

## Editor's Note

This special issue of the *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies (JCMRS)*, “Mixedness and Indigeneity in the Pacific,” is part of an important moment and intellectual turn in the discipline. As stated in past issues of the journal, there is now a critical mixed race studies association, conference, journal, and even, more recently, university minor. With this explosive growth has come the need to address areas that have largely missed our attention: countries and regions that have not been included in the conversation and populations that have been missed or only analyzed through the dominant paradigms. One such gap has been attention to Indigenous perspectives on race and racialization, and specifically how that comes to bear on our analyses of mixed race. This special issue not only draws our attention to Indigenous perspectives and asks us to center them but also brings our gaze across the Pacific, drawing different histories, nations, and Indigenous populations together to illuminate the distinct insights these perspectives and places can contribute to critical mixed race studies. In this issue, we will hear from a range of scholars about the perspectives and experiences of Indigenous and/or mixed-race populations in Aotearoa New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Kanaky/New Caledonia, and Guam.

While special collections on understudied perspectives often reflect a labor of love and care, this special issue is the product of the extraordinary and unyielding dedication of the contributing authors and all who helped with editing. Originally conceived of and initiated before the COVID-19 pandemic, it experienced the well-known delays and disruptions that come along with such a devastating global event. Along the way to publication, the journal experienced the sudden and tragic passing of its founding editor and inaugural editor in chief, G. Reginald Daniel, in November 2022. It is difficult to express the magnitude of this loss for the journal, the discipline, and the generations of students, fellow academics, and activists influenced by his scholarship and mentorship.

Dr. Daniel, affectionately known by many as Reg, set a powerful introductory tone for the journal as the inaugural editor in chief. As the first author in the journal's opening article, “Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies,” Reg played a central role in announcing and definitely declaring the arrival and establishment of a rigorous scholarly discipline. In this piece of essential reading, Reg's imprint is obvious throughout the text's meticulous recounting of the development and evolution of critical mixed race studies. Of the article's incredibly detailed and well-researched sixty pages, just over half comprise notes and references—a hallmark trait of Reg's immaculate knowledge of the body of work spanning decades of critical mixed race studies scholarship, as well as his careful, deliberate, and rigorous style of argumentation leaving no stone unturned and no contribution unrecognized.

While Reg's role as a foundational scholar in critical mixed race studies situated him well to reflect on the history of the discipline through his knowledge and first-hand experience, he was particularly dedicated to using his position as the journal's inaugural editor in chief to propel the discipline *forward*. His vision for the journal was one that would promote novel insights, perspectives, and theoretical innovations, with a deliberate eye toward expanding the reach and scope of the

discipline. In the second issue of *JCMRS*, a special collection that he himself curated, Reg advanced this vision with a pathbreaking focus on mixed race in Nordic Europe. In publishing this current issue, I am delighted to share yet another step in the execution of Reg's vision: a special issue collection, "Mixedness and Indigeneity in the Pacific."

Lost are the commentary and notes that Reg had undoubtedly prepared to introduce this special issue. However, his influence remains within the articles themselves, as he was able to contribute feedback to the authors and oversee the development of these works into their final form. I am grateful to all of the contributing authors for their understanding, dedication, and care as they navigated such unique obstacles and emotions along this issue's journey to publication. It is incredibly important to state that this issue would not have been possible without continuous guidance from Zarine L. Rocha and Basia Nowak. With no access to the notes, templates, or plans for the journal, I leaned heavily on them to piece together the status of every article and reconstruct Reg's intentions for the special issue. Dani Kwan-Lafond and Sayaka Osanami Törngren generously accepted last-minute invitations as the final pieces were coming together to complete the issue. Under such sudden and unexpected circumstances, the team at the eScholarship platform was gracious in providing me assistance. Operations Coordinator Justin Gonder, with sincere condolences and comforting reflections, granted me administrative access and taught me the general form and function of the platform, just as he had done for Reg many years ago. Copyright Policy and Education Officer Katie Fortney guided me through updated licensing and agreement decisions to help ready the journal in anticipation of a new volume and issue. Publications Manager Charlotte Roh patiently walked me through submission management and other aspects of the platform. Without the generosity of so many individuals, and the goodwill Reg generated through so many of his interactions, I would not have been able to pick up these final stages and bring this issue through to publication.

