

# *Introduction*

## AMPLIFYING PUERTO RICAN VOICES IN POWER STRUGGLES

STANDING AT FIVE FEET TALL, Ruth “Tata” Santiago is accustomed to people underestimating her. One breezy May 2015 evening in Salinas, Puerto Rico, I interviewed this lawyer and community activist about her experiences in different advocacy contexts. Our conversation in her home spanned time and space, punctuated by neighborhood dogs barking and a few cars passing. Santiago reflected on growing up in the Bronx in the 1960s, before moving to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and then to Puerto Rico at age twelve, where her father drove a sugarcane truck along what many locals called “la ruta del hambre” [the hunger route] because of the extreme poverty pervading the area.<sup>1</sup> In her unfamiliar surroundings, she experienced “a totally new world,” learning Spanish in school and the history of her parents’ home in Puerto Rico, where she ultimately decided to live, after completing her studies on the US East Coast.

Since the 1980s, Santiago has defied expectations and confronted intersectional oppressions. This community lawyer continues to agitate for *autogestión* [autonomous organizing] and *apoyo mutuo* [mutual support] by fusing her grassroots organizing with her legal knowledges.<sup>2</sup> To recognize her unwavering involvement with the *Iniciativa de Ecodesarrollo de Bahía de Jobos (IDEBAJO)* [Ecodevelopment Initiative of Jobos Bay] in Salinas and other grassroots groups, Santiago received the Sierra Club’s 2018 Robert Bullard Environmental Justice Award. IDEBAJO is organized by residents in Salinas and nearby Guayama and is considered a nonprofit under Puerto Rican law. The organization’s network supports several grassroots initiatives, including projects coordinated by the *Comité Diálogo Ambiental* [Environmental Dialogue Committee].



FIGURE 1. Ruth “Tata” Santiago, a lawyer and longtime community organizer, speaks during a public hearing, organized by AES Corporation representatives. Guayama, Puerto Rico, December 12, 2019. Photo by Víctor Alvarado Guzmán.

During one of our many conversations, Santiago discussed her motivations to continue struggling for her community.

CATALINA DE ONÍS: What gives you energy?

TATA SANTIAGO: Ah! You do! People do! Right?! We all do! I mean, I tell you, sometimes I’m here working alone, and I’m writing something or looking for some information, and I’m like, “Oh, my God, I have to do this!” And it’s interesting because, of course, I’m learning, and I’m the eternal student, and I love to learn, but when we get together in a group, it’s so wonderful because everyone brings different values to the table, different contributions to the group, and people just surprise us all the time, you know. Sometimes you’ll think you know somebody and sometimes you may be critical of people or someone may be not following up with something, and sometimes they’ll surprise you with this wonderful piece of information... I’m sort of motivated by combativeness, too. I mean, I feel that there’s so much injustice, so much environmental, social, economic injustice that, you know, we really have to combat it. And it’s sort of fun. Right?! [laughter]. It’s like, this may be Goliath, and we may lose this thing. But we’re gonna give ‘em a good fight, and everyone knows what the truth is, and, they may get away with it, but they’re gonna get discredited in the process, too. It’s not gonna be easy. [laughter]

ONÍS: So, when you talk about combativeness, is there a story you can share that epitomizes a time when you felt energized by that confrontation?

SANTIAGO: Well, it's usually when you start cross-examining people... they bring big-time experts from wherever. Mostly from the States, of course. And they'll say, "Oh, Mr. So and So, Mr. Smith, he's the prime authority on this and that," and then you start talking, cross-examining, especially, and impeaching them and finding the big lies, and people seeing that and being sort of surprised because this was supposed to be a top-credentialed person here telling us how to do this, and yet he looks so bad sometimes. That... that is fun! [laughter]... There's this big-time lawyer in San Juan who has introduced me... to another big-time attorney, as someone who is not what she seems to be. "Ella no es lo que parece ser." She looks like a little Black girl from the south kind of thing... but she's actually a little bit tougher than that.

