even wives and husbands would come there and look at the exotic other side of life". "Exotic difference" was therefore created within urban place through the comingling of public sexuality (heterosexual and homosexual) and a transnational presence.

Other interviewees claimed to have sought an alternative and anonymous sociality in the sex district. For them, the "girly bars" were simply places where bohemians could congregate with like-minded friends or have a conversation with a stranger. My interviewees emphasized the

plethora of relations and experiences fostered on the sex strip even though the consumption of sex by foreign men, they note, was a strikingly visible part of this scene. For example, Jon claimed that he first visited the "girly bars" on MH del Pilar when he faced a job crisis; the multinational company for which he worked, and which brought him to live in Manila, declared bankruptcy. At the time, he remembered wanting to patronize an establishment that was both anonymous and social. He had not yet acknowledged his homosexuality but he did not want to have sex with women; rather, Jon wanted to drink, listen to music, and have anonymous conversations with the hostess dancers. Thus the sex strip's establishments offered the appropriate combination of hospitality, sociality, and anonymity during this key crisis in Jon's life.

In a similar vein, Filipino bohemians discussed visiting the sex district because they found the space to be open, exciting, and removed from the critical eye of the Filipino upper classes who entertained in Makati. Bohemians framed their trips to the sex strip as an "exotic" night away from the controlling atmosphere of their home districts. One Filipino artist and bohemian claimed that she and her friends would gather at the most rundown "girly bar" to drink and socialize, "we would either end up singing on the tables or join the dancers on stage". For her, the bars were simply entertaining spaces where she and her friends could have unbridled urban experiences. Many bohemians characterized their use of sexual urban space as a kind of scavenging off of the exotic difference that the strip offered. They rented cheap apartments in the district so that on weekends they could get away from "home" to enjoy the nightlife, consume alcohol and drugs, and have their "illicit" affairs in Malate.

Thus in this experientially playful urban space, gay bars developed, leading to the gradual emergence of gay consumer spaces in Malate. Jon explains that in the early 1980s he knew of approximately six gay-oriented establishments dispersed among the sex establishments. These bars constituted the early commercial spaces for gay men to gather, socialize, drink, and to more openly express their desire for men, even though these initial gay spaces were oriented toward the sale of sex—they were prostitution houses, go-go dancing bars, hospitality bars, and hustler pick-up bars.

Yet finding gay space in Malate offered different avenues of sexual discovery for Filipino versus foreign gay men. Filipino gay men more often frame this search as a secretive journey where they stole away from family and friends to visit a district known to be gay. Once in Malate, they frequented the cafés and bars, and met other—often older—gay men who

understood and guided them around the district's nightlife. Discovering Malate in this way coincided with their sexual discovery, and for some, it marked a shift in their sexual identity. They discussed having an early recognition that they were sexually different, which they understand as provoking their curiosity about Malate's gay space. Yet Malate provided the place for their emergent gay identity, showing how place shaped that identity. Further, Filipino gay men who claimed to be attracted to foreigners explained that Malate was not only gay, but that it was a place that integrated gay lifestyle with a foreign presence. As José, a gay host, explained "If you're gay and you like white guys, you'd be stupid to go anywhere else but Malate". Rafael, a gay Filipino, described his early visits to Malate as a journey where he would go to "look at the foreigners". Most gay hosts expressed awe when sharing their first impression of Malate; it was the first public space where they not only witnessed same-sex expression but also a place where they saw foreign gay men. Thus for Filipino gay men, coming to Malate is tied to their experience of coming Out as gay men.

Gay tourists frame their discovery of Malate as one where they drew upon their already established "gay sensibility to sniff out" the gay areas of Manila. Others discuss stumbling across gay spaces only after being directed by the tourism industry to seek accommodation in the tourist district. A key difference between gay Filipinos and foreigners however is that foreign gay men arrived in Malate with a static understanding of gay identity and life. Their experience of Malate's sexual space therefore was one that emphasized its contradictions and/or fluidity of sexual expression, or how Malate's gay space was a poor copy of gay districts elsewhere. Ironically, the stability of their gay identity was challenged as well, as their participation in the sexual life of Malate ultimately drew them into complex sexual relations, which sometimes involved their having sex with heterosexual-identified Filipino men.

Gay bars on the sex strip were one form of gay space; another involved the development and influence of the fashion industry around Remedios Circle and on Mabini Street, starting in the late 1950s. Predominantly gay fashion designers located their shops in Malate because of the cheaper rent, the older buildings (which lent character to their design shops), and the close proximity of the arts and theater, a sector in which fashion designers were involved. Designers drew their clientele from the remaining wealthy residents who still used Mabini Street as their primary promenading area and who window-shopped for their clothes.

Martín, a gay fashion designer who opened his shop on Mabini Street, indicated that, by 1964, the top design, antique, and art shops were concentrated along Mabini. The street was a highly competitive place to begin fashion design because it was considered the most prestigious shopping street in the City of Manila. Couturiers began opening design shops on parallel streets in hopes of moving their businesses over to Mabini, which contributed to the density of the fashion industry in the area. Martín and others described their visits to Malate as involving walks along Mabini so that they could gaze into the windows of the many design shops that lined the street. He claimed that the creativity displayed on the street served as the impetus for many to enter into design. For example, Martín apprenticed for a Mabini designer before opening his own shop on Mabini. Micah, a graphic designer, also attributed his passion for design as beginning with visits to Malate's fashion row:

> I would take the Jeepney down from [school] and get off at Malate Church and walk down Remedios and just look around shop windows because being an art student at that time, it was like my only outlet. Wow, this is exciting. You see, these are nice shops, and you see collections and a lot of designers. Like the whole of Adriatico, where Enclave is now and Down Under,[2] these were all boutiques.

The design business in Malate was, for the most part, built around walk-in customers; hence, the culture of promenading was quite central to the establishment of the fashion industry in the area. Martín explained that the spatial layout of Malate—its mixed residential and commercial areas and its walkable blocks—was crucial to his design business. He built his initial customer base with walk-in customers, primarily young wealthy students who attended the Assumption Catholic School just two blocks over from his establishment. He claimed that his reputation spread throughout Metropolitan Manila via the elite residents of Malate who first patronized his shop on a regular basis.

Ironically, the sex strip (located just one street over on MH del Pilar and parallel to the fashion row) also contributed to the growth of the fashion industry. Designers claimed that tourists who visited the tourist and sex strip made up some of their clientele. Martín explained that tourists visited the bars along MH del Pilar and then shopped in the more expensive antique and fashion stores along Mabini. Thus Malate's rise as a fashion district was built upon the spatially intimate mixing of the sex, tourism, arts, and lifestyle industries within the district.

Further, the concentration of the fashion industry in Malate produced a window of opportunity for the development of other gay-owned businesses. Relying on capital earned from design, innovative couturiers opened cafés, bars, and eventually clubs, indicating that they wanted to create entertainment spaces that reflected their lifestyles and friendship circles. One such famous fashion designer, Victor, who got his start working in Malate's theater district, opened Cornucopia—an internationally famous disco and drag entertainment space—in the early 1970s. My interviews and archival data credit Cornucopia for drawing in the first major crowds seeking entertainment (rather than commodified sex) to Malate. Thus the opening of these cafés and bars by gay fashion designers established Remedios Circle as the initial site for a café culture in Manila. Other bohemian-identified café and bar owners followed, lending to the development of Malate into an urban enclave for bohemians, artists, designers, gays, and other patrons seeking alternative entertainment to the sex strip.

My interviews and archival research showed that gay men and bohemians became prominent patrons of this emerging café culture in the 1970s. These sources point to the interdependence between the gays and bohemians in shaping Malate, as both groups sought an open district where they could live alternative urban lifestyles. David (the key gay café owner who started the Nakpil revival in the mid-1990s), indicated that:

> Of course the gays and the bohemians were kindred souls. Like, there's a kinship between those types, the creative gay community and the creative bohemian community…. In fact, it still happens up to now. Because you have a generation like in the 60's and the 70's, you have the likes of Larry Cruz, although Larry Cruz[3] is not gay. But the whole scenario is like this—people like Victor, Mike De La Rosa (both are prominent gay fashion designers) and they do Larry's (Cruz) ABC Galleries.[4] They all go to Larry's Café Adriatico and have some Chocolate Eh, a big chocolate drink, and his Churros. This was in the 70s…. I think the gays and the bohemians were hand in hand in developing Malate.

Other interviewees pointed out that Malate's bohemians were the children of Manila's upper classes, and that their well-traveled class position influenced Malate's café culture. For example, upper-class families tended to send their children abroad for study; these students were inspired by the bohemian street and café cultures in Europe and the USA and drew from these transnational experiences to open similar cafés and clubs in Malate when they returned. Additionally, many spoke of knowing wealthy

bohemians who lived and worked in Makati during the week and who rented the apartments in Malate for weekend parties. It was in these weekend apartments that wealthy bohemians experimented with living the alternative and "freeing" lifestyles for which Malate became known. In this respect, Malate became an urban playground for wealthy bohemians who both participated in and contributed to the district's emergent sexual space; neither the state nor public monitored the practices of Manila's wealthy when such practices were tucked away in a sex, arts, and tourism enclave.

The mixing of diverse city worlds within Malate's magical urban place—like, for example, heterosexuals with gay life and the upper classes with sex workers—was not a relationship devoid of conflict. In fact, the first gay-oriented bars and clubs that were not a part of the sex strip were upper-class spaces designed to counter the commodified sexuality of the district's more predominant sex establishments. These gay business owners indicated that they wanted mixed entertainment spaces for upper-class gay men and trendy heterosexuals that were removed from Ermita's sex strip. Thus in 1970, and in collaboration with upper-class gay Filipinos, Martín (the gay designer) opened a new style gay bar, Café Sol, modeling it after the exclusive gay bars prominent in New York City and London. Café Sol was a small bar located in the back of a popular restaurant in the northernmost edge of Ermita. Patrons could attend only by invitation or after being selected from a line of people waiting at the door. Martín boasted of Café Sol's exclusivity and claimed the bar to be a "first of its kind in Manila".

He and his collaborators—all designers and writers—wanted a place for a particular class of gay men; they also wanted a bar that was stylish enough to attract the attention of a wealthy and famous Manila elite who were not necessarily gay. For example, drag performances at Café Sol demonstrated gay men's style and creativity and were orchestrated to encourage heterosexual patronage. Drag performances also provided space for gay designers to sidestep social controls and perform an alternative gender for their wealthy clients but only, Martín indicated, because "they were done with a lot of class and style". Thus using the commonsense assumption that "gays are at the forefront of art and design" while hiding behind class respectability and exploiting heterosexuals' voyeuristic desire to witness the gender transgression of gay men, Café Sol encouraged influential heterosexuals to take part in openly gay space. This was an alternative sexual space that, until this point, upper-class heterosexuals

would have avoided. Victor of Cornucopia, who was an established designer on Remedios Circle at that time, frequented Café Sol. Martín claimed that the drag performances at Café Sol planted the seed for the ensuing and internationally famous drag shows at Cornucopia.

The disco Cornucopia is a Malate legend—this gay-owned club brought national and international fame to both Malate and the City of Manila. Modeled after European discos, Cornucopia was the place to be in the 1970s for an even wider mix of patrons—tourists, Filipinos, designers, artists, diplomats, Manila's elites, heterosexuals, gay men, sex workers, and transgender women. It was the most successful dance club ever in the Philippines and it showed the power of gay visibility to draw crowds regionally, nationally, and internationally; many claim that it was the first notable space in the Philippines where gay life was Out and visible in this way. All of my interviewees indicated that Cornucopia had a transformative impact on both urban life in Malate and gay urban life in the Philippines. It not only showed that Out gay urban space was possible but also that gay-owned establishments could play a prominent role in jump-starting a café culture taking shape around Remedios Circle in the 1970s. Finally, Cornucopia was a demonstration of how a local business could successfully merge with Malate's unique urban features—its history, architecture, tourism infrastructure, arts and performance, sexual lifestyle, and wealth. In fact, Cornucopia became a tourist attraction in its own right; the disco drew in international guided tours for its evening drag shows and tourism guides listed Cornucopia as a tourist attraction for anyone visiting Manila.

Victor, Cornucopia's owner, as I discussed earlier, started out in design while working as a costume designer for a famous vaudeville actress who regularly performed in the Ermita theater district in the 1950s. He moved down to Malate to start his own fashion design business on Remedios Circle where he later became a leading fashion designer for the metro region. After interviewing Victor in 2000, I came to see that Cornucopia's start had everything to do with the cultural geography of Malate's urban space. For example, Victor ventured out from his design business into the club entertainment sector because, in his words, there was little in Malate on which to capitalize at that time and he chose the club's location on Remedios Circle simply because he already owned his design shop there. He shared that he found Cornucopia's location one rainy evening while walking around Remedios Circle, when he stumbled across a "For Rent" sign flapping in the wind. His initial impression of the historical building was that it was lonely; however, he found the space to be unique

enough to envision a club there. Although Victor claimed that the club was not well planned, he did want it to be a space for gay men to socialize. Hence, Cornucopia's style mirrored the emerging lifestyle cultures of the gay 70s to which Victor had been exposed while traveling to gay discos in Frankfurt, Germany.

Although Victor and his co-investors (who were all gay and friends) originally intended Cornucopia to be a gay club, they later decided that they did not want the club to be exclusively gay. Their vision shifted to a club where they saw Filipinos, internationals, the wealthy, the famous, gay men, and the informal workers of Malate (including sex workers) mixing. Cornucopia soon gained a reputation as a chic space where a range of patrons—who otherwise did not socialize—rubbed elbows. The space became such a performative and voyeuristic space that famous fashion designers lent out their new clothing lines to transgender sex workers who modeled their clothing while working as "call girls" to international tourists; as Micah described, "you would get straight people coming in to watch the drag show; … you'd get a little clique of transvestites (sic) and some of the couturiers would give these transvestites their clothes to wear. They would just wear them for the night". Cornucopia thus became the urban place to gaze and be seen, as long as the patron could dress and act the part of the urban, trend-setting, aspiring upwardly mobile, gay-friendly Filipino or international.

As I mentioned earlier, Cornucopia also developed through its relationship with Ermita's sex district. Victor claimed that his establishment benefited from the sex district because patrons would tour the sex strip and visit Cornucopia for drag shows and drinks. Jon, the gay expatriate, explained that there was a parallel thrill to touring both Cornucopia and the sex strip:

> It was frequently visited by the expat community families as the chic thing. They would go to Cornucopia to watch the gays and the shows as a sort of the kick of excitement (sic) just as people would go to gay bars all over the world. They are excited about seeing gay life. There was a little bit of the "let's go watch the freaks perform."

In this way, Cornucopia functioned much like the sex strip, facilitating a form of heterosexual tourism that seeks out sexual Others among Malate's urban sexual diversity. So Cornucopia became a space where visible gay life was gazed at, exoticized, and therefore Othered. Christopher,

an expatriate who often vacationed in Manila during the 1970s and 1980s, explained that Cornucopia was a draw for international tours to the City of Manila:

> In Cornucopia, they also did a very good drag show there. And people would come in just for the drag show, like a tour. You could see they had a guide with them and it would be part of the tour. Maybe Monaco[5] was part of the seedy underground tour.

The visibility of international tourists also helped establish Cornucopia's cosmopolitanism; the club became a global space where gay Filipinos knew they too could gaze at and meet foreigners. Thus for both foreigners and Filipinos, Cornucopia's space provoked the experience of being someplace else or potentially becoming someone else.

Victor emphasized that Cornucopia's success had most to do with the optimism and spirit of sexual exploration that was part of the 1970s, and that this was why the club did not last past the turn of the decade. Despite its closure, Cornucopia's impact on Malate was undeniable—the club transformed urban space into a gay-friendly and trend-setting urban enclave, where patrons came to have magical experiences. Micah captured this below:

> Malate always dictates what's cool, what's in … because during that time we had no internet or fashion television, you know, so it was Malate dictating the fashion. And then of course you had Cornucopia which was like the nerve center. All the people from like the famous photographers, models, visiting artists, and singers [were there]…. I saw the Village People there.

Cornucopia established the first widely held understanding of Malate as a gay area; yet, Malate's emergence as a neighborhood "where the gays are" had to be more widely solidified through two waves of gay-led business development along Nakpil and Maria Orosa Streets—the first wave of urban renewal was popularly understood as bohemian and the second wave as cosmopolitan. I turn now to an analysis of the first wave of bohemian-inspired urban renewal in Malate and how a key gay café owner, David, and a community development activist, Angie, mobilized the magic of place for urban community change. I follow how David and Angie both draw from and lend to discourses of urban magic through their production of a spontaneous street culture that encouraged the mixing of

pedestrians, street space, gay life, and creative performances with the local businesses on Nakpil Street. This is what my interviewees described as the "golden age of the Nakpil revival" and one that they understood as still bohemian and gay-performative.

"The Streets Are Alive!": The Golden Age of the Nakpil Revival

"Nakpil was nothing but a dark empty street just five years ago" my interviewees repeatedly claimed when discussing the development there in 2000. Remedios Circle had a few cafés and restaurants but more often Manila's nightlife concentrated along Mabini and MH del Pilar, particularly when the sex strip was open and thriving. The history of sexual space in the neighborhoods shows that together Ermita and Malate offered a respectable evening out and a "walk into the exotic other side of life" to an internationally famous sex tourism district. It was not until the Nakpil revival, beginning around 1995 and lasting through around 2006, that Malate came to the fore as a premier dining and entertainment district in Metropolitan Manila, which eclipsed (in entrepreneurial variety and numbers) the former sex strip of Ermita.

A parasitic relationship between Malate and Ermita is evident in their divergent development histories. It was not until Ermita was literally shut down during the bar closures of the early 1990s that Malate bloomed—the closing of the bars in Ermita, in part, shifted commercialization to Malate. Gay entrepreneurs described the window of opportunity that opened with the closure of sex establishments—rents were cheap, space was plentiful, and Malate had a unique sense of place that drew in visionary entrepreneurs. The district became a prime location to experiment with the opening of an innovative bar, restaurant, or café; in short, it became a place of cottage industry development. Yet Malate's growth did not happen on the terms of a sex industry's rise and fall or on the terms of big business; rather, an important part of Malate's growth, particularly when trying to understand its urban magic, are the terms of place-making set by a handful of small business owners and community organizers who saw merit in Malate's difference, history, and place, and sought to make a locally vibrant and performative community in its streets.

The street festivals orchestrated by the Tourist Belt Business Association (TBBA) at the turn of the decade generated entrepreneurial interest in the northern part of Malate, and concentrated metro-wide patronage around Remedios Circle. Increasingly, domestic tourists and suburban Filipinos were visiting the area for weekend entertainment. Malate had demonstrated that it was a viable space for an entertainment enclave in the metro region. So in 1993, with approximately six businesses scattered along one block of Nakpil Street, entrepreneurs organized around their collective complaint that they were not benefiting from the patronage of the street parties taking place just two blocks away from their establishments. At that time, my interviewees described Nakpil as having a residential yet "run-down" feeling; it was an intimate street just off of Adriatico Street and it lacked the spatial openness and commercial development of Remedios Circle. Yet the old houses lining Nakpil added to its unique character, and its short blocks made it a prime walkers' street. Entrepreneurs and community activists saw this potential in Nakpil, and tried to join TBBA's efforts to encourage patrons to stroll around the corner to Nakpil Street. They were unsuccessful, however, in convincing the TBBA to locate the promenade for Music Streets along Nakpil. TBBA saw Nakpil as too residential and its entrepreneurial space as too undeveloped to sustain an entire festival. This early attempt to join forces with the Remedios Circle street festivals failed to draw a critical mass of patrons over from the popular street parties. However, this failure became Nakpil's start, as it led to the collaboration of Nakpil's entrepreneurs with a former TBBA member—Angie—who decided to focus her community development on Nakpil Street. This collaboration eventually led to Nakpil's surpassing of Remedios Circle, as the most popular street space.

Angie had disagreed with TBBA's rejection of Nakpil Street; she saw potential in the block for developing an arts and entertainment promenade. She had owned a restaurant on Nakpil when she began working with the TBBA to orchestrate the Remedios Circle street festivals. Soon after her involvement as a community activist in the area, her restaurant closed. She described her involvement with the TBBA as motivated less out of a concern for conservation and more out of a desire to help local businesses make money so that Malate could be sustained through local endeavors. She wanted to encourage the residents of Malate to patronize local businesses in order to create a sustainable urban community driven primarily by local production and consumption practices.

Angie was a resident of Malate (up until her untimely death in 2012) and had taken an interest in the neighborhood after returning to live there as a young adult. She had lived most of her childhood in a family-owned building on Adriatico Street and left Malate as a teenager when her family moved to a suburb of Makati. Her return to Malate in the early 1980s had an incredible impact on her, and motivated her work with urban community. She described her frequent walks around the neighborhood and for the first time truly seeing the beauty and history of her childhood neighborhood. She claimed that this was the first time she lived in a neighborhood where she could walk for pleasure. She experienced her walks as directly connecting her to the urban space she lived in—walking the streets forced her to pay attention to the city's aesthetics, open spaces, trees, and architecture as well as how one moves through the city. It was through her walking that she developed an interest in older buildings and architecture, a love of urban street life, and a strong connection to urban place. It was through her walking the district that she first described experiencing the magic of Malate's urban place.

Angie's lived experience of urban place as well as her desire to help local businesses like her own led to her involvement with the TBBA and subsequent community work. She was also concerned with the direction of urban renewal in the wake of Mayor Lim's closure of the sex strip. She claimed that this was a key moment for Malate given that there were many vacancies and that rent was cheap. She and others believed that the area under Lim's leadership would likely attract big business and large-scale development projects. Lim was promising to move in the direction of mall and high-rise apartment construction (i.e. in the direction of Makati), while paying little attention to zoning, built heritage, or the original city plan. Angie felt that the TBBA's focus on fixing existing infrastructure, promoting Malate as a walker's district, and protecting Burnham's intimate and nature-accommodating city plan would allow smaller businesses to vie for space alongside of the threatening mass commercial takeover of the district. Angie claimed:

> You can never prevent big business from coming in.… I guess that's part of progress. But you have to be able to help the small businesses sustain themselves, or be able to put up some kind of a fight and not get taken over. And so that's what I wanted … because that's what makes a place appealing, so you [don't have to] go to a mall. And a lot of people like the idea that they can walk around the street; … *the streets are alive*. I'd be scared if the streets were deserted.

Angie, like many others, embraced Malate's mix, as a quintessential part of its magical sense of place:

> All kinds of people were there. You had office workers, and then these prostitutes with their Johns … and you could just sit there and have a meal and not feel alone because there were all these things going on in front of you. And that's what should make [the neighborhood successful].

It was precisely this intimate mixing of city worlds that Angie saw as Malate's great potential. She advocated for identifying the neighborhood's unique assets that could be harnessed for its renewal into a locally sustainable entertainment district. This focus on place could also avert Malate from following the path of mass commercial development that she so disliked in Makati. What Malate offered as an alternative, in her opinion, was a concentration of small businesses, a café culture, the accessibility of a walker's district, an interaction of diverse city worlds, and an established community of artists and musicians who lived, practiced, and performed in the area. When she spoke about her community work she emphasized the importance of these assets as central to a successful urban renewal project—the project had to remain rooted in place or many of these assets would wither away:

> There is no way you can compete with Makati. You just don't have the backup system that they do. They have the Ayalas[6], which you don't. You have to look at what you do have and build on that. What are your assets? You have the small businesses. You have the bohemian thing, the artists. For me, that is a very strong factor; that's one of the most important factors. Now Quezon City has that too, but it's such a big place; it's spread out. What they have [in Malate] is accessibility. You know you can just walk from one place to the other. In fact, that is what made their clientele…. [For example] the Spanish-speaking macho crowd … was like two steps away from Café Paradiseo with all these flaming queens and all kinds of people there…. A macho guy would never in his wildest dreams go to a place like that just to check it out even if he was dying of curiosity. It was just too weird. But [he could] walk over to Café Paradiseo and look in the window…. And so just from that you have this interaction because of the proximity.

By 1993, Angie had closed her business and was working full-time on these community events, though she had grown leery of the overly commercial direction of the Remedios Circle street festivals. She left the

TBBA because she grew tired of the increasing focus on built heritage, yet she remained interested in Nakpil Street after it had been proposed as a sight for Music Streets. Angie was also influenced by one Nakpil business owner in particular—David—the Filipino gay man who had opened the popular gay bohemian bar/café called Café Paradiseo. Separate from the TBBA and prior to Angie's involvement on Nakpil, David had organized a few successful Nakpil Street parties where in one instance he orchestrated a gay pride celebration with impromptu and very creative drag performances right out and onto the street. David's parties remain a legacy in Malate and were described by many as spontaneous and unique; his performances created a feeling that the district's celebration could simply spill out onto the streets from the crowded and very popular Nakpil establishments, because so often his celebrations did. Angie claimed that the other business owners on Nakpil respected David and followed his lead particularly when they all came together to share a vision for the direction of Nakpil's revival.

David and Angie decided that the Nakpil business owners should organize and carry out a series of street parties that could promote Nakpil as a promenade area. Music Streets was their model yet they believed that Nakpil was a far more strategic location than Adriatico for such an event because Nakpil had both the intimacy and the critical mass of businesses that Adriatico lacked. These businesses offered diverse entertainment services, including restaurant, bar, and café services and they were concentrated along one short block on Nakpil. Angie envisioned a chain of businesses that would encourage patrons to promenade from one end of the block to the other. David was enthusiastic about using the street for a festival and the other entrepreneurs wanted to generate wider interest in the area, which could promote a wider consumer base for their establishments. Thus with the support of the Nakpil business owners, Angie and David collaborated in their orchestration of a series of very popular Nakpil street parties in the mid-1990s that ended up drawing patronage from the wider metropolitan region onto Nakpil Street.

Angie, who was both well connected and familiar with city hall after her work with the TBBA, was able to secure the permits to close the street. Although Mayor Lim had supported the TBBA and its street parties, he resisted the business development and street life along Nakpil. Angie claimed that Lim was homophobic—the Mayor viewed David and his supporters "as a bunch of Baklas" threatening to take over. Angie (who was both heterosexual and from Manila's upper class) used her class and

heterosexual privilege to gain access to the inner circle of city hall and successfully obtained the necessary permits for all of the Nakpil events. Yet Nakpil's revival also had a hidden supporter in the Mayor's office at that time—then Vice Mayor Lito Atienza (who was elected Mayor in 1998, defeating Lim, and who supported the widespread urban renewal of Malate, including the development of Bay Walk) silently worked to encourage small business development along Nakpil by making it easier for entrepreneurs to obtain street permits for parties and sidewalk cafés. Vice Mayor Atienza had another hidden strategy; he quietly resisted Lim's push to rezone Malate into a residential district and into a condo and mall development zone, by sitting on permits for big development yet granting permits for small businesses and street parties.

Angie did turn to a large national corporation—San Miguel Beer—to secure sponsorship (approximately 80,000–85,000 pesos) for a series of four festivals to take place over the span of one month. This sponsorship was contingent upon the sale of only San Miguel Beer at the event.[7] Angie and the Nakpil business owners made this compromise in return for controlling the theme, planning, and orchestration of the street festivals. Their permit allowed for the closure of Nakpil for the length of one block between J Bocobo and M Orosa streets. The cafés, bars, and restaurants set up food stalls along the stretch of the block and Angie drew upon local artists to perform in the streets. Thus the first series of Nakpil street parties began in this relatively local way.

Although Angie began the street festivals to help local business and to improve the quality of neighborhood life, she did not anticipate how the promotion of street culture would factor so prominently into the success of these festivals. She varied festival themes, integrated performances throughout the festival, and avoided booking commercial acts for entertainment. Rather, she brought in writers, poets, performance artists, and musicians who were known, or trying to gain a reputation, within Malate. She avoided having a central stage and rather scattered the performances throughout the street and among the food stalls. Her festival themes included a poetry night, paintings and installations, "ethnic music," and the celebration of Bonafacio[8] day. She did not focus the festival around a central event; rather, she encouraged the integration of performers among patrons who could promenade and cultivate an alternative urban experience. She hoped that such integrated entertainment would contribute to a performative street life. She also resisted organizing street parties with a particular political message; she explained,

> I thought it was appropriate—so did David as did the others—to celebrate Bonafacio. I personally like Bonafacio. It was more fitting than celebrating Valentine's Day. And so, let's do it. I never thought of it as trying to tell anybody anything. We're just doing our thing here.

So, for example, the celebration of Bonafacio Day involved a leaf painting that was an interactive street drawing guided by an artist and carried out by festival patrons, "If you pass by, the artist is there to guide you and people would put leaves, a certain color of leaves, on [a canvas] until it became the face of Bonafacio. And we signed beside it. So all the people did that". Her strategy of advocating a more diverse spectrum of street art as entertainment for the festivals fulfilled three goals: The festivals drew on local talent, they provided a space for and patronage of local artists, and they made space in the street for artistic performances. Angie eventually realized street art's real contribution to Malate's urban culture—the street festivals established a vibrant urban community that drew from the mixing of pedestrians, street space, and creative performances. And, this mixing was precisely what many claimed to inspire Malate's magic.

Angie's budget was small[9] and by the fourth party she had run out of money. She secured an additional 5000 pesos from San Miguel Beer, which she used to pay the artists, indicating that her priority was to pay local talent for these small performances rather than to orchestrate a sensational commercial event. The unfolding of this fourth party revealed the ideal of what she had wanted to accomplish with the street festivals overall—that is a collectivity of creative expression drawn from the spontaneity and uncertainty of urban street life:

> One of the artists—he's American, you know, though he was Filipinized—he said, "It's going to rain." Because the first time I started doing [the festivals] I would wonder, "What if it rains?" He would say then, "It's not going to rain." I would say "No, seriously, what do we do if it rains?" … "You pray," he said. "I'm serious," he said…. And, it would work somehow. So this time he says it's going to rain. Then I say, "Ok, God please don't make it rain," and I wear my sandals and I go. This was total confidence; it's not going to rain. But anyway, it did rain … and everything just ground to a halt. And we were doing active thinking in the street. And a friend of mine had brought a raincoat. So I put it on and I was walking around in the rain and then I saw the mic and I grabbed it. I got an umbrella; the cigarette vendors set it up for me on top of the canvass. And I made the artist stand

> up in the rain. And so he started painting, and little by little people started coming out and walking in the rain. By that time, I removed my raincoat and after a while everybody was dancing in the rain. It was really fun because it was spontaneous. You just need that little thing to push it.

Angie alluded to many such unanticipated outcomes of the festivals particularly in their promotion of a street culture. She began her community work with a focus on local businesses and then "the arts started creeping in". She claimed that she had had an affinity for the arts prior to the festivals but it was during her orchestration of the events that she established a strong rapport with local artists and began to see their very strong role in building urban community. She found that the artists were equally interested in that community because they needed viable performance spaces that could facilitate their interaction with the public; thus artists had stakes in Malate's renewal as well. Angie credited the success of the street parties to the artists' spontaneous and context-specific performances. And through doing the street parties, she realized her interest not only in helping local business but also in helping local artists by making Malate a viable space for doing and earning an income of off their art:

> With the sponsorship money, I subsidized the artists. I gave them part of their fee and then told them to put out a hat. And I had flyers made and distributed [them], telling the people, "You like what you see, then give." And I was trying to get artists [to think] "Let's go to Nakpil and maybe get some beer money and do whatever. I'm in the mood to do something, to set up an installation." And they come over and do it.

Angie also discovered that creating interest in an urban neighborhood required her to foster three types of urban-based relationships: A relationship between Malate's patrons, businesses, and streets; between patrons and street performers; and between businesses and local artists. Although Malate had the reputation of being a bohemian district, there remained a popular misunderstanding of local artists who wanted to take to the streets to share their work. She explained that patrons saw artists as street people who wanted handouts rather than as artists making art for a public consumption so patrons typically did not donate monies even if they enjoyed the artists' work. Nakpil also presented a problem for cultivating such relationships because many still saw Nakpil as residential and as not

part of the lively entertainment spaces to which Manileños had only started to grow accustom around Remedios Circle. Thus an emergent goal for the Nakpil street parties was the facilitation of an artist-friendly street space where a true patronage of the arts could develop with some encouragement. If street spaces were opened, and such a patronage developed, artists would become more inclined to perform on Nakpil and around Malate more generally. In Angie's opinion, street art would augment Malate's appeal. Yet first she had to encourage patronage of street art:

> I saw [Malate] as a place where there were things happening in the street. I like the street idea.… I made it a point only to have one concert and then all the other weekends we had little things in the street.… I thought we had to turn around people's way of thinking. We are not used to street artists here as opposed to more First World countries. If you see a blind musician in the corner here, people are giving to him because he's blind, not because he's a musician. And so people have to learn to give. If you like it, you give. And you have to sort of educate them that way. And the artists here were familiar enough to perform in the streets.

