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AMAE Special Double Issue

Muxerista Pedagogies and Praxis:

Art, Activism, and Scholarship as Resistance and Restoration

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Introduction

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Special Double Issue Introduction Part I

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“I am a Chicana feminist. I identify as a mujer, as a Mexicana, as an hija, or daughter, as a student, a revolucionaria, a mujerista, activista, organizadora, conscious.” —delia (Raza Womyn de UCLA member interview in 1999, Revilla, 2003, p. 288)

“I was a part of this really beautiful queer-loving [feminist] community [the Muxerista community], and that was like the most transformative experience for me of my life, not just in college, but like of my life”. — Leila (collaborator pseudonym from Orozco, 2022)

The two epigraphs that open this special issue anchor the intellectual, political, and affective commitments of Muxerista pedagogy and praxis across generations. Though spoken decades apart and within different contexts, both quotes illuminate the transformational possibilities of naming oneself, finding community, and engaging collective struggle as pathways toward consciousness, healing, and liberation. Both delia and Leila’s words underscore how Muxerista ways of being and knowing function as transformative terrains where individuals come into new understandings of themselves, their relationships, and their sociopolitical possibilities. Furthermore, the quotes foreground love, relationality, and communal care as central pedagogical elements that resonate deeply across the contributions in this special double issue. This is the first issue of the special double issue, ***Muxerista Pedagogies and Praxis: Art, Activism, and Scholarship as Resistance and Restoration (A Special Double Issue)***.

Additionally, this special double issue is a homage to the over 25 years of Muxerista activism, organizing, and social change that have evolved across academia, community, and geographies. The term Muxerista was first coined by Raza Womyn de UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) in 2002 to define “a woman-identified Chicana/Latina who considers herself a feminist or womanist” (Revilla, 2004, p. 82, 2005b). Over the years, Dr. Anita Tijerina

Revilla has expanded on the term and embodiment of Muxerista by asserting the theoretical and pedagogical praxis rooted in theory, activism, and healing. This expansive definition is representative of her many years of community organizing alongside Las Vegas Muxerista activists (Revilla & Rangel-Medina, 2011). Dr. Anita Revilla (2022) notes that the term Muxerista “has always been organic and evolving” (p. 193). In her most recent works she defines a Muxerista as “a gender-fluid and sexually expansive Chicanx/Latinx identity that honors our multiple, intersecting identities and communities while uplifting our radical commitment to activism, organizing, personal and collective liberation, and social transformation” (p. 193). She asserts that a Muxerista identity and praxis is simultaneously “a Chicana/Latina[x], a feminist, and an activist, never just one or the other” (Revilla, 2009, 2022, p. 193). As such, Muxerista identity, pedagogy, and praxis continue to evolve as a dynamic and expansive framework that nurtures critical consciousness, relationality, healing, and collective transformation across multiple sites of struggle and possibility.

Throughout the last two decades, scholars, activists, and organizers have taken up this definition to imagine and enact Muxerista pedagogy and praxis across spaces of education, community building, and sociopolitical knowledge production. For example, Morales (2016) enacts a Muxerista pedagogical practice to engage Latina/o youth in Chicana/o Studies, particularly within the site of elementary schooling. Additionally, Oliva (2017) advances her analysis of Latina mothers' leadership in their elementary school children's education using a Muxerista theoretical and research framework. Oliva and Aleman Jr. (2019) build on this by naming how a Muxerista politics of education reconceptualizes the role of Latina mothers with educational leadership, including educational policy and parent engagement. Similarly, Fernández & Paredes Scribner (2020) name how Latine parent organizing is structured and enacted through a Muxerista praxis within an urban elementary school in the Midwest. Using Muxerista story(telling), Flores (2022) reframes parent involvement by naming how Latina mothers support their high-achieving Latina daughters through the educational pipeline. The role of mothers is central to several scholars' engagement with Muxerista identity, pedagogy, and praxis, as further articulated in Nuñez's (2019) work on how mothers impart Muxerista feminist knowledge and resistance practices to their children and within the home.

