QUEERING LA FAMILIA: CHARTING CHICAN@ CONSCIOUSNESS IN CULTURAL POLITICS


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This dissertation explores the role of family in Chicana/o/@ cultural production and representational politics. Working from a woman of color feminist and queer of color perspective, I analyze different ways family is imagined in Chicana/o cultural production from 1957 to 2014 by exploring works of fiction, Chicano manifesto, Chicana Feminist essays, and music videos of two queer Chican@ performance artists. My project contextualizes family as a space in which normative culture is transmitted and opposed, a space in which an individual's relationship to intersectional identity and to power can be negotiated to perpetuate normativity or to create forms of oppositional consciousness. Put more simply, I argue that familias is the space from which a complex and Chicana/o/@ oppositional form of consciousness emerges to reimagine identity and the relationship of Chicana/o/@ subjects to power.

The project begins with José Antonio Villareal's 1957 proto-Chicano novel Pocho which frames the conflicts associated with Chicano and Mexicano identity in the early part of the 20th century. It then explores three Chicano Nationalist manifestos from the 1970s, each of which imagine the family in Chicano Nationalist terms and explore its relationship to a culturally revolutionary political consciousness. My project then turns to the work of Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga and their own approach to reimagining the family from a woman of color feminist perspective as they critique both Chicano and American culture. My final chapter looks at ways of reimagining Chicano identity and intimacy from a Queer Chican@ perspective and explores music videos by two Chican@ artists, A. B. Soto and Adore Delano.

At the heart of my project is an attempt to explore how the limits of family can be expanded for cultural-political ends to challenge oppressive and normative forms of power by paying particular attention to the limits of power and non-normative individuals who challenge and disidentify with those limits. Articulated within my project are methods of world building for those alienated by normativity and a Chicana/o/@ epistemology of radical cultural-political consciousness.