Angie's strategy of reframing urban space as a place where artists, businesses, and patrons merge to produce street culture ties into her larger goal of creating a sense of magic and place in Malate. She wanted artists, patrons, business owners, and street space to develop a mutually beneficial relationship such that Malate may become a place of unanticipated exchanges and experiences—in short, a magical place. She wanted the magic of place to shape Malate's reputation and draw in additional artists and patrons from other regions, seeking local performances, and unanticipated street experiences.

Angie believed that patrons were looking for unique urban experiences, artists for performance spaces, and Malate businesses for patrons and cheaper entertainment. None of these groups wanted to compete with the high-profile and expensive Makati, an urban space that was economically out of reach for most patrons, businesses, and artists. Yet, up until this point, even in Malate, artists could not afford to frequent the businesses, business owners did not know how to attract patrons, and patrons did not know how to experience urban space beyond consumerism. Angie shared this story about an artist who eventually secured support from a local business to do his street art:

> One time, this artist went up to [an establishment owner] "Give me dinner tomorrow, a few beers, and buy a gallon of vintage adagio." And [this owner] was asking me "Should I do this?" [I said] "How much is a gallon of vintage adagio, for Pete's sake?! What are you thinking about? I mean you don't even think, do it. Even if it's a flop … who cares? For the price of a dinner and gallon of vintage adagio." And [the artist] did a wonderful thing. He did this whole performance installation art thing. And he even caught fire by mistake.… For a price of a dinner, you know, and you have something there. See, that could happen because it was artist friendly.

Thus Malate cultivated an urban patron who interacted differently with their environment—patrons began to engage with artists, local businesses, the streets, and each other. Angie believed that urban renewal relied upon Nakpil harnessing this kind of urban magic, and transforming into a place where patrons think:

> "Let's go to Nakpil because you never know what will happen there."… You should not have this thing that is always set because then they'll only go there when it's set. They won't go any other days.… If you're lucky [on the day you visit Malate] you get something nice, great, something to talk about for a few days.… [And the people who would patronize were] like people who lived around here or friends of residents or friends of Malate who would come around. And it was quite nice because people felt perfectly free even if they were alone; people who would normally not go out alone. They would just show up at Nakpil and they would sit down with the owner of the bar or see somebody that they were [friends with], talk to the person at the next table. It was that kind of atmosphere. And conversation really was good.

This spontaneous production of art in the streets became part of the popular experience and reputation of Malate as a magical urban place. Angie's work with the street parties did attract crowds and set the pace for an alternative form of street life. The patrons were initially local but the popularity of Malate's street life spread, drawing in patrons who lived throughout the metropolitan region. Nakpil became the new nerve center of Malate, demonstrating the success of Angie's efforts to harness urban magic for urban renewal.

"Who Cares About Choreography, Just Do It!": Café Paradiseo Opens on Backstreet Nakpil

An important part of the magic cultivated on Nakpil also arose out of the many drag performances that took to the streets—either spilling out from David's Café Paradiseo on any day of the week or when such campy performances took over the streets during gay pride celebrations. In fact, the first time I learned of Malate's famous street parties was in reference to David's drag shows, which brought an unexpected vibrancy to the quiet, residential street. Of all the figures who played a role in the Malate renaissance, most credit David for starting and framing Nakpil's revival and eventual transition into the neighborhood "where the gays are." David's street parties were rooted in his unique and humorous take on drag as well as his implicit practice of "gaying" the street, thus subverting the implicit separation between private business establishment and the public space of the street.

David chose to locate Café Paradiseo on the residential street of Nakpil. He thus had to become a different kind of host to fill a niche, and to draw in a patronage that was more likely to visit the cafés around the better-known Remedios Circle. Further, David's drag shows offered an alternative form of entertainment to Malate's nightlife—his drag broke with a tradition of Filipino drag where he and his performers sought to be humorous, contemporary, and political in place of being "real." During our interview in 2001, he explained that he started his drag performances during the week to draw in patrons when the café was slow. When his performances proved popular, he extended them into the weekends.

David's fans claimed that his drag performances had a message. They were also low budget, unspectacular, rough, and impromptu but many claimed that this lent to their appeal as well. He drew from and encouraged collaboration with local gay talent (some of the gay hosts who appear in Chap. 4 participated in the shows at Café Paradiseo). Their collaborations emphasized the irony and creativity of gay life. Drag shows are common throughout the Philippines, and especially within tourism hotspots, yet they are typically staged for heterosexual audiences who do not share the irony of gay culture. Even the drag shows at Café Sol and Cornucopia involved effeminate gay men and transgender-identified women who performed an upper-class presentation of "real" femininity. Eduardo, a gay Filipino who frequented Paradiseo, claimed that "It felt like the shows were made for gays, not straights. For once, the humor went beyond

simply mocking the idea of a man in women's clothing". David's shows stood out because they were not intended to thrill heterosexual audiences with the spectacle of men dressing as women; rather, the shows assumed a consciousness about gay culture and were therefore permitted to make a spectacle of something else. Angie described one show at Café Paradiseo in the following way:

> [Café Paradiseo] was not just a place; it was not just a bar. He would have his drag shows—his drag shows are nothing great; the clothes were like so what—but he would do performances like the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) summit meeting there. Most nationalists were against it (APEC) because that opened the economy to importing. So he had everybody, all his girls (drag performers) come out in just white T-shirts and whatever and then with printed slogans on the T-shirts "Hey pec-pec." You know what pec-pec means? The vagina. "Hey pec, hey pectado," all puns on APEC.… So he always had something to say. And so that appealed to me and we just like emphasized that and kept it going. What are we going to celebrate here? Thanksgiving? Hello!

David explained that he did not have a clear vision for the shows nor was he trying to get across a particular politics. Rather, he used the shows as an expression of his personal convictions and credits gay community for understanding and sharing his convictions:

> A lot of the gay people who came to Paradiseo were aware of things, conscious and intelligent enough to understand these things, and shared the same convictions.… They would just have a good laugh and in so doing maybe I had convinced some people, which now occurs to me as wonderful rather than having all of that just go to waste. I think it's nice to know that if you drive a point … in that packaging of being able to laugh at it, sort of opened their eyes to something probably relevant.… I have my views but … I'd probably do it in action rather than preach.

The drag performances were also distinct because they sought to parody the social concerns that mattered to Filipinos and to Manila, as, for example, the APEC summit that was taking place in the City of Manila. It was precisely the unique quality of such localized entertainment coupled with national and global concerns as well as David's growing reputation for being a spectacular host that allowed Café Paradiseo to draw attention to itself and to the quiet street of Nakpil where his quirky café resided.

David's biography, and how he ended up living and opening a café in Malate, also speaks to the local and global flows that make up the neighborhood. David was born in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines, and had moved to Manila to complete a college degree where he studied fine arts and theater. His experience in theater involved productions at the University of the Philippines (in Quezon City) and at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), which is located in Malate. From 1983 to 1990, he worked as an overseas contract worker (OCW) in Japan, as a Japauiki (gay drag performer), and he frequently passed through Malate as he left and returned to the Philippines on these overseas contracts. His contracts lasted approximately three to six months so he stored his belongings in a rented room in Paco, a district that borders Malate. He described the 1980s as a vibrant decade for Ermita and Malate because of the sex strip yet he linked his early magical experiences of Malate with the economic and global cultural privileges afforded to an overseas contract worker, such as himself:

> It was a really fun time for Ermita, which you know extends towards Malate. There were no boundaries it just happened around that area, the red light district and everything. You just go out and spend your money. See, you work abroad so you have all the means and the wardrobe and everything. It's part of being young and just going out and having fun. And, of course, Malate and Ermita at that point in time was just really getting to be like Pat Pong is right now, I mean really seedy, but a lot of fun. It's how you look at it, you see.… I was like in and out of there because of my work. You get a contract, you fly to Japan, do your contract—maybe three to six months—then you come back again. Then during that period [while you are] waiting for the next contract, that's when you sort of, you know, enjoy the fruits of your labor (laughs). As I said, I have always lived in the old quarters in Paco and then I get closer and closer, drawn closer to Malate.

In 1990, David found a room to rent on J. Bocobo Street, around the corner from Nakpil, where he would eventually open Café Paradiseo. He claimed that this new home in Malate offered him the stability of place that he longed for, given his frequent international travel and inability to put down roots in the country where he worked on contract. Like Angie, he walked the streets of his new home and it was this walking about Malate that inspired him to open a bar in the district:

> One day, I was at home on Bocobo. I took a walk on a Sunday, which I really loved to walk around there because it seems for all that energy now

> in Malate, still on a Sunday, you can decently have some peace and quiet especially now that the streets are so well paved. It's great to walk; it's just nice you know. I know that some of the buildings do not exist anymore but it's like walking also in a cemetery where you just have that memory. Yeah, walking probably as one would walk in old parts of cities anywhere in the world where it's only the memory that remains, you know? And it's sad to a point but you also remember nice things—it comes back to you in the peace that it provides, especially in the old quarter. In Malate, you can still do that I think up to now. [Then on that walk], all of a sudden it was like, you know, "On the seventh day, all the queens rushed into Malate!" [as the idea hit me]. So all of a sudden it just gets quiet for some reason, especially because there's a church nearby (laughing).… So I was taking a walk and then I saw this spot in a very quiet residential street and that was it.

True to his collective style, David enlisted the help of gay friends—both foreign and Filipino—who were artists and designers, as well as anyone with time to contribute to the readying of the bar space for an opening. He did not have a budget for renovations (a key distinguishing feature between the first and second wave of Nakpil's development) so he drew from local artistic talent and his own performative and humorous vision, as Micah, a gay Filipino, explained below:

> We were all there with our paintbrushes and designs and you had some guys painting the face of Tom Cruise on the seat of one of the chairs. Yeah we painted the faces of all these celebrities on the chairs so that someone could go to Paradiseo and say "I sat on Tom Cruise's face tonight, what did you do?"

The actual opening of Café Paradiseo did not go as smoothly as anticipated. David opened his café in 1991 on the cusp of Mayor Lim's closure of the sex establishments in Ermita. Mayor Lim was less than sympathetic to the opening of a bar/café on the residential street of Nakpil. He particularly disagreed with the opening of an establishment that was owned by an Out gay man who regularly dressed in an elegant evening gown in broad daylight. David placed tables and chairs on the sidewalk wanting to reproduce the experience of European sidewalk cafés that he had visited while traveling internationally. He soon encountered resistance from city hall because placing tables and chairs on a residential sidewalk was unheard of in Manila. The police visited and a fiasco would follow; "Can you imagine, the police and I would be playing tug of war over the chairs

and tables that I wanted on the sidewalk. I mean people would be arguing over chairs on a sidewalk?!". Vice Mayor Atienza mediated these conflicts between Lim, the residents on Nakpil, and David's café. David was able to remain open because he had the backing of the Vice Mayor and a few others in city hall. Jorge (Malate's city counselor in 2000) claimed:

> I was working in city hall, then as a legislative assistant and I would be getting complaints left and right about the group of Baklas being too noisy, and they're very homophobic, … especially this compound that's an old Malate family.… And I was getting complaints every single week from [this] guy [who is the] owner of the compound. And David was a friend and his group was fun. So I would be walking in Malate all the time. I would make them meet. And I would tell David, "David, just keep the volume down when it's past twelve already." But he is a true bohemian; David would be dressed up already and he would play the YMCA.… So, [the owner of the compound] would be at city hall … [Lito Atienza] was the vice mayor then. And we were able to solve the problem by convincing David to put up an annex of Café Paradiseo that was sound proof and the outer area would be coffee and drinks.

Café Paradiseo created tensions in the neighborhood because it was a commercial establishment, a bar, and a visibly gay entertainment space. It was successful, however, because its patrons did not see it as a typical Filipino gay bar. They experienced Paradiseo as a creative space and as a place that was in conversation with local, national, and international concerns. For instance, Philip, one of Nakpil's second wave gay business owners, described Café Paradiseo as an alternative, gay-orchestrated and -owned European-style café; he claimed that it was the first of its kind. Café Paradiseo was unlike gay bars in Europe because it was not strictly a cruise bar and it was unlike gay bars in the Philippines because it wasn't a strip or drag club. The café exuded a global gay sensibility in this quaint urban place all the while incorporating local gay talent as a central part of its shows. David explains that he and the other owners wanted Café Paradiseo to be a place for everyone—gay and straight, Filipino and international:

> But obviously you can't really hide the truth when three queens own it. I mean it's just obvious that the royal and not so royal aspects just flaunt about in a very spontaneous manner. And before you know it, well people always [label] because that's part of society and how [society] shapes peo-

> ple.… But we're too old for that; we're pretty secure with our sexuality. For me really, [it's] whatever makes you happy. I mean it was a gay bar but it was not a gay bar but it was a gay place but it was not a gay place. It was just for me a wonderful place where people had a great time; … it had wonderful memories.

Café Paradiseo was a microcosm of Malate; it was a mixed space where transnationals and locals, heterosexuals and gays, and the upper classes and working gays shared leisure and entertainment space. Micah described it as follows:

> When Café Paradiseo opened, it was actually like a new breath of [life in Malate].… It was like a world bar, an NGO (non-government organization) cafeteria where all the development set [hung out]; you know, you had Oxfam (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief) and WHO (World Health Organization). And you have the call boys, the dick dealers, drug dealers, and expats, and the daughters of shipping magnets who wouldn't let go of big hand bags because they were full of drugs.

On the one hand, many saw the success of Café Paradiseo as arising out of David's exposure to and knowledge of transnational gay urban life. Repeatedly, David was described as an "international" figure who had traveled and lived abroad and in urban centers such as Tokyo, London, Bali, and New York. David and my other interviewees claimed that his international exposure influenced the space. David claimed that his travel and social awareness shaped Paradiseo more than his theater experience, "[It] was personality-based, which meant that it mirrored my personality, my choices, my awareness of things going on, my reactions to these things, and my social orientation both in Manila and outside. You know, my exposure to certain cultures like Bali, which I go to a lot and the States and London, all of that". Yet, on the other hand, Café Paradiseo was not a carbon copy of a Western gay bar holding steady in a well-defined gayborhood. Rather, the space was a mix of the transnational with the local, with a distinctly Filipino take on campy gay aesthetics, which ended up making an altogether new place on a quiet residential street, within a neighborhood threatening mass commercial development.

David indicated that he did not have a rational plan for the Café nor did he intend to fill a niche in Malate. Café Paradiseo assumed its shape spontaneously and the drag shows were initially a strategy to draw atten-

tion to his café, as I mentioned earlier, yet they took on a life of their own. When he began holding drag shows on Wednesday and Saturday nights, David explained, he was not making money from the events. He charged a twenty pesos' cover charge and thirty pesos for a beer.[10] The shows attracted enough of a crowd that he added fashion show performances during the week. Philip described the fashion shows as follows:

> He was the only person who could create something else that was real that had a sort of humorous edge to it.… [They were] very intelligent drag shows [like the] Hoki-Hoki collection. Hoki-Hoki means the garbage collection. There would be themes. One week would be the salons, very creative concepts and one week it would be plastic bags.… And it would be done with great attitude and in true drag style.
>
> Dana: What's true drag style?
> Philip: When I say true drag style I'm referring to the drag shows like in New York and London where you have somebody who's obviously a man making a pastiche, a comedy, out of mannerisms of the other sex.… Whereas in Southeast Asia, a lot of the drag shows are essentially just beautiful boys dressed up to look like girls. And the humor is not really there. It's just a spectacle of like seeing a transgender, a transsexual.

Philip's description of these shows as both "real and humorous" meant that he saw something different in the shows' edginess. David's use of a global gay take on "true drag style" mixed with his own locational critique are what made his drag shows distinct from what had come before. This is one of the unique qualities to Malate, which David helped to foster with his drag shows and street parties; there is a mix of the local and global in its spaces that creates a distinct place. David's shows were also "real" because he drew from local gay talent and encouraged his performers to add their own creative take to the performance:

> They were just real you know. These are a bunch of talented people off the streets. I make them interpret.… I mean if they were meant to do Madonna they would do Madonna but I always tell them "You know, rule number one is that you're enjoying what you're doing, and you're not Madonna. So you just have to provide the allusion and if you make mistakes because you're human, you know people make mistakes—Madonna does make mistakes." That was when people would just crack up because we would make mistakes. You know, *who cares about choreography, just do it* (laughs).

Christopher, a gay expat, described the ad hoc manner in which the performances were pulled off: "And then you'd have some idiot in the back [of the bar], they got this spotlight, and he wouldn't even know how to direct it.… The performers they must have gotten paid but everybody else was sort of helping out, *helping David* (his emphasis)". The clean, smooth, and stylish atmosphere that marked Nakpil's second wave of entrepreneurial development was not what pleased the patrons of Paradiseo. In fact, it was the lack of attention to detail and the focus on parody, pastiche, and local and global issues that made the establishment stylistically different and eventually legendary. Both David and the gay hosts who performed at Paradiseo indicated that giving a smooth performance was not their goal; rather, David directed local gay talent by encouraging hosts to interpret a character and assert their own ironic slant to the performance. Thus performing a "real" woman could never be as entertaining as interpreting a woman and showing that creative recreation with an edge. As David pointed out, "You can either go glamorous or comedy but never the twain shall meet".

As I discussed above, David had a strong social network, which also helped his café—he was well connected to the arts, diplomat, and transnational scenes of Manila. He was able to publicize through, and draw in powerful people to Malate, while encouraging international travelers to return to Paradiseo when visiting Manila. Café Paradiseo thus became the meeting place for artists, journalists, intellectuals, NGO workers, gays, expatriates, diplomats, tourists, and heterosexuals. Philip claimed that Paradiseo catered to "Filipinos who have lived abroad at some stage either at university or their families have immigrated during bad times, during martial law, times like that. So they have a more global approach, an understanding of the big scheme of things".

Others believed that Paradiseo had a strong local presence, particularly for the gay hosts who were allowed to hang out there regardless of whether they could afford to purchase drinks. They saw Paradiseo as their place because they were gay men too, and despite their being snubbed by upper-class Filipinos and a transnational class with whom they shared Paradiseo's space. Several gay hosts described Café Paradiseo as an inviting space where they spent much of their time, came Out as gay men, performed in the fashion shows, and met many boyfriends. Yet my upper-class and expatriate interviewees repeatedly commented on the presence of gay hosts at Café Paradiseo, who they blamed for its closure. In their eyes, Café Paradiseo went downhill because the "parlor girls"[11] took over, hung out

all day, and rarely bought drinks. This was the first establishment where I learned of this discourse of entrepreneurs needing to keep the working gays at bay; otherwise, they would be marked as an establishment on the brink of decline. I encountered this discourse time and again, and it explained why gay hosts were so carefully regulated and marginalized from the gay establishments that arose with the second wave of gay gentrification on Nakpil. Yet gay hosts indicated that David never discouraged their presence and that Café Paradiseo served as their space as much as anyone's.

David, unlike other gay men of his class standing, insisted, however, that the success of Café Paradiseo resided in the eclectic mix of people, performances, and ideas that formed its foundation. The magic that arose out of the many spontaneous public interactions encouraged by Paradiseo's space and use of the street made it into something better than David had anticipated—he claimed that Nakpil Street became a magical space where "there was soul and a lot of attitude, a lot of attitude". Unlike the gay entrepreneurs who came with the second wave of gay gentrification, David claimed that he was never hung up on a business concept nor with turning a large profit; "we were not also wholly commercial you know, not profiteering; that's why people really enjoyed it. I [tried] to get ourselves above the water and that was enough". Yet Café Paradiseo unceremoniously closed in 1997; David claimed that the establishment was built too much around his personality, and after several years he had grown tired of it. He was no longer up for the day-to-day chore of running a business and keeping it above water.

Malate devotees overwhelmingly credit David for beginning Nakpil's revival—Angie claimed that "he started Nakpil [even though] he may not have made it. Because he was the only one there. Everybody was in the circle on Adriatico [when David opened Café Paradiseo] and he was on this god-forsaken dark street. So they had that respect for him. And when he left … all that sort of pep left". Paradiseo allowed for many their first experience of urban magic on the quiet residential street of Nakpil. They sat outside on his sidewalk café, attended his street parties, interacted with street art, and began to fall in love with Malate, as their identities also changed with their participation in this urban street scene. This popularity made the block not only hospitable to future business development (also aided by Mayor Atienza assuming office in 1998, who made it easier for smaller businesses to obtain permits) but it also encouraged even more patrons to seek out the urban magic that many claimed to have experienced there.

My interviews about Malate often began with interviewees remembering how Malate's street parties and Café Paradiseo encapsulated the essence of such a magical district—they were innovative, performative, bohemian, international, local, and mixed. Paradiseo, as an entrepreneurial space, did not place commercial success before hospitality, local performance, and urban community. It fostered a form of gay magic, a characteristic that eventually Malate became known for, as Jorge claimed to me, "Café Paradiseo had a lot of gays, but it wasn't a gay bar…. It was Malate. You know Malate is no homophobics allowed (sic). Straights and gays are all having fun together". The cases of Café Paradiseo and Angie's street parties show that urban magic is something that is cultivated from the ground up or from the power of place. Urban magic is not planned nor is it easily harnessed for a profit motive in urban development. Rather, urban magic is fleeting and when based too much around a community leader like David or Angie, then it withers away when that leader leaves. Yet this story of urban magic shows how magic is a powerful force in urban renewal, a force that is deeply rooted to the freedoms of sexual place in Malate. When answering the question in any urban renewal story, "Why this place in the city?", the unique qualities to that place and the lived experiences that that place enables—its magic—illustrates the powerful role of place in urban renewal.

I develop in Chap. 6, "The exclusions of place: Gay-led gentrification within Nakpil's second wave," how Nakpil's second wave of gay-led business development became increasingly cosmopolitan and classed, which created new exclusions in a neighborhood that had built its reputation around inclusivity and the mixing of diverse city worlds. The second wave's urban taste culture involved pretensions that many deemed detrimental to Malate's magic—that is, the neighborhood's celebration of difference, including the mixing of class cultures and the more spontaneous experiences of street art. Angie pointed to the irony of newer entrepreneurs coming to Malate to capitalize on difference (i.e. Malate's unique character), yet their snobby intolerance of the differences that made up the fabric of the district. This new cosmopolitan class would win out in guiding Malate's renewal for a time and after David and Angie had left Nakpil. I mark this second wave of business development on Nakpil as the beginning of gay-led gentrification because the renewal plans and business aesthetic begin to follow the logics of a neoliberal capitalist class, engaging in practices of exclusion and displacement that are part of gentrification in cities worldwide.

Notes

1. Sidecars are food stalls placed on the side of trucks or Jeepneys. They sell cheap food—snacks, drinks, lunches, dinners—to pedestrians and car operators on the street. Sidecars can be quickly moved depending on the heaviest human and auto traffic, or if there is a threat of police harassment.
2. Enclave and Down Under were two prominent gay bars in 2000.
3. Larry Cruz was the founder-owner of Adriatico Café as well as three additional restaurants that were located around Remedios Circle. He is often credited for developing the circle into a café culture area and for sustaining his restaurant businesses through the cyclical rise and fall in Malate's popularity. Larry Cruz passed away in 2012 but his restaurant franchise spread to other regions of Metropolitan Manila. In 2013, Adriatico Café and Remedios Bistro were the only remaining LJC restaurants around the circle.
4. The ABC Gallery was an art gallery.
5. Monaco was a gay sex club where patrons watched live sex acts, nude dancing, and met male sex workers.
6. Again, the Ayalas are an elite land-owning and real estate development family in the Philippines who have been credited for Makati's commercial development.
7. The restaurants, cafés, and bars could sell liquor, wine, and food but no other name brand beer could be sold at the street festival.
8. André Bonafacio is popularly understood as the common person's national figure of the Philippines and many claim him as "father" of the nation alongside the more educated and reformist José Rizal. Bonafacio founded the *Katipunan*—a nationalist and revolutionary association that sought Philippine independence through armed struggle and which played a powerful role in the first phase of the Philippine revolution against Spanish colonization. Bonafacio was later executed for treason by the revolutionary government preceding a split in its leadership (Francia 2010).
9. Angie indicated that she did this work for free; she never accepted a salary for any of the organizing work she carried out in Malate.
10. To give a point of comparison, Baccus, the gay bar that opened with the second wave of gay-led gentrification on Nakpil, charged a 100 pesos door charge and 80 pesos per beer in 2000.
11. "Parlor girls" is a derogatory and classed term used to describe working-class, gay Filipino men or transgender women who dress and act as effeminate gays and who work in beauty parlors. The term comes from the work effeminate working-class gays typically secure in the feminized sector of hairdressing or clothes making, and because they cannot secure jobs in masculinized fields.

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Photo 1 Jeepney driving down Mabini Street in Malate with spa advertisement in the background; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 2 Pedicab hub on Maria Orosa Street, Malate; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 3 Former lot for American-era home, torn down on Bocobo Street, Malate; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 4 Intersection of Nakpil and Maria Orosa Streets—the heart of Gay Malate; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 5 Outdoor restaurant café with side walk plastic tables on Remedios Street, Malate; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 6 Famous Malate fashion designer on Remedios Circle next to street vendor; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 7 Former gay-owned businesses on Nakpil Street with high-rise apartment building in background, Malate; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 8 Hospitality bar on M.H. del Pilar Street, providing shelter for the houseless, Malate; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 9 Reflection of older house and high rise condos in hospitality bar on M.H. del Pilar Street, Ermita; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 10 Hospitality bar on Nakpil Street in former Malate restaurant; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 11 PK at home in Sampaloc, holding two of his cats; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 12 PK with Louis at White Beach, Puerto Galera, Mindoro; photo by Dana M. Collins.

Photo 13 Adriatico Street billboard advertisements for high-rise condos, Ermita; photo by Dana M. Collins.

CHAPTER 4

The Sexuality of Place: Gay Hospitality and the Production of Desiring Labor

Alberto and I were sitting at one of the eleven tables outside Alvina's, the "sidewalk" café situated on the Robinson's Mall walkway. Robinson's Mall was part of a new urban development strategy for the Philippines, starting in 2000, and that focused on building urban malls that would draw in regional tourism from East Asia. By 2013, three large high-rise condominium developments shot skyward out of Robinson Mall's base. I was rarely able to pass Alvina's tables unnoticed when I visited the mall to attend to my errands, see a movie, or drink coffee. In 2000, the café was located just three establishments away from the Pedro Gill entrance, which was the main entry and exit point for a thick flow of mall patrons coming from the busy street of Pedro Gill. The street is a thoroughfare for public transport—taxis and Jeepneys—and binds together the southernmost end of Ermita to the northernmost part of Malate. Alvina's was a prime meeting place for gay hosts; their presence, punctuated by much socializing and cruising, was an almost constant fixture at this cafe. Rafael explained:

> It's not like in the Philippines we have other places to go; not many places have sidewalk cafés [during the day]. No one wants to sit outside because of the pollution and heat. So this is one place we can sit and watch men and we can socialize with one another.

Alvina's Café was a favorite among hosts despite the presence of Starbucks, just one establishment over. They spent their late afternoons

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sitting, conversing, and joking about their lives punctuated by their less subtle performance of cruising. Jose claimed "we stay as long as we want, or if there's something going on, we go. There's no schedule. We stay here as long as we're entertained". When they went, it was usually to see a movie in the mall or they began their walk down Adriatico to the gay bars in Malate, to meet with friends, or to hook up with a foreigner for the evening.

Alberto and I had been discussing Filipinos' relationships with foreigners who visited the Philippines. He emphasized first his compassion for foreign travelers; he was concerned that Filipino hosts take advantage of foreigners, financially, in hosting relations. I suggested that foreigners relied on Filipino hospitality and then left the Philippines, and that might also appear as a mistreatment of gay hosts. He responded, "But what would you expect from the foreigners? As long as you treat them equal, if you treat them nice, they'll treat you nice too. *Once you plant the mango you will also receive a mango*". Alberto's allusion back then pushed me to rethink the relationship between gay hosts and foreigners as one that had more to do with building a desirable relationship rather than the straightforward exchange of money for sex, which I had assumed to be part of all sex work transactions. Within three months of beginning my fieldwork in Malate, I saw the need to shift my interpretation of their hospitality as "sex work" and rather understand why gay hosts emphasized love and desire for the "boyfriends" who passed through their neighborhood. These revelations pushed me to ask other important questions about sexual labor in Malate: Why were gay hosts backing away from overtly commodifying their relationships with foreigners? Why were they framing these relationships as desirable companionship? How were hosts making these relationships economically sustainable; or how was is it that they were able to return almost daily to Alvina's to begin their evening as participants in urban gay life, particularly as the district's gentrification was working to exclude them?

I had come to Manila to study sex work and I had read all of the studies about the sex tourism that sustained this district. Yet in May of 1999, when I first walked the infamous sex strips of Mabini and MH del Pilar during a preliminary research trip, I experienced what was soon to be described by my interviewees as the "ghost town." Following the lead of written tour guides, I sought signs of a tourist space that may facilitate sexual exchanges. However, the bright lights and spectacular sexual entertainment of the sex district that I had read about did not greet me;

rather, I walked past boarded establishments and empty lots. The only sign that Malate and Ermita were in fact tourist districts were the hotels, money changers, and souvenir stores that peppered this otherwise "closed down"-appearing neighborhood. My initial impression of the districts was one of disorientation, even though they were clearly marked in most tourism literature as Metro Manila's tourist and entertainment districts. It wasn't until I followed the suggestion of both friends and my tour guide and sought refuge from the excruciating May heat by stepping into the air-conditioned Robinson's Mall that I found the bustle of vibrant public interaction and the more subtle forms of sexualized cruising. The contrast with the slow tourist strip of Mabini was remarkable. I had not anticipated finding that an urban mall was the new hub of public sexual activity in a tourist district.

It wasn't until my return to Manila in January of 2000 that I learned how many gay tourists deciphered Malate's gay spaces, and experienced the intimacy of this changing tourist district. Upon entering Robinson's Mall again, I was called out to and made the acquaintance of a group of gay hosts through whose hospitality I learned about gay space in Malate.

"What I Like About [Hosts] Is That They Are Very Adaptive:" Gay Hospitality in the Context of Urban Renewal

Malate is a neighborhood that gay hosts knew well—they drew upon its bohemian and sexually open spirit in order to call out to and make the acquaintance of foreign travelers who they encountered walking around the district's streets or in its malls. Gay hosts worked as translators of urban space, or cultural brokers (Dahles 2002) for gay travelers who sought gay space in Manila. It was through this translation and hosts' need to do informal sexual labor to sustain themselves in Malate that gay hosts arrived at their urban sexual identities and understandings of gay urban place. As Bobby Benedicto (2014) has shown in his study of upper-class gay Filipino men, gay life and space is situational. Gay hosts also wanted to participate in the bright lights culture Benedicto speaks of and that was beginning to take shape in Malate in 2000. Yet hosts' class position did not afford them the geographical scale of mobility and social networks available to upper-class Filipinos or to the transnational class of gay tourists who they hosted. Hosts' repeated assertions about the importance of Malate's gay scene as

their place should be show how place served as a seed in the shaping of their sexual identity and community. In other words, hosts became gay men through their mobility; their mobility involved their movement to and about the district and within the transnational relations of hospitality. Thus, their identities had to be cultivated both within the locality of an emerging urban sexual community and within the globality of gay tourism networks.