In this fight for justice, Santiago's work reveals Puerto Rico's deeply flawed electric system, and she, alongside many other community members, is working to dismantle currently operating and proposed fossil fuel plants that disproportionately harm rural, southern communities.

Puerto Rico's centralized electric power system requires an urgent transformation. Seventy percent of electricity generation comes from the south to meet the more populous north's 70 percent of total power demand.<sup>3</sup> The grid almost exclusively depends on coastal facilities fueled by imported animal and plant fossils that are burned primarily in four places.<sup>4</sup> According to the US Energy Information Administration, in 2020, the archipelago's electric energy mix consisted of less than 3 percent renewables.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, many fossil fuel industry and political allies are pushing to shift the archipelago's historical and ongoing heavy reliance on imported petroleum (Bunker C oil and diesel) and coal to methane gas.<sup>6</sup>

*Energy Islands: Metaphors of Power, Extractivism, and Justice in Puerto Rico* documents, assembles, and evaluates various discourses, narratives, naming practices, and metaphors constituting master and marginalized existences. These rhetorical materials take many forms, including testimonials at public gatherings, rap lyrics, news reports, blog posts, and embodied acts of protest, among many other artifacts and performances. Studied in specific situated contexts, these expressive energies enable and constrain possibilities for a more livable present and future. In particular, I research how, when, and for whom the overarching metaphor and heuristic of energy, with its fluid

figurative-material-literal relationships to power, islands, and archipelagoes, matters in historical and contemporary controversies in the archipelago and beyond. I argue that demonstrating their inseparability is vital for rethinking these terms for energy justice praxis, which requires an intersectional deep dive into powerful structures and everyday expressions of energy that attends to the embodied emotional, mental, and physical labor of colonized/racialized peoples. Ultimately, this book seeks to convey capacious understandings of energy beyond a narrow focus on powering individual dwellings and workplaces, by addressing and amplifying the human energies required to create and challenge energy infrastructures and technologies. This focus centers the physical labor required of workers involved in the fossil fuel industry, including job losses and individual and familial migrations, as well as the exertions of people organizing for energy justice within and across coalitions and community groups.<sup>7</sup>

Detailed later in this chapter, *Archipelagoes of Power* functions as a heuristic for analyzing these relational energies to challenge reductionist colonizer-colonized binaries and homogenizing tendencies that paint all of Puerto Rico with one broad brush, failing to account for place-based differential experiences with energy and power. Following José Castro-Sotomayor's caution against the Western tendency to privilege space over place to favor global discourses, I focus on Puerto Rico to grapple with how corporate polluters and crony politicians—both at US federal and local governance levels—target rural frontline/coastline communities, often home to dark-skinned and Afro-descendant people with few financial resources. Importantly, I also examine how certain individuals and groups in these places fight back and create alternative existences that spark, sustain, and strengthen communal connections and possibilities.<sup>8</sup>

To approach this archipelagic site of struggle, each chapter engages an energy metaphor of exigence. These concepts—in addition to islands, archipelagoes, energy, and power—function as theoretical constructs that provide an energetic powerhouse of critical perspectives and practices for making and breaking oppressive meanings, understandings, assumptions, and methods. In many cases, engaging these metaphors by contemplating, critiquing, and communicating their figurative, material, and literal shapes and effects enables a melding of theory and practice to attend to and intervene in actions that stymie or support just, equitable, and sustainable energy transformations, in what ways, and for whom. Unmaking oppressive relations for major

power shifts in all forms requires historicizing and illuminating the tenacious presence and communicative enactments of empire, colonialism, white supremacy, and other entwined lethal patterns and structures amid struggles for a good life. This book contends that one means for approaching this crucial task is in metaphoric terms.<sup>9</sup>

In this first chapter, I emphasize *amplifying* to listen to and raise the volume of Puerto Rican voices that resist and refuse dead-end relationalities rooted in master logics that normalize extractivism and expendability. This attention to everyday expressions of energy seeks to amplify place-based liberatory alternatives shaping Puerto Rico's crises before and after hurricanes and earthquakes. Together, Santiago and her fellow collaborators create a counternarrative that deviates from popular depictions constituting this "Isla del encanto" [Island of Enchantment]. Local political elites, tourist industry heads, and the US government employ this slogan to communicate a utopic island mirage that elides quotidian realities in Puerto Rico.

