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## AMAE Invited Issue

Grounding Emerging Scholarship on Queer/Trans\*  
Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x Pedagogies

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## **Grounding Emerging Scholarship on Queer/Trans\* Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x Pedagogies**

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This invited special issue ***Grounding Emerging Scholarship on Queer/Trans\* Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x Pedagogies*** reflects new thinking that is grounded in queer and trans\* of color and U.S. feminist of color theoretical and conceptual frameworks. This collection illustrates how queer and trans\* Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x pedagogies are drawing from U.S. feminist of color writing and queer of color critique, highlighting important engagements not only in reclaiming and tracing our pedagogical practices in education but also new theoretical insights into queer and trans\* scholarship that has taken creative interdisciplinary approaches to education research. The possibilities of the scholarship featured in the journal allows for fresh perspectives in youth studies and provocative embodied projects with Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x college students and their queer and trans\* Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x instructors.

We would like to thank the editors of the *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*—Patricia Sánchez and Lucila Ek—for asking us to create this invited special issue. It was a joy for us to work with each of the contributors, and we are so appreciative of the chance to do this work that is so important to us as first-generation queer scholars of color.

We dedicate this invited special issue to the memory of Dr. María Lugones, a fierce theorist of resistance and popular educator, a beloved mentor and friend.

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† Informed by Francisco J. Galarte's (2014) work, we use trans\* "as an umbrella term that encompasses (but does not conflate) various gender-nonconforming categories such as transgender, transbutch, andro, genderqueer, female to male (FTM), male to female (MTF), genderfucking, etc. It is being used increasingly as a term of self-identification to draw attention to the diverse gender identities that are traditionally conflated under the term *transgender*" (p. 234). When sources are quoted in this article, we use the author's chosen spelling, including trans, transgender, and/or trans\*.

## A Writing Praxis

We begin our Introduction to this invited issue with a discussion of writing practices. To thrive in the academy, many of us have had to make a shift in the ways we understand ourselves: We must see ourselves first as writers. Everything else is secondary. This is essential. U.S. woman of color writers understand this well—it is one of their most important practices in a pedagogy of coalition.

Why am I compelled to write?...Because I have no choice. Because I must keep the spirit of my revolt and myself alive. Because the world I create in the writing compensates for what the real world does not give me...I write because life does not appease my appetites and hunger. I write to record what others erase when I speak, to rewrite the stories others have miswritten about me, about you. To become more intimate with myself and you. To discover myself, to preserve myself, to make myself, to achieve self-autonomy. To dispel the myths that I am a mad prophet or a poor suffering soul. To convince myself that I am worthy and that what I have to say is not a pile of shit. To show that I *can* and that I *will* write, never mind their admonitions to the contrary. And I will write about the unmentionables, never mind the outraged gasp of the censor and the audience. Finally I write because I'm scared of writing but I'm more scared of not writing. (Gloria Anzaldúa, 1981, pp. 168-169)

In this passage, Anzaldúa describes the urgency to write as a praxis for liberation. Because dominant narratives have left out U.S. woman of color writings, Anzaldúa's essay "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Women Writers" untangles her political and pedagogical motivation for writing. Writing for her is terrifying and yet necessary. Writing is the compensation for what the world does not give her. It records the "unmentionables"—the racism of our families, the violence of home, silence and its death wish, the passing down of traumas and behaviors that cannot be life affirming. The foundational *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981) is a call for discussion and action about racism and oppression in the U.S. women's movement. To this date, there has been little or no collective response from hegemonic feminists. There is also the assumption that woman of color writings either have no audience or that *Bridge* is simply confessional or worse, perceived as an index of grievances in both racialized communities and in the feminist movement. Central to *Bridge* is a praxis of a "theory in the flesh," where an integrated analysis

of the multiple, often simultaneous experience of oppression makes visible the conditions of woman of color lives. Exemplifying an intersectional analysis, *Bridge's* notion of a “theory in the flesh” must be seen as a praxis of thinking and writing that potentially reconfigures (or reenvisions) the relations of bodies—human bodies, bodies of knowledge, bodies of land, our relationships to our own bodies, and the social dreaming necessary to move the political project of coalitional change forward. This practice of writing by women of color is neither confessional nor unmediated. For this issue, we invite you to rethink *Bridge* as a primer for writing against the grain of power, as a text that is inherently pedagogical, where we learn to write, re-envision, and revise our experiences as stories of resistance (Cruz, 2019).