I want to explain how it is that the urban spaces of Malate, as well as a new state position on tourism, contributed to the structure and informality of hospitality work. The history of sex tourism to Manila meant that the tentacles of sex trade ran deep into the tourism spaces of Ermita and Malate. Mayor Lim's policing of the sex district in the early 1990s led not only to bar closures but also to the policing of overt sex work. This drove Ermita's sex industry to other cities—Pasay City, Quezon City, and up north to Angeles City, where the former US Naval Base's sex district had been located. Sex workers no longer had establishments to work from and they had to find more covert ways to work the streets. Simultaneously, the Philippine state was flirting with the rhetoric of sustainable tourism, which began the circulation of an ideology of "pride of place" built out of community participation in tourism development. This was not a new idea, as it reflected Marcos' drive to make the Philippines the "Pearl of the Orient" by capitalizing on local Filipino hospitality. But the rhetoric of "pride of place" tourism trickled down to Malate, as the city conceptualized new ways of drawing on local labor and "Filipino hospitality" to transform the district into an urban tourism destination, which I developed in Chap. 2. Furthermore, the gentrification of Malate also contributed to the formation of hospitality work; gay entrepreneurs discouraged overt sex workers from patronizing their establishments because they too did not want Malate to slide back into the sex district that it once was. Rather, they encouraged the presence of a new class of Filipino gay men and gay tourists—cosmopolitan gay men who were eager to consume and entertain in gay urban space. This was the class of gay men that Benedicto (2014) later focused his study upon and who he followed to Makati and globally. Thus, gay hosts not only worked at becoming culturally knowledgeable—that is, "cosmopolitan" gay men—but they moved foreign gay men about Malate's burgeoning entertainment district without giving the impression that they did sex work. The more informal and hospitality-based their work became, the more gay hosts fit within state-endorsed urban renewal, which was encouraging hospitality and pride of place as a new

sustainable tourism strategy. Hospitality kept gay hosts "under the radar" so to speak and away from the policing that was part of urban renewal because hosts were not overtly sexual in their work and they facilitated gay men's consumption. By 2000, hospitality had assumed precedence over the establishment-based sex work that used to dominate the district. Male sex workers existed but these men were more often heterosexual-identified, and now worked the more precarious blocks known for sex work and which were regularly patrolled by the police. Gay hosts, on the other hand, sought to become a part of Malate's burgeoning bright lights gay scene.

Yet there was also something not only to the intimacy of urban space but to the diffused forms of sexuality across urban space in Metropolitan Manila more widely that contributed to the structure of hospitality. In Chap. 1, I discussed how gay space involved sexual commerce throughout the metropolitan region; gay space was not centralized in a neighborhood, cocktail bar, or club. Further, Lim's closure of the sex strip pushed sex establishments out of Manila and into Quezon and Pasay Cities (both border the City of Manila), and therefore, gay sex establishments were no longer spatially central to the tourist district where many gay tourists stayed. Thus, gay tourists seeking gay space would have to navigate a complicated transportation system and look for sex establishments, which were not clearly advertised as such. For many, finding such spaces of sexual exchange on their own was a daunting task, though some report this as part of the adventure of gay travel to the Philippines. So there emerged an informal trade of sex, love, and companionship among foreigners, gay hosts, and male sex workers in Malate around this geography of sexual space across the metro region. I found in 2000 that gay tourists and hosts fostered social and sexual exchanges at the level of chance encounters, in gentrified spaces, and within the informal sexual economy of gay hosting within the intimacy of Malate and then hosts helped travelers find the sexual spaces and have the sexual experiences they came looking for throughout the region. Alvina's, for example, with its tables placed on the mall walkway, served as a strategic cruising location for Filipino gay men who sought relationships with foreigners because most tourists (like me) ended up spending some time in the mall. Thus contextualizing hospitality within urban place shows how local spaces and processes of urban renewal become significant material and social forces that shape sexual labor, even as the global forces of tourism also impact such labor.

What has struck me most about the literature on male sex work is how varied structures of sexual labor can be viewed through a singular framework of sex work. There is an assumption that the sex worker is conscious of working to sell sex in order to earn an income and sometimes within the increasingly oppressive conditions that accompany global restructuring. And although Dennis Altman suggests that it is "useful to think of sex work not as a fixed state or identity, but rather as a continuum ranging from organized prostitution through brothels, escort agencies, and so on, through to unmediated transactions resulting from chance encounters" (2001, xiv), it also seems important to understand why some men resist defining their paid sexual encounters as work, particularly as they labor within specific local, national, and global contexts and among dramatic urban changes. Cabezas' (2009) engagement with affective extraction in her comparative study of women's sexual labor in Cuba and the Dominican Republic demonstrates the obsolete category of "sex work" for women who work to secure both monetary support and affective relations from the foreign men with whom they form relations. Although global tourism industries are built out of the extraction of such affections, Cabezas argues that researchers must heed women's lived experiences of affection and companionship to understand their strategic maneuvering within sexualized industries. Hers is a direct case of the need to tend to desire in tourism work because desire offers a glimpse into the resistances from below that engage global tourism industries.

Although sexual labor remains varied in the Philippines, researchers have too often treated gay hospitality as a form of male sex work. The emic (insider) labels most often used to refer to male sexual labor date back to the prevalence of the sex industry in Manila and include call boy (CB), commercial boy, money boy, guest relations officer (GRO), escort, host, and *Afamista*. These are varied forms of sexual labor because there are different services, payment practices, clients, and relationships of the work to an establishment. CBs and commercial boys self-identified as prostitutes and engaged in a more direct exchange of sexual services for money. They also tended to identify as straight and were "butch" (masculine) acting; they serviced both Filipino and foreign gay customers; and they most often only performed anal sex and received oral sex from clients. CBs were not typically connected to an establishment; rather, they tended to work independently by meeting clients on the streets, in parks, movie theaters, malls, and bars. GROs on the other hand, were either formally or informally connected to a business establishment; they

were either paid by the establishment to entertain the customers and encourage them to visit and drink or allowed to use the establishment's space to meet clients as long as they encouraged customers to consume. While in an establishment, GROs did hospitality work; yet they also used the space to meet clients for sex work, which took place outside of the establishment. GROs either explicitly negotiated sexual services for money or tried to indirectly receive money, gifts, travel, and accommodation while their clients stayed in Manila. Hosts, escorts, and *Afamistas* also worked as informal GROs (most of the gay hosts in this study did work as GROs at Down Under, one of the gay bars that allowed them to hang out but which closed with the district's gentrification) but they did not seek to meet clients solely in the establishment. Hosts engaged in a wider range of hospitality work that included informal tour guide work (around Ermita and Malate, Metro Manila, and the Philippines), translation, companionship, money changing, laundry, hotel reservations, care work, and travel scheduling. But hosts also offered sexual companionship in addition to this wider range of services. An Afamista served as a host, sexual companion, or both depending on what was negotiated with the client.[1] Some of the hosts in this study reclaimed the identity Afamista.

My attempts at understanding gay host identity and work were shaped by key tensions in this research. I set out to study "sex work" yet gay hosts did not always define what they did as "work" and they did not always define their sex with foreigners as part of the services that they offered to tourists. They rejected the labels of prostitute, CB, and money or commercial boy, and were more likely to refer to themselves as GROs, escorts, hosts, and guides; some claimed the identity Afamista, as I mentioned earlier, though more rejected this label due to its negative connotation. Gay hosts were more apt to identify as gay urban men, who found their community in Malate, and who were more often attracted to foreign men. They emphasized their pleasure in meeting and hosting these men, yet they also indicated that they needed to meet foreigners to earn money. Significantly, and I will return to this later, gay hosts distinguished themselves from the heterosexual-identified male sex workers who also used their establishments to meet customers and who worked the streets. Hosts' identification as gay was significant to them, as this was an identity that they cultivated once they migrated to Malate and experienced its urban gay life. Hence "gay host" and "hospitality work" are concepts that bridge emic (insider) and etic (grounded theoretical) perspectives; they

arose out of my analysis of what gay hosts defined for me as their identity, life, and labor in Malate.

The majority of gay hosts had migrated to Malate from both southern and northern regions of the Philippines or from other regions of the National Capital Region (NCR; such as Pampanga, Laguna, and Cavite); one gay host claimed that he grew up in Ermita. None of the hosts reported that they could afford to live in Malate without the help of a foreign boyfriend, which meant that most traveled great distances via Jeepney and bus, upward of three hours one way, to visit the district. Those who lived farthest from Malate explained that they kept clothing and necessities with friends and family who lived closer. Hosts did what they could to avoid making the long journey between Malate and their more permanent residence, which would be an almost daily journey. The hosts who lived closer to Malate (e.g. in Pasay, which borders the southernmost end of Malate) shared housing and food with each other or they would rent rooms in Pensionne house for a few nights in the Ermita District. The income that hosts earned from hosting dramatically fluctuated; hence, securing shared housing with other hosts was better than renting rooms in a Pensionne because shared housing could prove more permanent. PK, a gay host, described to me his first living arrangement with four other gay hosts in Pasay where they shared both rent (1000 pesos per month) and food costs:

> *D:* Was it a studio?
> *PK:* No, it wasn't a studio; it was one of the slums but it's not really slum, slum. I mean like it's a house but the owner of the house divided the house into six different sections. So they have like six different small rooms. Probably there were three rooms and they had to divide the room into two but there is like five of us in the room…. We were like sardines (laughs)…. There was a common bathroom that we could go to.
> *D:* What about a kitchen?
> *PK:* The kitchen we have. Your air conditioning (gestures toward a small window air conditioner) would be the kitchen. So next to the kitchen would be a little space for bed bunks.

In all, their precarious economic situation coupled with the rise in cost of living in Malate produced a migratory living condition for most hosts.

Hosts tended to form caring living arrangements with other hosts and used the term "family" to describe these relations and arrangements. Such arrangements allowed hosts to deal with the economic precariousness of

daily life; they not only shared expenses, but they collectivized their earnings (to ensure that all hosts were cared for despite having a slow week), budgeted food and housing costs, "hustled" their dates to bring in food for their "family," cared for one another when they were sick, and taught new hosts how to work the scene. Adora, a transgender sex worker, rented a room in Malate where she cared for a group of about three younger gay hosts whom she fondly described as her "children". She explained that she fed them, gave them money for haircuts and new clothes, and more generally made sure that they were well cared for. These younger gay hosts always referred to Adora as "Mama Adora" and to their group as a "family." PK explained that it was Mama Miguel's exceptional budgeting that kept their family fed even during sparse times:

> *What I like about* [*hosts*] *is that they are very adaptive.* You know when times are hard and this is all we have, we share what we have.… We would buy groceries; we would stock up on groceries. If we make money today, we give it to Mama Miguel, our share, and Mama Miguel would budget and buy a week's worth of groceries, and when times are hard we go through them.… He is really good at that, Mama Miguel, yeah. We would have noodles but you know, I don't have anything against noodles. I like noodles; I mean it is good; it is food. Um, and some dried fish that he would [buy]. It's good; it's nurturing.

Another strategy for securing food for the family involved hosting a foreigner and then collectivizing the spoils of the date; PK continued:

> If I have a date and I can hustle some food, you know from the date, I take it home with me or its better if we are eating then I can invite them (laughs)!… [Hosts] would have some skits sometimes, "PK, I have a date; I better run into you around twelve because that is the time we are going to have lunch. If I ran into you, I'll say you are my friend and you are coming with us" (laughing). "Oh my god, so you are just going to invite me? I don't know where, like ok!"… But we lived that way; it was our way of surviving at that time.

When a host first arrived in Malate, they were often taken in by an older gay host (and his host family) who introduced him to the neighborhood—they explained gay life in Malate, taught new hosts how to dress and meet foreigners, and more generally cared for the new host until he was able to contribute to the family unit. These older gay hosts earned the label "Mama" after offering such essential care to new arriv-

als. PK shared the story of his arrival to Malate and how, when having coffee at Alvina's, Mama Miguel gestured for him to come sit with him. Mama Miguel eventually offered PK a place to stay and it was in this household that PK hooked up with the group of hosts who became his family:

> [Mama Miguel] would say "You know we live together with all these other boys and you can visit our place if you want." And I would say, "Yes ok." And then I fell asleep and they just let me…. I got tired at one point so they just let me sleep and then the next thing I know they are going to Down Under again. Well that's a good thing because that is where I want to go…. In some way, Mama Bong was also helping me out, teaching me…. But Mama Miguel, I think, if I hadn't had him to guide me through the ropes of how it is around here, although I have a good sense of how to take care of myself and stuff like that. He would pick a good pair of shoes for me; you know, stuff like that. He is like that up until now.

Not all hosts joined a family, however, because some had their own extended family with whom they lived, cared for, and/or contributed economically. But these hosts also claimed that they learned hosting from the gay hosts whom they first met when visiting the district and while hanging out at the gay bars. In all, these gay families made up the local relations that shaped how gay hosts learned about the district, how they met foreigners and became hospitable, how they became "gay" and partook in gay urban life, and how they found a place to live, eat, and sustain themselves given their sporadic income and the rising cost of living in Malate.

Some hosts claimed that they worked as sex workers when they first arrived in Malate and after meeting and learning from other gay hosts, they were able to get away from doing sex work. José stated that when he ran away from home in Cavite, he came to Manila and ended up working as a CB on Mabini. He claimed that he visited Down Under but that he found the commercial boys and other gay hosts there intimidating so he initially kept his distance from them. Yet one evening when he was out on the street and sick with the flu, Lito (a gay host) recognized that he was delirious from fever and took him home to care for him. Following this caring gesture, José asked Lito to be his *Ate* (elder sister) and in return he promised Lito the respect of such a family member. Lito and José became family and Ate Lito introduced José to hosting and gay life in the district, which moved him away from having to do sex work. José claimed that he once did sex work but now he can afford to be more choosey. This was the beginning of many distancing strategies that hosts employed as they described to me their hospitality in Malate.

Hosts explained that they had several economic responsibilities—schooling, families, and their own living expenses—and hosting allowed them to fulfill these economic demands. Most of the hosts shared that when they first arrived in Manila, they had regular employment but these jobs did not sustain them and their families economically. For example, hosts worked in service positions such as fast food, janitorial work, and at Internet cafés. José first worked on a pig farm outside of Manila and found the labor so arduous that he could not sustain the job. The owner fired him because he could not endure the physical labor demanded of him. In addition to hosting, some claimed to have other businesses such as a *Sari-Sari* store[2] or a food stall; one host claimed that he worked as a designer and clothes-maker. Some claimed to be full-time students and one host claimed he was an artist. However, these other forms of income generation or education were never clear because hosts spent much of the afternoon, evening, and night in Malate. I felt that perhaps some of these were well-rehearsed stories about themselves, stories that they would share with other foreigners who they met, and that allowed hosts to account for their time and income so that they could counter the label commercial boy or CB. But their stories also reflected their new urban identities—they saw themselves as simply another gay worker, gay consumer, and gay participant in the neighborhood; they did not see themselves as sex workers.

Hospitality was invisible labor, yet I am proposing that it added reproductive value to both a Philippine tourism industry (that was emphasizing community participation in global tourism) and the more locally gentrifying entertainment district of Malate. Many travelers found Manila to be a disorienting city, as one gay traveler told me, "I still, after two weeks, feel like Manila is a really disorienting city". In 2000, travel within the metro region and country was difficult for an outsider who could not read the more locally coded transportation networks. Travelers had to move among Jeepneys, vans, busses, ferries, and planes to get to tourism destinations, and sometimes these tourism destinations were not altogether clearly read as tourism hotspots. This fragmented travel infrastructure and the undeveloped tourism destinations meant that gay tourists often opted to travel with a "local," particularly (as I found in interviews with gay tourists passing through Manila) if a gay tourist wanted to "travel off the beaten path and spend some time in gay space". Likewise, gay hosts helped gay tourists navigate the local dining and entertainment scene in Malate by suggesting restaurants, bars, parties, and hotels, many that were just opening up there in 2000. In all, travelers who sought to experience the Philippines

more independently and outside of an organized tour, for example, found that there was little tourist coding that facilitated their movement through spaces and among establishments.

As I discussed earlier, hospitality facilitated gay travelers finding gay space in Manila. Given the more diffuse notions of gay space that I developed in Chap. 1, gay establishments were hard to locate if the traveler did not have some form of insider information from either a host or a written tour guide. Yet the standard gay guides were not abreast of the many changes taking shape in Malate and listed only two gay-owned establishments in Malate—Down Under and Baccus. Hosts would also assess their clients' desires and escort them around Manila and the Philippines where they knew foreigners could experience gay sexual space more widely. Thus hosts literally worked as informal tour guides—they booked travel agendas, secured accommodation, took clients to restaurants and bars, served as translators, navigated public transportation, secured money changing, and helped to shop for souvenirs, and the like. They also explained not only the gay spaces but the varied sexual norms of these spaces, including the norms of sexual exchange in male go-go bars, bathhouses, massage parlors, cruising areas such as movie theaters, parks, malls, and streets, and on the most popular gay beaches. When their client would want a night's entertainment in Malate, hosts would bring them to the new restaurants, cafés, bars, and lifestyle stores that were opening weekly and tell them about any establishment and street party that was scheduled. This was, however, a historically specific moment for gay sexual space in Malate because by 2005 a more organized and Out gay space was apparent. At that point, gay-owned establishments did not shy away from the identity "gay" and tended to follow the bright lights global gay culture that Benedicto (2014) studied. Neither did the new crowds of gay men, who filled the streets of what most claimed to now be the "heart of gay Malate"—the intersection of Nakpil and Orosa Streets—shy away from a public expression of globalized gay culture. Most of the hosts who I followed over the years expressed enthusiasm for Malate's transition into a more Out gay neighborhood where a wider range of classes of gay men congregated.

Despite the work involved in hospitality, hosts did not express a clear distinction between host work and companionship and, in fact, often denied that their time spent with foreigners was work for them. Rather, they emphasized caring for their clients and expressed concern over their enjoyment, eating, sleeping, safety, and health. They also cared for the daily needs of their client because ideally they sought to spend their days

and nights with him. These services quickly became more relational. For instance, PK explained that hosting for him was like a friendship pact more than a business deal. When he met gay men via the Web or on the streets, he saw his offering of host services as the beginning of a friendship with possibilities. Hosts explained that sex may or may not be a part of these hosting relations but that sex was often involved. If sex was involved, they explained, that was a good thing because that meant that they were attracted to their client. Sexual relations, in their eyes, arose out of a good relationship with a foreigner—sex was not a sex work transaction that needed to be explicitly negotiated and paid for at one point and time during a brief encounter with a client. However, most hosts discussed the conditions under which they would have sex for money; José indicated that "Sometimes I have sex if they're cute. If they're not cute, I make them pay for it". Lito shared that his job status determined whether he would ask for money; "At that time, I could just go with the foreigner for fun because I didn't need the money. But today (Lito was out of work and looking for a job), I ask for some money because I need it". PK shared that when he was low on money at the end of the month, and in need of contributing to his gay family household, he would go have sex with a guy who he knew would always pay him afterward. He was not attracted to this guy but he knew he could earn money by having sex with him.

The negotiation of services for a fee was not entirely straightforward or consistent. PK's explanation of this negotiation showed the contradictions of this process. On the one hand, foreigners respected a clear discussion of what would happen between the host and themselves, particularly if they were paying, but PK also stated that he was not always paid and accepted instead a week's worth of free beers and lunch:

> I think [foreigners] are more respectful of the guy who knows what they want and who is only willing to do as much. Because that means that they are getting a clear message. If they're paying, then they better know what they are paying for.

D: So on some level there is a clear negotiation of what's going to happen?
PK: Of what is going to happen. But you know the money back then it wasn't that clear…. Back then it was hit or miss.
D: So sometimes you'd be paid and sometimes you wouldn't?
PK: Uhum, but I'll get a week worth of my lunch and money in beers. And I'm good with that.

Hosts reported earning from 500 pesos (10 US dollars in 2000) to 1000 pesos (20 US dollars in 2000) a day or 100 US dollars a week for hospitality. A client would additionally pay for all travel, food, drinks, and accommodation. Hosts would also accept additional money or gifts, particularly if the relationship grew into an intimate one, but few hosts claimed that they would directly ask for this money. Neither did they request a set salary for guide work; rather, they preferred waiting for the client to suggest a reasonable fee. Some hosts indicated that if the client could not afford to pay for hosting, they would do the guide work anyway and ask the client to donate whatever they could afford. If the host and client became emotionally attached during their stay together and continued their relationship after the boyfriend left the Philippines, their exchange of money was redefined as a monthly allowance that continued as long as they remained boyfriends. The amount of this payment varied and happened at infrequent intervals. José reported earning an average monthly allowance from a British boyfriend of 15,000 pesos (300 US dollars) to 20,000 pesos (400 US dollars) and PK mentioned that he had received checks as gifts from clients, which ranged from 4000 pesos (80 US dollars) to 16,000 pesos (320 US dollars). In all, payment for services was not a clearly negotiated or uniform practice in the host/companionship relationships. The income therefore was not regular; they were not guaranteed that they would meet a foreigner every week and neither were they guaranteed payment for their hospitality. Hosts got by through collectivizing their income and living arrangements. Further, Down Under and, more informally, Alvina's allowed them to keep a tab for food and coffees, which they would settle when they secured a hosting gig. So through their sporadic earnings from hospitality, collectivizing expenses, and credit from two business hangouts, hosts earned enough to meet their own subsistence, contribute to extended families, and continue their visits to Malate to meet clients.

"But Then You Should be Careful About Falling in Love:" The Neoliberal Relational Labor of Hospitality Work

After my first few months of fieldwork in April of 2000, and while I was honing a better understanding of exactly what was hospitality, I seriously considered that hospitality perhaps did not involve sex work. Neither did I understand how hospitality related to the many emotional relationships

that I witnessed developing (and was told about) between hosts and their foreign boyfriends. I had a loose understanding of hospitality as tour guide work where hosts offered historical and cultural information on neighborhoods in Manila and elsewhere; I did not see how this guide work could in fact foster the more intimate ties between hosts and their companions.

I wanted a tour of Malate, which I thought would provide at the very minimum ethnographic insight into how hosts frame this neighborhood for foreign travelers. I asked Arman to meet me one afternoon and show me Malate similar to how he showed the district to his foreign guests. Arman was in his mid to late thirties and he had frequented Malate since his late teens. He had moved to Manila from a region in the Visayas (the central Philippines), searching for a more vibrant and public gay life than that he experienced in the province. As was common for many hosts, Arman found a different and more Out gay life in Malate, and to stay in the district, he started to earn a living from hosting gay travelers. He self-identified as a "tour guide." Other hosts also identified Arman as a very good tour guide who knew a lot about the cultural and historical sites in Malate. Yet Arman repeatedly missed our scheduled meetings. After three missed meetings, I began to think that maybe there was more to guide work and that something was keeping Arman from giving me a tour of Malate. When I ran into him in Robinson's Mall and after his third no-show, I teased him about his leaving me waiting alone at Alvina's, hoping to get a sense of why he kept scheduling meetings he would then not attend. He quipped back, "Why do I need to show you Malate? You already have a girlfriend!".

Adapting Arlie Hochschild's groundbreaking work on emotional labor to women's sex work, Wendy Chapkis (1997) demonstrates in *Live Sex Acts* the strategies that global North sex workers use to manage their alienation in sex work. The commodification of body, sexuality, and emotions—three of the most intimate aspects of a person's being—can lead to a loss of self in sex work because experiences of bodies, love, and desire, for example, are deeply rooted in people's self-understanding. Challenging both academic and popular claims that prostitution essentially leads to the greatest alienation for women because the prostitute sells such intimate parts of herself, Chapkis shows that sex workers are in fact more knowledgeable of the boundaries necessary to perform intimate work and are therefore less likely than other workers to experience such self-alienation. It is part of the job to conjure roles and perform desire for customers—sex workers do not sell their real love or who they really

are but rather they sell a desirable fabrication of themselves. They invoke feelings, and in the process, they carefully construct them. Sex workers are therefore more conscious of managing their emotions, placing careful boundaries around "truly" falling in love or "fully" giving themselves or their bodies to a client; "for sex workers, too, the ability to summon and contain emotion within the commercial transaction may be experienced as a useful tool in boundary maintenance rather than as a loss of self" (Chapkis 1997, 75). Loss of self lies not "in the separation from role but in too close an identification with it" (Chapkis 1997, 79). Yet for the women in Chapkis' study, partitioning off and selling sex—with an emphasis on fragmentation and selling—served as a strategy for sex workers to not overly identify with their roles or to fully give of themselves to their clients. Yet these conditions and relations are deeply neoliberal in that the clearly negotiated and commodified sexual exchange enabled sex workers to manage both the roles and emotions they were willing to offer.

There are many parallels here to hospitality work, as hosts were involved in the work of not only sex but also companionship and caregiving, which involved another quality of emotional labor. Hosts often spoke about their boundary maintenance in these relationships through their need to be careful about "getting too close" and "falling in love." Yet a key distinction lies in how hosts approached the intimate neoliberalism of their work because hospitality relations blurred the boundaries between entertainment and work, companionship and service, love and sex, and desire and sexual commodification. All of these qualities were required for a successful hospitality relationship, and the neoliberal relations of tourism and transnational capital brought these travelers to the Philippines with a particular set of travel expectations, in line with a long history of such exoticized travel to the Pacific region (Gonzalez 2013). For example, Filipino and foreign men did do not necessarily define, negotiate, or share a similar understanding of what constituted companionship versus sex work. Foreign travelers were often looking for either free companionship or explicitly purchased sex, and most expected to have an exoticized sexual experience from their travels to the "islands." Yet for hosts, a long-standing paid companionship relationship with this transnational class of gay men was the ideal outcome of their hospitality. PK alluded to the complexity of these boundaries:

> When you work as a guide for someone, the work is made better by being someone's friend. And you build the friendship through traveling together, being a good guide, and caring for this person. As you become more of

> a friend, it becomes increasingly difficult to accept money for your guide work.

Hosts repeatedly emphasized to me the quality of their companionship as key to their success in being excellent hosts. Both José and PK expressed considerable pride in their companionship efforts and assumed a personal responsibility for travelers' experiences. José claimed that foreigners chose him over other hosts and male sex workers at Down Under because he intellectually challenged them and he offered interesting conversation. In his eyes, foreigners found familiarity and comfort in this style of companionship. José also placed considerable worth on intellectualism and conversation because they showed his English capability and cultural knowledge. PK explained that he felt personally responsible for alleviating travel anxieties such as travelers' feelings of difference and disorientation in the Philippines. If a customer felt lonely, frightened, or was taken advantage of during his stay, PK felt that he had not done his job well.

So for hosts, sharing what they saw as a very personal part of themselves was in fact what made a good host. Because hosting so closely paralleled companionship and easily slipped into sexual companionship, hosts spoke of offering something more personal in order to be a thorough companion and to "stand out" among the many male sex workers, which they believed gave them a competitive edge. Thus the neoliberal competitions of a remaining sexual economy as well as tourism's expectations of feminized care work from host countries pushed gay hosts into offering a more intimate part of themselves. PK described his customers' reactions to this personalized host work:

> So we (hosts) as well get or share something, share a piece of us, which is a very different find and their (clients') monies, they just don't feel like their monies could have paid for that.... Which I am proud of myself that I have shared a piece of me, a piece of my existence that made these people feel very much that they are cherished as well ... that they have had a good time. That's why I feel very disheartened whenever someone told me that they haven't had a good time in my company.

José also explained the necessity for doing this more personalized labor because hosting happens between people from different cultures and such relationships require a more personalized work for "cross-cultural" understanding. However, he countered that in a relationship both partners must do the emotional work: "Relationships are like row boats. If only one

person rows, the boat will go in circles yet when both row, you can move forward".

PK's emotional labor also involved managing crises and, at times, counseling foreign men, even though PK was eighteen when he started hosting and his clients were fifteen to thirty years his senior. He discussed meeting many tourists who struggled with their sexuality, drug abuse, and/or family and home conflicts, and hosting to him was about helping them work through these crises. The following story of meeting a tourist on Mabini Street relays this theme:

> He was really afraid of these [ideas of being gay]; he didn't want to admit to anything. But it seemed like he wanted to come Out to me, like he wanted my help. I gave this guy a choice because he had met a Filipina and he was considering going with her. I said "You have a choice, come with me or go with her, what do you decide?" The guy decided to go with the girl. He looked really sad; he looked at me really sad, almost like he was ashamed. I felt really sorry for him.

Given the neoliberal obligation to share such an intimate aspect of themselves, gay hosts repeatedly discussed their concern over "losing oneself" in hospitality relations. "Losing oneself" involved their struggle over falling in love. For many, falling in love and beginning a long-term relationship was the ideal outcome of hosting; however, the reality was that hosts fell in love and were left behind after the tourist's vacation ended.[3] Falling in love made the hospitality relationship risky because hosts felt they were less able to do the necessary boundary maintenance in these personalized relations if they lost themselves to love. In other words, falling in love distracted gay hosts from working in their self-interest. José explained that when he fell in love, he could not act rationally and that he would go along with a relationship that ultimately was not good for him, "What do you do when it's happening? You don't think, it's crazy and you go along with it, you just go along with it, you're just in love. Falling in love is part of it".

All of the hosts expressed caution over falling in love too easily with clients and most shared difficult stories about falling in love and being left behind. Bong explained the emotional tightrope of meeting and seducing a customer:

> If you like someone you should show him that you like him, so you become sweet, you always kiss and neck, and then that is just the way you show how you like this person.… But then you should be careful about falling in love,

> and be careful of going deeper into the sexual relationship. Because they will only break your heart. Eventually the guys, since they don't live here, they're just visitors, they will only come now and then and leave you alone for some time and then just eventually lie to you and start seeing other guys, start fooling around.

José made a face when I asked if hosts ever fell in love with clients:

> Yes some do. You can't help but to care for someone if they care for you, and if they are generous and give you money and they care for you, it's attractive. And you feel flattered with how you are liked by them … but it's more likely that one would end up caring for someone, or maybe caring initially, then falling in love with them. That would be the ideal situation.

For the first year that I knew PK in 2000—his first doing hospitality—he struggled the most with feelings of alienation and loss in connection to his clients in Malate. PK had moved to Manila in November of 1999 when he was 17 and had been hosting for eleven months when we first talked about love. He explained that initially he had looked for love while hosting but that now he preferred to place love in the background. PK claimed that he loved too much and too easily and that he wanted to become more practical about loving. He claimed that he would continue his guide work and develop friendships, but that he would no longer fall in love. PK also expressed strong insecurities about the impermanence of life, as he had already experienced the departure of too many people with whom he had developed strong connections. We talked extensively about his increasing inability to become close with people because he would obsess on their departure from him. PK would go to Malate and make the rounds—walk around the mall, see a movie, sit and drink coffee at Alvina's, walk to Down Under, and over to Baccus to see if he could get in—but he expressed feeling an increasing detachment from the community there. At that time and at eighteen years old, PK was grappling with how to manage the raw experiences of intimate neoliberalism that were part of his doing hospitality. He was learning how to juggle his need to host, the impermanence and power imbalance in these neoliberal relations, with his desire to meet foreign men, and some with whom he fell in love. Importantly, PK was navigating these feelings of detachment at the very same time that he was coming Out as gay. I'll return to PK's story in Chap. 5 but this was a key transitional moment in his learning hospitality, where he recognized the need to better manage his feelings about tour-

ists, including the detachment that occurs in these precarious neoliberal relations.

Hosts' relationship to detachment was also complicated because most, like PK, had migrated to Malate because they no longer wanted to be detached from their true feelings and gender expressions. In short, they were gay because they genuinely desired men but they were not Bakla because they wanted access to a wider array of masculine expression. Hosts therefore eyed the work of heterosexual male sex workers in the district as requiring the worse form of detachment—male sex workers had sex for money and not out of a true desire to be with men. José described male sex work in the following way:

> You're removing yourself from the act. It's almost as if you're being used, and that's taxing. And a lot of guys are doing this when they're not gay; they do this for the money…. That's the hardest exchange that happens because love is not a part of it necessarily.

Gay hosts saw that the commodified exchanges of sex work were the most alienating exchanges that could happen in Malate. Few hosts identified as "commercial boys"; rather, they saw their sex with clients—not as a detachment—but as an extension of their gay desire for men. Male sex workers were heterosexuals who did not share this gay desire; they had sex for money. Thus gay hosts protected their emotional relationships with foreigners, and by extension their desire for men, by choosing not to commodify these relations precisely because commodification may result in their detachment from gay experience. Experiencing non-commodified desire was very important for hosts, as Rafael described his first time with a foreigner:

> This was my first time, I liked it. I don't care what other people say as long as this is my feelings (sic) and I liked it…. And I think that is the starting point of my sexual desire. Really serious sexual desire and sort of like starting point of getting into relationships. Because that's the time I'm beginning to understand what gay really is and what it's like being gay.