#### COMPOUNDING CRISES

The disastrous 2017 hurricane season and the earthquakes and aftershocks in December 2019 and throughout 2020 substantially worsened longtime energy and other prolonged crises in Puerto Rico.<sup>10</sup> Mainstream US media reports tended to decontextualize and dehistoricize Hurricanes Irma and María and the seismic disruptions that followed a few years later. This framing simplifies and ignores needed discussions about the intersection of empire, disaster and racial capitalism, illegal debt and austerity, experimentation, and corrupt energy companies and politicians, as well as grassroots resistance and inventive ways to experience good lives.<sup>11</sup> For now, however, I limit this complex milieu to discussing impacts on electricity access and mass displacements during recent extreme climate-related and seismic events and return to longer histories in subsequent chapters.

Climate science confirms that tropical storms are increasing in severity and frequency, tied to uneven anthropogenic climate disruption and a hydrocarbon-based economic system, which aggravates these hazards.<sup>12</sup> Epitomizing these impacts, Hurricanes Irma and María barreled through Antigua, Barbuda, the US Virgin Islands, the Dominican Republic, and other Antillean islands in September 2017.<sup>13</sup> In Puerto Rico, Hurricane

María made landfall as a category four storm and caused flooding, more than one hundred thousand landslides, and weakened already poorly maintained roads, bridges, schools, and other structures. On the tailwinds of Hurricane Irma just two weeks before, María downed 757 transmission line towers and damaged 1,247 transmission line segments.<sup>14</sup> Millions of individuals were without power for months, and many rural households still lacked grid access almost a year later.<sup>15</sup> The customer hours of lost electricity service neared three billion, marking the longest blackout ever recorded in the United States and the second longest globally.<sup>16</sup> The power disruption also led to sewage water treatment facility discharges, job losses, bankruptcies, and generalized anxiety and uncertainty. Additionally, the system's failure threatened the survival of oxygen therapy and dialysis patients and those requiring refrigerated medicine, while pushing already overburdened medical services to the brink. The obsolete grid fell with grave consequences, as about three thousand people died indirectly from this flawed design, built by unsustainable material and political power structures.<sup>17</sup>

Aggravating these existing vulnerabilities and realities, the earthquakes and aftershocks that rattled residents with a retraumatizing force in late 2019 and throughout winter and spring 2020 damaged several power stations.<sup>18</sup> Although no tsunamis resulted, the Costa Sur plant was located in the seismic impact zone and became temporarily inoperable.<sup>19</sup> The damaged facility, which generates a large percentage of Puerto Rico's power, led again to outages and exacerbated the existing problems preceding and following María. In May 2020, electric utility officials claimed the Costa Sur plant would be operational by late summer 2020, requiring more than \$25 million dollars in repairs.<sup>20</sup> However, equivocating messages and secretive deals continued the uncertainty. The controversies involving Costa Sur and many other power-generation sites in Puerto Rico are featured throughout this book, given their connections to ongoing injustices.

The humanitarian crisis and unlivable conditions, including inadequate access to electricity for necessities, accelerated the out-migration of many Puerto Ricans to the United States.<sup>21</sup> Although Puerto Rico's population count is close to three million, a 2019 US Census Bureau survey and a 2019 American Community survey revealed that between 165,000 and 200,000 people left the archipelago from 2018 to 2019.<sup>22</sup> These numbers represent dispossession accelerated by the hurricanes and other compounded crises.<sup>23</sup> Of those who remained in the archipelago after the 2017 hurricane season, the January 2020 earthquakes displaced at least twenty thousand people,

