

# Editor's Forward

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Welcome to this curated collection, where the intricate intersections of pedagogy, partnership, and transformative praxis converge to illuminate the path towards expanding our understanding of ethnic studies. As the editor of this volume, I invite you to delve into the rich tapestry of insights, reflections, and transformative practices that lie within these pages.

At the heart of our inquiry lies a fundamental question: What does it mean to engage with K-12 schools in partnership, fostering an approach that is not only collaborative but also grounded in grassroots initiatives? How do we navigate the complex terrain of critical consciousness and human identity development, recognizing the unique journey that unfolds for each student?

Central to our dialogue is a rejection of gatekeeping practices that seek to limit the scope and impact of ethnic studies. Instead, we embrace the organic nature of this discipline, recognizing that ethnic studies can also emerge from lived experiences, cultural narratives, and diverse ways of knowing. Through the lens of "*otros saberes*" (other ways of knowing), we challenge patriarchal, colonial, and capitalist knowledge constructions, paving the way for nuanced pedagogies that expand our understanding of how knowledge is developed, taught and processed.

Furthermore, this collection celebrates the transformative potential of art, multimedia, and dialogical approaches within ethnic studies classrooms. By amplifying diverse voices and experiences in spaces that are sometimes less "visibilized," we create spaces for meaningful engagement and expression, nurturing critical consciousness and transformative spaces.

This volume serves as a continuation of a vital conversation, building upon the foundation laid by previous special issues. It highlights the power of action-based research, amplifying the voices and experiences of educators, scholars, and activists working in partnership with K-16. Through activism, digital media, and filmmaking, we bear witness to the transformative potential of collaborative endeavors, where research and praxis converge to inspire change.

Within these pages, you will encounter a rich tapestry of academic research, personal narratives, artistic expressions, and pedagogical reflections—all united by a shared commitment to educational equity and social justice. From deep pedagogical reflections to classroom practices aligned with the spirit of our work, this collection offers insights and inspiration for educators, scholars, and activists alike.

As you navigate this collection, I encourage you to embrace the spirit of inquiry and dialogue, engaging with these diverse perspectives with an open mind and a willingness to experience pedagogies for creative justice in new ways.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Cover Art**

**Title: J'Ouvert**

**Photographer: Rafael Gómez**

Featured on the cover is “J'Ouvert” by Rafael Gómez, which offers a vivid glimpse into the vibrant energy of the Labor Day Carnival in Brooklyn, New York, also known as the “West Indian Day Parade.” The image portrays a student adorned in colorful paint, joyously riding in a grocery cart amidst the revelry of the festivities. At the heart of the celebration are processions, predominantly led by younger community members extending through the night and into the early morning. In many ways, J'Ouvert epitomizes the essence of Caribbean Carnival and culture in New York City, encapsulating the spirit of joy, creativity, and community that defines the event. Gómez's photograph captures a moment of exuberance and camaraderie, inviting viewers to immerse themselves in the vibrant tapestry of cultural expression that permeates the Labor Day Carnival.

## **Articles**

### **They Buried Seeds: The 10-Year Unfolding of the Xican@ Pop-Up Book Elias Serna**

In “They Buried Seeds: The 10-Year Unfolding of the Xican@ Pop-Up Book,” Elias Serna provides a retrospective analysis of the Xican@ Pop-Up Book (XPUB) movement's education activism, pedagogical innovations, and artistic symbolism. Originating as a response to Arizona's 2012 attack on the Mexican American Studies department and subsequent book bans, XPUB boldly asserted its presence with the slogan, “You can ban Chicano books, but they still POP UP!” The movement utilized diverse mediums such as paper engineering, pop-up book manifestos, adaptable curriculum designs, exhibitions, media representation, and lectures to disseminate its message widely. Serna highlights XPUB's deliberate use of allegorical elements, such as the metaphorical “seeds of revolution,” which symbolize the movement's commitment to survival, perseverance,

and community building within the context of Ethnic Studies. As the landscape of censorship evolves, with renewed attempts to target critical race theory, The 1619 Project, LGBTQ+ literature, and Ethnic Studies, XPUB remains relevant. Moreover, the article underscores XPUB's contribution to the field of Ethnic Studies and K-12 pedagogy. By embracing a "Liberated Ethnic Studies' framework, XPUB continues to utilize its dynamic arts curriculum as a tool for resistance, cultural affirmation, and the cultivation of Ethnic Studies community. Through its multifaceted approach, XPUB exemplifies the potential for art to serve as a catalyst for social change and educational empowerment within Ethnic Studies pedagogy.