Thus gay hosts also use the intimacy of desire to resist the alienation of these neoliberal relations. It is true that by not seeing their hospitality as work or negotiating a fee for their services mystifies their labor. Yet I also recognize gay hosts' actions and meanings as an exercise of the agency that they did hold—their agency to both build gay desire and infuse desire into

the work they did. Although hosts expressed concerns over falling in love, they did not express similar concerns over having sex because "sex was not work." Rather, sex was as an expression of gay desire and a testament to their authenticity as legitimate gay men who were also struggling to take part in urban gay life. What seemed more at stake for gay hosts in doing hospitality was the maintenance of their gay identity, desire, community, and connection to Malate. In an urban context where male sex workers were historically viewed as heterosexual, and where a foreign presence has made commercialized sex both devalued and dispensable, I argue that gay hosts were reasserting themselves through their acts of hospitality, privileging desire and companionship above sex as work precisely because such assertions make hospitality less alienating, their desire for men more real, and their connection to gay space more secure. For a group of gay men who experienced the difficulties of rural to urban migration to take part in this gay urban life, becoming alienated from their desire, and hence their gay identity and community, may have been too great a sacrifice to make.

"I Wanted to Collect, I Wanted to Sort of Like Experience Different Nationalities:" Hospitality Is Desirable, Payment Is a Bonus

So what did this place-inspired desire look like and how was hospitality non-commodified? Although I came to Manila to study sex work as I understood it, I became increasingly curious about gay hosts' refusal to talk about *sex as work*. I spent my afternoons sitting at Alvina's listening to their stories about the many desirable and sexual encounters with foreign boyfriends. And daily, when I left my apartment to carry out my rounds of Malate, I would run into hosts who would update me on the most recent sexual and romantic experiences with boyfriends who arrived in Manila and who were in need of companionship or tours. I was also struck by how hosts resisted negative framings of these relations, even when I explicitly asked about bad experiences and even though they brought up negative experiences in other contexts. Central to gay hosts' understanding of hospitality was their expression that these relations were fundamentally desirable.

Rather than dismissing this desire, I found it increasingly important to learn about it, particularly given that desire was so central to how hosts talked about both their hospitality and Malate. I will unpack this desire by looking more closely at three primary discursive framings of the host/foreigner rela-

tionship in Malate. First, hosts emphasized their sexual attraction for gay foreigners over an abstract obligation to service a paying client. Second, they emphasized the emotional connections they established with clients and how some hospitality relations built their knowledge, cultural capital, and self-confidence. Third, hosts emphasized what they gained from doing hospitality work, a gain that was not couched in terms of payment for their services.

But I learned about gay host desire most directly through experiencing it—sitting at Alvina's each afternoon, I was inevitably pulled into mall cruising. I had been paying particular attention to how gay hosts used cruising as a way to both construct and perform their desire for foreign men. Hosts did not simply experience desire for foreign men; rather, a central practice of host community was the act of looking at and commenting upon the men who passed by our tables. Cruising felt like a productive performance where looking, commenting, and explaining one's desire, and not only to me but to one another, played a part in their collective construction of foreign desirability. Cruising was a normative practice among gay hosts because it occupied so many of the social interactions taking shape at Alvina's. Whenever a new person (myself included) was introduced to the "scene" in Robinson's Mall, we were all initiated through hosts' demonstrative displays of looking at and openly desiring foreign men. These displays required an attentive audience. Despite my efforts to not participate by disregarding the passing men and focusing on our conversations, I found that I could not converse without my table companions repeatedly directing me to look, comment, and understand what they found to be desirable about these men. I found myself gazing at men and then realizing (rather uncomfortably for me given that I was far more accustomed to gazing at masculine women) the impact that my gaze had upon them, and how, to an extent, I shared in that collective thrill with my tablemates. Likewise, José explained the thrill of cruising for him; he most enjoyed the moment when men realized that he was in fact looking at them with desire and then watching the impact that such a realization had for them. Although José looked at most of the men who passed by, I asked why foreigners seemed to garner more attention from the hosts. He explained that "tourists are more open minded compared to Filipinos. Sometimes Filipinos are like 'What's your problem? You're such a jerk!' You don't have to be rude just because I say hello. I mean excuse me; I am not talking to you. I am talking to him!". This very public act of desirable looking constituted one of the important actions of becoming a gay host in Malate.

In addition to hosts characterizing foreigners as fun to gaze at and easier to interact with, José added that there was something spectacular about looking at foreigners more generally. He spoke about this in the context of his first hosting trip to the beach resort Puerta Galera. Part of experiencing the thrill of a different place resided in seeing the foreign tourists at that place, "Lovely, it's good. And to see the tourists … because most of them are good looking. And I was like 'Oh my god!'". Rafael also spoke about desiring foreigners as he looked at them from the window of a Jeepney during his first trips to Malate:

> Actually I'm excited because I've never seen so much foreigners (sic) in my life. White people. And I don't even have preferences, you know, very young, very old.… I was riding Jeepneys because at that time traffic was a little bit heavy already. So there was like one point in time, I always wanted to go on that [Jeepney] because traffic is bad and I can have enough time to watch them.

Hospitality was also desirable because of the emotional connections that hosts reported developing with clients, and that I discussed at length in the previous section. Hosts claimed that these connections contributed to their self-confidence. Hospitality relationships began with what some hosts described as foreigners' tendency to "accept me for who I really am" or what others described as foreigners' recognition of their intelligence and attentiveness. Out of this emotional bond, hosts reported that their relations with foreigners had a closeness, support, and commitment that they valued. PK explained that:

> There's the feeling like you are very much accepted … and they appreciate you very much and they tell you that they appreciate you. There's also love, commitment, so there's support. Almost everything; I mean almost everything I could imagine. That's why whenever they leave, I have that feeling like I lost a lot.… So even though the relationship is very brief, the togetherness, the closeness, it is very amazing. Most of them are beautiful people really.

These emotional connections also intensified because of frequent departures and arrivals, which is part of intimate neoliberalism:

> Some of them would call internationally just to reach you and hear your voice … and write sweet letters. And when you see each other, it seems like

> he never saw you for a century…. It just makes me want to feel like I want to be in love.

PK shared that this emotional connection helped build his self-confidence; it also allowed him to decenter the importance of sex in hospitality relations:

> I gain a lot more self-confidence inside. I have learned that it's not just sex…. I mean, I can have sex. They made me realize that what matters is that there's someone to cuddle with, have a night with, and share the bed with…. It's not just about sex in a gay relationship.

Tourism hosts are assumed to have the cultural knowledge that travelers lack yet need for travel, making the transfer of hosts' cultural knowledge key in hospitality relations (Crick 2002). Yet becoming a good host within the neoliberal relations of gay travel pivoted upon hosts' ability to acquire a cosmopolitan sensibility of gay urban culture and English language skills. Hospitality and cosmopolitanism held a mutually productive relationship in Malate; hosts found this relationship desirable particularly in terms of the cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) that they gained from having intimate relations with well-traveled foreign men. Aihwa Ong (1999) has also studied the impact on desire of the allure of mobility, wealth, and cosmopolitanism for Chinese women who are drawn to romantic relationships with transnational Chinese capitalist men and Karen Kelsky (2001) looks at Japanese women who desire "foreign" men and "international" lifestyles, where "foreign" serves as an "exotic" construct of a worldly life, experienced outside of the gender regulations of Japan. Similarly, hosts found desirable their proximity, via hospitality, to all that is "foreign," particularity in how that proximity contributed to their cultural exposure: They learned and practiced English and they accessed free and frequent travel, nice accommodation, good food, and movement among the social elite of Manila. For instance, José explained that:

> Since I bonded with this foreigner, then I started to learn [English]. It just came up naturally [and I thought] 'Oh my god I can talk in English. I can manage to talk in a new language; like OK, so what's next?' So I enjoyed—I got out of town; I went different places; I got a different place. I went to Puerta Galera, Boracay, Baguio, Subic, almost everywhere. Then sometimes I would go with cute guys, which is sooo oooh. So it was OK.

Manuel shared the following in explanation of why he enjoyed coming to the mall everyday: "It's the people. I like the people here … because many are foreigners and I learn from them, their culture and their experiences". Rafael claimed that he preferred relationships with foreigners because he liked exposure to knowledge and he liked to collect experiences:

> I never really considered myself as a call boy because I never worked for it. I just wanted to be with them because I feel comfortable. I can discuss the things that my friends cannot discuss. Sometimes, I get bored with my friends and [am] interested with foreigners. They tell about something, which I wanted to know about their countries and so I learn things because I am that type of person. I wanted to learn things, which are just not here in the Philippines…. Sometimes, I would tell myself I wanted to collect, I wanted to sort of like experience different nationalities.

PK also emphasized the importance of learning from his clients, "as much as possible, every person I meet, I always make it a point that I would learn something from them…. So I've been learning a lot really".

In addition to emphasizing the desirability of hospitality, gay hosts also resisted explicitly commodifying their hospitality exchanges, as I discussed earlier. Hosts rather talked about payment in the following terms: They framed payment as a bonus, as a gift, as an offering (or a non-requested payment), and as masked in payment for other services so it was not acknowledged as direct payment for sex. Some hosts claimed that they refused payment to challenge foreigners' assumptions that they were sex workers or they refused payment from rude clients. In all, hosts expressed agency over payment as a way to maintain some control over their treatment in hospitality relationships or over particularly difficult transactional circumstances.

Both José and PK claimed that they rarely asked for money directly, preferring that the client offer what he could afford to pay. They denied, on the one hand, that they regularly had sex for money, yet they disclosed accepting money from men with whom they had sexual relations. PK said that he was very uncomfortable with asking for money for sex because he believed that that would cheapen the relationship. Likewise, José indicated that he did not like to ask for money for sex because then he felt as if he was selling himself. However, José indicated that if a client was rude, mean, or physically unattractive,[4] he would then ask for money. Bong said that he did not count on receiving money from a client because he was

not after the money. Bong saw payment as a gift that helped financially and given that his financial situation was more difficult than his clients, he expected gifts when he went with a foreigner. Bong also indicated a key transitional moment in his relations with foreigners. When a boyfriend offered a regular allowance, he considered this offer as an expression of love.

Many of the hosts framed payment as a bonus to an experience that they would rather describe as sexually fulfilling, as PK explained here:

> Some *Afamistas* would go home with someone and have a really good time. They have these relations and experiences, and then some of them would receive money, which is like an added bonus. Imagine going home with someone and really enjoying, liking that person and then you get paid on top of that.

José treated payment as secondary, claiming that he hosted for the experience of travel and that payment was only a bonus to these more important experiences:

> I don't really need the money … cause I do have my business to take care of. Normally it's like if I go with someone, it's mostly like for fun than for the money … and I like to travel…. If I buy my own ticket, it's going to cost me, but if someone's going to take me there, it's like "Oh it's free!" And I get money and I get sex; oh, it's the whole package.

Another strategy for avoiding commodified sexual exchanges was PK's acceptance of a payment for a week's worth of guide work with an added 400 US dollars bonus for sexual relations. PK explained that he felt better accepting this money because it was part of a larger payment for his guide work. Neither the sex nor the guide work was negotiated beforehand; rather, the client handed PK a check the day he left the country.

Explicitly commodifying hospitality might have framed it as too similar to work. Below PK shared a story of meeting a client at Down Under and his reaction to this client's definition of him as a "working boy":

> Whenever they see me at Down Under, they kind of ask "Do you work here?" I say "What if I'm working here, would you talk to me or wouldn't you?" And then he says, "If you worked here I would talk to you and if you don't, I wouldn't." So I say, "I work here." And we talked and then after that I told him it's not necessarily work because I like to talk and I like to

> see people. And then after that he just felt like he wanted to go out of the place and we went to the park and there we talked and I made him feel like talking is also another form of, it's not just like you are looking for someone to go to bed with. And then I left an impact on him…. And then after that we kind of stayed together for two days and I kind of escorted him to different places, to bars. Because he works for a cable network, I went with him to Makati.

Bong was the only host who self-identified to me as a prostitute, disclosing that he did have sex for money. Yet Bong too de-emphasized direct payment for sex. He often joked that he was such a successful prostitute that he did not have to ask for money anymore; his clients always offered. He stated this as a matter of pride and he seemed that he wanted to communicate that he earned enough money from his encounters that he was not pressed to request payment upfront.

Hosts resented the tendency for foreigners and upper-class Filipinos to assume they were sex workers or "commercial boys." Many foreigners conveyed to me that they saw host work as sex work; Bob, a US expatriate, claimed, "Oh honey, if they hang out at Down Under, then they're for sale". To challenge this assumption that they were "for sale," some hosts refused to accept money if it was offered directly as a payment for sex. Rafael recounted this story about meeting his partner in Malate, a man with whom he developed a long-term relationship and with whom he lived in Malate for several years:

> He started pulling out his wallet and trying to give me money. And you know what I said to him, "You know what? I'm not that type of person you see on the streets picked up with a tag price (sic) on his shirt. I am not that type of person." And then that mystified him. He was just "oh" sort of astonished when I refused to accept money. Because of all the Filipinos that he has met, he has to give them money except for me. I have to refuse it. So he got challenged.

In 2000, Bong was the most likely to discuss his negative encounters with clients, which centered around clients treating him like a sexual commodity. Bong vehemently critiqued clients who refused to have a relationship with him outside of their sexual exchanges—Bong wanted to be treated with love, respect, and friendship rather than as a purchased commodity. He shared a story about a French client with whom he stayed for several days in Malate. This boyfriend refused to talk to Bong when they

stayed together in a hotel; they would simply have sex, sleep, awaken, and the boyfriend would want more sex. This unfolded over a couple of days and, although Bong indicated that he really liked this man, Bong also felt that this man wanted him only for sex, and that this made Bong feel used. Bong decided to leave and at that point the man offered Bong money. Bong ended his story by defiantly stating as if to make a point about this man's abuse of their relationship, "I refused to take the money. I left and I wouldn't take the money".

Thus, there was this two-pronged strategy to hosts resisting sex work. One strategy allowed hosts to make hospitality relations work, to a degree, in their interests, and the other allowed hosts to frame hospitality as non-commodified relations that appealed more to gay tourists and over those commodified sexual relations offered by heterosexual male sex work. On the one hand, it was in hosts' interests to slow down the pace of sexual and emotional involvement because they were better able to establish long-term relationships, from which they stood to gain more. PK elaborated on this benefit:

> I guess, taking things slow is just the word to describe it, taking things more personal and getting a chance for conversations and for intellectual intercourses. They are very amazing attachments, very beautiful. So, if it so happens that that person leaves the country that he would be looking out for you. And the next time he will be here, he will be searching for you. And you'll be searching for his company and missing his company and stuff like that.

On the other hand, cultivating desirability and downplaying commodification fit with what gay tourists were looking for while traveling to the Philippines—they wanted genuine human relationships as opposed to those sexual relations that were fabricated for pay. I encountered many times gay travelers who expressed concern over being "taken advantaged of" by "commercial boys" who were not "really gay" but who had sex for money. Gay hosts asserted foremost their gay identity and sexual desire for men; hence, to them, they characterized payment as a bonus. Male sex workers were thought to assert their heterosexuality in the face of having to commodify their masculine sexuality to earn a living off of gay men who desired straight-acting men. Although gay tourists may not have always searched for genuine relationships, they did tend to expect genuine desire and sex because this was after all the ideological promise of gay

tourism. They often felt duped after sleeping with someone who then refused to identify as gay and expressed offense if that person then asked for payment. Since there was not a uniform protocol for negotiating sex for money before sexual encounters, foreigners and Filipinos approached these exchanges with different expectations.

"Here We Treat Foreigners Really Well; We Make Them Feel Warm, Cared for, and Welcome": The Transnational Relations of Hospitality Work

Hosts were adaptable. They learned how to generate their sustenance so that they could maintain their connections to Malate. Their work involved translating gay spaces for international travelers and navigating the informal economy of desirable companionship that these travelers sought. Working-class gay men who were a generation their senior had navigated a very different sexual economy on the sex strip, engaging in more specific forms of sex work. Hospitality was local in that Malate's urban place helped to shape hospitality; the district's intimate city plan, the emerging gay urban life there, and gay hosts' communities all contributed to the structure of hospitality. Yet the globality of the travel industry also helped shape hospitality. The global reach of gay tourism prompted hosts to frame their hospitality as distinct from services offered elsewhere such that hosts advocated for the quality of both Filipino hospitality and place. In other words, hosts construed Filipino hospitality and Malate as a tourism draw, which allowed them to compete with tourism services available to gay travelers globally. I saw several patterns to hosts' articulation of hospitality as also transnational.

First, hosts understood that the Philippines was one stopover in a chain of gay travel destinations for gay tourists in the region. They understood the globality of gay life, both in how it touched down in Malate and in how their foreign boyfriends experienced it through their transnational mobility. In the relationships that hosts established online, some foreign boyfriends visited the Philippines only upon the urging of gay hosts. For instance, hosts encouraged foreign gay men to have a leisure visit in the Philippines while passing through Southeast Asia on business. PK explained about one of his clients that "We met on the net. Then he came and visited me here. He does business in Asia, so he could have gone anywhere, Thailand, Vietnam, but he came here to meet me and the visit was really good. He had come back here to specifically see me".

Second, hosts frequently compared Malate's gay community to gay experience in Thailand despite the fact that only one host in 2000 had actually traveled there. Hosts expressed concern that gay life in the Philippines was not sufficiently developed or Out enough. Rafael claimed that "in Thailand they're so much more open, they're much more sexually free and they don't care if you're gay or not". Alberto, who had traveled to Thailand with one of his foreign boyfriends, claimed that the Philippines is the second best gay destination following Thailand, "oh my god, Bangkok is one of the most beautiful places for a gay people (sic), they are really fabulous dancers and the gay life. Philippines I think is the second one". Hence all hosts summoned Thailand as a potentially competitive gay travel destination where Filipino gay hosts lost boyfriends to Thai men who "look just like me." As PK explained:

> There is always some other guy in some other country who is cuter and newer than you. See these guys (clients) get to travel. They travel to all these other countries like Thailand and Vietnam and there are always other guys they could go with. You try to be really attractive and really sweet, and you try to be interesting and unique, you cultivate yourself to be something special. But if they grow tired of you they can always find someone else.

Third, the transnational comparisons with gay life elsewhere meant that gay hosts cultivated a discourse about Filipino hospitality and place—to them, Malate offered a fresh and exciting gay community and their hospitality offered a genuine gay experience precisely because gay sex and community was too commodified in Thailand and elsewhere. Angelo explained:

> If you go over to a Filipino's house they will almost immediately say "Have you eaten?" and they will offer you the best of everything. And it is very generous and genuine. It's not like in Thailand where everything is so money-driven, the tourism industry is so established and it's all about money. *Here we treat foreigners really well*; *we make them feel warm*, *cared for*, *and welcome*.

Hosts took pride in how the Filipino gay scene was much more hospitable whereas gay relations elsehwere, as Lito claimed, were seen as too professional seen as too professional, "It's so hard to determine who is commercial or not there (Thailand), everyone is working as a prostitute". In fact, both hosts and tourists believed that Philippine tourism was fresh,

challenging, and real precisely because both tourism and the sex trade were not as institutionalized as in Thailand. As one gay tourist posted on a Web page for gay travel to the Philippines, "If you're looking for more adventure and not the shooting of fish in a barrel approach, then visit the Philippines" (Utopia: Asian Gay and Lesbian Resources 2000).

Fourth, gay hosts' transnational discourse also assumed that Western gay men were escaping the alienation of gay life in the West and searching for authentic relationships through their travel. Several gay hosts spoke of relationships that they had with foreign boyfriends who were struggling to come out of the closet at home and how they found traveling to the Philippines freeing. For instance, Alberto explained why gay tourists enjoyed visiting the Philippines:

> Because of the people of course and because of the place. They can express their feelings for it is difficult for them, so they go here because this is the only place, or one of the places, where they can express their feelings being a gay. They are welcome; we are in a free country.

Filipino hosts felt encouraged to offer their passionate companionship as well as their local knowledge of an emerging gay place in order to be competitive with a global supply of tourism hospitality to global North gay men. Given that Malate served as simply one stop over in an increasingly powerful global chain of gay travel destinations in Southeast Asia, gay hosts offered what they saw as their more authentic desire and gay urban place to counter the commodified gay relations and spaces elsewhere. Thus in the face of these neoliberal gay tourism relations, hosts asserted the desirable authenticity of gay identity and place in Malate.

Yet the informality of gay hospitality functioned as a double-edged sword because the economic reality of gay hosts who sought to generate income in a gentrifying tourist district was that hosting was one of few income-generating options available to working class gay men. Despite their claims that they host because "they want to," gay hosts were reliant upon their relationships with travelers to sustain their return to the district. Hospitality was a precarious way for working-class gay men to earn a living, and to legitimate their presence in Malate, despite the fact that their work fostered local gay community and facilitated gay travel. Their gay desire, while powerful and imaginative, afforded them limited control over their tourism relationships, particularly when hosts relied on contributions and risked losing clients to an endless supply of gay workers in a global tourism

industry. Finally, while hospitality sidestepped state controls on sex work, gay hosts were, nonetheless, marginalized from the urban spaces undergoing renewal. Their class status made them suspect of being "commercial boys"; hence, the second wave of gay entrepreneurs discouraged hosts from hanging out in their establishments. Malate's urban history shows that sex workers face the brunt of urban redevelopment regimes that seek to control sexual Others whose sexualities are denounced as a "threat" to public health or as interfering with state efforts to give Manila a more proper national and touristic image (Tadiar 2004; Mullins 1999).

Yet hosts' practices of revisioning their labor, identity, and place in Malate defied images of passive victimization often advanced in urban, tourism, and globalization studies. Hosts are transnational subjects who struggled alongside the forces of globalization by engaging state controls, alienation, and economic exploitation. Their testimonies demonstrated that sexuality is not simply a commodity exchanged in tourism; rather, gay hosts were actors who invoked desire to assert their rightful place within gay urban life. In the face of the neoliberal relations that penetrated the most intimate aspects of their lives, they forged new sexual identities, lifestyles, family, place, and, in some ways, alternative economic relations, from those in the province. I turn now to the story of one gay host, PK, whose life and experience parallel the lived experiences of the hosts who migrated to Manila, found gay space, created sexual identity and community, learned hosting to economically survive, managed violence, and used hosting to either translate into another form of cultural work or "aged out" of the scene altogether. This in-depth portrayal highlights the key moments through which intimate neoliberalism structures gay men's lives, both in its regulatory form and in how working-class gay men use love and desire to resist this regulation.

Notes

1. The terms *Afamista*, call girl, and GRO are also used to describe women who engage in sex work.
2. A *Sari-Sari* store is similar to a convenience store.
3. Contrary to the common assumption that Filipinos establish relationships with foreigners so that they can leave the Philippines and have a better life elsewhere, most of the gay hosts with whom I discussed this topic did not want to leave Manila. Malate was their home and they felt a deep connection to its gay

spaces. For them, falling in love fulfilled an ideal for living their life in Malate, as they hoped to find a permanent partner who would share their life there.

4. What hosts saw as "physically attractive" varied yet all hosts shared a preferential attraction for foreign and masculine men. Older men (50s–70s) were not viewed as unattractive and, in fact, made up much of their client base.

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CHAPTER 5

"Love, Autonomy, and Our Attempts at It": Coming of Age in Malate

I could not fully appreciate the impact of the structural inequalities of neoliberalism until I returned to Malate in 2013 to witness what had happened to its gay space and the long-term impact of racism and economic insecurity on aging hosts' lives. The most telling stories involved heavy drug use, imprisonment, untimely deaths, being economically compelled to conduct sex work and scams, and the disappearances of transgender women and hosts who never returned to Malate. Three hosts had unexpectedly died in their late twenties; one was Vicente who had passed away suddenly, leaving his family to economically provide for themselves, as his sex work was the primary income generation in that household. Alberto had been arrested and imprisoned after stealing 5000 US dollars from a foreign client. Adora, one of the transgender women who had formed a family with some of the gay hosts, became involved with a well-known and violent Japanese gang after leaving for Japan on an overseas entertainer contract. She had not been seen in Malate for about seven years and most believed she was "disappeared" by the gang. Bong was doing direct sex work in Malate and trying to generate enough income to cover

This was a quote from PK, who sent me via text message in 2013 his impression of my first published article on Malate's gay hosts, which appeared in *Gender & Society* in 2005 "Identity, Mobility, and Urban Place-Making: Exploring Gay Life in Manila." PK is the only host who has read my written representation of hosts' lives.

D. Collins, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban Sexual Community*,
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a drug habit through his work as a floor masseuse in one of the gambling casinos that are now present in high-rise hotels in Malate. He often asked for monetary help from PK, and he struggled to meet gay tourists in Malate to generate enough money to live off of. By 2013, gay tourists, however, were very sparse in the district. Bong would disappear for weeks and worry the other hosts, only to reappear looking rundown and asking for money. Jasper and another gay host were also forced to transition into more direct sex work and they generated extra income through credit card scams and drug sales. José, having aged out of the hosting scene by 2005, had moved to White Beach, a popular gay tourism destination on the island of Mindoro and worked in a gay bar, as a guest relations officer (GRO) for a few years. Now in his 40s, and after not having a permanent boyfriend to support him, José lives in his home province of Cavite and no longer does host work. Manuel and Meno have stopped hosting but still meet their friends at the few remaining gay bars in Malate.

Others have moved on from the Malate scene, and perhaps their lives are considered to be the success stories by other hosts. Rafael ended his long-term relationship with his expat boyfriend and moved out of Malate in 2006 to a low-end Makati condo that his boyfriend had purchased for him. He now works at a call center and helps care for his sister's children who live with him. Two other gay hosts had met foreign boyfriends and moved to Europe to live with them. Mama Miguel also met a foreigner with whom he lives in Makati and where he owns and operates a pet store. Lito had moved around in his employment working intermittently as a doorman, manager, and GRO and doing sex work when he had to. By 2013, he had left the Philippines and was working as an overseas entertainer in Thailand, where he was also currently living.

This overview of what happened to the gay hosts with whom I started this project thirteen years ago offers a picture of the intimate neoliberalism that shapes working-class gay men's lives who struggled to take part in Malate's gay spaces. PK's case offers a "success narrative," albeit one riddled with complexities; he met a foreigner who helped him to earn a script writing certificate; he secured employment in a call center, and so, he did not return to hosting; and he met a Filipino long-term boyfriend with whom he could build his life in Manila. He survived the scene and, though his income was tight, he was not economically dependent on hosting or the abusive relationships that can arise therein. This is particularly important given that Malate no longer offered hosts a way to earn a sustainable income off of gay tourism. PK's story offers a patterned similarity

to the stories of other hosts though his aspired direction, and to a degree, his work reflects an urban education, upward mobility, and his ability to capitalize on the cultural capital he gained through hosting US gay men. PK migrated to Manila out of a desire for freedom and away from heteronormative family structures and masculinity; he experienced a sexual awakening within the context of urban space; he embraced its liberatory promise; he learned the codes of hosting and how to economically survive; he explored the intricacies of the host–traveler relationship, including managing abuse; he navigated the competitions and complexities of gay host community and formed gay host family; he "aged out" of the scene and translated his host work into another form of cultural work—that is call center work; and he embraced a shifting notion of desire as his love of whiteness shifted to the love of his current long-term Filipino boyfriend.

When we speak of neoliberalism at the structural level alone we lose sight of how it functions at the level of intimacies. We know from transnational feminist analyses of tourism and militarization that masculinist–neoliberal structures penetrate and shape the most intimate aspects of workers' lives (Brennan 2004; Cabezas 2009; Cheng 2010; Gonzalez 2013). The concept of intimate neoliberalism therefore organizes my in-depth portrayal of one gay host's life, as he comes of age in Malate and as I follow the many pathways of neoliberal social structural control as well as the ways in which he uses intimacy to resist these controls. In place of freezing hosts within a structural analysis of informal tourism work, life histories offer a powerful, and dynamic, lens to analyses of urban place because they show the confluence and unfolding of subjectivity, lived experience, *and* social structure in hosts' lives, as they forge their way in urban place. Chapter 4 elaborated patterns of how hosts worked within the neoliberal structures of gay tourism and urban renewal while creating their place in Malate's gentrifying spaces. Hosting emerged in relationship to both neoliberal social structures and urban renewal and within the intimate exchanges of paid companionship, desire, love, family, and urban place. PK's life history elaborates these and other forms of intimate neoliberalism. His life history is a coming of age story that disrupts the "use and abuse" paradigm prevalent in globalization studies because his testimony demonstrates his resistance to "being used" in both his intimate and professional relationships. His life history demonstrates why sexual desire and the need for economic security lead men like PK into hosting and commercial work (such as in call centers) which are pinnacles of neoliberal exploitation. Within these relations and spaces, PK struggles to

define love, intimacy, and connection. Thus his story shows the evolving intimacies and shifting desires across his life.

The portrayal below is constructed out of recorded oral history interviews that PK and I conducted over the three months we spent together in 2013. I also construct this narrative from the many conversations that PK and I shared during that three-month period. I sought to become a student of his life, dialoguing with him about how he understood his experiences in Malate, how he got there, and what he asserted as significant life events. PK agreed to do the oral history interviewing after we spoke about what a biographical case study of a gay host could contribute to a book on gay place in Malate. He wanted to share his story because he adamantly believes that people should know hosts' stories, even though PK continued to struggle with shame over having hosted. "We were a part of what was Malate, and people forget that," he shared with me. "It is important that we talk about it; our stories are important too." PK's framing offers both a moral depiction of his life and a life struggle narrative, where he too attempts to make sense of how his life has unfolded. PK was only 31 years old when we did these oral history interviews, and I am repeatedly struck by not only his wisdom but also the richness of his life experiences for such a young man.

Intimate Neoliberalism: Heteronormative Family, Masculinity, and the Desire for Freedom

PK was born in 1982 in Olongapo City, the Philippines. His father worked for the US naval base there in a job that PK described as having to do with ammunitions inventory. He had worked for the base for eleven years before losing his job, with many others, when the Military Bases Agreement of 1947 expired in 1991 and the USA closed all of its bases throughout the Philippines.[1] PK was the first child of three; he has two younger sisters. He claims to have been his parent's "love child" and throughout the thirteen years that I have known PK, he has often spoken of the love and support he received from them: "I think they tried to spoil me; … my mom told me that she would 'rent out' kids to play with me, you know, pay them or give them gifts or candies…. Cause my mom would fear that I would end up like a loner of some sort because I would be playing with my own little world and my cats; my cats were my friends."

PK spent his early childhood in Olongapo and his mother was a more constant parenting presence. She did not work to supplement the

family income until after PK's first sister was born, at which time, she began selling women's cosmetics and kitchenware (Mary Kay, Avon, and Tupperware), drawing from her neighborhood friends as her main clientele. PK described his early childhood as being preoccupied by his mother, and because his father worked long hours at the base. He made the first and only explanation of his sexuality by linking it to this experience of mother presence and father absence: "I think that is one of the factors that made me 'soft' (laughs) because my mom was always there and it was more feminine. But my dad would bring home colored pens for me. But that was the only bonding time that I would get with my father. My father would be tired coming home from work." Interestingly, PK's current gender presentation is not soft/feminine; however, he does enjoy women's friendships. His memories of family life in Olongapo framed his family as "normal, middle class, and ideal." His father would treat the family to a dinner out every weekend; PK used this example to show his respect for his father as a provider and to show how at that time his father's base job afforded the family this luxury. He also credited his mother for their class and consumer standing because she was an expert with the family budget, so much so that even during the difficult economic times that the family was soon to face, she was always able to eke out some savings.

In 1991, PK's father was laid off from his job just prior to the final closing of the naval base. The family first moved to Bataan, where PK's paternal grandparents lived and where his family could live rent-free in PK's uncle's house (who lived in the USA) and in exchange for looking after his property. PK's second sister was born in Bataan. Upon his mother's urging, the family moved to Laguna, a region to the south of Manila, and so that his mother could live closer to her sister. PK described his father as a husband who respected his wife, was concerned with her wishes, and understood her desire to live closer to her family. Though they rented their house in Laguna, PK described it as very nice—they had three bedrooms, a lot, two dogs, and three cats. His father had received some severance pay from his base job, which he used to purchase a Jeepney and hire a driver; this Jeepney service helped generate some income for the family, until mechanical failures led to their loss of this important income source. This loss prompted a key shift in the family's economic stability; PK describes this period as the beginning of significant economic challenges. In response, his parents opened a small Sari-Sari store where they also cooked and sold *merienda* (afternoon lunch or snack) food—pancit, panabok, and American-style hamburgers. PK claimed that it was the

combination of his father's ability to cook a good "American hamburger" (which he acquired while working at the US naval base) and his mother's budgeting skills that allowed this small Sari-Sari store and snack stand to generate just enough money to support the family up through PK's high school.