with about seven thousand individuals seeking shelter in makeshift camps.<sup>24</sup> While the local government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic warned people to stay at home, gender-based violence, austerity measures, job losses, and hunger exacerbated displacements and other forms of suffering, as many residents struggled to survive. Worsening these brutal realities, summer 2020 blew in the strong winds and rains of Tropical Storm Isaiás, which caused extensive flooding, landslides, and multiday electricity losses. Given the entanglements of climate disruption, empire, colonialism, and disaster and racial capitalism, human movements in search of more livable conditions between the United States and Puerto Rico are far from new, as migration has been a consistent impact of modernization and colonialism in Puerto Rico.<sup>25</sup> Nativist and xenophobic ideologies and discourses tend to link these racialized bodies with polluting the United States.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, movements of material pollution occur, exemplified by coal controversies within and beyond Puerto Rico.

US-owned AES Corporation is responsible for the privately owned 454 megawatt carbonera [coal plant] in the rural municipality of Guayama. Twenty-year-old Mabette Colón Pérez, who lives in the Miramar neighborhood beside the facility, and who created this book's cover image, expressed during a spring 2020 interview, "Quieren detener la propagación del coronavirus, pero nadie mira la plaga mayor que seguirá matándonos día a día por los siguientes años. Hay una pandemia mayor que el COVID-19 y sólo tiene tres letras: AES." [They (Puerto Rico government officials) want to stop the spread of the coronavirus, but no one looks at the bigger plague that will continue killing us day by day for the following years. There is a bigger pandemic than COVID-19 and it only has three letters: AES.]<sup>27</sup>

Investigative journalist Omar Alfonso published several reports on this company in 2018 and 2019, documenting AES's illegal activities.<sup>28</sup> Inaugurated in 2002, the plant generates at least 300,000 tons of coal ash every year. This combustion byproduct has led to a massive disposal problem: a five-story ash pile that menacingly occupies the property's grounds.<sup>29</sup> AES promoted coal combustion residual use to create Agremax, a blend of fly and bottom ash, as fill material in at least 40 construction projects as early as 2005. According to anthropologist Hilda Lloréns, who has conducted ethnographic research on this controversy for years, AES deposited coal ash in landfills in Peñuelas, Salinas, and Humacao, in addition to burying this substance in more than a dozen municipalities throughout Puerto Rico, especially in Guayama, Salinas, Arroyo, and Santa Isabel, which are

predominantly Afro-Puerto Rican communities.<sup>30</sup> In all, this corporation has disposed of millions of tons of ashes throughout the archipelago, which contain radioactive isotopes, heavy metals, and arsenic. AES employees also have distributed this material above the south coast aquifer, which provides the only source of drinking water for thousands of people.<sup>31</sup> Members of the Resistencia contra la quema de Carbón y sus Cenizas tóxicas (RCC) have protested these injustices, confronting AES representatives, police, and government officials in acts of civil disobedience, encampments, and legislative activities, among other tactics.<sup>32</sup> In response, the Puerto Rican government and local police have mobilized what Marisol LeBrón documents as “extreme force” against those opposed to the toxic assault of their communities, evident in elevated rates of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, corporate officials have targeted the Dominican Republic and Florida as dump sites—materializing what Lloréns and Santiago call the “Coal Death Route.”<sup>34</sup> This course originates in Colombia, home to the largest open-pit coal mining operation in the world.

Back in Puerto Rico, this decades-long struggle continues. At a December 2019 gathering with AES officials, a room full of residents assembled to protest the plant. Santiago shared that

each speaker was allowed five minutes to make their comments. When my time was up, people came up and donated their ticket numbers and time so that I could continue. Víctor [Alvarado Guzmán, a community member and local legislative advisor] started collecting the tickets, which he later used to give Dr. Osvaldo [Rosario, an environmental chemistry professor and scientific expert for several community and environmental groups in Puerto Rico] more time. It was wonderful teamwork in the midst of such a vile situation. It seems so incredible that all the abuse and injustice is hard to overcome. At one point, Jimmy Borrero from Peñuelas said that he’d risk his life if AES ever tried to take the ash to their town again. The AES people looked spooked. Certainly, they didn’t take it lightly.