### **Dark Aesthetics: A Glimpse into Black World Creation** **Justin A. Coles**

This article offers a compelling exploration into the realm of Black aesthetics as a means of world-making within the context of ongoing antiblackness. Authored by Justin A. Coles, this work stems from a rigorous qualitative project conducted in 2019 utilizing a Black critical race-grounded methodology. Coles delves into the creative productions of multi-ethnic Black high school students in New York City, crafting an empirically informed photo essay that vividly captures their aesthetic expressions and the construction of Black worlds. Drawing upon the rich visual narratives of the students' artwork, Coles advances the theory of Black Aesthetics in Education, viewing it through the lens of critical artistic resistance. The photo essay serves not only as a documentation of Black youth aesthetics but also as a living testament to the transformative power of Black artistic expression. Coles frames this work as an actionable pedagogical framework, inviting readers to engage with Black Aesthetics in Education as a means of fostering critical consciousness and cultural empowerment.

### **¡Mi Historia es Importante! Centering Ethnic Studies in the Spanish as a Heritage Language Classroom** **Nancy Dominguez-Fret**

In her contribution to the collection, Nancy Dominguez-Fret offers a poignant testimonio intertwined with pedagogical reflections on her journey as a heritage speaker teaching students with similar backgrounds. Drawing from personal experiences, Dominguez-Fret illuminates her path to critical consciousness, shedding light on the challenges inherent in navigating a Eurocentric educational system that often neglects the histories and cultures of marginalized communities, including her own Mexican-American heritage. Through her narrative, Dominguez-Fret unveils the transformative power of reclaiming history, language, and culture, revealing how these elements have profoundly shaped her approach to critically teaching Spanish as a Heritage Language. Her insights serve as a compelling call to action for educators to recognize and honor the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their students, ultimately enriching the pedagogical landscape for a more inclusive learning environment.

### **'Unhobble[ing]' Black Futures through Visual Essay Filmmaking** **ParKer Bryant**

ParKer Bryant presents a groundbreaking exploration of Black youth learners' critical and creative thinking through a visually driven essay project. This article delves into the conceptual framework

of the lesson, aiming to uncover associative assumptions within the imagination of Black youth, trace significant themes and motifs, analyze narrative affect, and examine the impact on their access to critical and creative thought. Central to Bryant's work is the integration of Toni Morrison's concept of "unhobble[ing]" as a praxis within language arts teaching methods, firmly situated within decolonialized, anti-racist, and abolition teaching curricula. Drawing from the intersections of Black feminist thought and socio-cognitive psychology theories, Bryant's conceptual lesson places Black youth learners at the forefront of middle-grade language arts classrooms. It underscores the indispensable role of Black diasporic imagination in shaping and nurturing Black futures, challenging conventional notions of academic English as a neutral platform and exposing its potential as a tool of "imagination interference." This article stands as a vital contribution to the ongoing discourse on inclusive and empowering pedagogical practices within ethnic studies.

### **Podcasting as a Pedagogical Tool to Create Latinx Youth Counterstories** **Gerardo Mancilla, Anjuli J. Brekke and Luz Rodriguez Camacho**

The collaborative effort of Gerardo Mancilla, Anjuli J. Brekke, and Luz Rodriguez Camacho unveils the transformative potential of the Summer Podcast Workshop (SPW). Employing podcasting as a pedagogical vehicle, the SPW empowers Latinx youth to construct counterstories that challenge dominant narratives. In this illuminating article, the authors provide insight into the workshop's learning objectives, program themes, and meticulously designed lesson plans. Central to the workshop's ethos is the cultivation of technical podcasting skills among students, enabling them to articulate their lived experiences as Latinx youth with authenticity and agency. The student voices, which resonate throughout the article, converge around three key themes: the acquisition of technical podcasting skills, the fostering of community with peers, and the amplification of lived experiences. Through these themes, the SPW emerges as a beacon of pedagogical innovation, showcasing the profound impact of podcasting in centering the counterstories of Latinx youth. This article stands as a testament to the power of culturally relevant pedagogy in empowering marginalized voices and offers invaluable insights for educators seeking to cultivate inclusive learning environments rooted in equity and social justice.