Reg poured an immense amount of his time, intellectual firepower, and personal resources into *JCMRS*. I am deeply grateful for the widespread support in honoring Reg's legacy and furthering his work on the journal from his colleagues, mentees, admirers, and friends, as well as from the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, the G. Reginald Daniel Memorial Fund, and the family and estate of G. Reginald Daniel. Through this special issue, we have the opportunity to receive one last peek into Reg's vision for expanding the boundaries and imagining the future of critical mixed race studies. I sincerely hope you enjoy these insights from across the Pacific, the departure from Western conceptions of race, and this exploration of belonging and identity from Indigenous points of view.

In the opening piece, Zarine L. Rocha provides context and theory for the issue's unpacking of mixed race, mixed identities, and Indigeneity. Importantly, Rocha acknowledges that colonial oppression has left a significant mark on how belonging is conceptualized but emphasizes that the issue's focus is on Indigenous conceptions of mixedness that provide alternative perspectives and frameworks. While each piece is firmly grounded "in place"—within each country's social and historical context—making their colonial pasts and presents inextricable, the articles do not linger within those dominant understandings of race and racialization. Instead, those colonial influences are shared to help demonstrate how they have affected and interacted with the Indigenous conceptions of belonging that

are decidedly at the center of each article. These internal conflicts over definition, belonging, and power profoundly shape how mixedness and mixed populations are viewed. Taken together, Rocha uses this collection to demonstrate that “Indigenous knowledge and ways of approaching human difference make a unique contribution to the field of critical mixed race studies.” It is a contribution that strongly warrants our attention.

Ashlea Gillon and Melinda Webber’s piece, “Whiria Tū Aka: Conceptualizing Dual Ethnic Identities, Complexities, and Intensities,” begins our exploration of the Pacific in Aotearoa New Zealand. The authors share with readers various Māori concepts relating to notions of sameness, family, connection, and belonging. Among these, they identify the concept of *takawaenga* (mediators) as a reference for how they interpret the lessons of mixedness from a Māori lens. In traditional Māori society, they explain, unions between different *iwi* (tribes) were celebrated and “sometimes used to form political alliances, unite resources, and make peace between tribes.” Although these marriages bound the parties together, “it was the children to come that would entrench the connection”; the children would become the *takawaenga* and “living symbols of peace and relationship.” These general understandings and attitudes toward intermarriage and mixedness are placed in context with Western colonial expectations and interpretations of “Māori-ness,” shaping how belonging and identity are enacted and performed in society. In turn, these expectations hold profound implications for contemporary experiences of mixed Māori/Pākehā populations in Aotearoa New Zealand, as the authors illustrate throughout.

In “But Aren’t We All Mixed Race?: The Politics of Mixed-Race Identity and Belonging in Papua New Guinea,” Kirsten McGavin demonstrates the centrality of *peles* (one’s place of Indigenous origin) in shaping conceptions of racial identity, and as fundamental to understandings of mixedness. While Indigenous Papua New Guineans are considered to be Black, it is one’s descent from *pele* and non-*pele* locations that defines one as being mixed race. McGavin draws on the example of her own cousin, whose mother is Papua New Guinean and whose father is African American. Although those drawing heritage from either of these distinct groups are considered to be Black, it is the *pele* and non-*pele* descent that makes her cousin, and others of similar backgrounds, mixed race in the Papua New Guinean context. These nuanced understandings of Blackness have obvious implications and applications for critical mixed race studies, as well as the other features of mixedness in Papua New Guinea that McGavin’s piece analyzes: “the perceived prevalence of mixed-race people having Black/Indigenous mothers and foreign fathers; a socially interpreted hierarchy that positions mixed-race people as somehow lacking the power, knowledge, or abilities of non-mixed Indigenous Papua New Guineans; and the categorization of mixed-race people as separate from their ‘parent’ races.”