These experiences and testimony illuminate the formidable energy realities that residents confront and work to combat collaboratively. Santiago’s fluency in English and Spanish positions her as a community spokeswoman. Many public meetings with US governmental and corporate officials are conducted in English, although the majority of Puerto Ricans most impacted by fossil fuel energy projects only speak Spanish or are not comfortable speaking English publicly.<sup>35</sup> All of these interactions require tremendous energy.

## DEFINING ENERGIES

Human beings understand, articulate, and experience energy in a multitude of ways. While the term finds its English denotative origins as “forceful or vigorous language,” the concept’s meaning has evolved to include other significations.<sup>36</sup> In contemporary times, the field of physics defines *energy* as “the capacity to do work, or the ability to move an object against a resisting force.”<sup>37</sup> The term also sometimes is situated scientifically as *primary energy*, *end-use energy*, and *useful energy*.<sup>38</sup> Political discourses of *energy security*, *energy dominance*, *energy independence*, *energy sovereignty*, *energy poverty*, *energy democracy*, and *energy justice* provide a vocabulary for the challenges, controversies, and inequities that circulate between and constitute various publics today.<sup>39</sup> On a personal level, someone may be described as or read themselves as *energetic* or *lacking energy*.<sup>40</sup> From everyday talk to policy discussions, experiences with encountering and expending energy are ever-present and are shaped by cultural and linguistic identifications and differences.

Turning to the Spanish language and Puerto Rican perspectives, the noun *ánimo* means energy, mood, strength, will, spirit, or when someone takes action, while the infinitive *dar ánimo* signifies to cheer, to encourage, or to support.<sup>41</sup> Given my interest in everyday forms of energy expressions, I frequently asked individuals in Puerto Rico: “¿Qué le da ánimo?” [What gives you energy?], as evidenced by this chapter’s introduction. For Santiago, energy was imagined as communal, a process of eternal learning, combativeness against injustice, and fun. Other interviewees described *energy* as a “desire to serve” one’s community and to inspire others; as a convergence that makes life; as power; as what “fuels society” in the form of electricity, with fossil fuels or renewables; as a force that can be used well or wasted; as something “transformed, transmuted, and transferred”; and as “everything.”<sup>42</sup>

Just as material energy is transferred and received in different forms, including in wires, gases, liquids, or solids, so too do rhetorical understandings of this concept implicate various energetic forms and content.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, I define *rhetoric* as “the capacity of symbolic and material energies to move others and ourselves to act (or not) in the world.” With this definition in mind, the following question guides this book: *How do various individuals and organizations communicate energy controversies and experiences to contest, constrict, and/or cultivate self-determination, coalitional politics, and alternative futures in Puerto Rico and in the Puerto Rican US diaspora?* My efforts to

engage this research offers a response to requests by some Puerto Rican collaborators to challenge a narrow victimhood and trauma-centered master story by writing a counternarrative about local community struggles and solidarities, amid competing interests and often lethal systems of domination.<sup>44</sup>

#### AMPLIFYING RHETORICAL ENERGIES

One of the primary challenges confronting social movement actors and activists is how to invent arguments that feel present for different audiences by amplifying particular perspectives, problems, and possibilities. Amplification is inseparable from energy in terms of both physics and communication. In the first sense, this effect uses an amplifier to strengthen a signal or wave, which increases power. In the related second sense, amplification involves strengthening rhetorical energy to achieve greater impact, as activists, scholars, and practitioners increase the voltage of their rhetoric. Amplification is one means for achieving presence, what Phaedra C. Pezzullo describes as “indicat[ing] when *we feel as if* someone, some place, or something matters, whether or not [they/]she/he/it is physically present with us.”<sup>45</sup> Individuals and groups mobilize various tactics to (try to) enact this feeling. Such efforts range from projecting different symbols on buildings, to communicating the magnitude of a problem by making the description and significance equivalent to the weight and/or size of some material object, to airing interviews and news reports on local radio to literally amplify neglected points of view, experiences, and counternarratives.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to making places, peoples, problems, and possibilities feel present, amplification also can function as an enactment of voice. Eric King Watts highlights the disciplining and silencing of outlaw voices in relationship to loss, wastelands, degeneration, decay, and noises. His work encourages rethinking what speaking forms are valued, beyond a limited focus on human expressions of eloquence. Voice emerges “from the openings that cannot be fully closed; from the ruptures in sign systems, from the breaks in our imaginaries, from the cracks in history.”<sup>47</sup> These enactments may be appealing or appalling. When evoked to advance justice and more livable conditions, uncertain and potentially risky exchanges work to disrupt business as usual, which thrives on capitalist, white, and heteropatriarchal domination.<sup>48</sup> From the potentially transformational, powerful, and unsettling effects created by the ruptures, breaks, and cracks from which voice as happening

