

# Editor's Note

G. REGINALD DANIEL

We are excited about the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies* (JCMRS). The journal is a new scholarly outlet that seeks to bring together innovative work on the topic of mixed race in the United States and abroad. *JCMRS* is being released at a time of extraordinary social, cultural, political, and economic upheaval in the United States and internationally. These forces reveal with undeniable clarity the interconnectedness of nations and peoples across the globe. Indeed, the concepts of mixed race and related ideas, such as racial and cultural hybridity, admirably capture the complexities and contradictions generated by the global circulation of peoples and cultural goods in a mediated and interconnected world. The hybrid, globalized human subject is increasingly confronted with the challenge of moving among sharply contrasting racial, cultural, and ideological worlds. Consequently, hybrid identities are not reducible to fixed formulas; rather, they form a changing repertory of configurations. The journal is being inaugurated following the 2012 reelection of Barack Obama as President of the United States, an African American whose biracial background and global experiences have enhanced his image as the embodiment of the principles of hybridity, which have been central to his appeal. In addition, 2012 marked the twentieth anniversary of Maria P. P. Root's groundbreaking and award-winning anthology *Racially Mixed People in America* (1992). It was the first comprehensive examination of multiracial identity and the mixed-race experience in the United States.

It has been a long journey from the publication of *Racially Mixed People in America* to the inauguration of the *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies*. In the interim, University of California, Santa Barbara sociology doctoral student Josef Castañeda-Liles approached me, Paul Spickard, and Maria P. P. Root in 2004 about founding a print *Journal of Multiracial Studies*. His rationale was that publications on multiraciality had reached a critical mass such that studies of mixed race were becoming a distinct area of intellectual inquiry. We contacted editors at several academic presses who found the *idea* of a journal on mixed race quite compelling. They were equally impressed with the stellar credentials of the co-founding editors and the well-crafted forty-five page proposal. However, they expressed reservations about *publishing* the journal given the financial expenditure involved, particularly considering that cuts to universities' budgets were increasingly prompting libraries to cancel journal subscriptions. At the time, those caveats made a print journal a risky proposition notwithstanding the strong resonance with the topic of mixed race. The idea of a journal would have to wait until the advent of online, open-access peer-reviewed journals in order for it to come to fruition.

The *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies* was launched in 2011 and emerged from the inaugural 2010 Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS) conference at DePaul University (November 5–6, 2010), which Camilla Fojas, Laura Kina, and Wei Ming Dariotis organized. Co-founded by G. Reginald Daniel, Wei Ming Dariotis, Laura Kina, and Paul Spickard, *JCMRS* is the first academic journal explicitly focused on critical mixed race studies. The journal is transracial, transdisciplinary, and transnational in scope. It places the concept of *mixed race* at the critical center of focus such that multiracial individuals become subjects of historical, social, and cultural processes rather than simply objects of analysis. This

involves the study of racial consciousness among racially mixed people, the world in which they live, and the ideological forces that inform their identity and experience.

*JCMRS* also stresses the critical analysis of the institutionalization of social, cultural, and political structures based on dominant conceptions of *race*. In keeping with sociologists Michael Omi's and Howard Winant's racial formation theory, *JCMRS* acknowledges that the concept of race invokes biologically-based human characteristics, but the selection of specific human features for the purposes of racial signification is a constantly changing sociohistorical process. Accordingly, the journal emphasizes the constructed nature of race and the notion that racial categories are unstable and decentered structures of sociocultural meanings that are continuously being created, inhabited, contested, transformed, and destroyed. Finally, *JCMRS* underscores the mutability of race and the porosity of racial boundaries in order to critique local and global systemic injustices rooted in processes of racialization and social stratification based on race, as well as the interlocking nature of racial phenomena with sex, gender, sexuality, class, and other categories of difference.

One of the special benefits of being an eScholarship online journal is that it is possible to publish articles of just about any desired length at no additional cost. Given that this is the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies*, there are more articles than will be the case in subsequent issues, except perhaps special issues devoted to a particular topic, with some articles in this issue being considerably longer than others. However, one of the goals of *JCMRS* is to foster an informed readership, including the lay public and particularly scholars working in the area of mixed race as well as race and ethnic studies, more generally. Consequently, in the first issue we felt it was incumbent upon us to provide an extensive discussion of key issues and concerns in the field of critical mixed race studies. We hope this issue of the journal will be a valued and indeed classic resource on the study of critical mixed race for years to come.

We would like to thank New York-based multimedia artist Saya Woolfalk for providing the cover image from her 2012 project titled *The Empathics*. This performance piece is set in a fictional hybrid plant/human community that Woolfalk ethnographically analyzes, documents, and displays. *JCMRS* managing editor Laura Kina selected this series by virtue of how it symbolizes the constructed nature of race and playfully mixes imagery and language from DNA analysis, alchemy, mythology, fashion, and ritual. In Woolfalk's "mixed-race" aesthetic, the past/present/and future are rendered in a manner that not only rejects delineated temporal boundaries but also mediates, fractures, and reframes them, like the mission of this journal, in order to embrace contradictions, multiplicity, and ambiguity.