Aurora Levins Morales (2019), one of the original contributors, reflects on the significance of *Bridge* on social media:

Thirty-eight years ago, this month. We had spent the day draping stone walls and statues of dead white men in fabrics from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Indigenous cultures. We had a crowd that was overflowing, sitting in the aisles, on each other's laps, standing in the back. *This Bridge Called My Back* had only been out for a few weeks and the first edition had sold out. When we came out onto the dais, we got a standing ovation before we'd said a word. That was a revelatory moment for me. I understood two things: that we were being applauded, not for our individual talents as writers, but because we had, for that moment, and through accidents of timing, connection, [and] serendipity, become the tongue for a vast, angry body of our kin, and that this—being a voice at the service of my people—was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

*Bridge* writing practices are collaborative sense-making activities, where the writing process is an acknowledgment of other people in our emotional, material, and cognitive worlds. It is writing and thinking in relation with others that not only help us understand U.S. woman of color experiences, but offer a blueprint for coalitional relations. Levins Morales illustrates this wonderfully: We write with others for connection, for truth telling, for remaking and revising our understandings of our worlds. The field of education is late in centering queer and trans\* Black, Indigenous, Chicana/o, and Asian American theoretical offerings. This invited issue is a call for education scholars to engage with the writings of lesbian and queer feminists of color whose foundations make possible emerging trans\* and queer of color research projects in education and beyond. We ask how and why are certain fields of scholarship erased? It is not

enough to acknowledge the research gap on queer and trans\* people of color *inside* our field; we also need to unveil how and why the field of education is systematically maintaining the historical contributions of queer and trans\* people of color *outside*. Is the so-called “research gap” really the active refusal of transforming pedagogy, the maintenance or containment of knowledge construction that by design keeps queer and trans\* people of color out of the classroom, curriculum, and texts?

This special issue engages with Anzaldúa’s (1981) call to write and to do the work to acknowledge and identify the contributions of Black, Chicana, Indigenous, Asian American, lesbian, and feminists of color in our theories and pedagogies in education. One way to engage these foundational scholars is to employ interdisciplinary approaches to research methods and theories. This requires us to read outside of the field of education. Specifically, we need to engage rigorously with the scholarship and writings by Black, Indigenous, and woman of color thinkers. Further, we need to develop methods and pedagogies of tracing the genealogies that inform our writing as a way to establish strong and legible roots of the scholarship that came before us. Ungrounded writing assumes that we are only filling in a research gap. Grounded writing contributes to the historical praxis of writing as liberation.

### **Latinx Scholars in Education Need to Do their Homework**

If you read and trace the field of U.S. feminism of color, exemplified by texts such as Moraga & Anzaldúa’s (1981) *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, “The Combahee River Collective Statement” (1977/1995), *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers* by Barbara Christian (1985), *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), *Women, Race, and Class* by Angela Davis (1983), Alice Walker’s (1983) *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens: Womanist Prose*, Cherrie Moraga’s *Loving in the War Years* (1983) and *The Last Generation* (1993), Asian Women United of California’s (1989) *Making Waves: An Anthology By and About Asian American Women*, Paula Gunn Allen’s (1992) *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (1992), and *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Oppression Against Multiple Oppressions* by María Lugones (2003), among so many other writers, then you will find an antiracist, anti-imperialist, anticolonial, and very critical lesbian of color mode of inquiry that has often been overlooked, both as a field (Lee, 2000) and as life-affirming theoretical praxis (Alexander, 2006) in education scholarship. The practice of coalition and the relations necessary to achieve it is key in many of

these texts, and it is important for education scholars to recognize U.S. woman of color feminism emergence from the theoretical work of Black feminist scholar-activists.