> Dad would cook home-cooked hamburgers, very American. We actually literally grew up with a lot of Americans from the naval base so I mean we had this American craving for hamburgers. They make good hamburgers. We had that little store and that supported us up to high school cause my dad never looked for another job afterwards. I mean they kinda do the business on their own…. Most of my classmates still remember—we had a reunion last year—and they still remember the hamburgers as one of the best hamburgers that they have ever tasted. And I take pride with my Dad's hamburger. Yeah he really does make some really nice hamburgers.

By high school, PK was thinking about college but knew that his family could not afford his tuition; the family income generated only enough for rent and food. His father had wanted to send all three of his children to college but despite the work and budgeting the family could not generate enough income for college tuition. Unbeknownst to his father, PK wrote his paternal grandparents, seeking support. He explained that he wanted to help his father by freeing him from the responsibility of putting his first child through college, and so his father could focus on supporting his two daughters' college education. PK claimed the role of the eldest son, indicating that, at the time, he believed he would be fine and by finding another way to support his college education, he could best support his family. His father's pride was deeply hurt because, as PK claims, he saw himself as a provider and that over the years and despite the economic struggle, his father had managed to never ask for money from his parents. Eventually his father agreed to his parents paying PK's tuition, if he would go to Bataan State College, which was closer to them, and where PK could live rent-free with his grandmother's sister and help her in her home; she had never married and lived alone.

PK moved back to Bataan and started to work on a Bachelors degree in secondary education and general science; yet he left university during his second year. He claims that he had thought life would be easy but eventually found that his grandmother's sister was "a very difficult person" to live with. "I have a feeling that she doesn't want me there…. And the thing

is, I am helping her out but … she makes me feel as if I should feel more indebted and all this. So I think I am going to go, and skip school, and work. That is why I ended up running away…. They (his parents) didn't really know that I ran away from Bataan … that I packed my bags, and going to Manila."

PK had spoken often about how his desire to leave the province was also rooted in his inability to truly realize his desire for men there. He remembers his first sexual attractions to boys around the age of thirteen and he spoke of attempting to repress these attractions because he felt his parents feared that he would become gay. He was growing up in what he described as a female-centered household—his mother's presence as primary caregiver, his close relationship with his two sisters, and the many female cousins who spent time at his home. He therefore recounted many awkward hetero- and gender-normative experiences that he shared with his adolescent friends and father, and as he tried to navigate heteronormative masculinity in his relationship with the men in his life.

> My dad would always get me involved with Tae Kwan Do, boxing, you know, boy stuff. I remember when I was in high school him asking me if I wanted to go to a girly bar. I was like "*Noooo*" (his emphasis). He was probably on his drunk state of mind, "Well maybe PK can come with me to have a good time at the girly bar."… There was a time that I went to one … with my classmates back then. It was an experience but I never wanted to do that again ever. I felt bad; I felt bad because these girls are doing literally everything. They were putting beer bottles in there. It was the same way I felt when I saw this little kid getting fucked in the middle of the crowd. Yeah, live show. Well to me it was a little kid because the guy was way bigger; … it made me cry. I mean, it's the same; I could equate that. This is not sexual at all…. [Yet] one of the most memorable parts of my bond with my father would be the boxing thing because he would try to get us some boxing gloves and you know spar with me. He would say "You need to punch a little harder young boy, ok?" But my dad pretty much prepared me; I always look back to that time and say well my dad was really scared that I'll end up gay, that's why he had me on boxing gloves at one point and trying to train me. I guess it was also his way of preparing me toward a battle that I would be facing as being me.

PK's early relationships in high school were with girls; he spoke of dating girls who were labeled as the "class sluts" because he saw them as more adventurous and not conservative. He was drawn to them because

he wanted their freeing influence in his life, particularly as he was seeking to better understand his own sexuality. PK described these relationships as "sisterly" and very asexual. Despite his parents' concern about his relationships with girls who had questionable reputations, "they were some of the best relationships that I've had" because they focused on their friendship. He remembered feeling ridiculed by his father when he spoke of being in love with one girl when his father claimed that PK didn't understand love. He said that he was defiant in the face of his parents' misunderstanding, claiming that he would find love. PK laughed at this recollection, stating that he did find love in Malate but not in the way that he or his parents had anticipated. "It's funny now because they no longer care how I love."

PK spoke often of how "time for me was so limited because I couldn't wait to get out of the countryside." When I asked what factors played a role in his wanting to "get out," he answered that he "felt lonely"—in his relationship with his grandmother's sister and in his relationships with his heterosexual male friends in Bataan. So at sixteen when he started college, his friendships with heterosexual men demonstrated their very divergent desires.

> I still look at men [when I got to Bataan]. Some of them I drink beers with on weekends; … I can sense this entire homoerotic vibe within the community but I don't see it as exposed…. There is nothing to confirm that, nothing tangible to confirm whatever … I am feeling at that time. It felt like I had to go out of the box to experience it…. Some of these boys are my friends or friends of my friends. I would sleep over and stuff like that. And when you sleep over and you drink, there will be, uh something, and you would feel that air of sexuality…. There was some touching and all that but … I said, well, I gotta figure this all out cause I am so confused.

> *D*: Was it almost accepted because you guys were drunk?
> *PK*: I think that was on their mind. I refuse to take that explanation…. For them, I think it was OK because I know some of these boys have their own girlfriends, and I think there is something *wrong* (his emphasis) in this picture because tomorrow they forget. We have amnesia tomorrow. I don't think I can live with that…. I think that that is one of the things that differs me from all these, cause I know them and when I go back to the countryside, I meet them and they are happily married and all this. So I guess it works for them that way but apparently for me it didn't.

Sexual Awakening in the Context of Urban Place

PK's inability to "have amnesia the next morning" served as an impetus for him to leave the countryside when he was seventeen. He indicated that he wanted to leave his life in Bataan to find work; Manila was the only place that he could think of where he could find a job. He had hoped to secure a job in the service industry, as a janitor or a food server. He packed his bags and left with enough money to support himself for two months. PK spoke of feeling "liberated" the further he moved away from Bataan, and the closer he approached Manila. He claimed to have had a plan B, if things didn't work out in Manila, and that was to return to Laguna where his parents lived and with a recognition that they would have accepted him; "I mean I have a home." PK would have had to simply swallow his pride and accept his father's discipline for having left Laguna for college in Bataan in the first place. Yet PK was also "searching" for himself.

In November of 1999 and at seventeen, PK arrived in Malate, yet this arrival to the district, in his words, was "unplanned"; he did not know Manila well and he had never heard of the "Malate" district. He exited the bus in the northern portion of the metro region and from there:

> I just drifted away, jumped in and out of Jeepneys until I landed here. I didn't know this place…. I had no idea [it was a tourist district]. I just kept walking, walking, walking, and I ended up at Down Under…. I literally walked the entire cruising area but I didn't know it. I would see all these gay men! And no wonder … cause I was walking all the cruising areas (laughs). Remedios Circle was my last stop and then Down Under. It was loud music playing because I think it was a Friday…. It was that one night of being in Down Under that I have to blame (laughs), … and seeing *all these men* (his emphasis)!

The gay men in Down Under were aloof at first because they couldn't figure PK out. Since he had just arrived from the province, he dressed differently than they did—more casually—and so some believed, PK later found out, that he was a tourist visiting from Malaysia; "I was an alien over here! You know I have my backpack; I am drinking my beer in a gay bar…. [I came] back there cause I think I slept in Remedios Circle back then." PK's initial days in Malate were exhilarating; they involved long walks around the district and his sentimental discovery of an urban neighborhood, with its freedom, that he was experiencing for the first time:

> The next morning, I would do my walk.… It gives me this high; like you are so curious that you don't get enough. You get a little sleep but you are way up and it seems like you have this rush. I would wake up early and I would have my walk and then the next thing I know, the mall is open. And that takes my time, the mall. Then Alvina's, and you know that is how my day went.

On PK's third day in Malate, and at the café Alvina's, he befriended some gay hosts. Hosts had been aloof his first night in Down Under; yet one gay host—Mama Miguel—beckoned for him to share his table at Alvina's that day. When Miguel learned that PK had just arrived in Manila and needed a place to stay, he quickly invited PK back to the place that he shared with other hosts in the bordering Pasay district. PK slept for hours and when he awoke, Miguel and the others were going to Down Under, and so he decided to accompany them. He describes how he felt as he sat at Down Under and observed the other hosts:

> Well you know they speak this language—the gay language (*Swardʔ*)—is all new to me. I have never heard anyone talk like that! … I would be sitting and just be amazed at how this entire language (laughs), who invented it and how come I am enjoying it? It is like music to my ears (laughing)! … They have a way of changing [the language] and just somehow if you are gay, you would be able to connect all that. I think it is a talent … and for me it was just like a word game for me to figure out what they were trying to say. To be able to understand it was somehow a confirmation for me that "OK, I can understand their language, I really probably am one of them" (laughs). I just spent my first week observing. If there was a foreigner who would come in the door, all of them would just jump and walk towards him and just say "hi," and I would be left there.… But they would sit the man, you know, give them probably one of the menus. But I watched all this.

It was a formative week for PK's sexual identity and for learning the codes of hosting. PK stayed with the group in their studio and within the week, PK was with his first foreigner.

Learning the Hosting Code and Building Host Family

The hosting community was neither ideal nor abusive; it was the family that both competed with PK for the attention of foreigners and nourished him, as he learned how to host and came out as a gay man in Malate. He

experienced resentment from older hosts and competition from younger hosts, as he was the "new kid" in the scene and therefore was more likely to draw foreigners' attention.

> Mama Bong used to hate me. Well, not really hate me; he had a corner and I could not stand on his corner and I would say "Well, I am just standing." He would tell me "Go find another corner." … There was one time when he suspected that I was taking drugs and he would hit me and say "You are fucking high!" "No I'm not; you probably are!" And Mama Miguel would come to my rescue: "You don't hit him! You don't hurt him!" They were like two of my mothers—one was tough love and Mama Miguel was very, very nurturing; he was more of like a mother to me. Mama Bong was very rough; he almost made my head rotate (laughs).

Mama Miguel most closely guided PK "through the ropes of how it is around here;" though PK indicated that he knew how to take care of himself. When I inquired as to what was involved with "learning the ropes," he said that Mama Miguel would help him with his dress, and presentation of self, so that he could fit in with the "upper class style of dress" that other gay men were emulating in the neighborhood. If he was to meet foreigners, Mama Miguel instructed PK that "'You better look good.' Back then, what I get from him was that he tries to dress as much as possible as the upper middle class dresses so that he could blend in with them and you know be tagged as one of them."

PK lived with Mama Miguel and four other hosts in a small studio style unit in Pasay (I discussed this living arrangement in more detail in Chap. 4), and Mama Miguel made sure that PK had food and care for the first few months that he was in Manila. PK described the whole group of hosts with whom he shared housing as very generous because he didn't have to contribute to the rent, initially; in return, he would secure food for everyone. It was within this host family that PK learned how to sustain himself in Malate—they would share food, con their dates into buying lunch or dinner for other hosts, maintain a collective money source out of which Mama Miguel would budget so that their monies could cover food and supplies for all, collectivize their hosting success, and share the burden of "dry spells" so that no one host went hungry or didn't have a place to sleep. "What I like about them is that they are very adaptive. When times are hard and this is all we have, we share what we have." An example of how they collectivized their living was in how

the hosts used their studio; "We were a group of four; but we kind of grow every week sometimes. There were people coming and going.… We don't sleep there all the time; I mean it's just a place to crash in; … I mean it was a place we'd go back to, you know, if things go wrong," as PK explains.

Managing the Host–Traveler Relationship and Violence

I tried to understand the specifics of how PK acquired hosting skills. Yet his new host family never communicated a clear set of strategies for what he should do after meeting a foreigner. Not knowing how to manage the host–traveler relationship created a particular moment when most hosts, including PK, risked and experienced violence. PK learned about hosting through sharing the same urban spaces as other hosts and by following how they met foreigners: "They would take me to the places where they frequent, like you know Alvina's, or where we can cruise. But pretty much when I met my first *Afam*, uh, I was pretty much on my own.… Those things, you have to just learn this in the process; there really is no guideline to becoming a great gay host. What do you call this book 'The Idiot's Guide to gay hosting' (laughing)." PK thus learned where to hang out, how to budget, and how to change his appearance from looking like a "country boy." But for all of this care, he received little advice on how to manage a date once he had one—PK didn't know exactly what he wanted or what to do once he went home with someone. The first time he went with a foreigner, at age seventeen in 1999, PK was raped. Stories of rape were common among hosts who spoke of being "taken advantage of" by at least one foreigner and usually when they first started hosting or when they first "fell in love" with a client.

> My first time—I never told anyone about my first time, not even my friends—it was with a German guy that fucked me. All that time, they thought that I knew what I was doing; none of them were really invasive. They thought that I was just hooking around like them whereas I didn't feel like that was exactly my goal. The first week that I was here, I hooked up with this German guy who kept me in his … hotel where he is staying, and fucked me. I mean, I think he raped me; he raped me. He did.… Yeah, I said no (silence and we both breathe). Well, you move from that but it was sad because how

> I wished it was different.… I thought he liked me, and I liked him, and probably love is possible, so I just gave in to the idea.… After him fucking me, I didn't feel any more special to him. That just confused me even more because I was very special until he fucked me. After we fucked, that was it. He said he had to do something right away and he couldn't wait to get rid of me.… Well it got me confused because the first two days, I felt like you know we were going to get together in this little cozy room in our world.… I try to forget most of it but I cannot really put that away because it is part of who I am now; it is part of my whole evolution. Afterwards, I was like, "Well I'll toughen up; no one is going to do that again to me." I was wary the next time; … I was very careful.

This story shows the first in at least two experiences for PK where the line between love and violence is blurred; this blurring of desire and structural and literal violence is a part of the relations of intimate neoliberalism under construction in Malate. PK learned to become more direct with boyfriends about what he was willing to do sexually; he also learned to evaluate boyfriends when speaking with them about sex to see whether he trusted them. He claims that this allowed them to build trusting and respectful relationships, as both of their expectations became clearer. Yet payment for sex remained indirect and inconsistent. If PK met someone he was attracted to, he could secure a week's worth of his meals, drinks, accommodation, travel and/or entertainment, including additional food for his friends. He claimed this was enough and even if the boyfriend didn't offer him additional money for having sex. He said that he never felt coerced into going with someone and that he could say no if he didn't trust or like the man. Yet he also spoke of the economic pressure to go with someone because he, like the other hosts, had to monetarily contribute to their household.

> We always have a choice not to go with this guy but sometimes it is survival that you have to. There was this guy that I wouldn't even date but he's a foreigner and he likes me. It's not a pity fuck for me; he pays me at the end and I am aware of that. It's not really negotiated; … you just know it's automatic. If I had chosen that day not to go with him, I would have to work twice as hard to find someone so that I could last through the next two days.… Yeah, that money would pay for food. And especially, I was living with other people who were also expecting that I would give my share back then.

"Choice" implied that there was an ideal boyfriend yet rarely did the ideal transpire for PK and others. Most relationships existed somewhere between the ideal—"a stunning American or a stunning foreigner who had a lot of money and who was gonna treat me like a prince"—and the worst case scenario—"someone that would make you do things that you know, and in the end not pay you, not give you anything, not even food." PK spoke of working with whatever he was presented at any given moment; "it is not too hard to love someone. You feel something toward someone who starts to treat you like a king and you're from the streets." PK's ideal shows his desire for "Americanness" and "foreignness" and for economic support; they were embedded in one another and shaped by his experience of the intimate neoliberal relationships he was cultivating in Malate.

Within the context of his first year within Malate's gay spaces and its intimate neoliberal relations, through hosting foreign men, by falling in love, and having others fall in love with him, PK, in his words, came to terms with his sexuality and embraced the new reality that he was gay. PK's narrative shows the role of urban place in facilitating his construction of gay identity, particularly in how his movement away from the province led to an experience of a place that affirmed his sexuality:

> Meeting all of these other gay men, foreign and local, I think it shaped homosexuality within me.… I was in love with David, and David was in love with me. But I also have Jimmy in love with me. And I think that Tom was loving me, but … actually he wants me around as his companion. I have love from everywhere and it is the same kind of love that I was fearing when I was in the countryside. I kind of get that affirmation from here, and I don't have to wake up tomorrow and forget about it. That's all clear to me in the first year.

His narrative additionally marks love and business opportunities as significant life events, elaborating further ways in which intimate neoliberalism was central to organizing his life. PK spoke often and with much detail about one formative relationship he had for six years with a US businessman, Tom, who owned US-based adult video stores and who would come and live in Manila for three months at a time. Tom eventually purchased a condo in Robinson's Mall where he and PK lived when Tom visited Manila. Their relationship was mostly sexless; Tom hired PK eventually to be his "personal assistant" in Manila. PK describes this moment as "a blossoming period" in his life and for several reasons. First, he had met

a foreigner who provided him with a more permanent form of economic support, schooling, and a condo, and he established this almost "ideal" relationship in his early years as a gay host: "Tom was like 'Come and hang around with me and show me where these places are and I'll give you US 100 dollars a week. How about that?'… Some of them (hosts) were envious about me settled at an early time because some of them have stayed there for years…. I just went out there and somebody found me and thought that I was the chosen one. It just felt that way…. My life has changed 360 degrees." Second, and with Tom's monetary support and signature, PK established credit and received his first credit card. Third, PK had the extra income to offer monetary support to his gay host family: "Now I have my friends coming over, checking out the place. Mama Miguel, before I would borrow money from Mama Miguel, now it is my turn to lend him money. So you know the tables were turned. The best thing about that is that I did not forget where I came from and that is why they loved me more." When Tom was in Manila, PK earned a weekly salary, lived in Tom's condo, had his food, drink, and travel paid for, and he would receive occasional gifts from Tom. Finally, Tom paid for PK to complete a scriptwriting course at the University of the Philippines where he secured a scholarship for additional coursework and was able to meet and network with people from the media industry (which is the industry that he currently works in).

PK stopped hosting once he began his relationship with Tom, in part because he no longer needed the income and also because he was dedicated to Tom. The bulk of their six-year relationship was defined by their companionship and work—Tom expressed his enjoyment in having PK around and he relied on PK to take him to the metro region's gay bars, clubs, massage parlors, movie theaters, cruising areas, and so on. PK did his research; he purchased a Spartacus gay tourism guide to Manila "so I would know exactly where to take him because he'd want to see the uppity up and the low end, down to Santa Cruz where they would have to lock us up. Unbelievable places." PK negotiated paid sex from other hosts or sex workers for Tom: "He can converse to me freely; I am like his translator sometimes…. He gets tricks that … pretend not to speak English, … so I kind of tell them, you know, 'Come on, don't give me a hard time here. I mean you can understand him.' That's my job." PK's guide work involved their informal research of Manila's gay spaces and was part of a longer-term business plan where Tom was considering relocating his adult shops from the USA to Manila. PK claimed that there was a point when it

appeared that the lavender dollar was about to take off in Manila around 2004, and Tom was vying to take advantage of this new consumer market. With his new credit card and cultural capital, PK identified himself as part of that gay consumer class: "You could see all of these gay men spending their money on these bars. I was spending my own money. If I go out with Tom there are times where he was 'PK, can you pay them in cash and I'll pay you back?' 'I will do what I can, definitely.' It was a turning point for me."

His work also consisted of business assistant and finance-related tasks. For instance, when Tom purchased his condo in Malate, PK worked as a go-between for him, speaking with the interior designers and the condo association. Thus PK worked as Tom's cultural broker and translator in Manila, and he assisted Tom with his US businesses. Tom taught PK how to follow stocks, so he began reading the market and making suggestions on what Tom should buy and sell.

> I would call people from the States, like his broker. Those are the things that I think he found really handy about me because I could converse with these people and talk to them at their level. And probably he programmed it into me; I am like his little computer at one point…. In less than a year I was putting stock orders, wow! And he was very happy when I find these stocks…. He would say "Well, I am buying you a phone because we made a lot of money on that stock." To me it doesn't mean anything; there is no use for me alone. I would have to do it with him. But back then I think there was things I get to do that I don't think anybody else could do.

PK also spoke of the influence Tom had on his life in how he came to define himself and negotiate his relationships in Malate. This was apparent to me because PK used terms ("tricks," "hooking", "boys") and spoke with an accent (a Northeastern US-accented English) that I did not remember from when we first met in 2000. I saw Tom's influence on how PK conceptualized his hosting relationships because Tom directed PK to frame his work and sex in economic terms whereas PK sought to define his relationships with foreign men as dates and in terms of love and as no longer having to do with his earning additional income. The following disagreement elaborates their different approach to relationships in Malate:

> I learned that from him that if I meet someone, you have to be clear with them if it's purely companionship or if you are expecting something in return…. I met this guy and I said "I have a date." And Tom said … "Oh

> you're charging him aren't you?" I said, "No, I'm not." "Why not?" "Well I think he's nice and it's just hanging around with him. I don't have to charge him for that." [Tom says] "If you have sex with him, you better charge him. I think he is ugly."

When I returned in 2013 and spent a significant amount of time with PK, every meeting he would share with me something about the relationship he had had with Tom. PK would oscillate between emphasizing how ideal the relationship was and then share with me how violent and dysfunctional it became. He spoke of the companionship they shared without the obligation of sex; he spoke about the steady income and gifts; he spoke of Tom's mentorship and support for his schooling; and how "freeing" the relationship was for both of them. His relationship with Tom was close to the "ideal" he had spoken of earlier in the interview; he was not in love, and they didn't have sex, but given that PK always worked with whatever relationship he had at any given moment, he still framed the relationship in "fairy tale" terms: "I was watching "Homeland"[2]; there's this scene where there is this special girlfriend of the prince. The prince is a womanizer so the special girlfriend gets to choose the girls that are going to go with the prince. But she is like the original, you know; she stays with the prince. It was like that." PK indicated that although their relationship started out as sexual he quickly learned that Tom wanted to have sex with many men and instead of becoming possessive and/or making sure that Tom would buy him enough gifts before the inevitable demise of their sexual relationship, he rather turned his attention to being Tom's companion and cultural broker. He recognized that this was a smart move on his part because this allowed him and Tom to transition into a longer-term relationship whose foundation was based on companionship and business. Yet their relationship became increasingly difficult, as it was riddled with economic and power inequalities, violence, codependence, and eventually self-destruction, particularly as Tom's drug use increased. PK did not move into the condo full time because he wanted the certainty of a "home" to which he could return when he and Tom fought.

> There was this one time that we fought … and he almost broke my neck. He said sorry, and he gave his keys to his condo and he said, "Stay at my place; I don't want you staying anywhere." He tore my passport; he broke my credit card; I didn't have money. "You know things will be better tomorrow; here's 1000 pesos." … I didn't want to spend the 1000 pesos because

> that is probably the last money that I'll get from him…. But the next day he is still acting weird, so I said "fuck it; I am leaving." I would go to Vicente (another gay host) and stay with them.

Conflict also arose out of Tom's possessiveness over PK's time and relationships with other men despite the fact that they did not have a sexual relationship and neither were they formal business partners (PK never owned any of the stocks that he traded). He marked the beginning of their relationship's decline back to 2006 when PK met another man with whom he fell in love. Tom responded, "PK, you are still young. You are going to meet a lot of boys" and PK said that, "I thought it would matter to Tom but I guess when he felt he was about to lose me that is the time when it started to go haywire." PK also turned down an internship with a television company that was part of a fellowship he was awarded after completing his screenwriting course and which could have turned into a permanent position. He turned it down because he felt compelled to return and care for Tom, whose life was imploding.

> That was when we already felt like things were a mess. We were still trading but … it changed me; I just felt different…. He would sleep the entire day probably from being wasted. I would say "You know, we don't work anymore Tom. We used to work. We used to party hard and work hard…. I am living the life of a junkie here. We are eating out of cereal boxes." "OK PK, stop branding. I am going to take you out to eat."

PK made the decision to "branch out" by securing a part-time call center job in Makati, where he worked selling DVDs for a US company; Tom felt threatened by PK's new job. So Tom offered PK a "job" if he would travel with him to Thailand and work as his host assistant once again. PK left his call center job to travel with Tom to Thailand, and upon their return to the Philippines, PK was stopped by Filipino immigration and was subjected to a cavity search; immigration was suspicious of a young Filipino who was traveling to and from Thailand without baggage. Tom had told him not to pack anything because they would purchase what they needed in Thailand. Immigration, however, assumed that PK was trafficking drugs. However, Tom moved freely through customs with his US passport.

PK fell in love with another man, David, and had a two-year long distance relationship with him while he was still working for Tom. This relationship also ended because of PK's work—David was threatened by

PK's relationship with Tom and he wanted PK to end the relationship and find a "real" job. PK refused, indicating that his work with Tom was his job, and that the other jobs he could secure, given the limitations of his age, experience, and education, were neither lucrative nor secure. David offered to support PK monetarily if PK left Tom, and to send him to school. PK didn't want that kind of support. He said, however, that if David had offered to marry him and bring him back to Finland, then PK would have accepted, leaving both Tom and the Philippines. David never asked.

Tom's increasing drug and alcohol use became a key source of tension, and violence in their relationship. It put PK in danger with the police because PK started to manage Tom's drug use, at points going out and securing drugs for Tom, and particularly when Tom became excessive and destructive in his use. The Philippines has very strict drug laws and PK was more at risk for imprisonment and police abuse than Tom and despite PK's belief that Tom was more at risk. Foreigners typically are not arrested for their drug use or they can afford to bribe the police to secure their release. Tom's violence toward PK increased during this time:

> He got mad at me for controlling him.… That was when we fought.… He beat me up so bad because he was drinking. I thought it was better that he drinks so I asked him to drink. But he was an alcoholic so he didn't stop. And he blamed me for that later too.… I really didn't see it coming as his "Boy Friday" back then. I thought that I was responsible for everything.… He would see [sex workers] and they would rob him and I would clean up after them. I know that was part of my job but if I could avoid having to deal with the police, with the condo association, I would do that.

Yet PK's narrative showed his commitment to wanting to protect Tom—from street crime, sex workers, the police—rather than PK reflecting on how Tom's drug abuse put both of them in danger, including the escalating violence between them. His managing Tom's drug habit and "cleaning up" after Tom had been robbed also shows the intimate neoliberalism at work in this relationship. For instance, PK took care of the underground economic exchanges of drug and sex work purchases as a way to buffer Tom's exposure to risk and even though PK was more at risk from these exchanges. PK acknowledges the pinnacle of abuse as a turning point for him when he recognized not only the danger he was in because of the abuse but that their relationship was not going to change:

> Tom locked me out on the balcony and you know it's too hot out there and I needed some water, I think I'm gonna, I'm too parched. I think he was doing some drugs in the living room. He just probably forgot about me…. If [my friends] didn't come that day, I don't know what would have happened to me. It's 32 flights down…. It was just too hot (starts crying), and I was trapped…. That was pretty much it (breathes). I guess I was just holding on to the thought that this guy that I met years ago is still there somewhere and that I can still save him.

PK confronted Tom about their crumbling relationship and Tom's deteriorating business and this confrontation ended their relationship.

When Tom left Manila after that final confrontation, and decided that he would no longer return or invest there, he promised PK through an email exchange to gift the Malate condo to him. Yet when Tom had the opportunity to sell it, he sold it and with all of PK's possessions still in the condo. PK lost both the condo and all of his possessions, which he had kept there when he stayed and worked for Tom.

Translating the Cultural Work of Hosting into the Call Centers

Tom's and PK's relationship ended in 2007, and for the first time since 1999 when he had come to Manila, he returned to Laguna to live with his family for a while. He then used money he had received from Tom (which was included with Tom's apology letter) to move back to Manila and in with some friends who "took me in and made me a part of their family," economically supporting him until he could find a job. Yet, PK fell into a depression.

> I was at a point very crabby because I felt like … I lost Tom, and I was hard on myself, and I was drinking all of these Valiums to calm down, and stayed at home in bed. I had this entire bottle of Valium from [Tom] that I kept and it was my life at one point. Bradley [his housemate] would wake me up to eat and I would get mad at him. But you know when I am done with my Valiums, then I am done. I am looking for a job (laughing).

PK did in fact finish his bottle of Valium and proceeded to secure a position at a call center on the first day of his job search. He claimed that it was easy because it was his second call center position, and because

in 2007, there was a high demand for a young and English-proficient workforce. PK speaks English with an American accent and he is familiar with US colloquialisms and culture more generally; all of his US cultural know-how, which began with his family's connection to the US naval base in Olongapo and was augmented through his work as a host and paid companion to Tom, meant that PK found himself in high demand for US-servicing call centers, which were on the rise in Manila. He describes this period in his life as one full of transitions and one where he genuinely felt content—he learned to let go of Tom and Malate; he embraced his new full-time job; he formed new and work-based friendships; and he began his first long-term serious relationship with a Filipino boyfriend, Louis, who remains today as his life partner. Once again, he describes his relationship with the neoliberal social structure of the call center in terms of the intimacies of family, friendship, and devoting his life to this work:

> I was living to work. They treated me nice; they gave me a certain feeling of importance; I am important. And I was happy because I made friends, good friends. It was like home so they take the place of my family. I like the idea that no matter what happens to me I am secured, I mean, I am insured; it pays the bill. It was altogether good that I took that path…. I built a relationship around something like that and made it my life and you know it is still foreign; it's not here (meaning Malate).

Yet in 2010, another company bought out the call center and management changed. The work environment changed as well from the family environment that he describes above to a deeply stressful work environment where management expected higher call volumes (more calls per hour) and fewer breaks. PK began to have trouble with his voice; he was regularly losing his voice on the job, and after visiting a doctor, they discovered nodules on his voice box. He requested to be moved to a position with low incoming calls but the manager wouldn't work with his request, despite the fact that the company physician also recommended such a move. Rather, management regularly sent PK home because he would lose his voice during his shift. Eventually, PK was laid off from his position. PK's health insurance was terminated when he lost his job and even though both he and his family needed the health care from his plan (the nodules on PK's voice box required regular medical care). To date, the company has not compensated PK for his work-related injury, and PK still experiences flare-ups where the nodules compromise his ability to speak.

> I worked eight hours per day…. The longer it takes me to take another call, the more the other people would have to work harder because they would have to take all these calls…. We only get a 1-hour break for lunch…. When I was feeling sick, I would let the customer do all of the talking, and that is bad. Because if I let them do the talking, I don't have control over the call. But I have to, because I have to conserve my voice, otherwise I would not have a voice at the end of the day…. So the following day I would have to go home…. I was really sick…. Even now, if I want to work, I cannot work because I do not have a voice at all. I cannot do sign language, not on the phone. I have no choice; I can't work…. It's called abandonment of your post, if you leave your post, but we have to go take a leak. Otherwise we are peeing in soda bottles underneath our tables…. One minute is the most you can go on after a call. If you go beyond that people from the command center will be calling you and asking you to go back on because there are calls waiting. It was terrible after they took over.

PK continues his description of the intimate neoliberalism that shaped his work at the call center, elaborating that (like his relationship with Tom) he felt "used" and "kicked to the curb" when his body could no longer perform the job and despite his working for the company for five years (he was laid off in 2012).

> The *heart* of [the call center], the place that I loved, it was just suddenly foreign, different. That was when I knew that they had no use for me anymore because of my voice. That is why [the new call center] did this to me but [the previous company] wouldn't do this to me…. They have no compassion for the people that had been there for years because they didn't get to see us grow, like there is no attachment. "He doesn't have a voice. OK, kick him to the curb. Get someone else with a voice. We need people with voices."

Evolving Intimacies, Evolving Desires

In 2007, after he and Tom had parted, PK shared that he had contemplated going back to Malate to work as a host once again. Yet he found that Malate and everyone there, including himself, had changed.