### **Oral History and Digital Archiving as an Ethnic Studies Praxis** **Michelle Rendón Ochoa**

In "Oral History and Digital Archiving as an Ethnic Studies Praxis," Michelle Ochoa offers an insightful exploration into a youth-centered oral history digital archiving project, "*Aquí Estamos*," co-created with high school students in Long Island, New York. This autoethnographic piece delves into the transformative nature of the project, emphasizing its alignment with an ethnic studies curriculum framework. Ochoa advocates for the expansion of oral history archival initiatives that prioritize historically marginalized voices within educational settings. The article provides a practical dimension by offering a comprehensive guide for educators interested in implementing similar projects in their classrooms. Ochoa concludes with a reflective analysis, highlighting the profound experiences and insights gained by both students and her throughout the project's duration. This contribution enriches the collection of ethnic studies K-12 pedagogy works by showcasing a tangible example of how to engage students in meaningful activism and community-centered learning. By centering Latine voices and utilizing digital archiving techniques, Ochoa

demonstrates how educators can empower students to amplify underrepresented narratives and contribute to broader conversations of social justice and historical representation within the classroom.

### **Analyzing as an Artistist** **Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales**

Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales introduces a thought-provoking reflection that not only furnishes educators with user-friendly materials but also offers a compelling political narrative. At the heart of this lesson lies a pivotal inquiry: Can activist art serve as a catalyst for the eradication of racism? Central to Tintiangco-Cubales' approach is the introduction of a sample image titled "12 Step Program to Justice," providing a concrete framework for educators to facilitate transformative discussions and actions within their classrooms. Her work seamlessly bridges the realms of teaching practice and advocacy, empowering educators with the necessary tools to cultivate critical consciousness and inspire meaningful social change among their students.

### **(Re)claiming Our Cuentos** **Jeanette Godoy**

"(Re)claiming Our *Cuentos*" by Chicana Jeanette Godoy stands as a powerful testament to community empowerment and cultural resilience. In this innovative work, Godoy reimagines an indigenous tale, transforming it into an engaging play tailored for elementary school students. This endeavor not only serves as a bridge between generations but also as a means of reclaiming and preserving cultural narratives often overlooked in mainstream education. By drawing upon oral traditions and folklore, Godoy revitalizes ancient wisdom for contemporary audiences, infusing it with relevance and accessibility. One of the most remarkable aspects of Godoy's work is its ability to create educational opportunities beyond the confines of traditional textbooks. By bringing these critical narratives to life on stage, she not only captivates young minds but also fosters a deeper understanding of cultural heritage and social justice issues. In doing so, "(Re)claiming Our *Cuentos*" demonstrates the transformative power of creativity and theater in shaping children's perspectives and nurturing empathy and awareness. Moreover, Godoy's emphasis on community engagement underscores the collaborative nature of cultural preservation and education. Through participatory theater practices, she invites students, educators, and families to actively engage with the material, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in their shared heritage. By amplifying voices long silenced and reclaiming cultural narratives, Godoy invites us to imagine a world where every child has the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the stories they hear and the characters they portray. In doing so, she paves the way for a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape, where all *cuentos* are valued and celebrated.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

**Title: Our Lady of Carmen Celebrations**  
**Photographer: Rafael Gómez**

In this photograph captured by Rafael Gómez, we witness the commemoration of The Day of Our Lady of Carmen, known as "*El Día de la Virgen del Carmen*," a revered event celebrated globally by

Catholics and other spiritual communities. In the Dominican Republic, this observance, dedicated to one of the identities of the Virgin Mary, has transformed into a powerful symbol of popular spirituality that extends beyond the boundaries of traditional church settings. Devotees intricately decorate altars, attend masses (*misas*), and engage in lively gatherings filled with music, dance, and delicious cuisine as expressions of reverence for La Virgen. These festivities, rich with multi-generational participation, see the active involvement of younger devotees who contribute in various capacities, including as musicians, underscoring the enduring significance and inclusive nature of this sacred tradition.