For example, the 1977 Combahee River Collective (CRC) writes: “We find our origins in the historical reality of Afro-American women’s continuous life-and-death struggle for survival and liberation,” an acknowledgment of the climate of impunity in Boston during the late 1970s, where it was necessary to develop an analysis of the experience of terrorization of Black women’s lives. In this analysis, the CRC created a theory of the simultaneity of oppression that women of color were experiencing in Boston. The statement was grounded by an anticolonizing and anticapitalist critique that was required to fully understand the racial and sexual violence of Black women. The authors write:

The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggles against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives.” (p. 210)

CRC’s statement is an expansive vision of liberation with Black women at the center of a radical politic. It is a call to value Black women’s lives in an era of police impunity and terrorization. And in their radical politics of the antiracist, anticolonial, and anti-imperialism stance that they take, one that includes an understanding of the heterogeneity and plurality of Black women’s experiences, it becomes so urgent for Latinx scholars to also include an understanding of the heterogeneity and plurality of Latinidad always *already* as Afro-Latina/o/x and Indigenous. Black feminist and U.S. woman of color theorizing make this possible not only in expanding the terms but also as a model of a practice of coalition. In this era of #BlackLivesMatter, we need to recognize and acknowledge our theoretical mothers and grandmothers and the history of the terms we use so that we refuse to erase Black feminist and woman of color contributions in our own scholarship.

### **Chicana/Latina Pedagogies and Experiential Knowledge**

The 2006 anthology *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminista Perspectives on Pedagogy and Epistemologies*, edited by Dolores Delgado Bernal, C. Alejandra Elenes, Francisca E. Godinez, and Sofia Villenas (2006), draws from U.S. woman of color scholarship, where Moraga and Anzaldúa’s (1981) *Bridge*, Anzaldúa’s (1987) *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* and

Chela Sandoval's early work on U.S. third world feminism and *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000) form the major theoretical backbone of the text. Centering Chicana/Latina ways of knowing and a critical set of interpretive practices, *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life* (2006) emphasizes the use of testimonio methods and standpoint epistemologies. The contributions of coalitional thinking, reflexive pedagogies, and the critique of categorical logic are central themes in U.S. woman of color theorizing and are important issues in studies of educational problems. Engaging with U.S. feminist of color thought directs the authors to think through multi-layered, intersectional problems that current frameworks fail or are unable to nuance. Yet there is a legibility problem when education scholars omit U.S. woman of color theory in their work or misrecognize the theoretical offerings of this field of studies.

It is in this space of the chapters of *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life* (Delgado Bernal et al., 2006) where education researchers are offering pedagogies of survivance, *consejos*, *respeto* and the brown body. It is illuminating a writing practice drawn from U.S. feminists of color who, writing against erasure and into subjectivity, take knowledge produced from lived experience and infuse them with a critique of the racialized, gendered, and political worlds in which they move and exist. The pedagogies of experiential knowledge and the politics that come from this interrogation are unsettled in order to make more visible the contributions of U.S. feminists of color, defending experiential knowledge in every chapter of the book. What is important is addressing the problem of U.S. woman of color writing being dismissed as "messy text" and as raw, unmediated experience. These responses often dismiss woman of color writings as "old school." Their writings are too often evaluated under different standards than mainstream theorists and often end up listed toward the end of course syllabi, if at all. The pedagogies of relation that undergird much of the texts of women of color illuminate the cumulative impact of their thinking coalitionally, where the artifacts of a collection of essays such as *Bridge* (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981) and *Haciendo Caras* (Anzaldúa, 1990) become the material representations of coalition and the starting point for new thinking in educational studies.