> The years of being with him (Tom), I actually did not see how the place evolved but it has evolved into something else…. Malate is different. Down Under is no longer there…. A lot of younger people [are there]; if you are going to compete, I know … I am just going to get real. I know that there

> is a potential for meeting and making a life and finding my prince charming, in an ideal world…. But after Tom, like you said, the process can lead to self-loss (referring to my article, which he had just read), and I felt loss. At one point he made me feel like I was all set, and here he is leaving me. And I was on my own again.

PK did go back to Malate to date men but not to host; he had started his work at the call center and therefore had regular income. He had a secret relationship with a heterosexual-identified Filipino man, Dante, who had children and an absent wife who worked as a hostess in Japan but who had financially abandoned the family. PK explained that their relationship was closeted and that there was never the possibility that he would move in and become Dante's full-time lover or co-parent his children.

Although PK was searching at this point in his life, there were two key transitions that took shape—(1) he began to have relationships that were not confined by the host/traveler dynamic and (2) after Dante, he started to desire more widely and saw the potential in forming longer-term relationships with Filipino men. He no longer exclusively desired foreign men and the income, cultural capital, and cultural difference no longer held the same appeal as they once had when he first arrived in Malate. Yet what prompted PK's move into his first living space that was his own was not a gay lover. Rather, PK's younger sister discovered that she was pregnant around the time she was to graduate from high school and needed PK's love and support. As the eldest, and because PK loved and respected both of his sisters, he used his income from the call center to secure another apartment where PK, his sister, and her boyfriend could move. There he could support her during the pregnancy of her first child and through the process of telling their parents.

> She's just a kid back then. She was only eighteen, and she was so scared. She even thought about getting rid of the baby and I said no, keep the baby, tell dad "Papa don't preach; I'm in trouble deep. I'm keeping my baby" (laughs). Not to quote Madonna or anything (laughing). So there we lived together, me and my sisters. The other sister came; she graduated from the province and she said why don't I go look for a call center job in the mean time…. So we kind of lived together all three of us, and then eventually the baby and the husband. So we were five but it was family; it was happy; it was nice.

In December of 2009, PK met his current boyfriend and "the love of my life," Louis. Louis is a twenty something, gay and politically identified

Filipino man, who was not connected to the Malate scene prior to PK meeting him. PK is seven years senior to Louis though Louis, who has since graduated from college (he took two courses, one in Accountancy in 2007, which he stopped for a year, and then he switched to a Communication Arts course in 2009 around the time when he met PK) and secured a well-paid call center job, is currently the primary breadwinner of their household, given that PK has lost his ability to speak and work the long hours required of a call center. Such a job is the only regular employment that PK could secure, given his age and education. It was during Louis' second year in Communication Arts, and after he and PK were already together, that PK first became sick and lost his call center job. Louis picked up work at that point and has supported PK ever since, applying for several jobs before landing his current well-paid position in Makati. Louis is a beautiful, wise, and loving partner, and very different from the boyfriends whom PK has described to me over the years. He has strong leftist political and egalitarian convictions and has been involved in a variety of activisms and youth justice work in the Philippines. They share a love of the arts, reading, film, writing, and music, and they cherish their three-cat family. Louis has also grown close with PK's family, who accepts and loves Louis as one of their own. Louis describes his own family life as having been difficult; he was raised by his aunt who died of ovarian cancer in her thirties and then by his maternal grandmother, who he describes as tough, though caring, and who was perhaps overwhelmed with the care she provided for many of her grandchildren. His father struggled with addiction and left his birth mother to care for several children; she relied on her extended family to help with raising Louis and his siblings. Hence, Louis, too, seems to have formed family in his relationship with PK and PK's family.

When I returned in 2013 and met Louis for the first time, I was thrilled to witness the beauty and sustenance of this relationship in PK's life. Their love for one another was vibrant, even as they faced difficulties when they came together—PK lost his voice and his job at the call center; their apartment burned to the ground and they lost all of their possessions; and PK's mother and father, who had moved back to Bataan, had lost everything in a typhoon that swept through the region and destroyed much of the city. The narrative of their coming together as told by PK is one that begins with PK emphasizing how he knew at first sight that Louis was the love of his life. Yet PK had to woo Louis for five months before he accepted PK into his life as his lover. PK would take Jeepneys for two hours to where Louis went to school and they would walk to Louis' home, and all so that

PK could spend a half an hour with him. Louis claimed that he waited to join PK in partnership because he first wanted his community's blessing of their relationship.

When Louis and PK finally joined as lovers, they eventually moved into their own apartment, which was soon destroyed in an electrical fire. Their newly adopted cat was killed in that fire. PK shared with me a Filipino saying when he spoke of losing his beloved pet in this way; when an animal dies in a human tragedy, the animal's soul takes the place of a human soul that could have been lost in the fire. Both he and Louis were away at work when the fire broke out and proceeded to burn the entire apartment building to the ground. PK turned again to his friends in Malate and collected donations of household items and clothes for himself and Louis. By 2013, he and Louis had moved to another apartment and were still acquiring household items to live with. One night, we collectively sat on a blanket and recently purchased pillows on the tile floor while having dinner; PK had purchased that blanket and pillows for our dinner together. The fire marked a particularly difficult time in their relationship; "It was all too much in a year, Dana … but we held onto it; we fought it. Yeah, it's good to come out of it and just start moving forward from there…. The worse is we thought we weren't supposed to be together; … we were questioning why we were together a couple of months after the fire…. But we're still together. Louis is really like me; I just don't give up right away."

PK shared that he and Louis wanted to become fathers together in the future but that now they were enjoying being a couple and living a happy and uncomplicated life—"The best thing about this relationship, we can have fun at home…. We can go out with friends and have fun but if we stayed at home and be with the cats and all that, those are the things that we love about this relationship. We can exist in the four corners of our apartment." I asked PK about how his desire for foreigners had changed and what he had learned from falling in love with and building a family with a gay Filipino man. His shift from loving "whiteness" and "Americanness" is very significant, because the performance of desire for foreigners was a strong organizing principle in gay hosts' identity. PK now organizes his identity and desire around his relationship with Louis—a gay man who never shared his hosting experience or his desire for foreigners. PK offers an answer that illustrates his ability to grow beyond what he initially understood to be gay desire but what was a form of desire shaped by the intimate neoliberalism of hospitality.

> I realize that people will just come and go, no matter where they come from. If I didn't meet Louis, I would still be looking for someone and it doesn't matter where they come from; it could be from here. I think I was just a lot younger back then that I thought that only foreign people find me attractive, I mean stunning, that is how they would describe it. They would find something special about me. I would think it was just foreign men that would do that. And I would think that for a relationship to work, I should feel mutually attracted to them. And I do get attracted to them at the same level that they were attracted to me. At one point, I thought that it could only happen between people of different cultures, races, and I was wrong—I met him (Louis). It changed my whole perspective about a relationship, and I guess it is a blessing. Something from god, divine from the universe that's way more advanced than my thinking because really it was magical the way it fell into its places and me falling into it, leaning myself into it, and allowing it to happen in my life…. There's just something magical about love; it's life changing and you are never the same afterwards. Ah, there's still that part of me that's an Afamista and I am not renouncing it. I told Louis; I never kept a secret, he knows about it. But it's all good to exist.

PK's life history hints toward new possibilities within a changing urban space and as shaped by the complexities of intimate neoliberalism. It is also indicative of how he both found his place and participated in the making of place in Malate. Although Malate has changed, in the end, PK offers conceptual openings for differently structured interpersonal and professional relationships. And although his story elaborates the intimate reach of neoliberalism, his insights suggest that through his resistance and his vision of love and desire, his life was not entirely restructured by the alienation of neoliberalism or by the negative impacts of gentrification and urban change. Rather, his life history shows how desire and love became a core mechanism of finding place, building place-based identity and community, opening up to pleasure, and ultimately his own biographical change.

I turn now to an exploration of the second wave of gay-led gentrification on Nakpil and Orosa Streets—what became the gay heart of Malate. I will elaborate how Malate's magic and gay history attracted a second wave of gay entrepreneurs who viewed urban renewal on more classed and cosmopolitan terms. It is in this second wave gentrification that the exclusions of Malate's urban renewal become most apparent. It is these exclusions that gay hosts had to navigate, even as they were drawn to the more out and cosmopolitan urban gay life that Malate's renewal was facilitating.

It was in fact the exclusionary features of urban renewal that helped create the conditions of the demise of urban place in Malate.

Notes

1. Yet with the passing of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in 1999 as well as the more recent 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), the Philippines remains open to the US military and to US–Filipino military exercises, including extensive US military occupation of bases in the southern Philippines. Some claim that the VFA and EDCA make the base closures obsolete because the USA still occupies the Philippines but in what I see as a neoliberal, "just-in-time," and contracted way. What I mean by this is that the USA has a military presence in the region but without the permanent (and expensive) responsibility of base upkeep. The Philippine government is now responsible for the spaces of militarization and with dealing with the fallout from US militarization, which include both environmental and social problems. For example, in 2015, a US marine murdered a transgender woman, Jennifer Laude, after meeting her in a bar in Olongapo City.
2. A US television show.

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CHAPTER 6

The Exclusions of Place: Gay-led Gentrification Within Nakpil's Second Wave

"The Malate Mafia"—Gay Entrepreneurship and the Rise of Neoliberal Gay Space

We saw in Chap. 3 how Manileños, regardless of sexual identity, shared an understanding of Malate as the neighborhood "where the gays are"—it was a district with a visible urban gay life in the form of gay pride celebrations and street parties, transgender and male sex work, same-sex sexual exchange, and gay-owned businesses. The dominant narrative about Malate's gay space is one that speaks of the influence of gay-owned businesses that exerted a stylistic presence on the district and that ultimately shaped its urban renewal. I was often struck by the credence given to gay entrepreneurs and their private businesses for creating Malate's gay space. For example, most Filipino gay men pointed to Malate's businesses as their first experience of gay space; they credited this private business space for the fruition of their sexual identity and desire.

However, these establishments were not (until Club Fellini opened in 2004) explicitly gay bars and clubs and neither did they cater exclusively to a gay clientele as we learned in Chap. 3. In short, they were not out as gay businesses like the establishments that made global North urban enclaves into the rainbow-clad gayborhoods that many associate with gay districts. As I discussed in the previous chapter, a "gay bar" in Manila was a strip club for effeminate gay men who desired straight-acting masculine men and who were prepared to pay for sexual interactions. Yet around 2005, much of that changed and precisely because gay men throughout

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the metropolitan region started to embrace a more open Western gay identification and started to become more comfortable being out in public in the new gay clubs opening in Malate and Makati (Benedicto 2014). Malate had to become a gay neighborhood that ultimately produced gay spaces and establishments by 2005, and it did so through a network of gay men who invested in, owned, operated, and exerted a more open gay style to their businesses and out onto the streets. Gay entrepreneurs may have chosen to locate in Malate because of its gay history; however, Malate became gay through the consolidation of their entrepreneurial and cultural capital, including an increasing media presence that marketed Malate as a tourism and entertainment enclave led by a group of gay business owners who made up the second wave of business development on Nakpil and Orosa Streets.

This chapter is about this gay-led gentrification of Nakpil's second wave, and the production and character of gentrification's neoliberal exclusions as they manifest in urban place. My intent is to show how these exclusions in fact undermined the power of place in Malate, and eventually thwarted Malate's emergence as a gay district. I begin by exploring how the appeal of Malate's place factored into why gay entrepreneurs located their businesses there and in the wake of David's influence on Nakpil, and then I explore how gentrification happened through their gay cultural and network capital within a low-risk investment neighborhood. I tell the story of Nakpil Orosa Bar Restaurant Association's (NOBRA's) work to organize urban renewal by exerting a stylized presence outside of individual businesses and onto the streets. I follow with a discussion of how the mass commercial development of a restaurant row in a Makati mall contributed to the beginning of Malate's fall. I conclude with a vision of Malate's fall from the perspective of gay entrepreneurs who claim that the global commercialism and commodified sexuality of the new out gay man partying at the intersection of Nakpil–Orosa Streets killed the district, despite these gay entrepreneurs' own investment in a transnational gay class and cosmopolitan commercialism. The main goal of this chapter is to tell the sexual, cultural, and neoliberal story of gentrification, teasing out the character of neoliberal exclusions as they manifest in a global South urban neighborhood.

The story on the Nakpil Street revival, in Chap. 3, focuses on a period of urban renewal that my research participants describe as bohemian and gay-performative. Starting in 1999, the second wave of gay entrepreneurs

chose to locate in the district because of this gay and bohemian history and because of Malate's sense of place. They opened cottage industry businesses that changed the bohemian aesthetic to one that was more cosmopolitan. Following their commercial success in 2000, many other businesses flocked to Malate, harnessing the attention of Mayor Atienza, who saw the benefits of tax revenue in the renewal of the neighborhood into a restaurant, entertainment, and tourism enclave. City hall supported small business development and Atienza eventually spearheaded his own lighting and Bay Walk development projects. From 2000 to 2007, Malate became a metro-wide sensation; rents increased, pushing out lower-income residents and eventually making the area unaffordable to both small local businesses and an urban middle-class consumer base. Yet similar to many gentrification stories, Malate's revival pivoted around place because it was Malate's unique sense of place that encouraged gay entrepreneurs to go against the grain and to locate their high-end establishments there over what many believed to be the more obvious choice—the upscale commercial albeit more conservative and sterile environment of Makati. Entrepreneurs even sought to market place in their urban renewal efforts by encouraging a new cosmopolitan consumer base to frequent the genteel, small-scale, and entertainment-oriented enclave over the placeless space of a Makati mall.

This second wave of gay entrepreneurs included both Filipino and expatriate gay business owners. From 1999 to 2000, Philip and Dirk (both gay-identified expatriates) and Juan, Davido, and Alfredo (gay-identified Filipinos) designed and opened two restaurants on Nakpil (Anas and The Wild Goose), a Western-style gay bar on Maria Orosa (Baccus), and a home furnishings/lifestyle store on Nakpil (Luna). Even though there was a mix of Filipino and expatriate business owners who populated Malate, it was the two expatriates Philip and Dirk who became the mass-mediated face of urban renewal, earning the label "The Malate Mafia." From 2001 through 2005, more upper-class and out gay Filipinos opened establishments along Nakpil, Orosa, Bocobo, and Adriatico Streets, and as part of a more intentional trend to create a gay neighborhood in Malate.

In my interviews with gay entrepreneurs, I was repeatedly struck by their collective rationale for choosing Malate (over Makati) because they wanted to work, live, and create as out gay men in a neighborhood that exuded a sense of place and freedom. Davido (gay Filipino, manager of Anas), captured this openness:

> If you live in this area and you're gay, it's not very hard to be gay, to be open, secure, and stable. If you're asked if you're gay, "Yeah. Why? Do you have a problem with that?" As compared to if you live in Makati and you're an executive and you're gay, of course you would deny to heaven and to earth that you are.

Gay entrepreneurs also credited David[1] for their being able to open the kind of establishments that they had envisioned on Nakpil because the street was still a residential space in the late 1990s when Philip first opened Anas there. They explained that they may not have followed David's business style but he was the first gay business owner to put himself out there as a gay man on Nakpil, and his eclectic café and street parties breathed gay life into the neighborhood. Thus it was David's gay urban expression that drew in the second wave of gay entrepreneurs, encouraging them to open their establishments specifically on Nakpil, and not elsewhere in Malate. Philip, having moved to Manila from Hong Kong (he is originally from the UK) with the intention of opening his first fine dining restaurant in the Philippines, described being "drawn to Malate" and it was David, specifically, who encouraged him to open his restaurant on Nakpil. The street had potential for becoming a prime promenade area that could lure the fine dining crowd away from Makati on weekends, particularly if they were looking for a different street experience.

Lionel (gay Filipino, owner of Enclave a gay comedy and drag performance space that lasted the longest and which many gay Filipinos and expats viewed as a gay tradition in Malate) explained that he located in Malate because he grew up in the district and had an understanding that the district was gay: "I love this place so much and it is really a gay district…. I remember one gay bar here that lasted for thirteen years, Cornucopia…. It's a gay-friendly area so you can just walk on the street in drag and nobody would care. Ever since then we tried to speak *Swardi*[2]". Jemuel (gay Filipino, owner of a spa Bathing Relaxation and a sex toy paraphernalia store Pride's Place) spoke about Malate's bohemian culture, and how the long-standing presence of artists and gay fashion designers created the district's sense of openness. He chose to locate his establishments in Malate because of this openness and to ride the tide of gay-led commercial success:

> I think Malate is the only bohemian district in all of the Philippines…. It doesn't just cater to gay men; it also caters to a lot of alternative people who

> are alternative-living. And it is a place where one can really feel free. You can hold each other's hand; same-sexes kiss each other and nobody would even make a qualm about it. That would be different from other areas in the Philippines. Malate is also the only hip place in all of Manila. Besides the mall, it's the only sort of center of entertainment in the whole of Manila.… I think it's because most of the artists converged in Malate; it also has the Cultural Center nearby. It is also a place where you find a lot of smaller cafés, alternative dining; it's not pretentious at all; it embraces people.… Like the second Soho district, you have a lot of fashion designers who live here.… Because of the presence of smaller restaurants, smaller cafés, it's a walking district. Unlike others (referencing Makati's Greenbelt Mall), it's not contrived. I like Makati some but it's so contrived. Everything is so prim and proper; everything is so manicured; everything is so perfect, so that if I go there, [I am] very conscious of what I wear.

Noah (gay Filipino, opened a restaurant and a bar/dance club in 2001) explained that Malate was the first space where he could conceptualize being gay in public. When he came out as a young gay man, he was a patron of the Nakpil first wave and spent considerable time at Café Paradiseo. It was during this first wave of Malate's revival and within the gay-performative spaces that David helped create what Noah conceptualized as his first gay establishment:

> That's where I first established my identity of being gay in public was in Malate. I was discovering my identity as a gay person. You know, I loved it and told myself one day I'm going to put up something here.… That was back in ninety-four and then eventually I came out to my family as well, and they said, "Do you go to that Malate place? Yes I do; *that* Malate place."

Like their gay Filipino counterparts, Philip and Dirk also experienced Malate as open and gay-friendly and they experienced their own version of coming out as gay expats in the district. Malate was a liberated urban space for them because they were not subjected to the sexual controls that they had experienced at home and in their work lives in other countries or regions of Metropolitan Manila. Philip drew from a discourse of sexual inhibition and liberation to describe his move to Malate after living in England, Sydney, and Hong Kong, where he claimed to have repressed his sexuality because he feared homophobia. He described meeting David who was his new neighbor when he first moved to Malate: "I heard the doorbell ring. I answered it and there standing in my doorway was this

very tall man dressed in a glamorous evening gown, and holding a large bouquet of flowers. I was so shy and inhibited at that point and I was so amazed that gay men could walk around with that freedom here". His experience of visible gay life in Malate inspired a significant change in his sexual and gender lifestyle:

> When I moved to the Philippines, I became even more relaxed with the circle of friends because the Filipinos accept homosexuals a lot, and so I became even more confident here in the Philippines. I didn't give a damn. And I've seen all these ugly [Baklas], … if they can mince around with a handbag and makeup on, the jewelry, flamboyant, if he gets away with it and he's hanging out in city hall, … why can't I be confident? Eventually, by surrounding myself with these very flamboyant types who were very liberal, "Who cares Philip, enjoy yourself, live it" [they would say], I began to live it. It was funny because David, … we used to just go out shopping, go flower shopping, and just like do the gay thing. I was like "This is fantastic! You can walk around, be as casual as you like, be as relaxed as you want, and nobody cares." In fact, they (Filipinos) like it; they actually enjoy seeing displays of homosexuality.

Dirk also spoke of seeking to live a more sexually open life in Malate. As an owner of a machine parts corporation, which he operated out of Makati, he described his Makati work life as requiring his performance of heterosexual masculinity and where he could not be out as a gay man. His transition to opening a high-end lifestyle store in Malate, with the help of a network of gay male designers and investors, was connected to his desire to shed the controls of his former corporate life. Yet his economic success with his transnational corporation allowed his investment in the emerging gay entrepreneurial space in Malate[3] where he felt he could be more out as a gay man.

> In my business before—which I did for the last ten years—it is a very extreme, straight, environment, machinery. We imported machinery for the plastics industry. That's how I earned most of my money the last ten years and that's why I can be so cool about everything (laughs), to be honest. It was very sensitive; you couldn't be out at all with all these company owners, mainly Chinese, traditional, and conservative. But here [in Malate] no, they expect it [that a lifestyle store owner is gay]…. I couldn't bear it any more [working in that company]. I mean, you live once and if you have to hide for too many years, um, I did it for ten years … but then I realized no it's

> not really me. That was a big factor why I created that (the lifestyle store) and that's also why we moved back to Malate. I mean I have properties in Makati and I rent them out but I just don't want to be there anymore. It's part of the new life, even moving here.

Gay entrepreneurs' personal experiences of the neighborhood in this way factored prominently in their decisions to locate there. They liked the neighborhood; they had freeing experiences there; they came out and participated in the neighborhood's gay presence. The personal was therefore fundamentally productive of gay entrepreneurial space. Gay entrepreneurs saw possibility in Malate's open and gay-friendly urban spaces and therefore conceptualized independent and innovative businesses. Their entrepreneurial presence then contributed a cosmopolitan lifestyle, which was the lifestyle that they imagined taking part in as an up-and-coming gay neighborhood. Philip's narrative about his role in Malate's renewal focused first and foremost on his belief in cultivating his businesses (over wider social or community concerns), that his businesses represented his lifestyle aspirations, and that he worked on the neighborhood only because it housed his bar and restaurants. He had to care about what was taking shape on the streets because he wanted his entrepreneurial space to fit with, and sustain, a certain class of patron that he was hoping to draw in. Yet when answering my question about why he believed in Malate, he claimed that his business, Anas, was very personal to him because it was an expression of his lifestyle: "I started when I was so young, first business, I was living here, and I treated it so personally that it became my life. So, it's very difficult just to, to look at it as a business anymore because it really is my lifestyle. You know, I eat, drink, and sleep, everything else, all around this restaurant".

The desire to live one's gender and sexuality more freely and to take part in a gay urban neighborhood factored into gay entrepreneurs choosing Malate as the urban space where they did business. Yet there were both aesthetic and economic reasons for opening risky businesses in a neighborhood that had not proved that it could sustain the cosmopolitan class cultures that entrepreneurs were hoping to draw in. Lionel claimed that he took advantage of a window of opportunity during the post-EDSA recession, (refers to the People Power Revolution, which consolidated around Epifanio de los Santos Avenue) which kept rents low in the district, and allowed smaller businesses to emerge. Philip emphasized that Malate was less expensive than Makati; so if Anas failed, then he and his investors would

lose less. Davido explained that the neighborhood was less expensive and it had character, which could lend something unique to the business:

> In Makati, you get a lot of business people, a big business area, and the only spot you can get is in a mall. Who would want to eat in a boutique restaurant like this situated in a mall? It loses its character; it loses its identity.… But if you put it here, it makes its own niche in the market. I know that we lose out on a lot of clients because traffic-wise it's hard to get from Makati to here. But you get the people who really go out of their way to enjoy dining, to enjoy their food.

By comparison, Makati's rents were, on average, eight times higher. Malate's lower rents began with the en masse vacating of both residents and business with the opening of the sex strip; when the sex strip was closed in the early 1990s, the lower rent was accompanied by an opening of space for new businesses. Mayor Atienza followed with his support by more quickly approving business permits for smaller local businesses in the late 1990s and by sometimes waiving permit fees. Mayor Atienza made sure that his administration cultivated the reputation of supporting Malate's small business revival and to counter the image of Manila's former Mayor Lim who in fact opposed such entrepreneurship in favor of mass commercial development. Thus local and smaller businesses started to proliferate by 2000. Philip reflected on how Malate used to encourage "concept risk takers" in these smaller businesses where gay entrepreneurs would go all out on a new concept because the rents allowed for a low overhead and more time to create consumer interest. He claimed that to succeed in Malate "it takes a particular mindset, a person who is prepared to take a bit of a gamble and risk to go all out with concepts.… They could do it because it was such a low overhead, but when you go to Makati, … you can't take the risk, you can't be as individualistic, you have to go for the mass population to a certain extent".

It also took capital to open up these unique businesses because the business spaces had to be renovated. Dirk claimed that he had the capital to take the risk of opening a high-end lifestyle store in a district that historically supported bars and lower end restaurants and to invest in the renovation of other business spaces in support of his gay entrepreneur friends. All of the gay entrepreneurs spoke of finding beautiful older buildings where they could afford the lower rents, and where they had the freedom from landlords to renovate the space into their stylized new businesses. For

example, Noah explained that his three businesses were located on a former family compound where he not only secured a lower rent for renting the entire compound but was given free reign to redesign the compound for all three of his businesses in one place:

> N: It was owned by one family, it was a compound…. We negotiated because it belonged to siblings so we got a better deal for the one in the front.
> DC: Did they give you pretty much free reign in terms of how you revamped the buildings?
> N: Yeah well, when we had rented it, they were very, very dilapidated; I had to do major improvements to improve a lot of the structure and everything. So yeah, I did a courtyard, which was courtyard cuisine. We kind of wanted to make it very French-Chinese kind of thing. Also modern. All of the establishments are very modern.

Jemuel shared a similar experience of renovating a family compound for his spa:

> J: It's an ancestral house; it's owned by five families. It can't be sold because the clan owns it….
> DC: Do you have free will to remodel it however you want, or were there any restrictions?
> J: The only restriction was that I could not change how the house looked on the walls, open it up, put mirrors all over, but I didn't want to do it anyway. I wanted to maintain the history of the house. And I restored [it]; … so the owner's very happy with this.

"It's All Part of Creating an Island Around You"—Gay Cosmopolitanism and the Production of Exclusivity in the Neighborhood

By 2001, Malate was undergoing a full-fledged commercial revival and became the premier entertainment enclave in all of Metropolitan Manila, where its drawing power became what gay men did with their businesses within this unique urban enclave. This second wave of gay entrepreneurs claimed that they did not start their businesses with a gay master plan; rather, they drew from the creativity and individuality of living the gay life in an open district to create their concept businesses. Yet their business style, nonetheless, assumed an institutional status in Malate's revival.

This style and their targeting of a new class of patron ultimately shifted Malate's gay spaces into a neoliberal space where entrepreneurs began to explicitly link Malate's renewal to cosmopolitan gay neighborhoods globally—commercial urban spaces that link gay urban style with fashion, creativity, hospitality, trend-setting, boutique consumer goods, travel, and consumption. Dirk claimed:

> I think Malate was really started by the gay lifestyle basically like many trendy areas in New York and Europe. It always seems to be the gays who start that, even like Luau Fong, in Hong Kong, was started by one gay establishment. I think it is very important because they do have an impact in fashion. Even like Philip doing his restaurants the way he decorates it, the way he conceptualizes his food, and now we have four establishments here and we're all gay. I believe we have a big impact here already and I don't know whether there is more intuitive or whether more gay-owned establishments will come in, but it will always have a big impact.

This cosmopolitan gay urban neighborhood discourse was so strong that in entrepreneurs' eyes "being gay helped business," as Davido claimed. My interviewees repeatedly claimed the virtues of gay men in the leisure industry—they were good hosts, great performers, excellent comedians, fun, more intelligent, cutting-edge, and simply had the stylistic know-how that heterosexuals lacked. For example, Davido claimed that gay men paid attention to the "details of life," which was evident in the interior design of the restaurant, the customer service, and the food: "I guess it's become very popular to be a very gay restaurant just because somebody [like me] greets you by the door.… And I really think that being gay helps a lot, especially in the hospitality industry".

Being gay also helped with investment in the neighborhood's business. Behind every successful gay business in Malate there was a network of investors, public relations workers, graphic designers, interior designers, tourism workers, customers, and so on, who were also gay and who pledged their allegiance to gay-owned establishments. Malate's business revival was possible because of a very successful and supportive gay network that extended not only throughout Metropolitan Manila but also through Southeast and East Asia more widely, which consisted of a transnational class of gay men who could invest, consume, and travel to this emerging cosmopolitan consumer enclave. Philip explained that he sold his fine dining restaurant idea to gay friends in Hong Kong, London, and

Manila, claiming that they saw what he was able to do with the restaurant in Hong Kong and felt confident that he could reproduce that in Manila; "I approached about twenty-five people and they ended up making a low investment. There was no problem; they just did it.… Most of them are gay. Yeah, most of my friends are gay". Hence it was transnational gay capital that allowed Philip to open Anas in the first place.

Philip explained that he never intended for Anas to be a gay establishment. Yet he worked closely with his friends and investors, who were all gay, to open his dream fine dining restaurant, which gained the reputation of a gay establishment that serviced a gay, upper-class, and transnational clientele with discerning tastes. Philip claims that gay men simply like "nice things," and this went a long way in building his reputation in the restaurant business:

> I worked with them (his network) on the project because most of them are in PR, or design or advertising, the creative side. And because I did that, their friends, connections, were brought in … like "You must come to my place because I'm friends with so and so."… I think just by working with these people that pulled in what would seem to be quite a gay crowd because it was from having gay friends. So we ended up with quite a big percentage of the gay market at Anas. I think gay people also like nice things so what we created was something comparatively better, an aesthetic value from the other establishments in Manila.… So yes, we did draw a gay crowd but it wasn't directly marketed like that. It was marketed at expatriates.

Dirk spoke most explicitly about the power of a gay network in drumming up a consumer base for his high-end lifestyle store Luna:

> We get a phone call from this couple … staying over in the Peninsula (a high end hotel in Makati) for another night, [they] come in and spend 200,000.… We do have ties with the hotels because old Concierges are gay anyway, so it's the gay mafia; they send people over and it's been good.… There is really a network; I call it gay mafia, mafia in a positive sense of course. It's this network and it works. The PR Concierge at Peninsula is a good friend and they send over so many people.

The gay network also exerted its first influence on the street when Philip, with his business partners Dirk, Erik, Alfredo, and Juan, opened the first Western-style gay bar in Malate, Baccus, around the corner from Anas on Maria Orosa Street in 1999. Philip claimed that he did not have a motive

to "gay" the district. Anas was experiencing a degree of success and he was witnessing businesses rapidly opening in Malate, noting that something big was happening. While walking the district, he had happened upon a grouping of units being redeveloped on Maria Orosa Street. Surveying the new establishments opening around Malate, he had thought that he could "do better than that" and suggested to his business partners that they rent one of the units on Orosa and open a gay cocktail bar. He and his friends also didn't have a gay bar to go out to in the evenings and that they did not like going all the way to Makati where upper-class gays entertained:

> We just went to the unit and said let's do a gay bar; it won't be that difficult. We'll just do it like something we do in the West, with nice music, nice looking staff, fancy drinks, and you get sort of this trendy [place]. And of course the designers (his business partners and friends) were "Yeah! Great idea, we want a place like that." In fact, Erik and Juan (two of his gay Filipino business partners) had been planning a club for years. They had all the drafting of it down and everything but they never had the capital.

Philip consolidated his capital and opened Baccus around the corner from Nakpil on Orosa Street. This was the beginning of the intersection of Nakpil and Orosa, which became known as the "gay heart of Malate."

As Philip claimed above, the market for Anas was in fact expatriates (meaning global North expatriates) living in Manila who wanted a fine dining experience. Other gay entrepreneurs were clear that the gay men (networks) who influenced their businesses were "Western"—they were either global North expatriates or Filipinos who had traveled to and were educated in the "West." Noah explains that Malate's gay pride parties, for which it became famous and which marked the district globally as a gay neighborhood, were started by gay entrepreneurs who shared a "Western" sensibility:

> Philip, Dirk and I pretty much catered to the same market and we thought the same way. I mean they were very Western-educated and so was I pretty much.… So we had formed our sort of "association" and we actually launched the Gay Pride Orosa–Nakpil party scene. That was six years ago, and that was when Baccus had just opened up as well. And I had actually helped him out with it in the beginning. Philip's actually a very good friend of mine. We were neighbors and everything and then I actually worked for him at Anas when I was on vacation here from hotel and restaurant school [in Europe].

This Western-influenced gay network was soon labeled a "consortium" by the media who were quick to capitalize on the urban revival story of Malate, and which helped to encourage city hall's support, as well as pique the interest of the Department of Tourism, the national body that was keen on marketing Malate as an entertainment enclave for tourism purposes. This further galvanized the consortium that began to reach out from their establishments and onto the streets with an interest in exerting a distinct style to the whole neighborhood; Dirk said "we were called the consortium already. Um, of you know Anas, Metro, Wild Goose, Marseille…. We really tried; … for months we worked on that (stylizing the district). We wanted to do like a monthly magazine, really stylish, like showcasing events, fashion, music; we had the forum, we had the name, it was all done".

