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Regeneración Tlacuilolli: UCLA Raza Studies Journal

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INTRODUCING REGENERACIÓN TLACUILOLLI: UCLA RAZA STUDIES JOURNAL

JOSÉ LUIS SERRANO NÁJERA, ELIZABETH GONZÁLEZ
CÁRDENAS, AND MOISES SANTOS

Take care and do not forget that ideas are also weapons.
—Subcomandante Marcos—

The editorial staff takes great pride, joy, and honor in welcoming readers to the inaugural issue of *Regeneración Tlacuilolli: UCLA Raza Studies Journal*. Our aim for this journal is to foster revolutionary ideas about freedom, choice, love, spirit, and justice that permeate the human experience across time and space. We look at the Americas to strive to envision them as, Turtle Island and Abyala Yala without borders so that we have the freedom to move across these lands like butterflies in the wind. We focus on transborder Chicana/o communities for the beautiful potential they demonstrate in their rasquache ways. But with visions of beauty, we must also critically look into the particular pain of colonialism that has dominated this land for five centuries, which has given birth to a modernity plagued by its violent logics and drive for domination.¹ We must look at the forces of oppression to not only challenge them, but to challenge how they have twisted our logics, imprisoned our creativity, corrupted our thoughts, and damaged our ability to love. Our aim at critical historic consciousness will thus help us envision a liberated future where we move beyond the dominance and towards self-determination. In doing so, we must remember that our ideas are weapons, and they have the most potential to change our society.

To exert our humble contribution to societal change, our journal will provide a space for ideological regeneration through writing. Our journal's name refers to some intellectual, cultural, and historic influences on the Chicana/o Community that have inspired ideas of regeneration. *Regeneración* is Spanish for regeneration, but is also the title for the newspaper published by the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) during the Mexican Revolution. The PLM was in many ways the ideological impetus for much of the radically progressive factions of the Mexican

Revolution, which was made possible by the publication and distribution of their newspaper.² We thus draw our progressive vision of writing from this intellectual heritage. Second, Tlacuilolli is Nahuatl for written and is related to the term tlacuilo, which was the title given to pre-colonial scribes of Mexico-Tenochtitlan (Mexico City). We chose this term to underscore a legacy of thought and knowledge in the Americas since the beginning of time that remains a resilient philosophical influence on us today. Together, *Regeneración Tlacuilolli* refers to the regenerative and revolutionary potential of widely distributed written work in the field of Raza Studies. Finally we employ the term Raza Studies to broaden the field we have come to know as Chicana/o Studies. We aim for a broad focus encompassing the Americas that emphasizes the global potential of human connections on a day-to-day basis. In this manner, we utilize the Spanish meaning of Raza as people to emphasize the humanity we seek to exhibit in our writings. In short, these are people studies.

The knowledge we seek to transmit here will take creative and scholarly modes in an effort to cover the broad subject matter of people studies. Although we cannot yet perform it like actors and musicians, we seek to transmit knowledge through writing much in the same way Diana Taylor contends performance “transmit[s] communal memories, histories, values from one group/generation to the next. Embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge.”³ The ways in which Taylor illuminates the transmission of knowledge imbedded in our minds, bodies, and souls are the ways in which we envision *Regeneración Tlacuilolli: UCLA Raza Studies Journal* inspiring these processes through writings that capture the (re)generative potential of thought.

The (re)generative potential of knowledge we seek to transmit in our journal will also contain an introspective gaze that challenges our actions and beliefs. No revolution can function without self-critique, and with this in mind, we commit ourselves to also publish material that is critical of all oppressive ideas no matter who displays them. We cannot pretend that a history of colonialism, racism, capitalism, sexism, and homophobia have not been instilled in the thoughts, desires, and goals of Chicanas and Chicanos. For instance, to some our reference to the Mexica stirs up the problems of romantic Mexican nationalism. We acknowledge the validity of those concerns and seek to critically examine the history that influences this romanticism.⁴ In this manner we seek to understand the potential of Chicana/o ideas in ways that critically examine their contradictory influences as a means of revealing even more decolonial potential. In this way, we seek visions of a world where differing ideas about heritage can exist. More specifically, our reference to