### **Limitations and Expansions of Queer and Critical Pedagogies**

Deriving from Paulo Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, critical pedagogy questions inequitable power manifestations in educational settings. Freire (1970) delineates that oppression is mutually constitutive to dehumanization, and he identifies the ways that schools

(pedagogy) reproduce a knowledge hierarchy between teacher and student. The banking method—the one-way transaction of teachers depositing knowledge in a student’s presumed knowledgeable brain—is the strategy that creates a “culture of silence” in classrooms. Freire (1970) asserts that a pedagogy of the oppressed, in turn, (re)humanizes and engages the oppressed in social transformation. Queer pedagogy is one of the offshoots of critical pedagogy, and it unveils how heterosexuality is normalized in curriculum and classrooms (Drazenovich, 2015). Further, queer pedagogy values queer students’ experiences and knowledges as contestation to heteronormativity. However, as Aguilar-Hernández (2020) finds, the challenge of queer pedagogy is its “limitation of...its primary focus on sexuality, leaving Queer of Color perspectives and knowledges on the margins” (p. 5). In other words, queer pedagogy expanded the scope of critical pedagogy while maintaining queer knowledge as white. Building on the contributions of QueerCrit scholarship in the law (Valdes, 2000; Velez Martinez, 2015) and in education (Kumashiro, 2001; Misawa, 2010), Aguilar-Hernández (2020) proposes a “queer critical race pedagogy” that is explicitly and simultaneously anti-racist, anti-heterosexist, and anti-oppressive.

Kevin K. Kumashiro’s (2001) edited anthology, *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality: Queer Students of Color and Anti-Oppressive Education*, is the earliest collection we identified that contains theoretical and pedagogical writings about queer students of color, including Chicana/o, Latina/o, Asian Pacific American, Black, Native American, and mixed-race peoples. As the title suggests, Kumashiro (2001) engages the “troubling intersections” of race and sexuality “that educators must acknowledge and work through...if they are to address queer students of color and challenge both racism and heterosexism in schools (that is, engage in antiracist, antiheterosexist education)” (p. 2). Responding to the need for additional collections of writing on queer students of color, Ed Brockenbrough (2013) and Lance T. McCready (2013) co-edited a special issue, “Queers of Color and Anti-Oppressive Knowledge Production” for *Curriculum Inquiry* where they activate a “Queer of Color” analytical framework to “interrupt hegemonic processes of knowledge production” and to “inform transformative pedagogical work that benefits queers of color specifically and anti-oppressive educational scholarship more broadly” (Brockenbrough, 2013, p. 427). The two collections expand critical pedagogy to interrogate the intersections of race and sexuality.

Trans\* pedagogy also expands critical pedagogy and is a “concentrated effort to explore trans\* subjectivities, identities, and experiences in educational contexts” (Nicolazzo, Marine, and Galarte, 2015, p. 367). The issue “Trans\*formational Pedagogies” in the *Transgender Studies Quarterly* sought “to reinvigorate ongoing conversations about education as a practice of freedom by exploring ways in which educational processes can specifically challenge the oppressive aspects of the binary gender system” (Nicolazzo, Marine, and Galarte, 2015, p. 368). Responding to the paucity of trans\* pedagogical frameworks and informed by his teaching experience with elementary school students, Keenan (2017) proposed a “critical trans pedagogy framework” that unscripts gender and resists definition, as “there is no universal definition or experience of transness” (p. 551). LeMaster and Johnson (2019) argue that while school leaders are called to be inclusive of trans\* students on campus, “pedagogues are confronted with the limits of their/our embodied knowing about gender” (p. 191). LeMaster and Johnson (2019) propose a “critical trans-affirming pedagogy [that] is a labor that seeks to shift the hegemonic ways in which we communicate, or are expected to communicate [about] gender identities...” (p. 192).