Several scholars extend Revilla's (2004) Muxerista pedagogy within the higher education landscape. Revilla (2005a, 2009, 2010) has published several articles that speak to how Raza

Womyn of UCLA enacted resistance strategies and taught one another about social justice through their activism and organizing efforts on and off campus. Additionally, Alemán & Olivo (2019) highlight how Chicana editors of a college student newspaper engaged a muxerista orientation in their editorial practices to draw attention to Chicana issues on campus. Engaging in a Muxerista orientation is further reflected in Nuñez et al.'s (2021) chapter on undocumented Muxeristas, whose work and lives have shaped the very immigrant rights movement in Las Vegas through Muxerista and Jotería activism. My own work, Orozco (2022), engages the path of *conocimiento* (Anzaldúa, 2002) as an analytical tool to articulate the Muxerista Activist Consciousness Development Framework, which speaks to the identity and sociopolitical consciousness development of Las Vegas Muxeristas. This further speaks to how Muxerista activists come to know themselves within the context of their activism and how they take up Muxerista ways of being and doing in their organizing and activist efforts on and off campus (Orozco, 2025a, 2025b; Orozco & Williams, 2025). Conversely, Ek et al. (2010) diverge from the experiences of students and student activism by engaging Muxerista praxis within the lives of Chicana and Latina faculty in higher education. They highlight the importance of Muxerista mentoring for Chicana and Latina faculty in the tenure process at a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Alarcón and Bettez (2017) name their own Latina faculty experiences with Muxerista mentoring at a predominantly white university. As noted in the literature, Muxerista identity, pedagogy, and praxis have and continue to inform several areas of research inquiry within and beyond educational spaces, organizing efforts, and world-making practices.

Roberto's Muxerista Historia

As part of each special issue introduction, we, as guest editors, welcome you into our Muxerista historias. I was first introduced to the Muxerista community by Anita when I moved to Las Vegas to serve as the Director of Social Justice at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). This center was a result of the student activism on campus, including Muxeristas, that demanded the university to provide physical spaces that focused on social justice initiatives for minoritized communities. During the two years I lived in Las Vegas I had the opportunity to learn from and engage in activist work alongside Muxeristas on and off campus in Las Vegas. This community was also the one that introduced me to the Association for Jotería Arts, Activism, and Scholarship (AJAAS) when I got to go to the 2015 national conference in Phoenix, Arizona. Attending AJAAS in 2015 served as a catalyst to my Muxerista and Jotería identity and

praxis. I share more about this in the first article of this special issue, and I name how the Muxerista community was the space where I stepped unapologetically into my joto identity. This is one of the best gifts I have received from my Muxerista familia.

After leaving my role at UNLV, I went to Rutgers University–New Brunswick to begin my doctoral journey. I stayed in contact with many Muxeristas, who were my undergraduate students, at UNLV, and continued to connect during our time at the biennial AJAAS national conference. What started as my professional journey at UNLV ultimately became the center of my dissertation research, examining the identity and sociopolitical consciousness development of queer and trans Latinx/a/o college student activists in the contexts of their activism. My interest in this work came about because of my close relationships with Muxeristas and the history of queer and trans Latinx/a/o student activism at UNLV. My work alongside Muxeristas culminated with the Muxerista Activist Consciousness Development Framework (Orozco, 2025). This framework builds on Anita's early work with Raza Womyn de UCLA and the work she did alongside Muxeristas of Las Vegas. Ultimately, I see my work as a continuation of how we move forward Muxerista ways of being and doing across our communities and spaces.

I think of the Muxerista community in the metaphor of waves. I see the work Anita did alongside the Raza Womyn de UCLA as the wind and water that build the foundation for the waves to exist. In the first wave, I see Anita's work with the early UNLV and Las Vegas activists as the first wave of Muxeristas, from 2004 to 2012, that extended from the way of being in community with one another that was learned from Raza Womyn de UCLA. The Muxeristas of UNLV and Las Vegas from 2013 to 2017 are what I consider the second wave of Muxeristas, and where I entered the community. Recently, Anita Revilla, Joanna Nuñez (first wave Muxerista), Briceida Hernandez-Toledo (second wave Muxerista), and I were asked who we consider the third wave of Muxeristas to be, and our response was that the third wave of Muxeristas are the people that we are in relationship to now across spaces. Many Muxeristas continue to do work in Los Angeles and Las Vegas; for those of us not in those spaces, our Muxerista values and praxis traverse geographies and communities: to build emerging spaces of third wave Muxeristas.