The next piece in the collection takes us to Fiji, where Rolando Cocom explores the experiences of participants of Indo-Fijian and Indigenous Fijian descent. While much of the focus of critical mixed race studies traditionally draws more attention to European/Indigenous relationships, Cocom focuses on the postcolonial intermixing of minority migrant/Indigenous majority populations. In this piece, he presents not just the complicated relations and dynamics between colonizer and colonized but also the accompanying story of mixing, migration, and indentured labor that evolved over Fiji’s history. “Exploring Mixedness in Fiji: Navigating Mixed-Race Identities for Individuals of Indo-Fijian and

Indigenous Fijian Descent” draws on a deft historical analysis alongside individual and group interviews with ten participants to make a valuable and novel contribution to the study of mixed race.

Anaïs Duong-Pedica’s article, “Mixed-Race Kanak in ‘a World Cut in Two’: Contemporary Experiences in Kanaky/New Caledonia,” homes in on the role of space—and in particular spatial segregation and polarization—to analyze how the colonial divide manifests in the identities and contemporary experiences of self-identified métis/ses Kanack-White people. Her research examines these questions at a critical juncture of the formal decolonization process in Kanaky/New Caledonia, drawing primarily on interviews conducted with participants a few months before the 2018 referendum for independence. Embedded within a special issue intended to draw our attention to the role of context and place in countries across the Pacific, Duong-Pedica encourages us to have even more precision regarding the racialization of space and its implications for mixed-race populations that navigate physical and racial terrain in Kanaky/New Caledonia. She argues for a recognition of the colonial organization of space as being both real and imagined: real, because “spatial segregation is a social reality in Kanaky/New Caledonia,” and imagined, because “the city” and “the tribe” are “imagined as culturally impermeable spaces that do not communicate with each other.” She traces how this construction and “geographical metaphor [take] root in the historical pathologization of multiraciality.” As is the case with several other pieces in this special issue collection, an exploration of the histories, cultural constructions, and ideologies of Indigenous populations offers a great deal toward explaining, understanding, and unpacking constructions of mixedness. Mixed-race populations in these contexts do not just navigate Western and colonial interpretations of mixedness in their everyday lives; they also navigate through social worlds that view them through an Indigenous lens.

Lastly, Arielle Taitano Lowe contributes her article, “Rhetorical Dance of Belonging: Chamaole Narratives of Race, Indigeneity, and Identity from Guam.” Chamaole is a local term, one that can be seen as “either a descriptive, pejorative, or empowering marker, depending on the context,” and is used to refer to descendants of both Indigenous Chamorro populations and White Americans (*haole*). Drawing on interviews with three Chamaole authors and poets, alongside an analysis of their works as well as reflections on her own experiences of Chamaole identity, Taitano Lowe applies a “Pacific model of abundance” to challenge “racist, White supremacist, anti-Indigenous deficit models of blood quantum and fractional composition.” By weaving together literary art with the experiences of identity that so profoundly shaped it, Taitano Lowe draws out the role of structure and society in producing the very strategies and responses that we often gain insight into through personal narrative. Although the works of these Chamaole authors are reflections of (and on) their unique individual experiences, as sharply influenced by age, gender, social context, appearance, and other factors explored in the piece, the same tensions and conflicts of racialization and colonialism shaped their available identity options and constraints. These structures forced them to navigate complicated sets of decisions, responses, and interactions around being—or not being—haole, Chamorro, Chamaole, and other; and fractional or whole.

Despite the sudden transition in the journal, the identity and intention of *JCMRS* remains true to its original founding:

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.

We welcome and encourage submissions that uphold this vision of *JCMRS* that was outlined in the inaugural editor's note, as well as those that advance and expand the scope of the discipline as we have come to know it. As we approach a new decade of the journal and of critical mixed race studies, we contend with new social and political contexts across the globe. Much has changed about the role of race, and mixed race, since the very first issue of the journal. In the midst of such dynamic and fluid social contexts, mixed race studies scholars are ideally suited to unpack our current moment and examine how we got here. I hope that this special issue inspires you to do that work, and that we all reap the benefit of reading your words in future issues of *JCMRS*.

—*Alyssa M. Newman*, Editor in Chief