Specific to the theme of this special issue, we highlight three manuscripts that contribute to earlier articulations of queer/trans\* Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x pedagogies. Anita Tijerina Revilla’s (2004) essay “Muxerista Pedagogy: Raza Womyn Teaching Social Justice Through Student Activism” positions Raza Womyn, a Chicana/Latina feminist student activist organization, as a site where pedagogy is developed outside of the traditional classroom. Rooted in Chicana feminist and critical race theory in education, muxerista pedagogy “involves dialogue, praxis (theory and action), and dialectical exchange” to discuss multiple forms of oppression and garners “commitment to creating social change” (Tijerina Revilla, 2004, pp. 83-84). Informed by his experiences as an educator in higher education, Eddy F. Alvarez Jr.’s (2014) essay “Jotería Pedagogy, SWAPA, and Sandovalian Approaches to Liberation” defines jotería pedagogy as feminist, intentional, critical, intersectional, and that centers the lived heterogeneous experiences (and erasures, omissions) of jotería bodies. Finally, Francisco J. Galarte’s (2014) essay, “On Trans\* Chican@s: Amor, Justicia, y Dignidad” reflects on the status of Jotería Studies by asserting, “Jotería, listen to what your trans\* brothers and sisters are saying, and remember those long forgotten” (p. 229). A reconfiguration of Anzaldúa’s (1987) call to “listen to what your jotería is saying” (p. 107), Galarte (2014) urges jotería scholars to

engage trans\* Chican@ pedagogies, beyond inclusion and recognition, to “assert the indispensability of trans-analytics to the aim and scope of jotería studies as a critical project” (p. 233). We situate Galarte’s (2014) argument as a directive to interrupt trans\* omissions in current and future research projects that aim to build anti-oppressive pedagogies. Notably, the three manuscripts weave the contributions of women of color, Chicana/Latina, and critical pedagogy that enlighten their conceptualizations of queer/trans\* Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x pedagogies.

### **This Special Issue**

In the first article, “**Terca, pero no pendeja: Terquedad as Theory and Praxis of Transformative Gestures in Higher Education,**” Omi S. Salas-SantaCruz offers a theory of terquedad to analyze the complex relationships that queer and trans\* people of color traverse and negotiate at R1 universities. Grounded in Anzaldúan theory, Salas-SantaCruz charts how Quiahuitl, a Xicana queer woman doctoral student, performs terquedad, or stubborn gestures, that refuse gendered expectations and academic violence in the subject’s daily encounters. Terquedad, Salas-SantaCruz profoundly argues, is re-made into a praxis of refusal, where Quiahuitl transforms the spaces around her within higher education.

The second article, “**Cyborg Jotería Pedagogies: Latinx Drag Queens Leveraging Communication Ecologies in the Age of the Digital and Social Displacement**” by José Ramón Lizárraga and Arturo Cortez documents how Latinx drag queens have bridged digital performances with pedagogy. The authors discuss Persia, Reina de Aztlan, and RuPawl, whose digital performances serve as queer gestures that inform cyborg jotería pedagogy. Their amplification signals the necessity of engaging digital platforms within critical pedagogical practices that border-cross and fluctuate gender, race, and sexuality. The third article, “**Imagining the Future of Jotería Studies as a Framework in the Field of Higher Education,**” by Antonio Duran, Roberto Orozco, and Sergio Gonzalez, argues that Jotería Studies can serve as a framework to inform pedagogy, research, and student affairs practices in higher education. The authors provide recommendations for educators, researchers, and student affairs practitioners, arguing for the need for specificity of frameworks that center queer Latinx/a/o students as one way to combat intersecting systems of oppression that higher education replicates.