Mexica terms for writing acknowledges an important heritage that exists among some and not an attempt by us to reenact romantic hegemonic nationalism. Instead we seek to construct a forum here that emphasizes the pluriversality of our communities where many worlds exist inside of one. We want to underscore the fact that the corrupted logic of Mexican political leaders' façades should not hide the legacy of those who possess Indigenous heritage and at the same time fight to challenge its use in the construction of national hegemony. These types of critical thoughts and distinctions are the complicated levels of examination and analyses we seek to promote with this journal. We seek to provide a forum for dialogue among students, academics, community members, activists, poets, and storytellers on debated topics in ways that are critical of, as well as remedy, injustice and inequality within Chicana/o communities. These introspective analyses must occur at the same time we challenge colonial and modern hegemony. We hope that by contributing a forum for these types of discussions, we can contribute our granito de arena that reveals some of the beauty in this world through the powerful ideas of those who want to make it better.

THIS ISSUE

In this first issue, we did not seek a theme, focus, or particular perspective in the writings we solicited. Nonetheless, the research in this volume took on an educational focus. Perhaps it is fitting that we start with education in our first issue since through it we see the goals, desires, and dreams for a better future. Like many of our parents told us long ago, education was the means to salir adelante. But to move forward we must understand the past and how it moves us all. In her article, Sylvia Mendoza examines The Adelante Oral History Project (AOHP) in Salt Lake City, Utah where children are motivated to go to college not only by informing them about the requirements to attend, but by also ensuring these children have a strong grasp of their history and culture. Through oral history assignments that help them reflect with their parents, students at Jackson Elementary demonstrate the decolonial potential of curriculum that helps instill pride in family and culture. Mendoza reveals this decolonial potential through moments where AOHP curriculum provided opportunities for students to challenge ahistoric and colonizing curriculum in their educational institutions. In all, Mendoza concludes that, "the AOHP represents a real life attempt in a real school in Salt Lake City, Utah to chip away at the epistemic power of colonialism." This article thus provides decolonial insight on how educators can

incorporate the lived and historic experiences of their students in ways that challenges institutions to break away from traditional western modes of only validating the teacher's knowledge.

The tradition of educators challenging western status quos has a long history in the United States and is linked to broader efforts in struggles for human and civil rights. In his essay, José Luis Serrano Nájera outlines a Chicana/o Movement pedagogical legacy that began in the 1960s when activist educators tied knowledge of Chicana/o history and culture to civil right claims to a quality education. From there, Serrano Nájera traces this Chicana/o Movement pedagogical legacy through the end of the twentieth-century when many Chicana/o educators and activists tied cultural revitalization of Chicana/o Indigenous heritage to struggles to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples in international settings. Although Serrano Nájera notes complex and varying ideas about Chicana/o Indigeneity, he demonstrates that educators inspired by these pedagogical legacies were at the forefront of interpreting Chicana/o Indigeneity in ways that challenged global historic injustice. He concludes that, "...activists' use of education to instill the values of Chicana/o social movements in young people is indicative of a long standing tradition among Chicana/o activist. Chicanas and Chicanos in these organizations were committed to utilize education to help younger generations continue a commitment to social justice." This essay reveals various efforts to provide alternative educational modes that challenge colonial and modern notions of the superiority of western civilization in ways that highlight the need for pluriversal democratic alternatives.

Although educational efforts critical of injustice provide students with insight necessary to envision alternatives, the civic engagement to enact change that brings about alternatives must take place outside the classroom. In our final essay, Irene Vásquez, Elizabeth González Cárdenas, and Christine García demonstrate to us that the best thing educators can do is provide students with the opportunity to engage in hands on learning outside the classroom with organizations that seek social change. Their work examines the impact of Community Based Learning, influenced by *El Plan de Santa Bárbara*, on student aspirations within the Chicana and Chicano Studies Program at the University of New Mexico. Vásquez, González Cárdenas, and García do so by interviewing students who affirm the value of Community Based Learning, which helps students better envision how they may utilize historic knowledge and skills learned in a Chicana/o Studies classroom as they engage in community service. The authors reveal pedagogical methods that take student learning into community spaces where they learn from

community members how to enact social change at the local level. In essence, Vásquez, González Cárdenas, and García provide a model for education that subverts educators' and universities' authority over knowledge dissemination. Instead, students learn collaboratively and mature their agency as they work in tandem with community activist to enact social change in ways that place students in institutions that seek to improve the future of neighborhoods, cities, and regions.

