

# UC Merced

## The Undergraduate Historical Journal at UC Merced

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Undergraduate

**THE  
UNDERGRADUATE  
HISTORICAL AND  
CRITICAL RACE &  
ETHNIC STUDIES  
JOURNAL**

At UC Merced

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*The Undergraduate Historical and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies  
Journal*

*At the University of California, Merced*

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## Letter from the Editor in Chief

It is with great pleasure that I present the first issue of the *Undergraduate Historical and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Journal at UC Merced*, as a continuation of the sixth volume of the *Undergraduate Historical Journal at UC Merced*. As a reflection of our joint department's commitment to urgent questions of race, class, and gender in the past and present, this issue stands as a testament to the benefits of collaboration from students across disciplines and UC campuses.

As we entered this semester, no one anticipated the unprecedented events that would shake us to our core. In just its first few months, 2020 has brought to the forefront critical questions of empire, democracy, public health, and state surveillance; questions that scholars of History, Critical Race Theory, and Ethnic Studies grapple with daily. In the articles that follow, each author had to edit their work amidst these uncertainties, with a keen eye to how they could contribute to new understandings. The issue opens with two book reviews, each dealing with exigent issues of race, state, and power. I review Maile Arvin's *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania*, which asks questions about the role of social science in furthering American Empire and white supremacy. Next, Madelyn Lara reviews *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas* by Monica Muñoz Martinez, highlighting Martinez's interrogation of state-sanctioned violence and community memory in Texas. These are followed by three articles spanning the Mexican-American border in the early 1900s, the cinema of Shanghai in the 1920s, and literature in 1990s and 2000s California. Thomas Paniagua follows American reactions to the Mexican Revolution and German strategy in World War I to show how the US state justified a standing, peace-time army along its Southern border. Next, in an examination of cultural forms, space, and modernity, Parker J. Bovée demonstrates emerging societal conversations concerning gender roles and female agency fostered by theaters and film in early twentieth-century Shanghai. Omar González closes this issue by bringing the voices of racially marginalized authors to the forefront in an interrogation of multiculturalism and California's claims of diversity through California Literature from the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

I cannot stress enough how faithfully the editorial staff worked to make this issue possible. Despite virtual meetings, spotty Wi-Fi, and the pressures of remote learning, each and every editor made time to adjust passive voice and fix footnotes and I am forever grateful. This semester's board was staffed by Oshree Barak, Omar González, Madelyn Lara, Darlene Medrano, Kevin Ng, Thomas Paniagua, Jeremy Ternate Paguibitan, Yohel Salas, Ariell Wright, and Guadalupe Vazquez. Thank you all for the hard work and dedication you put into this edition. I would also like to thank the head of the Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Major at UC Merced, Assistant Professor Ma Vang, for her guidance through our name change. Finally, on behalf of the entire board, I would like to thank Assistant Professor Romina Robles Ruvalcaba

for advising the journal and offering support throughout this stressful semester. Leading the journal in my final semester at UC Merced has not been without challenges, yet I could not be prouder of the result. And so, I now present this edition of the journal for your enjoyment.

Sarah Lee  
Editor in Chief

## Faculty Forward

With great enthusiasm, I have the honor to present to you the Spring 2020 issue of the UC Merced based *Undergraduate Historical and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Journal*. We are moving almost into our eighth year of great sharing and collaboration that promotes the best research among undergraduates. We have broadened the base for accepting submissions by welcoming Critical Race & Ethnic Studies students whose work has been guided by amazing scholars, including Professors Ma Vang, Kit Myers, and Sapana Doshi. The incorporation of CRES is a natural one for the kind of historical approaches the *Journal* has always taken: One that is interdisciplinary, innovative, and critical. Our *Journal* has always taken pride in presenting analyses that incorporate a diverse set of voices expressing forms of knowledge intertwined with experiences of struggle, resistance, and contestation. We are therefore proud to strengthen this mission and welcome students whose work contributes to this vision to consider submitting their work to the *Journal*.

The editorial team has worked diligently to bring to life the Spring 2020 issue despite enormous challenges and these very difficult times. Nothing demonstrates the beauty of the life of the mind than when it can find continuity and voice in the midst of chaotic circumstances. In this sense, we present three wonderful articles that critically examine power, gender, and race: Thomas Paniagua's "Preventing the American Front: A Transnational Examination of the U.S. Border Patrol, 1908-1924," Parker J. Bovée's "Shifting Gender Norms Through Cinema: Physical Spaces and Cultural Ideals of 1920s Shanghai Cinema," and Omar González's "Diversity for Whom? Interrogating California's Racial Diversity Through California Literature." We also present two book reviews that seek to explore analyses that have pushed forward key points of conversation and discussion: Sarah Lee's critique of Maile Arvin's *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania* and Madelyn Lara's critique of *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas*.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the members of our editorial team for doing such an amazing work in bringing this issue to life: Oshree Barak, Omar González, Madelyn Lara, Darlene Medrano, Kevin Ng, Thomas Paniagua, Jeremy Ternate Paguibitan, Yohel Salas, Ariell Wright, and Guadalupe Vazquez. In particular, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to Sarah Lee for her tireless commitment to the *Journal* and to the enormous generosity she demonstrates towards her peers. Her leadership and vocation stand as a model for the kind of scholarship and camaraderie that we should all strive for in the good times but especially the trying times.

Romina Robles Ruvalcaba, PhD  
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