Drawing from theories of decolonial feminisms, the fourth article by Andrea del Carmen Vázquez, **“Joaquin’s Refusal: An Embodied and Geographic Active Subjectivity,”** is an ethnographic snapshot of the experiences of queer Latinx students at Villa High, a rural school in California, where students literally find themselves in the margins of their school space. Vázquez provocatively suggests that the Latinx students’ refusal to acknowledge the gender-neutral bathroom—at the edge of the school in a room used as storage—is an example of a queer and resistant sociality. In this space, students have learned to recognize each other’s “reclamations to dispossession” by learning to travel to each other’s worlds to understand how the “no” is a radical gesture. In the fifth article, **“Centering the “T”: Envisioning a Trans Jotería Pedagogy,”** Jack Caraves begins with a letter-poem to his family, tracing the relationships between his mother, his transition, and his emerging critical consciousness. It is a powerful narrative that centers the vulnerability of the scholar’s position as a trans\* Chicana educator and the productive engagement of the disruption that his change elicits in the students that move him toward a trans\* jotería pedagogy. Thinking with Moraga’s theory in the flesh and Anzaldúa’s *conocimiento*, Caraves argues that these practices of vulnerability and disruption must be central in a pedagogy of trans\* jotería.

In the sixth article, **“The Power of Testimonio Pedagogy: Teaching Chicana Lesbian Fiction in a Chicana Feminisms Course at a Predominantly White Institution in the Midwest,”** Tanya Diaz-Kozlowski offers a testimonial pedagogy that bridges the epistemic disobedience the author witnesses her students cultivate in a Chicana Feminisms course. What is illuminating is the careful tracing of Diaz-Kozlowski’s pedagogy to Black women writers such as Toni Morrison, and the linking of Chicana feminist thought to Black women’s literature. Notions of silence, sexual assault, and dysfunctional and often violent households were discussed and interrogated, where students understood intimately that an interrogation of their own experiences was necessary not only for their own emerging political consciousnesses but also for their own healing. Our final offering is Wanda Alarcón’s **“Reading and Remembering Butch-Femme Worlds,”** a meditation on loss, recuperation, and lesbian histories and cultures. In this article, Alarcón leads us through a collective effort of creating and teaching a course that centers butch-femme working class lives, where the limitations of “queer” as a category become illuminated. She argues that “butch-femme is not the same as queer or LGBTQ,” and in the building of a course in LGBTQ Studies,

suggests the problem of the term “queer” needing negotiations and interventions by people of color. The stakes are high for naming butch-femme worlds in terms of race and class and erasure. Alarcón’s contribution of the butch-femme worlds syllabus at the end of her article reflects a similar practice of Black feminist scholarship, where sample syllabi of Black women’s literature, whose work is rarely taught in the university, is often found in U.S. woman of color anthologies as a gesture of accessibility and inclusion.

### **Cindy’s Reflection**

Photographer Laura Aguilar was a friend and teaching colleague whom I recruited to work with college bound high school youth in our summer enrichment programs. We stayed friends and even helped in a Joshua Tree photography session. She shared with us her life story, and we visited her at home, bringing gifts. One of those gifts was a blue wool poncho with the image of the Virgin de Guadalupe emblazoned in the front. It would be easy for Laura to slip on for those afternoons in Joshua Tree when hikers wandered unexpectedly into her photography shoots. I valued our friendship greatly during our time in Los Angeles.

We left Los Angeles in 2006 for New York and then back to Santa Cruz, California. Rarely were my partner and I able to visit Los Angeles as much as we would have liked. But we would not miss the 2017 *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA* art showings, as the Vincent Price Art Gallery at East Los Angeles College featured a solo show of Laura Aguilar’s photography titled “Show and Tell.”

I’d been to the Plush Pony to do HIV education work in the late 80s and early 90s—to hand out safe sex kits and information about testing to the mainly Mexicana working class clientele. This was a butch-femme bar. You could only get beer or wine. There was a small dance floor and a jukebox filled with Mexican ballads of lost loves, cumbias and foot-tapping rancheras. But we only knew Laura’s Plush Pony Series photographs from essays and online galleries, these portraits of butches and their *rucas* and after-work beers with friends, marimachas looking straight into the camera eye, thumbs tucked into their belts. The images are fierce.