emerges, “muted” voices exist in “communities choking on the dust of coal and [other fossil fuels] made to stand up for the polluter or else.”<sup>49</sup> Watts’s theorizing resonates with mounting calls to associate the widespread racial justice mobilizations of 2020—to topple the powerful interlocking systems, ideologies, and rhetorical energies constituting anti-Black racism, militarized policing, white supremacy, capitalism, coloniality, and transphobia—with environmental racism.<sup>50</sup> Extractive industries and their political accomplices disproportionately harm and kill the same communities that are targeted by police brutality and criminalized by the state, too often denying the physical ability to breathe in both instances.

People who are Black, Indigenous, Latinx—including Afro-Latinx and Indigenous Latinx—and Asian and Pacific Islander, among many other racialized groups, and low-income and low-wealth communities are devalued and sickened by corporate polluters and their political cronies.<sup>51</sup> These communities contribute least to greenhouse gas emissions and yet experience disproportionately large effects. This injustice is what Pezzullo and Robert Cox call “the cruel irony” of climate disruption.<sup>52</sup> The Global North’s extractivist economy, colonizing powers, and exploitation of resources elucidates the continued oppression rendered by logics of domination.<sup>53</sup> Many climate justice advocates, including Olúfẹ́ mi O. Táíwò and Doreen E. Martinez, argue for the importance of rethinking and renaming climate change in terms of climate colonialism. Martinez writes that the climate is “being colonized and forced to alter, modify, and—as catastrophes indicate—it is rebelling and resisting the assault upon it. Mother earth is responding and calling out through floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and droughts.”<sup>54</sup>

Confronting the violences of environmental racism and climate and energy injustices, marginalized communities often are the most materially deprived of financial and infrastructural well-being, although these groups often have other forms of wealth that are incalculable in capitalism’s value system.<sup>55</sup> These alternative resources can include rhetorical materials that are essential for imagining and enacting more livable environments and sustainable, self-determined energy relationships.

A rhetorical focus examines energy-related exigencies and how they are powered by oppressive ideologies and communicative acts—as well as challenged—amid and in response to everyday stressors and (the increasingly not-so) exceptional emergencies. To study these rhetorical energies, this book interconnects environmental and energy rhetorical studies,<sup>56</sup> Latinx environmentalisms and de/coloniality,<sup>57</sup> Puerto Rican rhetorical studies,<sup>58</sup>

Puerto Rican environmental and energy studies,<sup>59</sup> and island and archipelagic studies.<sup>60</sup> Following calls by Michelle Holling and Bernadette Calafell for increased inquiry on “Latina/o vernacular discourse” to decenter privileged rhetoric, I approach frontline/coastline enactments of voice as important sites for meaning and community making and insist this embodied, experiential knowledge is essential for uprooting structural injustices.<sup>61</sup>

## AN ENERGY ETHNOGRAPHY IN ARCHIPELAGOES OF POWER

This volume contributes to a burgeoning body of what I understand to be energy ethnographies. This research genre examines power and energy struggles in different situated contexts by drawing on fieldwork and personal experiences, partially or fully, for archive creation and critique.<sup>62</sup> Power has many different definitions and is a contested, heavily discussed term in both technical and everyday circles. *Energy Islands* approaches power as (1) converting energy at a particular rate, while noting that different communicators often use power and energy interchangeably in colloquial exchanges;<sup>63</sup> (2) constructing a hierarchy of domination; and (3) encapsulating both individual and collective agencies in the form of poder, a Spanish word for both power and the ability to act.<sup>64</sup> Martinez writes, “History is the fruit of power, but power itself is never so transparent that its analysis becomes superfluous. The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.”<sup>65</sup> In response to this critical work, this energy ethnography engages power dynamics in an entwined rhetorical-material field that diverges from mainland continental ground.