We are enormously grateful to Justin Gonder, eScholarship Operations Coordinator, who painstakingly guided us through learning how to navigate the eScholarship platform. Ken Watanabe was most generous in advising us on the formatting and design of the journal. We are equally indebted to Jan Christian Bernabe's and Jacqueline Heckman's stellar copy editing and their attention to detail that is nothing short of amazing. We are very appreciative of UC Santa Barbara sociology doctoral student Alyssa Newman's meticulous proofreading. *JCMRS* also benefitted from the efforts of the members of our Editorial Board, who generously solicited contributions, recommended readers, reviewed submissions, and themselves wrote articles for the journal. We are seeking to expand our Editorial Review Board and roster of external reviewers of manuscripts, particularly outside the United States. Please contact us via the *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies* website: [http://escholarship.org/uc/ucsb\\_soc\\_jcmrs](http://escholarship.org/uc/ucsb_soc_jcmrs) if you are a

university professor and are interested in serving on our Editorial Review Board or as an external reviewer, or a doctoral student nearing completion of the PhD, who would be interested in serving as an external reviewer.

Most of all, we would like to express our gratitude to the authors who contributed to this inaugural issue in order to make their work readily available to the broadest audience possible. The journal's introductory essay, "Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies" by G. Reginald Daniel, Laura Kina, Wei Ming Dariotis, and Camilla Fojas, maps out the development of mixed race studies at a time that beckons scholars to be more *critical*. That is, this current moment calls for scholars to look back and assess the merit of arguments made over the last twenty years and their relevance for future research. The authors discuss the requisites of this critical turn and examine to what extent critical mixed race studies actually diverges from previous examinations of mixed race in terms of pointing scholars in the direction of new research in the field.

Winthrop Jordan, one of the most honored of US historians, wrote about racial mixing a generation before there was a field of mixed race studies. At the time of his death, he left an unfinished manuscript: "Historical Origins of the One-Drop Racial Rule in the United States." For this inaugural issue of the *JCMRS*, Jordan's former student Paul Spickard, himself a foundational scholar of multiracial studies from the first wave of scholarship in the late 1980s and early 1990s, has edited Jordan's final article.

"Reconsidering the Relationship between New Mestizaje and New Multiraciality as Mixed Race Identity Models" by Jessie Turner provides a comparative analysis of the divergences and convergences of new discourses on *mestizaje* in Chicana/o Studies and multiraciality in other disciplines, particularly sociology, psychology, and history. Turner seeks to enter these new mixed identity discourses into conversation, which has heretofore been largely nonexistent. By expanding upon existing ethnoracial models and challenging the exclusions that each reproduces, she elucidates the benefits that such dialogue would bring to both fields.

"Critical Mixed Race Studies: New Directions in the Politics of Race and Representation" was Andrew J. Jolivette's keynote address at the inaugural Critical Mixed Race Studies Conference, November 5, 2010, at DePaul University. Jolivette posits critical mixed-race pedagogy as a model for developing intersectional coalitions across various categories of difference composed of a "new American majority" (people of color, queers, women, immigrants, and youth), which was in fact President Barack Obama's 2012 winning coalition. This shifts racial formation and social change from binary constructions to more multivalent approaches to achieving human rights and social justice. Taken to a logical conclusion, mixed-race pedagogy could also serve as a similar organizing principle for international movements for equity and social justice.

In "Only the News They Want to Print': Mainstream Media and Critical Mixed-Race Studies," Rainier Spencer, another foundational scholar from the second wave of scholarship in the mid- and late 1990s, examines how the mainstream press, which has such a powerful influence on popular culture, has for decades failed to engage the rich complexity of mixed race in the United States. He argues that the dominant press instead, promotes a conservative model of multiracialism that emphasizes sentimentality and sensationalism over journalistic objectivity. Spencer calls for the *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies* to assert itself as a scholarly counterweight to the dangerously biased, perhaps even naïve, reporting found in mainstream media outlets.

Molly McKibbin's "The Current State of Multiracial Discourse" provides an overview of multiracial discourse in terms of what is at stake in the current advocacy and scholarship, the problems that arise in popular and academic discourses, as well as the concerns that should be addressed as multiracial discourse continues to develop. Among other concerns, she examines group versus individual identity; the uses of language in multiracial discourse; what multiracialism is considered to be and do within the context of US race relations and racial practices; progressive and conservative political approaches to multiracialism, classification methods, and the relationship between the fields of critical multiracial (or mixed race) studies and critical white studies.

Daniel McNeil's "Slimy Subjects and Neoliberal Goods: Obama and the Children of Fanon" documents the various metaphors that have been used to depict mixed-race individuals as animalistic, infantile, or commodified subjects in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In doing so, McNeil's article reveals the discordant affinities between the politics and poetics of Frantz Fanon and anti-colonial intellectuals in the 1950s and 60s. It also calls attention to postcolonial theorists who emphasize Fanon's continuing relevance in the fight against neocolonialism and neoliberalism in the twenty-first century. Moreover, McNeil's analysis not only brings into sharp focus the carefully constructed civility of contemporary politicians and journalists who seek to distance themselves from Fanon's trenchant radicalism but also encourages further reflection on the language and style of academic debates in critical mixed race studies.