Reflecting on my own Muxerista historia I am continuously brought back to the epigraphs at the beginning of this introduction. As a joto, being a Muxerista is more than an identity, it is a way of being in community with others while doing the work that matters. This

special issue is a homage to a community that taught me what it meant to claim an authentic Jotería identity. As someone who is intimately indebted to the Muxerista community, the work I have done and continue to do around queer and trans Latinx/a/o people in higher education is a moment of deep reflection of my own developmental process as someone who claimed a more unapologetic way of being when I began to be a part of this comunidad.

Special Double Issue: Part I

In this special double issue, we gather a set of deeply relational, creative, and sociopolitically grounded contributions that collectively advance Muxerista pedagogies and praxis. Across the collective manuscripts, the authors center practices of healing, community-building, and onto-epistemic disruptions that are vital frameworks for education, comunidad, and liberation. Taken together, these works insist that Muxerista pedagogies and praxis are not merely theoretical interventions, but lived, embodied, and insurgent practices that move across sites—academia, classrooms, homes, kitchens, and transnational landscapes.

As editors, we see this special double issue as both an offering and an invitation: an offering of Muxerista pedagogies as tools for survival and transformation, and an invitation for scholars, educators, activists, and organizers to continue building worlds that center relationality, spirit protection and restoration, and collective flourishing. As you enter this first part of the special double issue, we invite you to visit the second part of this special double issue.

We open up the first volume of this special double issue with *Heridas y Sanación Colectiva: The Path of Conocimiento as a Muxerista-Jotería Framework for Queer Latinx/a/o Research in Higher Education*, by guest editor Roberto C. Orozco. This opening article positions Anzaldúa's (2002) path of conocimiento as a Muxerista-Jotería framework that embraces the non-linear, liminal, and transformative processes of queer Latinx/a/o realities. By tracing how the path of conocimiento shapes every stage of the research process, from inquiry and collaborator engagement to data interpretation, the author reframes research itself as a relational, reflexive, and worldmaking practice. This intervention sets the tone for the issue by urging scholars to consider how knowledge production can honor the complexities and creative capacities of queer Latinx/a/o communities using a Muxerista-Jotería framework.

The theme of relationality and generational transformation continues in the second article by Michael Angel Vázquez, Rama Ali Kased, and Janin Guzman-Morales. This article

provides a portrait of Dr. Leticia Márquez-Magaña, whose life and work exemplify Muxerista values in STEM. Through portraiture and counterstory, “It’s For My Science Daughters”: A Portrait of Dr. Leticia Márquez-Magaña’s [Counter]Storied Legacies for Latinas and STEM” highlights how she resists the racialized and gendered constraints of academia by cultivating “science daughters” and extended networks of care. Her praxis of femtorship challenges dominant narratives of individual success and instead centers collective thriving, demonstrating how Muxerista commitments can reshape even the most exclusionary institutional spaces.

Expanding the scope of pedagogy beyond formal educational settings, the issue also includes a powerful exploration of *acuer(pan)do*—a Muxerista pedagogical practice rooted in baking *conchas*. In “*Acuer(pan)do la pedagogía muxerista*”, Chantal Figueroa foregrounds embodiment, rest, and mutual support as essential components of learning and community building. By situating mental health, dialogue, and care within the act of making bread, the author offers a radical reimagining of pedagogy as a sensory, communal, and healing practice. *Acuer(apn)do* becomes both metaphor and method: a way to *crear mundos de dignidad, sustancia, y la sabiduría colectiva*. This article is also written entirely in Spanish, and we invite readers to challenge themselves to engage with the author's linguistic offering.