The Vincent Price Art Gallery is a beautiful space (see Figure 1). I remember it when it once was held in two portable classrooms and how this opening was also a celebration of the gallery space itself. But for my partner and I, it became a joyful reunion of friends whom we hadn’t seen since we left L.A.: Becky Villaseñor, Sandy Guevara, Judy Ornelas Sisneros, Renee

**Figure 1**

*Image of Entrance to Laura Aguilar's Solo Exhibition, "Show and Tell," at the Vincent Price Gallery*



Note. Photo by Judy Ornelas Sisneros, fierce documentarian of Queer L.A.

Martinez, Lynn Ballen, Verónica Reyes, Gino Conti, Robin Poldosky, my ex-high school students, dozens of friends from the Women of ACT-UP/Los Angeles, La Red, Queer Nation, Lesbianas Unidas, Women's International Day events, and of course Laura Aguilar, reminding us of the lesbiana/marimacha/woman of color dyke scenes that were so vibrant in the dance clubs, bars, poetry events, performance art, zine collectives, fashion shows, the butch-femme softball games, coffeehouses (remember Little Frida's?), the National Queer Arts Festival. This remembering is not supposed to be nostalgic for lesbian Los Angeles of the 80s and 90s. But for the few hours that we were at the Vincent Price surrounded by Laura's huge photographs of marimachas, lesbianas, malfloras, the relationships we had thought lost in time were made

anew, connecting with old friends, making new friends, planning new futures, strategizing over cold beers and good food.

In Los Angeles, I did not think of our collection of lesbianas as *jotería*. I thought of us as a dyke nation or sometimes we used the term “jotas” when we were joking, especially after Wanda Alarcón’s *Jota* zines were published and making the rounds at queer and lesbian events in the early 2000s. If I had to think about a coalition of working-class hard-scrabble lesbians who were activists/artists/teachers/troublemakers, I do not think that I would use the term *jotería* to describe the plural worlds of lesbian Los Angeles. To be lesbian in Los Angeles is to be coalitional. Many of us were and still are woven into the fabric of activism in Los Angeles on many fronts—working at Planned Parenthood or as teachers with queer youth, public artists and muralists, with radio programming and poetry readings and the IMRU show or even as archivists at the June Mazer Lesbian Collections. What Laura Aguilar’s work did at the Vincent Price was to make much needed space for these communities of queer, trans\*, and lesbian women to connect once again with each other. The space was complex, temporal, and multiplicitous. Little did we know how these connections were going to be necessary for survival just 2 years later in our struggle for coalition on multiple fronts.

### **José’s Reflection**

As a scholar-activist and educator, I appreciate the ways in which “*jotería*” has been reclaimed in scholarly projects, the arts, and community-based organizing. I grew up hearing that word as an insult and threat. Cherríe Moraga’s (in Moraga, 1993) essay, “Queer Aztlan: The Re-formation of Chicano Tribe,” redefined the term as an empowering communal identifier that refused to separate queer from Chicana/o identities. Aside from Moraga’s work, Gloria Anzaldúa’s (1987) *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* and Richard T. Rodríguez’s (2002) article, “Serial Kinship: Representing La Familia in Early Chicano Publications,” disrupted my preconceived assumption that queer Chicanas/os were absent in the historical past. Further, my membership and leadership roles in La *Jotería* de UCLA, the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS) Joto Caucus, and the early years of the Association for *Jotería* Arts, Activism, and Scholarship (AJAAS) placed me at the center of intellectual and grassroots conversations that were mapping “*Jotería* Studies” while debating its limitations and possibilities, specifically in relationship to its genealogical relationship to the U.S. southwest Chicana/o communities.

During my master's program in Latin American Studies, I focused on locating additional scholarship on queer Latinas/os, especially of Central American and Caribbean nationalities. In March of 2006, I attended a talk at UCLA where Horacio Roque Ramírez, queer Salvadoran scholar, spoke about his oral history and archival research that charted the histories of queer Latinas/os in the San Francisco bay area. One of the reminders that Horacio offered me that day is that queer Latina/o history needed to be recovered. In various academic and informal conversations, Horacio shared with me that he identified as a *CentroMaricón*, an identity that merged his Central American, Salvadoran, immigrant, and gay identities. Today, I understand his assertion of *CentroMaricón* as exemplary of the need to document the myriad of identities claimed by queer and trans\* Latinas/os/xs. Although not the sole focus of his body of scholarship, several queer and trans\* Latina/o identities (including Mexican, Central American, Caribbean, and South American) are captured in his publications. That is, queer and trans\* Latinas/os/xs are heterogeneous, of multiple nationalities, geographies, genders, sexualities, ethnicities, and experiences.

