

CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives

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Introduction

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Introduction

By Nancy Pérez and Marisol Ruiz

It takes courage for any of us to begin to write our stories. These are the stories of bravery from students across multiple spaces and virtual realms.

One of these spaces was Professor Nancy Perez's Ethnic Studies 107: Chican@/Latinx Lives course taught at HSU, where students learned about the long history of Chican@/Latinx struggle and mobilization in the fight for rights, empowerment, and liberation both in the classroom and in their communities. Students reflected on these histories and their own connection to them, a first-time experience for many of them who shared it was the first time they have taken a class where they got to center their own lived experience, identities, language, family histories, communities, and worldviews.

Another one of these spaces was in Fortuna High School in Humboldt County. The Promotrx Transformative Educators program led by Professor Marisol Ruiz began the journey in Ms. Angela Alvarado's Spanish for Native Speakers classroom, where they conducted a 2-week bilingual translanguaging writer's workshop inspired by the words of Gloria Anzaldua who reminded us not to be afraid to write our truths with our "wild tongues." Gloria Anzaldua also reminded us that if we are not the ones writing our stories, our struggles, and histories, then others would write them for us distorting who we truly are and erasing our existence, assimilating us into rigid identity categories and one way of being.

Before writing any of their stories, students were reminded that writing is a spiritual process where it is not only about writing our stories but about embarking on an inner journey, of reminding ourselves "Si tu puedes, tu eres una escritor(a), Yes tu historia me importa, Si your words matter because they explain your existence." We had to remember and believe that we had a voice and right to tell and write our stories without having to translate or explain them.

Despite the disproportionate challenges, systemic violence, immense loss, and restrictions that came with COVID-19 and movements for racial justice this past year, students still showed up to class and for

each other. They wrote and listened to each other's stories, processing the times and building a sense of community online with generosity always in mind. We hope that you celebrate the CouRaGeouS Cuentos in this volume with us, and that it inspires you to write your own story too. CouRaGeouS Cuentos is a step towards the pluriverse we are creating together with the voices of youth at the forefront.

To the writers
we love you
we are community and
we are fuerza!
may this complicate
your views of
who we are
may this let you see
you are not alone
but part of a community who
loves and
cherishes your existence
your words
your beauty
y sigue adelante
unapologetically
let your words flow with the wind

Que tus palabras vuelen con el viento
hacia tu familia
tu comunidad
tu mundo y
mi mundo
nuestro mundo
Nuestro mundo
Se complica, si
pero se ve
mas claro
que el ancho mar
que las olas lleven
tus palabras
mis palabras
nuestras palabras
a los sitios más lejanos
para que sigas existiendo

para que sigamos existiendo
Solos, juntos, unidos
y en todas partes
quiero alzar la voz y decir
Tu existes
no en la imaginación
sino aquí
ahora
en este instante
leamos
disfrutemos de
nuestros
Courageous Cuentos