We invite readers of this issue to consider *JCMRS* as a home for their future scholarship. *JCMRS* seeks new and innovative work from scholars in all fields and disciplines that examine the many aspects of mixed race. In future issues, we will not only be looking for theoretical analyses of the sort that compose the majority of articles in the inaugural issue, but also studies of particular problems, thematic concerns, and specific mixed-race populations. We welcome scholarship that engages in transnational analyses and the influences of globalization on the topic of mixed race. Moreover, *JCMRS* has no objections to authors who receive their first online publication in *JCMRS* and subsequently publish their work in books as well as other print or online journals (with the understanding that authors acknowledge *JCMRS* as the site of initial publication).

In addition, we would like to provide a clarification about the title of the journal. There has been some debate as to whether *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies*, *Journal of Critical Mixed-Race Studies*, or *Journal of Critical 'Mixed' Race Studies* was more appropriate. The first emphasizes "Mixed Race Studies" as the key focus and makes it substantive; the second focuses on "Mixed- Race" as an adjective modifying "Studies;" the third emphasizes "Mixed" as the key focus of analysis in "Race Studies." The consensus was that "Mixed Race Studies" was the preferred nomenclature. There has also been discussion as to whether the terms *mixed race* or *multiracial* would be most appropriate. Many individuals employ multiracial to refer to racially heterogeneous populations (e.g., a multiracial society); others use the term to describe individuals of mixed heritage, ancestry, or background. The term multiracial appeared as early as 1980 as a definition of someone with more than one racial background in Christine C. Iijima Hall's groundbreaking doctoral dissertation "The Ethnic Identity of Racially Mixed People: A Study of Black-Japanese" (1980).

This terminology and definition gained widespread usage among many activists early on in the multiracial movement beginning in the late 1980s, particularly among the membership of the Association

of MultiEthnic Americans (AMEA) and affiliated organizations, along with A Place for US National (APUN), as well as Project RACE (Reclassify All Children Equally) in the 1990s. Many individuals preferred the term multiracial in order to move away from any association with “being mixed up” as in “confused.” Also, some individuals believed the term mixed race was an externally imposed label originating from West European colonialism and domination. The term multiracial thus seemed to provide an opportunity for a new conceptualization that jettisoned this legacy of problematic associations.

Yet Hapa Issue Forum (HIF), which was another important foundational organization in the movement, preferred the term mixed race. This was due in part to the potential confusion of multiracial with the meaning of “diversity” as in “multiculturalism.” In light of these concerns, the late Ramona Douglass, then President of the AMEA, recommended at the Third Multiracial Leadership Summit on June 7, 1997 that we alternate between the terms multiracial and mixed race at the meeting in order to respect Greg Mayeda, Sheila Chung, and Cynthia Nakashima, who were representing HIF. However, in 2004 when Josef Castañeda-Liles, Paul Spickard, Maria P. P. Root, and I were seeking to publish a print journal, we decided to use the term *Journal of Multiracial Studies*. Yet we made it very clear in the journal description that its purpose was to examine the topic of mixed race, as well as interracial marriages and transracial adoption by extension. Notwithstanding the title, *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies*, we accommodate the terms mixed race and multiracial interchangeably in the journal since both are widely used in the field of mixed race/multiracial studies and consciousness, as well as in the public imagination.

Finally, some scholars, as well as many members of the public, not only view “ethnicity” as a less “problematical” concept—and thus as a suitable substitution for race—but also view racial and ethnic lines as critically different from each other. Ethnicity generally refers to a social subset whose members are thought by themselves and others to share a common culture (beliefs, ideals, meanings, values, customs, artifacts, etc.) that sets them apart from other groups in the society. These individuals also share a common origin or ancestry (real or imagined)—and thus may have similar ancestral and common geno-phenotypical traits—that also distinguish them from other social groups. They may participate, in varying degrees, in shared activities in which their common origin and culture are significant.

Considering that ethnic formation can include notions of both race and culture, the terms “multiethnic” or “mixed ethnic” may seem more descriptive and meaningful than “multiracial” or “mixed race.” Those terms might appear to lend themselves to a more nuanced discussion of identity, that is, one’s sense of personal spatiotemporal location in relationship to other points of reference in terms of similarities and differences. The notion of ethnicity experienced as culture—the “culturalization” of ethnicity—is, nevertheless, different from the experience of racial or geno-phenotypical and ancestral differentiation—the “racialization” of ethnicity. This does not mean ethnocultural differences have not been the source of prejudice and discrimination. However, in the United States and elsewhere, ethnoracial differences serve as a primary contributing factor that sustains institutionalized and systemic injustices. These ethnoracial differences have a significant impact on the distribution of wealth, power, privilege, and prestige notwithstanding the fact that ethnoracial and ethnocultural phenomena are invariably intertwined. That said, critical mixed race studies actually encompasses critical mixed ethnic studies.

We hope you enjoy this inaugural issue of the *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies* and find it an informative resource on the topic of mixed race.

– G. Reginald Daniel, Editor in Chief