**Title: Resilient *Tamal***  
**Photographer: Andrea Mercedes Garcia**

Andrea Garcia's photograph captures a profound scene of familial tradition as her children engage in the making of tamales. Rooted in ancient Mesoamerican culture, the tradition of tamale-making holds deep significance, passed down through generations. Garcia's New Mexican heritage infuses her tamales with a unique blend of green hatch and red chile, creating an unforgettable flavor. The meticulous preparation of masa, derived from the revered maize through ancient nixtamalization, pays homage to the sacredness of corn in Mesoamerican culture. Beyond mere culinary preparation, tamale-making is a sacred ritual that binds Latinx families together, echoing ancestral wisdom and resilience. In a world where indigenous traditions are often marginalized, the act of preparing and savoring tamales becomes a powerful assertion of cultural pride and resistance, reaffirming Latinx identity and reclaiming ancestral heritage. Through each bite, one not only tastes the savory flavors but also experiences the rich legacy of resilience, connection, and cultural pride that transcends generations.

**Title: Decolonial Home Garden**  
**Photographer: Andrea Mercedes Garcia**

In Andrea Garcia's photograph "Decolonial Home Garden," the essence of indigenous identity is manifested through the cultivation of traditional crops within an urban setting. With a profound connection to the land, Garcia and her children have established a home garden that symbolizes decolonization, adaptation, and resilience. Through the cultivation of maize, tomatoes, lettuce, chili peppers, and various herbs, they confront environmental racism and assert control over their well-being in an urban food desert. Viewing gardening as both therapeutic and defiant, the family's garden serves as a bold act of resistance against dependence on large-scale agriculture and fast food. Despite challenges, their garden flourishes, nourishing both body and soul while teaching important lessons of self-sufficiency and resilience to future generations.

**Title: Cooking *Frijoles* is a Revolutionary Act**  
**Photographer: Andrea Mercedes Garcia**

Andrea Garcia's photograph "Cooking Frijoles is a Revolutionary Act" captures the essence of cultural preservation and resistance through the simple yet profound act of preparing beans. As a culinary link to ancestors, beans symbolize a return to an indigenous and a decolonized diet. Passed down through generations, the recipe for frijoles reflects a rich lineage from Zacatecas and Nuevo Mexico, blending traditional cooking styles from both sides of the family. Through careful

preparation, Garcia's children learn the importance of honoring their heritage and reclaiming beans as a staple of their native diet. Amidst the food deserts of Los Angeles, cooking frijoles becomes an act of anti-colonial resistance, nourishing both body and soul while preserving indigenous food sovereignty. This culinary tradition, passed from one generation to the next, underscores the significance of maintaining cultural identity and connection to the land.

**Title: I Am My Brotha's Keeper**  
**Photographer: Fritz Pingol**

In the compelling photograph titled "I Am My Brotha's Keeper" by Fritz Pingol, a poignant moment from the heart of the Black Lives Matter movement is immortalized. Captured amidst the streets of Long Beach, California, the image encapsulates a diverse group of students marching together in solidarity. Against the backdrop of societal upheaval and systemic injustice, this powerful photograph serves as a stirring call to action, evoking the timeless concept of brotherhood and collective responsibility. Central to the image is the presence of a participant holding a sign emblazoned with the resolute declaration, "I am My Brotha's Keeper." This poignant message symbolizes a steadfast commitment within the Black community to uplift and support one another in the face of adversity. Furthermore, the photograph serves as a poignant reminder of the historical struggles and enduring resilience within communities of color. From the dark shadows of slavery and segregation to the ongoing battles against police brutality and institutionalized racism, the image resonates with the deep-rooted legacy of resistance and perseverance within the Black liberation movement. Through the lens of Pingol's camera, this photograph becomes a testament to the unwavering spirit of solidarity and the tireless pursuit of justice within marginalized communities.

**Title: Filipinx for Black Power**  
**Photographer: Fritz Pingol**

Captured during a protest rally in Long Beach, California, Fritz Pingol's "Filipinx for Black Power" photo signifies a pivotal moment of solidarity between Filipinx and Black communities. It depicts Filipinx students standing alongside their Black peers, wielding signs in a powerful display of unity against racial oppression. Reflecting the ethos of the Black Power movement, this gesture underscores themes of self-determination and collective action. Both communities, steeped in histories of colonization and systemic racism, find common ground in their struggles for liberation. For Filipinx individuals, shaped by the legacies of colonialism and imperialism, this solidarity represents a shared understanding of the impacts of racism and the necessity of collective resistance.