The exclusivity of this stylized district was evident in the targeted consumers. Even though Malate had a history and reputation of catering to bohemian patrons and mixed clientele, the consortium narrowed their consumer base to a cosmopolitan patron who sought finer consumption experiences. For example, Philip's vision for Anas was not local; his intended market was upper-class Filipinos and expatriates and he sought to offer a transnational cosmopolitan aesthetic within the bohemian spaces of Malate. Davido explained that Anas "gives the people of the Philippines, or the expatriates who are here, a venue and something different from what they already have around Makati or Manila. Something different that would make them feel that they're back in Europe. That they're back in one of the more advanced cities like New York, San Francisco, or Sydney". Philip's targeted customer base were not only "Western" gay men but any well-traveled and upper-class patron who was accustomed—but who did not have access—to fine wine and foods in Manila. Anas was intended to be an enclave within an enclave where expatriates could get away from the harshness of Manila's urban life and enjoy the food to which they were familiar. Philip's bar Baccus was intended to be a high-end cocktail bar, offering an environment that was familiar to gay expatriates who missed such classed gay spaces in their gayborhoods at home. This gay cosmopolitanism produced an enclave of exclusivity first in their businesses and then in a lifestyle that spread throughout the neighborhood, as Philip claims:

> [Anas was intended for] those who were in the creative field who would appreciate having another avenue to develop their lifestyle. For example, they did shopping [at Luna], opened Baccus [for cocktails]; they could eat in Anas…. They could go on holiday to nice destinations. You know it's part of

> a lifestyle, if you eat certain things, you drink certain drinks, you wear certain jewelry. *It's all part of creating an island around you.*… And of course you have to have money to do that in this country.

Ironically, Malate was like an island in that it historically and into the millennium functioned like an urban enclave that was separate from the urban spaces of Makati. It was a more intimate urban space and it was a place where gay men experienced openness. It was removed from Makati's mall consumerism, as well as from the mass commercialism that inundated Metropolitan Manila more widely, which were consumer spaces that gay entrepreneurs disdained. Philip alluded to the importance of this spatial configuration, and the need to reconfigure the patronage of Malate, when he discussed the high-profile opening of Anas, which was directed at drawing in expatriates and wealthy Filipinos from Makati and into Malate, which was a neighborhood that had been viewed as financially rundown, "So we did call in very high profile government officials, we called in the press, and they were really quite amazed there was something like this [Anas] in Malate, which was traditionally financially run down". Thus "the island," as claimed by gay entrepreneurs, had a spatial-class configuration. Their goal was to create an exclusive urban space for their lifestyle consumption, which implicitly required keeping other classes out.

This exclusivity was evident in the designing of Baccus, one of the main gay spaces in 2000, where I witnessed a palatable stratification of gay men by class and race nationality. Philip originally designed the bar for a "cocktail hour" crowd who visited Malate from Makati for the arts and entertainment. The initial segregation of this cosmopolitan patron from the average person who lives and works in Malate and surrounding neighborhoods began with Philip's high pricing of drinks, the establishment's dress code, and the watchful eye of bartenders in this small rectangular bar. Most gay men in Manila could not afford to purchase drinks at Baccus and could be made to feel "unwelcome" because their dress did not reflect a favorable class location.

Despite these early exclusionary practices, Baccus' patronage grew, packed the bar on most weekend nights, and started to claim this wannabe cocktail bar as a dance space. Philip soon hired a DJ for the weekends, and when I interviewed him for the first time in Baccus, he gestured, "this is what they wanted"—a dance space for gay Filipino men. By 2000, the bar was listed on gay tourism guides as the gay bar to visit in Manila. Yet as Baccus reached its height of popularity, its exclusivity became even more

entrenched. In particular, Philip and his network of investors became concerned about the patronage of a particular class of gay Filipino who would attend Baccus and "nurse one drink all night" —that is, middle- and working-class gays who could afford one drink purchase per night. Further, it was the visibility of gay men dancing with and touching one another that sometimes brought on sensationalist press reporting that Baccus was a gay men's sex club and in need of policing. Baccus was never raided due to Philip's political and economic connections (and most likely very little explicit sex took place in the bar) but this chilling scrutiny did lead Philip to closely regulate the type of exchanges that took shape in his bar as well as his clientele—gay sex work and hospitality were discouraged through both the direct policing by door men and the establishment of a cover charge and drink minimum that this class of gay men could not afford. The doorman would turn away Filipinos who were not dressed appropriately, indicating that sandals and T-shirts, for example, were not appropriate attire yet I never witnessed expats and tourists being turned away even though this group tended to dress far more casually than most Filipinos regardless of class. The doorman also waived the door charge for those customers whose patronage the bar wanted to encourage—for example, as a well-dressed white woman, I never had to pay the door charge to enter Baccus. When hosts brought foreign tourists to Baccus neither were required to pay the door charge, which would have been paid by the tourist. Implicit in these exclusionary practices was the concern that Baccus could go the way of Café Paradiseo—if anyone was allowed to just "hang out" in the bohemian spirit of Malate then the place would be overrun by sex workers who would take advantage of Baccus' customers. These exclusionary practices set a new trend for regulating customers that the ensuing gay entrepreneurs followed.

NOBRA—A Business Neighborhood Association's Aesthetic Control on the Streets

Malate's gay entrepreneurs expressed the contradictory consciousness that, on the one hand, they wanted to develop cosmopolitan spaces in Malate, yet on the other hand, they believed that urban renewal could not be planned and that top-down planning threatened to kill Malate's unique character. They were highly critical of the neoliberal development that was taking shape both in Malate and throughout the metropolitan

region in the form of high-rise condo construction and mall development. They also despised the generic urban planning and mall commercialization of Makati's entertainment sectors, having cited this as one reason for wanting to locate in the eclectic urban space of Malate. However, they invested in the development of another neoliberal relation—building Malate's consumer base in what the consortium called the "A" crowd, or a transnational consumer class who would travel to Malate and often from Makati for their evening's entertainment. The "A crowd" is a distinct class of patron—upper-class Filipinos, gay and heterosexual, expatriates—who typically live much of their lives separated from the working-class realities that surround them throughout the metropolitan region. When they leave Makati and other wealthier regions for entertainment (many live within gated communities and have full-time drivers who transport them to Malate where they are dropped off for the evening), they typically visit the arts complex with a quick stopover to the restaurants or clubs, like Cornucopia, when that internationally famous club was open. This class of patron often complained about the streets of Malate—they were dirty, unsafe, they didn't like being hassled by street children and vendors, and they did not want to share their leisure space with sex workers. The consortium's formation of NOBRA involved their more organized effort to bring this consumer class to spend their evenings in Malate and to patronize the newly opening establishments. NOBRA sought to cater to this patron's lifestyle concerns—they wanted a high-end consumption experience and they wanted to be shielded from the working lives, poverty, and street life right outside of the businesses' window. NOBRA was an organized attempt at asserting their classed vision out into the neighborhood because they were invested in transforming the neighborhood into an urban space that was not offensive to this new cosmopolitan class' sensibilities.

Lionel discussed the main objectives of NOBRA and highlights the organization's main contradiction—they want to preserve place (the uniqueness of Malate which was threatened by the encroaching mass commercial development); however, they want to "clean up" the district to make it accommodating to a more cosmopolitan class of patron:

> The owners of Baccus, Enclave, Down Under and other bars—which are gay-friendly—we formed an organization to develop Malate different from other places like Makati and Quezon City. We don't want it [Malate] to loose its character. The Malate businesses are growing, you know, other

> investors are coming in but we don't want to lose the touch; Malate is simple, cheap, but very entertaining. We don't want to compete with Makati [because] it's very high profile…. First, we have to take care of the environment; it's our first project now to clean the whole area. We've got to protect the client, especially the foreigners. We want the foreigners, especially now; that's our first [objective] to protect them from getting robbed, mugged.

Some of NOBRA's organizing was local in scope. Nakpil and Orosa's business owners wanted to regulate the street parties that were happening with increasing regularity outside their doorsteps, which drew away street patrons from their businesses and to what they called "outsider" vendors who would set up food and drink booths during the street parties to generate quick income. Sometimes street parties were sponsored by entertainment companies who had no connection to Malate but sought to capitalize on the popularity of the district and without the consent of local businesses. NOBRA worked to get Mayor Atienza to restrict the permits and to require the local businesses to sign off first before a permit could be secured. The goal was to regulate the frequency, theme, and non-local orchestration of the events. They also tried to organize a fund where permits had to be purchased and these monies would be put toward beautification of the neighborhood.

As NOBRA became more organized they took on other issues in the neighborhood. They organized garbage collection and encouraged street cleaners (an informal sector of worker who swept the streets and picked up garbage in the early mornings) to "clean up" Malate. They funded street signage in order to regulate street traffic through the area. They sought more of a police presence throughout the neighborhood by meeting with police and voicing their concerns about robberies, violence, and vandalism. They spoke of wanting to have a police presence to, in Dirk's words, "intimidate bad elements," for example, to keep what they termed as "youth gangs" at bay, primarily young men who were gathering and sometimes fighting on the increasingly popular weekend nights. They met with the police chief so that they could get roaming policemen to come through the area every half hour and they offered free meals to police officers to encourage them to spend time on foot in the neighborhood. They spoke with Barangay captains,[4] encouraging them to get out and police the streets. They sought to meet more regularly with Mayor Atienza to voice their aesthetic, traffic, and safety concerns. These organizing efforts allowed for Malate's entrepreneurs to see their collective desire to control

what was happening on the street, as Dirk claimed "the main reason for its existence was to regulate what was happening on the streets. That was the most important, main task of NOBRA". NOBRA thus exerted a new regulating force to the district, which extended beyond individual entrepreneurial establishments. They sought to make the district palatable to a new class of patron who was concerned about safety, crowding, trash, and traffic.

Dirk spoke of another influence that NOBRA aspired to exert, particularly right before the organization's disbanding in 2004—a monitored aesthetic appearance to the streets. For example, some members wanted to ban some entrepreneurs' placement of plastic tables on the sidewalk because this compromised Malate's cosmopolitan style. NOBRA members divided over this issue; bar owners benefitted from the moving of plastic tables out onto the sidewalks whereas restaurant and high-end bar owners did not. Other aesthetic interests extended to more structural concerns with the neighborhood—they wanted to fix the streets; they wanted to bury the electrical and phone wires that crowded the sky; they wanted to fix the sewage; and they wanted to shut down Nakpil and Orosa to vehicular traffic, transforming the heart of gay Malate into a walker's intersection. Dirk explained that the major structural changes that were part of NOBRA's longer-term vision for Malate required much more influence and far greater willingness to deal with the City of Manila's bureaucracy than what the group was able to inspire in its members: "There were talks going on like, for example, all of these ugly wires, to put them underground, fix the street, put up potted plants…. There's lots of long-term thinking there but then you have to deal with certain authorities…. We were just too small, basically".

Gay entrepreneurs' main sphere of influence and focus in NOBRA remained business-centric—they wanted to ensure the development of their own unique and stylized businesses and to encourage like-styled businesses to open in Malate. As Dirk spoke to me about the business development he wanted to support in 2001, he indicated that owner-operated, small, and stylized businesses were ideal. What he meant by local and small was not necessarily Filipino-owned or Malate resident-owned, as he was an expat who had recently moved there in 2000. He saw Malate as the ideal location for the concentrated development of higher-end and cottage industry-style businesses that he recollected from Europe's gentrified neighborhoods. In 2005, he explained this vision further:

> Our vision was to have establishments, which did develop good quality, individual, owner-operated, personal, you know, good service, good food, maybe exotic cuisines, things you couldn't get anywhere else. Having this sort of old-world charm here, which was always extremely popular with tourists, foreigners, or foreigners who live here. They always preferred Malate to Makati…. A higher-end cottage industry, yeah, small but beautiful; … none of the establishments that was owned by any big group or anything. It was all like privately owned, small corporations, owner-managed. Like you enter, the owner's like "Good evening; nice to see you again." Personalized.

Angie, the community organizer from Nakpil's first wave, claimed, however, that it was exactly this kind of aesthetic exclusivity that eventually killed Malate's eclectic mix:

> The owner, we were talking to him, and he says "Oh yes, yes, this is like the new, Nakpil emerging, this is how it should be." … I look at him, "Why should it be any way?"…. And what he meant is highly styled. That was exactly the attitude; these people were like imposing their will on the others. Which killed all the others…. Name me any kind of a person and I'll tell you where he or she can go…. You want *mabutil* (corny), we got it. You want chic, we got it. You want, like ordinary after work person, we got it. And so we had it all, you know? And … this was all within a few steps of each other. That is what helped in the dynamic nature of the place because it's so easy to check out another lifestyle…. It was always supposed to be commercial…. I mean let's face it, you can't open a business and not try to make money. That's commercialism, you know? But here [now] it's mindless and soulless.

Greenbelt 3—An Urban Mall's Influence Over the Commercialization of Malate

I often heard Malate regulars claim that the district's strength and unique sense of place resided in how it grew organically, without a master plan. Surely Malate's uniqueness could not be copied through a top-down urban plan that resulted in the development of Greenbelt 3—an outdoor restaurant row that was carefully planned around landscaped grounds and built as an extension to one of Makati's many urban malls. Greenbelt 3 is beautiful, clean, walker-friendly, and has the benefit of covered parking. One also has to pass through a security check to access the open-air restaurant row. Malate was the model for Greenbelt 3, literally, in terms of the

plan's aesthetic, actual businesses, and targeted patronage of a restaurant row. Developers designed an intimate outdoors walkway that meandered among beautifully sculpted grounds; eateries opened out onto the walkway and business owners put their tables out there as well. The Ayalas—the key landowning and development family in Makati—then approached the restaurant owners of Malate, asking them to relocate to Greenbelt 3. Even if the mall restaurant row was not successful in capturing Malate's sense of eclectic place—it is an outdoor mall after all—what they offered business owners was a resolution to the problems that could not be solved by NOBRA—a clean environment, safety for patrons, no traffic, brand new structures for their establishments, and easy access to A-crowd patrons who were already consuming in Makati's malls. Although the gay consortium initially held out, rejecting the invite to relocate to Greenbelt 3, many of the other less committed to Malate business owners accepted the offer and left Malate for a Makati mall. This initial exodus had the following two effects on Malate's renewal: (1) primarily restaurant businesses left and bar establishments moved in, disrupting the balance between bars and restaurants and transforming Nakpil and Orosa into more of a bar and club space and (2) the class of patrons who were looking for the amenities of secure consumption started to attend Greenbelt 3 in place of Malate. Malate's gay entrepreneurs remained focused on running stylish businesses and asserting an aesthetic sensibility to the district where increasingly they lost their consumer base to Greenbelt 3. So as Greenbelt 3 gained in popularity, Malate as an entertainment enclave and despite its unique sense of place could not compete with these market forces and declined in popularity.

Philip explained that the restaurant development in Malate sustained itself until around 2002 when restaurant entrepreneurs started to feel Greenbelt 3's competition. The smaller (non-chain) restaurant owners—the cottage industry-style businesses that had their start in Malate and that contributed to Malate's revival—found it difficult to sustain their business, particularly during the week. What Greenbelt 3 offered to these smaller business owners that Malate simply could not was a weeklong critical mass of mall patrons within a concentrated restaurant space. When these Malate restaurants moved to Greenbelt, their business boomed, which influenced other restaurant owners to follow suit. By 2005, Philip conceded and moved one of his restaurants, Wild Goose, to Greenbelt 3; he described

below the process whereby the Ayalas approached the business owners in Malate and supported their relocation to Greenbelt 3:

> Since 2000, [Malate's business development] went on a general up-trend for another couple of years, until a point where competition from other destinations played a major role in the closure, or the lack of popularity of the type of restaurants that were being put up at the time in Malate…. What I know happened was, they also approached me, Ayala Land, who are one of the biggest landowners in Makati; they operate all these malls and things. They approached virtually everybody in Malate and said we're going to be doing a new development in Makati, which is going to look like Malate and that will be al fresco dining, and it's going to be a mall. But you won't actually be inside the mall; it will be a garden side of a mall, with a garden in front of it, and you can sort of walk around. They approached everybody … and asked us all to go there, and at the time, I turned them down. Luna opted to do it, and a few others opted as well, and when that mall opened, it had about sixty different food outlets in it…. And of course, … the market being so limited for these owner-driven or individual restaurants, not your American fast-food chains or your franchises, that [market] was very limited. So when they all opened up together in a new destination, it was like boom-time, "let's all go to Greenbelt 3!", which was this new Ayala mall. So there's this huge exodus all around the city of these people [businesses and patrons] to this one destination…. Since they opened, business slowly went down for everybody, and a lot of businesses closed all around the city. From high-end dining, from the European market to trendy bars and nightclubs, to gay bars and restaurants … because they were all being catered for in one destination, which was Greenbelt 3. Superficially, I might add. Superficially, they go for the impression that we're going to be just like Malate but they're not really…. I have now succumbed to them and decided to move Wild Goose to that destination as well.

Both Philip and Noah described the competition between Greenbelt 3 and Malate in terms of two urban consumer spaces that were competing over a small class of patrons in the metro region who could afford to spend at high-end restaurants:

> I think a lot of that has to do with our economy. I mean, the reason why Greenbelt took our market away was just because there was just a really small market [for the A crowd] to begin with. Really, really small market. So, um, you know, when Greenbelt opened up with its one hundred establish-

> ments and the convenience of parking and the convenience of being near to where a lot of people live, you know, they took that away from us.

Dirk was surprised about the success of Greenbelt 3, given that no one anticipated that a mall could copy Malate and take over both the district's businesses and customers. He exclaimed, "[We were] absolutely caught by surprise; we knew they would pattern it after Malate but we were thinking 'Ah! You know, how can you copy Malate anyway? I mean, it will be a new building; it will still be a mall.' We were wrong; they took over so many of our guests".

Philip claimed that during Malate's revival, there was no market competition because the district was one of a kind; it was a restaurant and entertainment enclave in a metropolitan region with no other enclaves like it. That was precisely Malate's charm and poison because other developers, in addition to the Ayala Corporation, witnessed Malate's commercial success with cottage industry-style neighborhood development and then looked to other parts of Metropolitan Manila with a developer's eye and copied that form of business development. Cubao X and The Fort—two other renewed urban spaces in the metro region—are cases in point. Philip stated, "Virtually everyone came here because there was nothing else. There was no other choice. It was just Malate, or malls with chains and mediocre restaurants. And then suddenly Ayala realized, not only Ayala but other organizations over in The Fort, which is another part of the city, they've also tried to bring in entrepreneurs that can create individual establishments that will set themselves apart". As more areas opened for urban entertainment the consumer base became fractured—the A crowd chose to patronize Makati's Greenbelt and the former bohemian, artist, and student crowds chose to patronize restaurant rows in Quezon City and in Cubao X. Philip also claimed that Manila's trend setters increasingly chose Makati over Malate, the media followed, and then increasingly even the B crowds left Malate.

Philip also spoke about how the clustering of gay-owned establishments vying for the A crowd also saturated Malate's market. Ironically, the consortium's vision of developing a cosmopolitan gay neighborhood contributed to the undoing of gay-led gentrification. Gay bars and restaurants had opened and closed from the period of 2001–2005 along Maria Orosa Street with a definitive cluster of gay-owned establishments that purposely located close to the intersection of Maria Orosa and Nakpil Streets. The plan was that this cluster would encourage establishment hopping for gay

consumers yet these establishments targeted A-crowd patrons when the majority of gay patrons who came to Malate found these establishments economically out of their reach. Thus gay men continued to visit Malate but most hung outside on the street at the intersection of Nakpil and Orosa—the heart of gay Malate. In fact, the establishments exclusivity ended up creating a more visible gay street culture where gay men used texting to hook up on the outside of gay establishments, creating a more populist gay space in the streets. As elite gay businesses fought the challenge of Greenbelt 3 to their targeted patronage and claimed that Malate was dying, another revival of sorts was taking shape. The private and consumer space of gay bars became a secondary space for gay men to meet, and the public spaces of the streets became far more central to the formation of gay space in Malate. Malate became such a visible gay space in the streets that the now very Out crowds in fact further alienated the A-crowd gay men who were not Out and afraid of being associated with such a visible gay scene. Philip described the closure of the consortium's businesses:

> My partners, and the designers from Luna opened up a twelve million-peso lounge bar, a beautiful interior, opened with a bang, was very popular for the first six months, and then it just went downhill.... And then Metro opened up, which was another gay bar, and Club Fellini opened up, and The Falls opened up, and some other Juicy Fruit thing opened up, and they're all catering to the gay market. So there's thousands of gay people on the street but nobody was going inside because they were all so cheap. They just wanted to cruise outside and text each other. So you had all these restaurants and bars, but nobody inside them. And then you had vendors outside, selling like twenty five peso beers and that's when it all started because they saw the market opportunity. People haven't got enough money to spend the hundred and fifty to get in, so they just stay outside all night long, the cell phone, and eyeball. They call it eyeball—they say "Meet you in Orosa." There was this huge gay scene, this networking going on, outside and nothing happening inside. You see because no one has the spending money to go from one bar; only a few people could go to Baccus, Metro, Marseille, and move around. And that's how I was marketing my restaurant; I wanna have the eleven to twelve set, and the midnight goes to Metro, doing the cocktails and the drugs. Next thing they all go to Marseille, and then they go off to Club Fellini. That was the idea, you know, and I was fine. Competition's great; it creates the market. But the market didn't have the money to do that and so they just sat in the streets. And we all put all this money into designing it, getting DJ's, promoting it, and eventually we all closed. Only one survived, Club Fellini.... When all the other gay bars opened up, the

> market was fragmented to about five different destinations—none of us survived. We're all vying for the same group. And, uh, remember that we also alienated the closet queens, which is a huge market here. There's a lot of that going on but they would never come to Malate because it was just too Out…. But now, everybody's just flaming, you know, in the streets and it's like a gay pride every night.

The Class Threat of Urban Commercial Sex and Gay Globality

It's 8:30 p.m. on a Friday night in May of 2000, which is early for a gay bar in Malate. Dim, flickering lights blur the bartenders' hurried preparation, as they wipe glasses and funnel bottles of alcohol onto the shelves. By midnight, Baccus will transform into the most happening gay scene in Metropolitan Manila. Yet at this early hour, the only customers are four gay hosts and I; the doorman and bartenders have permitted us to hang out without paying a door charge or purchasing drinks, as Philip has yet to arrive. We sit toward the rear singing, gossiping, and periodically gazing down the length of the bar toward a large metal door that marks its entrance. Most nights the small square space in front of us swells with patrons who tend to negotiate all bar space as a potential dance floor. At this early hour, however, we have the illusion that the bar is open for our use alone.

Having grown tired of our conversation, José, a gay host, begins to follow a friend, as they take turns strutting the length of the bar, using it as if it is a catwalk in a fashion show. They perform their best moves, dramatically gesturing for one another, the bartenders, myself, and the mirrors that line the side of the bar. They offer one another suggestions and begin their next strut with even more expressive movements. Each "model" progressively takes up more bar space as they seek a heightened performance of their modeling. José's friend ends his final walk with a Chaplin-like waddle and José, not knowing how to compete with that, breaks away from the informal walkway and begins to dance enthusiastically, twirling, kicking, and periodically dropping to the dance floor. He prevents others from dancing with him while his dance spills out to all parts of the bar. His friends follow his lead, as four gay hosts begin to dance wildly around the bar. The bartenders look up smiling, distracted from their preparation; they laugh, as the ad hoc fashion show transforms into an outrageous use of bar space.

At the entrance of the bar, the heavy metal door opens and Philip enters with two other white men, witnessing the spectacle of dance unfolding in his bar. The hosts quickly slow their dancing and with comparably subdued actions duck off to our corner, except for José, who continues his dancing. He looks in the direction of the men who have just entered and furrows his brow. He then begrudgingly pulls his body from the dance floor and demonstratively flops on the velvet cushion next to me. The expression on his face relays his disappointment, as he contrarily states, "I like dancing like that." "What is that?" I ask. He explains "Free-style. It's an urban dance; we dance like that in Malate. I dance like that when I go to Puerto Galera [hosting gay foreigners]. And people who work there … they think I come from someplace else." The pleasure with this confusion that his appearance inspires in Puerto Galera is apparent on his face. He too may be viewed by Filipinos who live in this beach town as someone else—a cosmopolitan gay tourist. This expression replaces his disappointment from having been displaced from the floor with the arrival of white gay men who own the space where he dances and who informally control the sexual expressions and gay identity that take shape in their bar.

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Despite this monitoring of gay hosts and gay bar space by Philip and others in their effort to establish an atmosphere that would draw in and keep the A crowd, by 2005, the gay consortium emphasized to me that Malate was dead. Yet I would look out at the streets witnessing the playfulness and spirit of a new crowd of out gay men, who Benedicto describes as searching the bright lights of gay globality (2014) and which I see as taking shape within the context of urban place—the gay heart of Malate. These men reflected the spirit of José and his friends who took up host space in a gentrified bar space just five years prior. Plastic tables and grills lined the streets and the informal sector workers selling cigarettes, candy, and flowers mingled among patrons, successfully selling their goods. Mayor Atienza had successfully synchronized the attire of some of these informal sector workers—the girls selling flowers wore the same red satin dresses, as they weaved throughout the crowds selling singular roses. There was not a lack of gay patrons in Malate; by comparison to 2001, the streets were filled with a definitive gay presence; men walked the streets holding hands, cruising, meeting up, and patronizing bar establishments along

Maria Orosa Street. Bars predominated yet the cafés and other food joints that filled the district seemed to benefit from the foot traffic of consumers coming to the district to bar hop, consume at the cheaper eateries, and experience the vibrant and out public gay street life. I spoke with many Filipino patrons who consistently reported that Malate was better now that the Malate Mafia (the consortium) had had its day and who now exerted less influence on the district. There seemed to be a new generation happy with Malate and who regularly sought out its urban space. A new consumer base filled the streets, even though Greenbelt 3 had opened and was prospering with Malate's former businesses and A-crowd customers. I couldn't understand what the consortium was speaking about when they continued to emphasize that Malate's era was over.

By 2005, Dirk's business partners who helped open Luna had split taking the lifestyle store's name and moving to Greenbelt 3. Dirk held out in Malate with his remaining business partner, who was also his life partner, keeping the downstairs of Luna as a lifestyle store but opening the upstairs for drinks during the weekend. I sat upstairs one evening awkwardly with the five other guests who ventured upstairs to have a drink. There were a few chairs strewn about and a small refrigerator; two young, attractive, and masculine men "waited" on guests, offered me an overpriced beer, handed it to me, and asked if I wanted a glass. It was an odd use of his store but one that Dirk saw as necessary; he too was trying to capitalize on the patrons coming through Malate on the weekends to drink. Malate had gained a reputation as a party district where young gay men met up and celebrated in the streets, spending their time and little money in bars that offered cheaper beers without a door charge. Malate still felt open, free, and celebratory yet the assertion of a gentrified and cosmopolitan class culture had left (along with perhaps the A-crowd consumers) and a younger, out, and celebratory generation of gays had come in to claim Malate as their neighborhood. This crowd also resembled a global gay presence that was becoming more predominant by 2005. Below Noah captures why he, an upper-class gay man who grew up and came Out in Malate in the 1990s alongside of a bohemian wave, no longer spent his weekends in Malate. For Noah, Malate's class composition had shifted and he no longer saw himself and his friends as part of a district that they now viewed as "lower class":

> I'd rather hang out here [in Makati] and, you know, for convenience purposes. I guess it depends on the market you're talking about. If you're talking about maybe the B, C, D market, they're still there. But I'm talking

> about myself and my friends; we prefer more sophisticated establishments and all that, and Malate doesn't offer that anymore.

The sentiment was that Malate had become "downscale" and, ironically, "too commercial." Dirk also commented that:

> It's becoming much more commercialized, basically. Generally the standards are going down. I mean just as simple as like, beer prices, etc. So the crowd is a little bit more, what's the politically correct word? Maybe a bit more down-market. And some of the original up-market establishments, which basically started the area … they all closed, and they're all replaced now by basically very simple beer joints and KTV, and not only that, it also turned into a little Korea. All new tenants are Koreans.

Malate's commerciality of course resided in how the new market did not fit within the lifestyle island that they had worked to create. Commerciality signaled that a new class of patron predominated and that class was not the upper-class, cosmopolitan gay, and expatriate consumer who they had envisioned. That new class also brought with them a public sexuality that harkened back to Malate's era as a sex district where urban patrons use the district, not for lifestyle consumption but for cruising, public sex, and sex work. And then there was the other critical dynamic—gay entrepreneurs, most of whom were expatriates themselves, critiquing the emergence of Korean-owned establishments, which would continue to rise into 2013. The irony in this critique is that "Korean" to them signifies commercially cheap and outsider to Malate whereas their own Western-stylized presence was always characterized in terms of how they could renew the district, ironically, from a more localized standpoint. The consortium thus argued that Malate had lost its local appeal because the district now focused on mass consumerism and its global appeal as a tourism destination for Koreans.

Malate's new public sexuality hit on what gay gentrifyers saw all along as the real threat to Malate's renewal and which they worked to keep at bay—the increasing presence of commercial sex within Malate's gay space. So, for instance, Philip argued that Malate's gay space was younger, more out, and very cruisey. This public gay sexuality frightened away upper-class gay men who tried to maintain their class position by remaining in the closet, and who did not want to be associated (at least publically) with a crass commercial and sexual space:

> Malate is still busy; it's still very gay but it's gay in the fact that it's out there. It's really out in Malate. It's closeted in other parts of the city still. So the closeted queens don't go to Malate; they're too scared to come…. Now Malate has this reputation for being pretty down market queenie, in the streets anyway. There's a lot of cruising in the streets.

What is key to Malate's shift in Dirk's terms below is that Malate is no longer a district shaped by gay entrepreneurs like himself and Philip; it is a district that is gay because of the type of consumer who predominated in 2005:

> It's still a very much gay neighborhood, … especially on weekends. During the week, not so much anymore … but on Friday, Saturday, it's still like when you go to Orosa, all these people hanging out on the streets, mostly very young gays who cannot afford to have many drinks, they just hang out in the street and hope to pick up someone. But especially on Saturdays, Malate's still gay…. But gay-owned establishments are less now, much less.

This issue of how public and commercial sex had won out in the struggle over Malate's gentrification is a key one. Below, Philip showed a contradiction of gentrification; on the one hand, Malate was made on the balance of a bohemian mix—a mixing of differently classed patrons, the fine dining and café culture, the grill bar eatery on the streets, and the sex work all in one district. Yet gay-led gentrification had involved his efforts in shifting commodified sexuality to other parts of the district, away from the "front steps of" his businesses and out of sight of his desired A-class patrons. By 2005, Philip claimed that Malate's Mix had been thrown off and that the district was dominated by prostitution again, which was taking place on the doorsteps of his businesses.

> Malate traditionally was a red light district along with Ermita…. It was all going well and you could still pick up hookers, it was fine, but it was always a balance. There was a nice harmony; you had your tony restaurant, your hooker bar, and you had your trashy cowboy grill, like we have on the street. Suddenly, in the space of three years, it's just gone "whoof," all away, and now it's just like prostitutes on every corner…. I feel as though it's just imbalanced…. It's just it wasn't on the doorstep of the restaurants; it was always like on another side street, or another district.

Philip described the downfall of Malate as a moment when the district started to become like a gay district in Thailand, that is, Malate had affectively been globalized through sexual commerce and mass commercialism and lost its unique qualities of place: "It can be quite irritating the noise pollution, because they are also putting sound boxes outside the restaurants to encourage people to come in. That's their marketing strategy now, which is really, it just doesn't work. It just creates interference. It's a bit reminiscent of Silom Soi Four in Bangkok, if you know the gay street".

There were indeed rising antagonisms between all of Malate's business owners, particularly with the shift in businesses and customers after the opening of Greenbelt 3. Conflicts intensified between restaurants and bars over the use of the street for weekend parties and over the placement of tables, chairs, and stereos out into the streets—restaurant customers complained about the noise pollution, which was increasing with more bars opening in the district. NOBRA had disbanded back in 2004, which killed the collaborative actions and visions that an association tries to instill among independent business owners. Business owners were no longer collaborating in a vision for the district but rather pushing forward with their individualized entrepreneurial objectives, which could be short-lived given the high business turnover at that point. Even the restaurants couldn't work together.