From our educational research we move to our short stories and poems that demonstrate the power of creative writing in helping us envision social alternatives. Jo Anna Mixpe Ley demonstrates the complexities of what is to be Chicana in a place where traditions, family, identity, and gender roles collide and unravel. Nonetheless, Ley's use of ancestral knowledge becomes a form of empowerment, healing, and self-love. Alyssa Nicole Griego interacts with the happiness, pain, and strength that individuals experience with love, as well as the violence that the outside gaze can inflict on identities, in particular queer identities. Sylvia Fernández similarly explores the struggles with multiple identities and acceptance of those who constantly live on the frontera. Cecilia Medina Velásquez and Elizabeth González Cárdenas both speak of personal strength, resistance, and perseverance, as well as the importance and responsibilities of culture, family, and history. Eztli Sánchez, Giovannie Nuñez-Dueñas, and Joél-Léhi Organista Estrada address issues of power, race, class, and identity by vividly demonstrating the complexities and impact of living under such constraints. At the same time, however, these authors find strength from within to overcome such adversities. Cristina Rose Smith demonstrates the complex sexual desires, emotions, and feelings that occur even in the context of attending church. In spite of orders of colonial power that the church inflicts on sexual desire, Rose Smith makes these desires holy and sacred and quiets the power of the church to mere murmurs. What all these poets do is provide us with a call to consciousness of our individual and collective agency, as well as challenge the status quo. These authors recognize the points at which our struggles, our identities, our love, our pain, and our strength interact, and where they can become unified. The authors' themes range from the individual to the community and force us to think about our involvement in the nurturing of both.

From our creative writers we end with reviews of books that shed light on understudied aspects of Latina/o communities in the United States. The review of Darius Echeverria's *Aztlán Arizona Mexican American Educational Empowerment, 1968–1978*, highlights Echeverria's revelation of Chicana/o Movement era educational activism in Arizona, which

remains an understudied region in Chicana/o Movement historiography. Our second review of Tomás F. Summers Sandoval's *Latinos at the Golden Gate: Creating Community and Identity in San Francisco* underscores Summer Sandoval's unique subject of pan-Latina/o ethnic identity in the San Francisco bay area dating back to the mid nineteenth-century gold rush, which sets community apart for its particular cosmopolitanism. Finally, the review of Bárbara O. Reyes' *Private Women, Public Lives: Gender and the Missions of the Californias* emphasizes Reyes' contribution to the study of women's agency, from different social racial and economic classes, in the context of Spanish colonialism in the U.S.–México Borderlands. In all, these books reveal unique Latina/o agency and resistance to structures of power in ways that emphasized community building.

NOTES

¹ For a critical examination of modernity as part and parcel of colonialism, refer to Aníbal Quijano "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality," in Walter D. Mignolo and Arturo Escobar, *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, Reprint edition (Routledge, 2013).

² For more on the *Partido Liberal Mexicano*, refer to Ricardo Flores Magon, *Dreams of Freedom :A Ricardo Flores Magon Reader*, ed. Chaz Bufe and Mitchell Cowen Verter (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2005); and Juan Gómez–Quiñones, *Sembradores: Ricardo Flores Magon y el Partido Liberal Mexicano: A Eulogy and Critique* (Aztlán Publications, 1973).

³ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Duke University Press Books, 2003) 21. In the future, *Regeneración Tlacuilolli* will seek to include audio and visual performance in its online format.

⁴ For a balanced examination of Chicana/o writers influenced by Indigenism that exhibit libratory potential and romanticism, refer to Sheila Marie Contreras, *Blood Lines: Myth, Indigenism, and Chicana/o Literature*, 1st ed, Chicana Matters Series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008). For a severe critique of Chicana Indigenismo that equates it to Mexican nationalism, refer to Nicole M. Guidotti–Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2011). For advocacy of the need to integrate Indigeneity into the libratory projects of the Americas, refer to Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, *Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*, trans. Philip A. Dennis (University of Texas Press, 1996); and Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, *Pensar nuestra cultura: Ensayos*, 1. ed edition (México, D.F: Alianza Editorial, 1991).

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