*Energy Islands* approaches islands and archipelagoes as vital symbolic and material sites for navigating the energy- and power-related tensions of crisis and care, stagnation and struggle, harm and hope, loss and love, and isolation and interconnection in a time of overwhelming and mounting socio-ecological calamities.<sup>66</sup> Such a geographical orientation inspires this book’s guiding concept: archipelagoes of power.<sup>67</sup> This heuristic decenters mainland and continental ways of being, knowing, and communicating to center islands as a material metaphor. This concept attends to relationalities of geographic forms (e.g., land, water, islands, and archipelagoes), individuals, and organizations that generate formations that contaminate, clash, construct coalitions and community, and challenge, among many other power-filled

actions in different configurations, points, and time periods. I define archipelagoes of power as a network of entities/islands at various levels and hierarchical and horizontal nodes across and within structures and institutions that enable and constrain agency for diverse actors. These relationships find energy in fluid and dynamic intersections and movements at global, transnational, transcolonial, national, territorial, regional, and local levels that are entangled like seaweed rather than linearly situated. Such configurations include a multilevel governmental net and implicate corporations and military forces. Concurrently, everyday actors, including social movement actors, and nongovernmental organizations are influenced by and respond to these archipelagic formations, as individuals and groups navigate and work to de/construct these connections.

In Puerto Rico, top-down political dictates from the US government work in concert with and against the territorial Puerto Rican government in different moments throughout history. The archipelagoes of power concept examines the ways in which the Spanish and US empires and multinational corporate officials have imposed their will on civil society, while local elites often have aided, and sometimes challenged, these endeavors. Additionally, the divisive local political party system, organized by three stalemated perspectives in response to Puerto Rico's status, also contributes to this milieu. These parties are the Partido Nuevo Progresista (pro-statehood), the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (proindependence), and the Partido Popular Democrático (procommonwealth, or current status).<sup>68</sup> A deviation from these entrenched partisan groupings, different movements—like the Movimiento Victoria Ciudadana and community solidarities committed to mutual support and alliances—take shape within Puerto Rico, with the US diaspora, and with other island and archipelagic locales, among many other configurations. Ultimately, archipelagoes of power maps power(ful) relations from above, below, and everywhere in between.

In scholarly and popular press texts, “archipelago(es) of power” language tends to be referenced briefly, without sustained analysis of the concept and the importance of material archipelagoes and islands beyond their utility as a relational metaphor. Academic uses of the phrase usually mention Michel Foucault's carceral archipelago, as the theory relates to subjectivity and surveillance, discipline, and punishment that are dispersed and expansive—creating the image of assorted islands.<sup>69</sup> Discussions about archipelago(es) of power also include the underground group Anonymous, the medicalized gaze, and architecture, revealing the variety of topics informed by this con-

cept.<sup>70</sup> Importantly, these uses illuminate the disassociation of this metaphor from emplaced and embodied understandings of island and archipelagic geographies, cultures, and politics. Such removal and erasure may be generative conceptually, but this tendency also risks further marginalizing island and archipelagic peoples, amid the material shrinking, eroding, and polluting of many of the geographic bodies they call home. Accordingly, this energy ethnography joins efforts to resist the erasure and marginalization of noncontinental forms by delving deeply into archipelagoes of power as they relate to energy politics and everyday energetic expressions in Puerto Rico.