In fall of 2017, I visited “Axis Mundo: Queer Networks in Chicano L.A.”, one of 70+ exhibitions that formed part of *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA*, a “collaborative effort from arts institutions across Southern California” that explored “Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles” (Pacific Standard Time, 2017). Axis Mundo “...mark[ed] the first historical presentation of groundbreaking art, music, and performance from a network of queer Chicana/o artists in Southern California” (Museum of Contemporary Art, 2017). I was moved, and at moments overwhelmed, as I walked through the exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Pacific Design Center. I was particularly struck when I saw a photo of seven Chicanas/os, wearing light yellow t-shirts with the word “maricón” or “malflora” across their chests (see Figure 2). “Malflora” is a variation of Spanish-language Latina/o/x terms used to identify lesbians. The t-shirts were designed by queer Chicano Joey Terrill, and the photo, by Teddy Sandoval, was taken during the 1976 Los Angeles Christopher Street West Pride Parade:

The *malflora* and *maricón* T-shirts take Terrill's assertion of pride and visibility one step further, affirming Chicanidad within a queer culture that was at times resistant to racial difference...[they] place Chicana/os as active participants in the emerging generation of gay and lesbian activists of the 1970s. (Frantz, 2017, p. 67)

I smiled, felt empowered, and was reminded of Horacio Roque Ramírez’s assertion. Finding “maricón” and “malflora” was evidence of the multiplicity of identities of queer and trans\* Chicanas/os and Latinas/os. As a scholar interested in anti-oppressive pedagogy, the exhibition displayed the urgency of scholarship and curriculum to illustrate the plurality of language that is reflective of historical and geographic locations.

**Figure 2**

*Image of Axis Mundo: Queer Networks in Chicano L.A. Catalog Cover*



**Conclusion**

The authors in this issue use multiple terms, concepts, and theories to discuss queer and trans\* Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x pedagogies. We celebrate the range of terms as a necessary and ongoing exploration of the heterogeneity of the queer and trans\* communities of Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x descent. Simultaneously, we acknowledge the need for future special issues, anthologies, and manuscripts that expand on additional representations, specifically of Central American, Caribbean, South American, Black, Afro-Latina/o/x, Indigenous, undocumented, and emerging positionalities. Future manuscripts need to build pedagogies that reflect omitted and emerging gender and sexual identities, as the writings before us have.

The project of synthesizing queer and trans\* Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x pedagogies is multi-dimensional. It includes personal reflection, historical recovery, scholarly intervention, praxis (theory and action), and a commitment to ending all forms of oppression. This being the first special issue on this topic leads us to ask: Considering the heterogeneity within Latina/o/x communities, what are the concepts, terms, and keywords that aren't yet named in scholarly works? Where are the Indigenous and Black queer and trans\* knowledges and contributions to Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x pedagogies? How does pedagogy change when centering queer and trans\* Central American, Caribbean, and South American contexts? Beyond different languages and terms, how are the pedagogies different? What does it mean to teach and learn about social locations/subjectivities not yet covered? What does it mean to be, for example, a first-generation queer Central American learning from Horacio Roque Ramírez's scholarship? What kind of work is necessary to think about a plural Chicanidad and Latinidad that centers Afro-Latinx and Indigenous knowledges? And what kinds of practices do U.S. feminists of color offer for queer and trans\* Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x education research? We only imagine that those projects are underway, being theorized and developed in classrooms, digital platforms, and communities across the Americas. We anticipate that future projects will answer these questions and pose new ones.

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