Similar struggles ensued between gay business owners, as the consortium found that its influence and business success waned while a new group of gay business owners who catered to a new "gay globality" consumer began to have more sway in the shaping of the district's image as a gay space. The case of the conflicts over the 2005 gay pride celebration illustrated some key changes in the direction of Malate's gay space. Philip's version of the story focused on the dominance of Club Fellini (the only and most popular gay dance club in Malate at that time) and its consortium of owners who tried to make Manila's gay pride a global circuit party with the intent of putting Club Fellini on the global gay tourism map. In short, Club Fellini attempted to use the gay pride celebration (which historically involved a more local celebration in Malate and was organized by the district's gay entrepreneurs) as a forum for global advertising. This altered the spirit of gay pride because it was a far cry from David's drag shows that spilled out onto the streets, involving street patrons and gay hosts, creating a sense of gay place within a distinct neighborhood. Philip claimed that he had wanted to keep gay pride local—he wanted the party

to be a no cost celebration for Malate patrons and tourists; he wanted it in the streets; he wanted it to be a celebration that brought together Malate's businesses to celebrate Manila's gay community; and then he wanted it to be an opportunity for all of Malate's businesses to make a little money. He did not think that one establishment should put themselves at the center and use Malate's gay pride for their own global advertising:

> Some of the proprietors and bar owners were treating the event as a moneymaking venture, and traditionally, we were arguing that gay pride is just a celebration amongst all the different bars and restaurants in the area. We all benefit because people come here but we don't monopolize the event ourselves. So Baccus never monopolized the event. It'd be the center of attention but it was never like "Official party here and you can only go here to get tickets." … There were no tickets. What happened last year was Club Fellini started promoting it internationally as a circuit party. They called it "What circuits this?" you know. They tried to put themselves on the circuit party map, and have that whole international marketing, where you can buy tickets online, stay in a hotel, go to the event, the opening night, the closing party. I'm like, "Hello! This is not a private party; this is a local neighborhood event, which brings all the gay establishments together." This is not, like a white party, or a rave that's happening in a different destination and … we're selling tickets.

This kind of gay globalization of Malate was killing the district, in Philip's opinion, because locale was being elided. He argued that in this case, if Malate was to survive, it must remain local because its locality was what made the district distinct, creating a unique sense of place. However, this vision of locality did not seem to apply to his and other gay entrepreneurs who also sought to bring in a global aesthetic—that of the gentrified gay cosmopolitan district. He claimed:

> I just wanted to push that it should still be Malate; it should still be a localized thing. Let's not try and emulate America; let's not try to do the Singapore thing, you know, the muscle bunnies and all that. This is the Philippines, you know. And what we have is something really special. People always say that; they come here the last turn of the century, you know, and they'd be like "The scene here is very different from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, you know, and we're sort of losing it now." … Yeah, it's all becoming a bit copycat and a bit sort of like "let's try and be like bars abroad."

Malate had failed by 2005, in the consortium's opinion, because the nightlife became yet again sexually commodified and newly globalized, as a Korean tourism destination and as part of touristic gay circuit party destination. The global gay had won out and was taking up space in the streets, giving a new image to Malate's gay spaces. Yet Malate drew in gay men from a wider region of the metro (no longer was Makati the focus of a consumer base) and what had returned to the streets was the more visible gay sex work and hosting as part of the celebratory and, yes, populist street life that solidified in 2005. Even more patrons sat at the sidewalk café tables, drank their cheap beers, eyeballed men on the streets, texted, and hooked up. This kind of sexual commercialism is what gay entrepreneurs feared most—it was at once too populist and too globally homogeneous. The irony in their reflecting on the loss of Malate's mix and bohemian qualities is that the exclusions and inclusions produced out of their gay-led gentrification helped create the conditions for this kind of commercial space. Noah lamented the loss of Malate's bohemian edge:

> It's not like the bohemian Malate that it used to be. It's now about three for one hundred peso beer establishments. I mean it's definitely still unique, you won't find anything like that, but you know, it's lost a lot of it's Malateness, yeah, Bohemianness. That's how Malate started out; it's like bohemian gatherings, gathering of art people and the mix of this and that, but now it's all about like cheapy bars and pick-up boys.... Yeah, it's become very commercial.

Notes

1. David was one of Philip's closest Filipino friends. They met and lived in the same apartment building in Malate up until David left Manila.
2. PK also spoke about encountering *Sward*, or "gay speak," when he first went to Down Under, as we learned from Chap. 5. It is a form of slang shared by gay Filipinos transnationally (see Manalansan 1995 for a discussion of gay Filipino Americans' use of *Sward* to grapple with the impact of HIV/AIDS and migration on gay Filipino–American communities in New York). *Sward* draws from both Tagalog and English yet it consists of words, accents, and sayings that are made up and therefore unique to the speech.

3. Dirk invested not only in his own lifestyle store but was part of the consortium of investors in Anas, Baccus, The Wild Goose; he later opened Marseille.
4. Barangay captains are similar to a local community police force.

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CHAPTER 7

Conclusion: Malate 2013

In January of 2013, when I returned to Malate and Ermita after eight years, I was immediately struck by the enormous changes in the district. Alfredo Lim was back in office as the Mayor of Manila, and his imprint was everywhere. I grappled with a sense of loss and confusion, as I walked around, trying to reacquaint myself with the neighborhood. What was once a unique place had become an urban space that could easily be found anywhere in Metro Manila or urban Southeast Asia. I was often disoriented only to realize that the core older buildings, which once served as my landmarks, had been torn down and replaced by expansive high-rise condos. These high-rises littered the skyline and obstructed the view of a once smaller-scale neighborhood. I no longer felt that I was in a neighborhood by a bay. The construction throughout Malate and Ermita amazed me; at every turn, I passed fenced off blocks under construction with advertisements featuring newly arriving condos for sale with models (typically white) smiling in their potential vacation or retirement homes. I no longer saw uniquely themed restaurants and bars; hospitality clubs and bars predominated. There were many informal workers and houseless people carving out a space for their belongings in the few available spaces at ground level. The informal workers were no longer coordinated by a mayoral program; rather, many people vied to eke out a living and to service the construction workers and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) tourists who now predominated in the district. Food, cigarette, and candy vending and the informal work of street cleaning were everywhere. Some workers distributed fliers for the condos under

D. Collins, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban Sexual Community,*
DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-57961-4_7

construction in the area. I thought about what Mayor Lim had proposed all along—a concentration in private investment in the housing and land market of Manila, a developer's dreamscape. Along the base of many of these new high rises, I saw convenience stores, hospitality bars, and restaurants, most of them Korean and Japanese owned. I noted that during the day, unhoused people and informal laborers took up residence and worked from the steps of the entertainment establishments, which opened at night and displaced the workers and the unhoused from their steps. The managers and doormen prepared the bars and clubs for their intended clients—Korean and Japanese male tourists who now seemed to predominate.

This predominance of transnational tourists[1] also lends to a feeling of neighborhood transition into a non-place. Outside of the many hospitality clubs and bars that line the streets are wooden signs, featuring a collection of Filipina hostesses with whom men can make their acquaintance. All of the women are dressed in provocative evening wear, some in lingerie, which makes their appearance somehow out of place within a district that is also selling vacation condos to expatriate families. The new term for a guest relations officer (GRO) is now customer care associate (CCA); GRO was discarded because of its association with prostitution. Thus, there is a makeover in language as well. The wooden signs are specific, indicating the age limit of the women (18–23) and their available services: two such descriptions are "table companion" and "exotic singer." Last night, the manager of my hostel, shared that when he and his friends (all Filipino) try to go inside some of these hospitality bars, they are always turned away, with the claim that a special party is going on inside.

Commodified sexuality is all around me, but this is a commodification directed toward elite heterosexuals. As I walk around the district alone both during the day and at night, younger men approach me very frequently to offer their "company." Also, I see many more young Filipina women accompanying much older white men and Korean and Japanese tourists, walking around the district, eating in restaurants, and checking into and out of hotels. This heterosexual presence of companion tourism is now a very prevalent part of the district.

Former Mayor Atienza's pet project—Bay Walk—is gone, and the bayfront property—although used by pedestrians, fishers, and the unhoused—feels as if it is in a state of either unfinished construction or dilapidation. The restaurant stalls and sidewalk cafés that used to line the bay and comprised the commercial side of Bay Walk in 2005—including the billboard proclaiming Mayor Atienza's pet project—have all been cleared out,

making visible the disrepair of Atienza's other pet project: the controversial and gaudy lighting project. The bay lights stand tall and decapitated, with only a few lighting up the broken cement walking blocks, which created the pathway for Bay Walk. The metal statue of a Filipino nuclear family—father, mother, child, and dog, playing along Bay Walk and erected as part of Atienza's Bay Walk urban renewal project—remains though the family's arms and legs have been broken off, perhaps scavenged and sold as metal is a valuable resource. People still use the bay for walking and sitting, but now the bay is home to many unhoused people and informal laborers as well. Many sell massages and food to patrons, and several set up tents among the few trees that remain in Bay Front Park. When Mayor Lim assumed office, one of his first acts as mayor was to clear out Atienza's Bay Walk, remaining in line with a long line of city and national officials who make a point of undoing the pet projects of former officials.

Most striking is what has become of the gay heart of Malate and the devastating loss of gay space in the district. Nakpil and Orosa Streets are now rundown, with sewage spilling out onto the streets. The establishments along Nakpil and Orosa that have not closed—there are many boarded up establishments—are now predominantly Korean and Japanese Karaoke, hospitality bars, or restaurants; the bars and clubs that are not oriented toward Korean and Japanese tourists remain but are in the minority. The restaurant row and lifestyle stores have all vacated Nakpil and Orosa Streets. A woman who has set up her home with cardboard boxes and other items lives in the small alley entrance to one of the remaining gay clubs—club Fellini. She sells cigarettes at night and sweeps Nakpil Street during the day. Another unhoused person has made his home down further on Nakpil, under the awning of a now defunct gay bar. Club Fellini, which attempted to make it on the global circuit party map back in 2005, is now open only on Fridays and Saturdays; two weeks after my arrival, I learned that it, too, is closing. I can't even recognize the establishments that used to be Luna, Anas, Baccus, and the Wild Goose—they are either boarded up or have been remodeled to a point where I no longer recognize their architectural space. Neither have I encountered the groups of gay men, Filipino or expatriate, hanging out in business establishments or on the streets that I grew accustomed to back in 2000 and 2005. The infamous Enclave has changed its location as well. Formerly, the comedy and drag bar, Enclave, was located next door to the hosts' favored hangout, Down Under, and in an old row house; both row houses have been completely torn down. In their place is a towering high-rise condominium development, which

takes up an entire city block and which is most easily accessed by driving one's car into a parking garage at its base. Now Enclave is located on Orosa Street just north of the gay heart of Malate. I was told that Enclave's returning international patrons still go back to the old location only to find the high-rise building with a heterosexual hospitality bar at its base. Pedicabs, which advertise "Enclave," await these patrons and offer to take them to the gay institution's new location. Literally, gay space has been disappeared—buried—by the neoliberal relations of mass urban development.

I attended my first street party within the first week of my arrival in January of 2013. Small groups of gay men milled about Orosa Street, sitting awkwardly at the plastic tables and chairs placed out onto the streets. They looked around worriedly, or subdued, but without the enthusiastic recognition of friends and spaces that used to characterize Malate's gay street space. The doormen in the bars and clubs that now dominate Nakpil and Orosa offer the most eager presence on the streets; they beckon patrons to come inside and to have cheap drinks. This appears to be the only way that patrons are drawn into the remaining business establishments. I briefly ran into Bong—one of the gay hosts I interviewed in 2000 and 2005—on Nakpil Street. Initially, he was tentative, holding eye contact but also giving the impression that he could walk away; perhaps he was waiting for me to recognize him. He had aged considerably so it took me a moment to form my recollection of who he was. I called out his name and we stopped to talk for a moment. His taut face showed a much older man from the young man whom I first met, in 2000, when he was only nineteen and one of the youngest hosts in the scene. He asked the typical questions: "How have you been? What are you doing for the night?" But he quickly moved on to his commentary on how dead Malate was now—"There are no more foreigners in Malate, no more customers to meet." We spoke for about ten minutes before he indicated that he had to go, "I have no money for tonight so I need to 'meet' someone." He walked down the street, with his back to me, his strikingly thin body swaying in the streetlight. He was dressed impeccably, as he always was, his hair nicely combed and still damp from an evening shower and his shirt tucked neatly into his pants. I later learned that Bong was using drugs and working some nights in one of Malate's largest casinos, giving shoulder and neck massages to patrons. He could only work for tips in the casinos. His movement away from me was slow and deliberate, and it lacked the free-spirited bounce that I had become accustomed to in 2000, particularly as he walked down this very street on his well-worn path between Baccus

and Down Under. He no longer danced through the streets, as I had witnessed on many occasions years prior. Even though Nakpil now had the open space to dance, it lacked the spectators for his gay performance.

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The images of Metropolitan Manila circulated in international media depict a city overrun by poverty, corruption, urban unsustainability, and social repression. Shanties built on garbage mounds, districts sustained by sex industries, urban pollution, crowding, and vulnerability are likely to be the stories reported upon in international documentaries, newspapers, and television. Tourism guides encourage international tourists to spend approximately two nights in Manila before transferring to the more desirable beach locations throughout the Philippines. Even the Department of Tourism frames Manila, primarily, as a historical city with a focus on its colonial and US military legacies, evading what is specifically Filipino about the nation's capital. This is the global image of a burgeoning metropolitan region; yet there is a local story and one that has to do with sexual community and relations that are also relevant to Manila's shifting urban landscape.

To answer the question of why and how place mattered to sexual community when the forces of global homogenization were also at work, I've offered a historical ethnographic journey, focusing on the role of place in the rise and fall of a gay neighborhood in the Metropolitan Manila region. Malate's renewal was facilitated by the closure of its sex district. Yet the district's distinct sense of place also arose out of the transnational, bohemian, and sexual experiences of urban space within a historical neighborhood that offered an intimate mixing of diverse city worlds. Thus the closure of the sex strip began a process of urban reimagination, as much as a process of economic transformation, where conservationists, small-scale entrepreneurs, gay men, and informal sexual laborers, as well as other devoted participants in city life, envisioned *and experienced* alternative practices of urban community. The connection to urban place was central to their vision, and it allowed them to articulate new identities and renewal practices that showed the power of place to reshape urban space. They sought to counter neoliberal mass commercial development, and for a time, they succeeded in doing so. The power of place was a central vector for the direction of Malate's urban renewal.

Place has meaning because it has a history. What I mean by this is that Malate's unique sense of place, in part, resides in its neighborhood

history and urban plan, which became fodder for conservationists who sought to promote an image of Malate as an "Old Manila" neighborhood, an image they hoped would allow domestic tourism to jumpstart the neighborhood's renewal. Place mattered to conservationists because they recognized the need to first cultivate a popular connection to a neighborhood that many saw as facing both urban decline and unbridled urban development. If they could facilitate Manileños' connection to place, then urban renewal could happen on local terms, protecting built heritage and public space, rather than going the way of homogenizing global urbanization. The Remedios Circle street festivals were one attempt at forging new connections to urban place. These parties resulted in the most successful street parties at that time in all of Metropolitan Manila, and they revived a popular interest in the district. But what they also demonstrate is how the unique sense of place that eventually drew gay men together in urban sexual community was first articulated through a conservationist lens. The experience of place also drew conservationists to their work. They practiced a conservationism that harnessed their experiences of place to articulate new visions of urban community. Their articulations showed urban residents' connectedness to locale (rather than place-less modernization) and the need to forge identity in relationship to place as a way to counter global homogenization.

The Tourist Belt Business Association's (TBBA's) street festivals were indeed popular, which ironically led to a form of commercialization that squeezed out their focus on locale, and thus, foreshadowed what was to come with Malate's rise and decline. Despite TBBA's interest in the power of place, once the state became involved through the Department of Tourism (DOT), the street festivals lost their focus on local businesses, residents, and community; rather, they became the mechanism for the mass commercialization of Malate into an entertainment enclave. It was precisely this form of urban commerciality as well as an enduring focus on bringing in cosmopolitan consumers from other regions, which was first delineated by the TBBA and the HCS (Heritage Conservation Society) in their urban renewal efforts, that also led to the decline of Malate's gay spaces. What we learn from the conservationists, and what is reaffirmed in the second wave of gay-led gentrification, is that place-making that has lost its commitment to diverse urban communities and actual place is one that simply becomes another consumer enclave that loses out to the wider metropolitan competition among rising entertainment districts.

But Malate's place was also magical, which offered a unique experience for business owners and patrons, and which led to many businesses locating there, as well as encouraging a metropolitan-wide popularity. Malate's magic is what made the district distinct, particularly, from its commercial rival, Makati. Yet empirical analyses of urban magic are challenging; I offer a phenomenological picture of urban magic that I derive from how people experience magic and develop meanings and outcomes from it, and therefore, create their lived experience of urban place. I offer two characteristics of Malate's magic—the lived experience of the neighborhood's intimate urban mix and its offering of freedom. The history of Malate's sexual space bubbles up in people's contemporary experiences of urban magic because Malate had long been a removed and non-normative enclave where a certain quality of freedom and mix was sought after and experienced. With the first wave of the Nakpil revival, we see a recognition of the importance of the *social production of urban space*, meaning that community organizing must connect people to their urban environment in order to facilitate place-based renewal. Thus Angie's and David's Nakpil Street parties brought about the uncanny mix of celebrants, local businesses, and the arts, which promoted the breakdown of social barriers—of class, race, nationality, sexuality, and labor—within urban space. Angie's community organizing drew from Malate's magic, and expanded upon it, by allowing space for an artistic, performative street culture, in which people could become lost in the arts. David's spontaneous drag performances that spilled out from his establishment and onto the streets also called on people to experience urban space differently, and that is to potentially perform being someone else within Malate's unique place.

David's contribution to Malate's magic resided in his use of the ironic performativity of drag endemic to the global gay culture that he took part in but also through his injection of the specificity of Malate's locale. Performance requires both an ironic reflection on normative relations (not only gender but also urban class relations) and the improvisational remaking of places of performance. Malate's gay spaces were made through such gay performative practices of place-making. Thus the magic of place shows that Nakpil's first wave of urban renewal was founded upon a vision that development should emerge more spontaneously from the creative relationships of urban life. Yet this renewal relied too much on the charisma of individual people, such as David, who was in the end a business owner who lost interest in his business, closed down, and moved away from Manila. This shows how the magic of urban place has so much to do with people

and their social locations; magic goes away not only through the rise of condos but also through the displacement of community people and their historical relationships to place. Angie and David had solidified Nakpil as a unique place where innovative businesses could thrive and which leant a gay style to the district, encouraging David's transnational gay network of friends to both live and open businesses there. Their bohemian-inspired renewal eventually gave way to a cosmopolitan-inspired gentrification led by this second wave of gay entrepreneurs.

Urban place has a sexuality in that both commodified and non-commodified sexual relations make up urban space and form the basis of community, identity, and belonging. Malate's place relied upon the interdependency of informal sexual workers who lived and worked there. The neighborhood had to be interpreted for those gay tourists who experience its space in contrast to other gay spaces globally. Gay hosts performed such labor, and therefore contributed to the creation of gay space in Malate, as gay hosts literally became the cultural brokers of sexual community. Hospitality not only established solidarity among gay hosts, but it also allowed hosts to claim space in the newly gentrifying district, and to form alternative economic relations that sustained their participation in its emerging gay community. Thus hosts' identities were rooted in place, and, along with their creation of gay family, they agitated against the alienation they experienced through their migrations from rural regions (where they could not find themselves as gay men) and into the urban class relations that marked them as commercial boys. Gay hosts resisted this explicit commodification (through implicit payment and non-fixed prices) of their relations with gay travelers in favor of building meaningful companionships that reflected and bolstered their identities as urban gay men.

I analyze hospitality with this qualitative depth because it relays how this informal labor shows the operation of intimate neoliberalism in the district. Guide work was not only important to Malate's urban renewal but it also fit well with changes in the new state position on tourism: gay hosts served as informal laborers in a tourism development agenda that focused on community participation in pride of place tourism development. This was labor that was shaped by the demands of neoliberal gay travel and gentrification; in this way, hospitality required the emotional labor of personalized care of both travelers and "self." Hospitality shows the reach of these neoliberal controls at the very same time it shows how hosts—through their labor, desire, and identity—managed those neoliberal controls. Being a good host was not only about being a good

companion but also about being a Filipino who took pride in his ability to host foreigners, and who communicated the quality of gay place in Malate. Their stories of Malate's unique place and gay community teach us about distinct resistances to the homogenization and alienation that come with global gay community, as well as their place-based strategies to resist their own marginalization from increasingly neoliberal spaces.

Thus, gay men experienced the freedom and mix of Malate's spaces differently. My oral history interview with PK exposes how the liberal language of "freedom" and "mixing" can elide attention to the class and race-nation inequalities and violence that create vastly different life stories within Malate's gay space. I offer this oral history as a case study of how one gay host managed his life there, including love, violence, career aspirations, and cultural competency and all to remain a part of Malate's gay scene and to discover himself as a gay man. This intimate portrayal shows the impact of intimate neoliberalism across the lifespan of one gay host. Like many hosts, PK managed his class aspirations alongside of his desire to explore sexual identity and community. Also, like other hosts, his aspiration for upward mobility and participation in gay commerciality were tied to his intimate relationship with a US gay expatriate who relied upon PK's help to manage his stocks and to manage the sex and drug scene in Manila. PK's story shows, however, that neoliberal relations have costs: the violence and economic precariousness of hosting manifested even in what many hosts viewed as PK's success story.

PK migrated to the city out of a desire to live an alternative gay life to that which was available to him in the province. Within Malate's gay spaces, he formed a gay host family and learned the informal labor of hosting. He participated in the collective care of that host family, thus allowing himself and other hosts to return to the district and to continue participating in Malate's gay spaces. He acquired cultural capital in his long-term hosting relationship and used this cultural capital to secure call center work when his relationship ended. After losing his voice, he speaks of a similar inequitable relational outcome to that of hosting—he was cast aside when he was no longer of use to a company that he had once viewed as family. And yet throughout his narrative, PK speaks about his capacity to love in spite of the neoliberal relations that regulate his life and which reproduce continuous economic instability. Through this capacity to love, PK shifts his focus from desiring foreigners to building a long-term relationship with a Filipino boyfriend. Rather than producing the "use and abuse" paradigm of neoliberal exploitation, PK demonstrates how loving

and desiring offers an overlooked agency for building new relations within a neoliberal era and the possibility of community that need not be so thoroughly built around exploitative structures.

I then turned to what became of Malate's neoliberalism, which was intensified during the second wave of Nakpil's revival. Ironically, gay entrepreneurs who led this gentrification were running away from the urban commercialization of Makati at the same time that they were offering new neoliberal ideals for urban renewal—that is, a consumer-oriented, cosmopolitan gayborhood with which they were familiar from global North cities. As a transnational class of Filipinos and elite immigrants from Europe, they wanted to create an island of urban change around them that did not offend their class sensibilities, and they did not want Malate to succumb to the crass commercialization that they witnessed throughout the metropolitan region. They believed that gay style and cosmopolitan community could resist such commercialization. None believed that urban development could be planned; rather, they asserted that gay men with vision and capital should settle on shaping it. Yet, the totalizing neoliberal vision of Nakpil's second wave compromised Malate's mix because gay entrepreneurs asserted a gay presence that was regulated heavily along class lines.

Malate's urban renewal failed because of its commercialism, at least the Malate envisioned by this exclusive group of gay entrepreneurs who were more concerned about how other classes might compromise their lifestyle island. Although this group had a vision for the power of the local in jumpstarting an urban renewal that could be more uniquely situated within, and sustained by, Malate's unique sense of place, their vision was driven by ideas of Malate as a business and consumer enclave, and not as a dynamic community. Gay entrepreneurs focused on bringing in higher-end businesses and cultivating an exclusive lifestyle in which only Manila's upper classes could participate. They asserted this lifestyle from the perch of their high-end businesses and onto the streets, showing another neoliberal control over formerly public space. Malate's eclectic urbanism served as an aesthetic backdrop to their cosmopolitan sensibilities. Yet they never committed to the eclectic community that made Malate such a unique urban place. Much like the conservationists whose class position they shared, gay entrepreneurs tended to engage with the city as a material space rather than as a social space that is a dynamically changing home to a wide range of people. For example, their engagements with the people who made a living off of the streets were shaped by fear, a desire for control, and a tendency toward exclusion. Hence their urban renewal efforts,

like many in gentrifying districts globally, reproduced relations of displacement, literally squeezing out Malate's local relations and alienating the patrons and workers who could have sustained the district.

Malate's story is one of an ongoing struggle between place and the erasure of place and between the controls of, and resistances to, neoliberal globalization. Malate's renewal was never organized, and that lack of organization perhaps kept place relevant for a period of time. What is most interesting about Malate, and something I had to discover over the course of this research, was how these struggles over place created a nexus of urban actors from different classes, nationalities, and sexualities who asserted the importance of urban community, as a way to resist the depersonalization of rapidly globalizing urban spaces. In differing ways they engaged in place-making that was about shaping urban spaces for more meaningful lived relations there. Yet, in the end, Malate's place-making was not structurally organized; hence the district's localization could not compete with the sway of global capital nor the change in mayors who treated renewal as flagship projects of their administration. Unorganized urban spaces are too vulnerable to these national and global forces.

Three factors contributed to the unraveling of place in Malate: (1) The competition from other consumer urban spaces, developing throughout the metropolitan region, (2) the economic displacement of the local small businesses in Malate, and (3) the changing of Manila's mayor to an urban administrator who held aspirations for mass commercial development in the form of mall and high-rise condo construction. The opening of a mass commercial mall in Makati, Greenbelt 3, which was designed after Malate's restaurant row, undermined Malate's entrepreneurial space by drawing away both businesses and patrons. The safety, cleanliness, commerciality, and spatial proximity to where leisure consumers lived meant that those consumers chose to go to the mall for dining and entertainment rather than face the long, polluted drive to Malate, where their consumer environment was less controlled. This showed that the A patron for which Malate's entrepreneurs vied never really identified with urban spaces outside of the highly fabricated commercial urban space of Makati. The identification of this class of consumer with Malate's unique sense of place was never really established. Thus building an entertainment enclave around such a class of patron was precarious at best. Further, Greenbelt 3 was not the only competing entertainment space in Metro Manila's development. Malate also lost its B and C crowds, including the artists who once took up residence there. This crowd of patron could no longer

afford to pay rent and/or entertain in Malate; they relocated to Cubao X, a U-shaped enclave that had redeveloped into a restaurant row and bar space in Quezon City and that became a new entertainment strip for music, art, and street performances.

By 2013, the impact of call centers on the labor market for a younger generation of Filipinos who had the cultural capital to secure work there was palatable. Makati and Quezon City housed most of the call centers, and they were so profitable that the call center in walking distance to Cubao X also had high-rise condos built adjoining it, which offered affordable housing to call center workers. There was, therefore, a growing class of B and C patrons who had expendable income from this burgeoning service industry, and Cubao was reaping the benefits. It was an entertainment enclave that was both affordable and spatially central to where this class of patron both lived and worked. In short, the emergence of other entertainment enclaves throughout the metropolitan region presented the first and impacting competition to Malate's entertainment enclave, drawing away the district's cottage industry-style business and consumers. People and businesses simply chose to go elsewhere when they had that option, and particularly when Malate presented too many challenges both economically and spatially.

With Malate's gentrification came the rapid increase in rents, which negatively affected the ability of smaller, risk-taking businesses to open there. These cottage industry-style businesses, which took a chance on a concept and connected with the street, had formed the backbone of Malate's revival and contributed to its unique sense of place. As Malate became a leading entertainment district in the region, landlords increased rents to take advantage of this economic boom. Hence the window of opportunity to open a unique business in a low rent area after the closing of the sex district passed; by 2005, the district was immensely popular and many businesses were vying to come in and profit off of the neighborhood's success. Further, the increasing construction of high-rise condominiums established the neighborhood as a residential space that was unaffordable to the average Filipino. Rather, a non-Filipino transnational class was buying up the condos as both vacation and retirement homes. The new business class that was willing to pay higher rents and renovate their business space were Koreans and Japanese, many of whom sought to take advantage of a tourism market that was on the rise in Manila. The leading tourism arrivals to the Philippines come from ASEAN countries, with Korea at the top. Much of this tourism was the outcome of a focused

effort to encourage shopping tourism among ASEAN countries, where the Philippines invested development funds into the construction of malls throughout the urban region, and to draw in tourists looking for deals in struggling Southeast Asian cities. In fact, the Mall of Asia—the Philippines boasts that it is the largest mall in the region—was constructed just south of Malate and is highlighted as one of Metro Manila's tourism hot spots. Tour buses often pass through Malate ferrying Korean tourists between the Mall of Asia and the many Korean restaurants that are now located in Malate.

Finally, the construction of malls and condos throughout the district, which now saturate the Malate skyline, dramatically changes the scale of a once intimate neighborhood. The condos, convenience stores, Korean restaurants and KTV bars, and hospitality clubs cannot reflect the uniqueness of Malate's place; rather, these entrepreneurial spaces offer services to the new consumer and resident of Malate. With the election of Mayor Lim who, unlike Atienza, held no vision for Malate's renewal on local terms, Malate's development changed dramatically. Mayor Lim had always been anti-small business, and pro-large condo and mall development. This is what the conservationists fought against in the 1990s. Despite the fact that he was behind the closure of Malate and Ermita's sex district, today he turns an eye to the proliferation of hospitality bars to the patrons who shop in his malls and who purchase condos. The lighting project of Mayor Atienza has also been allowed to deteriorate, and his Bay Walk has been completely cleared out. There is little attention paid to the pedestrian experience in Malate; in fact, many of the condo developments do not have sidewalks and can only be accessed through a driveway that enters directly into the parking garage at the base of the condo. I've noted the increasing presence of both sewage and trash along the streets; the sidewalks are no longer manageable as spaces to use to move about the district. Yet when you look up, the skyline of Malate has become ever so sparkly, spectacular, and new. Atienza's flagship projects that focused on keeping people rooted to the street and to local businesses have been replaced by Lim's flagship projects, which focus upon the skyline gazing neoliberal project of mass urban development.

The lessons learned from this research into the role of place in sexual community show that place could not sustain gay community. Urban place offered the freedom and magic, for a time, to shape Malate's urban renewal and to create a window of opportunity for gay-owned businesses to locate there and to lend a stylized presence to the neighborhood. But

there was never an organized effort on the part of these entrepreneurs to sustain the local urban community in which they both lived and built up their business. Gay commercialism cannot withstand the sway of neoliberal globalized capital because it is part of it. Entrepreneurs and consumers who are only interested in lifestyle consumption will leave and take up residence in the next best urban space that will facilitate their economies of experience. The increasingly global commercial, consumer, and tourist elements of Malate's spaces compromised Malate's magic and unique claim to urban place. Thus, all left in pursuit of the neoliberal consumer experience in other parts of the city. At the same time, the other lesson learned from this case is that neoliberal restructuring does not have to go unchecked because it can be resisted in new and creative ways due to its amorphous nature. Malate in the 1990s provided a particular context in which people engaged in this resistance; it is powerful to look at what made it possible then and why it feels less possible now.

The story of Malate comes full circle. Mayor Lim (who was voted out of office in May 2013) signed a contract with a developer to reclaim Manila Bay for development before leaving office. That very same move by Mayor Lim back in the early 1990s ignited the conservation activists in their movement to "Save the Bay," and led to their organizing in the streets of Malate. A window of opportunity has opened, albeit slightly, for community activists to organize and push back against these threats of unbridled urban development. This challenge may inspire activists to imagine what urban community should look and feel like—that is, place-making—and to reclaim the streets of Malate once again. There is a lesson therein for community activists throughout the metro region who work to confront, and take back, urban public space—to create place—in the face of a neoliberal globalization that threatens its erasure.

Note

1. At this historical moment, the transnational entrepreneurial and tourist presence is largely Korean and Japanese.

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Index

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