Islands cover about two percent of the globe and are home to about 10 percent of Earth's human population.<sup>71</sup> These complex marine and coastal environments hold paradoxically fluid yet finite boundaries that inhabit various formations, including archipelagoes, isles, islets, reefs, atolls, cays, and keys. Mirroring the complexities and diversity of these spaces, the interdisciplinary field of island studies covers a wide range of topics. Contributors to the *Island Studies Journal* and the International Small Island States Association critically engage tourism, renewable electricity, climate disruption, rural youth education, the Anthropocene, textiles and clothing, migrations and diasporas, biodiversity, place names, Small Island Developing States initiatives, colonial legacies, research methods, and much more.<sup>72</sup>

Islands and the spatial imaginaries they configure exist all around—physically and figuratively. According to Alison Mountz, these formations are “highly unique, idiosyncratic, disparate and yet revealing, offering spatial form, pattern, and logics that are everywhere reproduced.”<sup>73</sup> In colloquial and popular culture exchanges, islands hold numerous meanings and associations. Many dominant representations feature sunny vistas with palm trees, sand, and tropical fruit drinks to characterize places of what Julie Sze calls eco-desire that contain magical, green allure, epitomized by the film *South Pacific*, with strong links to imperialism and militarization.<sup>74</sup> The 2017 failed Frye Festival in the Bahamas, which promised luxury accommodations and a musical festival for those wealthy enough to afford event and airline tickets, capitalized on popular island imaginings. The Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, trash islands in different oceanic bodies, and artificial islands for diverse purposes, ranging from renewable energy generation to conspicuous consumption, point to how these spaces are de/constructed and de/valued. Carceral archipelagoes, quarantining on metaphoric and material islands, military bases for chemical weapons testing and storage, a midway point shaped by the paradox of encounters and isolation, an

“island” countertop in the center of some kitchens, and Kashi’s (Kellogg’s) Island Vanilla organic cereal are several other ways to conceptualize and constitute these marine-coastal forms.<sup>75</sup> Such cultural components point to how different actors and forces literally and metaphorically consume islands and how these geographies can be both intoxicating and toxic.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, in energetic, environmental, and climactic terms, microgrids powered by solar and wind energy islands and urban heat islands also symbolize these formations. Depending on one’s embodied and emplaced perspectives, islands can be places of both refuge and risk, and, amid seismic shocks and rising seas, they also may be home.<sup>77</sup>

Sze argues that islands can generate a wide variety of emotions, more than with other landmasses, as these noncontinental places tend to evoke the paradoxical experiences of freedom and entrapment and pleasure and pain.<sup>78</sup> Islands symbolize precarity and perseverance, as they configure and are configured by contested understandings, values, and worldviews. Many of these geographic formations include the frontlines/coastlines of turbulent tides, unpredictable precipitation, shrinking shorelines, food and energy injustices, water scarcity, and disaster-driven displacements. These urgent problems result from ways of being and destroying that celebrate avarice, violence, and dispossession, while devaluing and denying care, dignity, and other necessary conditions for individual and communal thriving.<sup>79</sup> The Pacific island nations of Kiribati and Tuvalu potently epitomize this urgency—as Indigenous inhabitants respond to and many refuse the drowning of their culture and material existences.<sup>80</sup> Important for considering these struggles and their relational entanglements are archipelagic formations.

Material archipelagoes are energetic sites that regularly face efforts to minimize their existence. Tiara R. Na’puti introduces archipelagic rhetoric to study how different texts marginalize and center these areas. She examines Indigenous Chamoru experiences in Guåhan (Guam) to trouble land centrism and this logic’s complicity with expansionist projects and discourses constituting colonization and militarization. Na’puti argues for the decolonial communicative practice of remapping to generate alternatives to colonial ordering grounded in “epistemic, relational, and geographic forms of violence.”<sup>81</sup> She asserts, “Islands are understood primarily as tiny, micro, and barely worthy of being mapped or placed at the margins (if they are depicted at all).”<sup>82</sup> Such (lack of) representation marks “these locales as uninhabited, unnamed, unknown, and/or seemingly unimportant.”<sup>83</sup> Studying an island context that challenges this perspective, she seeks to unsettle national stories