Transnationally, this issue challenges the dominance of the Global North in Jotería Studies by centering voices, projects, and epistemologies from the Global South. The fourth article in this special issue is titled, “*Transnacionalizando y Transfronterizando: Arte, Expresiones e Iniciativas de la Jotería desde abajo del Globo Sur en México*” by Luis Oswaldo Esparza, José Ramón Ramírez, Mario Marín, and Geovani Temich. The authors conceptualize Muxerista–Jotería work as “*nagual*”, a shapeshifting force that traverses borders and disrupts asymmetrical power relations through narratives of art, activism, and scholarship from México. This intervention calls for a reorientation of the field toward horizontal exchanges and solidarities, emphasizing that the future of Jotería Studies depends on recognizing and engaging knowledge produced *desde abajo*.

Within the graduate classroom, another site often shaped by colonial and neoliberal logics, contributors reimagine pedagogy through zine-making as an anticolonial and liberatory practice. In “*Zine-ing Latinidad: Zinemaking, Latinidades, and the Muxerista-Jotería Pedagogical Possibilities with/ in the Graduate Classroom*”, Pablo Montes, Omar Serna, Garrison Daly, Katherine Crowe, Maria O’Connor, and Anna Block offer zine-making in the graduate

classroom through Muxerista-Jotería pedagogies. Drawing on pláticas among students and a professor, this article positions zines as socio-material spaces where knowledge, creativity, and relational accountability intersect. In this offering, the classroom becomes a site of *nepantla*, an in-between space of tension and possibility, where students collectively enact Muxerista-Jotería pedagogies and reconfigure the boundaries of academic work.

Furthermore, this issue brings us into the intimate space of the home, where Muxerista mothering emerges as a foundational pedagogical praxis in “¡Mi Mamá Me Enseñó a Luchar!: Muxerista Mothering Pedagogy” by Joanna Nuñez. Through testimonios of working-class Mexican and Chicana mothers and their *hijxs*, the author illuminates how feminist values are taught, embodied, and sustained across generations. This work underscores that the roots of Muxerista pedagogy and praxis are not confined to academic or activist spaces but are cultivated in everyday acts of care, storytelling, and survival. By naming mothering as a site of political education, the article expands our understanding of where and how transformative knowledge is produced and enacted.

Alongside the research and scholarly articles in this special issue, we are honored to include a collection of poems by Las Vegas Muxerista, Xuanito Espinoza-Cuellar, that refuse separation between theory and lived experience. In the three poems, “Literacy”, “Bridge a Dream”, and “The Border to Me”, Xuanito offers a visceral poetics of survival, borderlands, and becoming. These poems extend a Muxerista pedagogy and praxis into the realm of language as affect, memory, and embodied testimonio. They remind us that knowledge is also carried in silence, in longing, in fractured language, and in the enduring desire to care across boundaries.

Finally, we end Part I of this special double issue by offering a critical Muxerista book review of *The Power of Latino Leadership*. In this review, Michelle Lopez and Arturo Servin challenge us to think beyond the essentialism of Latinidad within leadership models. They further complicate Latinx/a/o leadership by naming that this identity is deeply rooted in history, politics, culture, and lived experience. The authors offer readers to engage Muxerista pedagogy and praxis as one critical approach to thinking about Latinx leadership models to engage more critically with decolonial and intersectional frameworks, move beyond broad generalizations to recognize the multiplicity of Latinx identities, challenge rather than conform to dominant leadership paradigms, and center community-based and movement-based leadership rather than institutionalized and elite figures.

Lastly, we are extremely thankful to our reviewers for all the feedback they provided to the authors of the manuscripts in both special issues. Their labor and feedback were immensely valuable to our process and the final versions of this special double issue!

To Anita, thank you for your fierce femtorship and queertorship! It has been an honor to continue to imagine Muxerista futures and possibilities alongside each other. To Jerry, Patricia, and Lucila, thank you all for the support and grace throughout the process of putting together this special double issue! To Jerry, thank you for making our vision of this special double issue come together so beautifully!

To current and future Muxeristas, may we continue to move in ways that honor our Muxerista values and ways of being in community with one another. ¡En la lucha, para siempre!

As a reminder, we invite you to visit Part II of this special double issue!

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