**Title: Please I Can't Breathe**  
**Photographer: Fritz Pingol**

Set against the backdrop of Downtown Long Beach, California, during the protests ignited by the tragic murder of George Floyd in 2020, this photograph captures a poignant moment. By amplifying these voices and experiences, the photograph challenges viewers to confront their complicity in perpetuating inequality and prompts critical reflection and action. "Please I can't



Breathe" emerges as a catalyst for societal introspection, underscoring the ongoing struggle for racial justice and the necessity of universal solidarity.

**Title: *Magia y Tradición***

**Photographer: Felicia 'Fe' Montes**

In the heart of Mexico City's Dia de los Muertos parade, photographer Felicia Montes captures the essence of magic and tradition. Through her lens, we witness celebration woven with memory, methodology, and movement. The image portrays a young Mexican girl adorned in traditional attire, embodying her culture with every step she takes. Standing beside a towering replica of a Mexican doll, she gazes confidently into the camera, a living embodiment of the pedagogies of creative justice. In her presence, we see the convergence of prayer, poetry, performance, protest, and public art, all intertwined in a celebration of culture, community, and collective consciousness. This photograph becomes an ethnic studies classroom in flesh, teaching lessons of color and culture, prayer and performance, style and spirituality. It encapsulates the *magia y tradición* that defines the Day of the Dead.

## **Art**

**Title: Home is the Place to Dream**

**Artist: Emily Hsiao**

Emily Hsiao's art piece serves as a nostalgic reflection on her upbringing in Wellington Heights, East Los Angeles. Set within the frame of her living room, adorned with Chicano/a/x art and family heirlooms, the painting transforms her home into a dollhouse, symbolizing the interconnectedness of her environment. Hsiao captures the energy flowing from the streets into her home, where she feels watched yet connected to her community. Through vivid imagery, she portrays familiar scenes: a boy helping his blind mother, the raspado vendor busy with schoolchildren, and neighbors from her childhood. Among them are representations of herself and her best friend, Laura, evoking memories of innocence and friendship. By removing the ceiling, Hsiao metaphorically emphasizes the limitless possibilities within her safe haven, where dreams can flourish amidst the constant change of the city.

## **Film**

**Title: Selling one Tamal at a Time**

**Filmmaker: Julio Henriquez**

Julio Henriquez's film *Selling one Tamal at a Time* presents the compelling story of his mother Carmen, a Salvadoran street vendor in 1990s Los Angeles. Against the backdrop of a bustling urban landscape, Carmen's resilience shines through as she navigates the complexities of street vending with determination rooted in her Salvadoran heritage. Her journey, fraught with challenges yet filled with opportunities, serves as a powerful narrative for K-12 ethnic studies pedagogy. By highlighting Carmen's experiences, the film provides a valuable lens through which students can explore themes of immigration, economic empowerment, and cultural resilience. It invites discussions on the contributions of immigrant communities to American society.



**Title: *Tango: The Greatest Rock Album Never Heard***  
**Filmmaker: Gregory Esparza**

Gregory Esparza's *Tango: The Greatest Rock Album Never Heard* delves into the overlooked legacy of Chicano rock musicians, highlighting the systemic barriers they faced within the music industry. The film critiques the industry's failure to recognize and promote Chicana/o talent, resulting in the underrepresentation of their music. Despite the undeniable contributions of Chicano musicians to American rock 'n' roll, their voices often went unheard, depriving audiences of their unique artistry. This narrative resonates deeply with Chicana/o/x studies, as it sheds light on the erasure of Chicano cultural contributions and the impact of systemic discrimination on artistic expression. By uncovering the story of *Tango*, Esparza invites reflection on the broader socio-cultural dynamics that shape the representation and recognition of Chicane identity within mainstream narratives. Through this lens, film emerges as a critical pedagogical tool for reclaiming stories within academic discourse and beyond.

## Cover Art: J'Ouvert

Rafael Gómez, California State University, Los Angeles

**Description:**

The image depicts a student whose body is covered in paint while being pushed around in a grocery cart (September 3rd, 2018). During Labor Day Weekend, Brooklyn, New York hosts the Labor Day Carnival, also known as the "West Indian Day Parade." The Brooklyn Carnival draws more than two million people, mainly from the West Indian and Caribbean communities in New York City and beyond. Central to the festivity is the J'Ouvert ("Break of Day") processions, which are composed chiefly of younger community members. J'Ouvert, which



goes through the night and early morning, is best known for its uncouth revelry, manifested in the creative spirit—yet low cost—of the costumes on display. In so many ways, J'Ouvert is the essence of the Caribbean Carnival and culture in New York City.