UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Amor Eterno e Inolvidable:

Queer Diasporic Practices of Latinx Identification and Mourning

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

by

Omar Padilla

Committee in charge:

Professor Yen Le Espiritu, Chair
Professor Jillian Hernandez
Professor Curtis Marez
Professor Richard T. Rodriguez
Professor Rosaura Sanchez

2022

The dissertation of Omar Padilla is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

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DEDICATION

En reconocimiento a todo el apoyo que me han brindado en seguir mis sueños académicos, les dedico mi tesis doctoral a mi familia; mis papás cuyo apoyo ha sido incondicional. A mis hermanos, gracias por su amor y a mis sobrinos, ojalá alcancen sus sueños. A mis abuelitas Socorro y Margarita, cuyas sonrisas y bendiciones llevo en mi corazón; y a mi abuelito Ramón, "ánimo, viejo," gracias por todas las lecciones. Y a mi tía Lupita, gracias por siempre mostrarme cariño y apoyo.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

University of California – San Diego, San Diego, CA **2022**
PhD in Ethnic Studies
Amor Eterno e Inolvidable: Queer Diasporic Practices of Latinx Identification and Mourning
Committee: Yen Le Espiritu (Chair), Rosaura Sánchez, Jillian Hernandez, Curtis Marez, Richard T. Rodriguez
IRB approval, January 2018

University of California – San Diego, CA **2015**
MA in Ethnic Studies

California State University – Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
MA in Mexican American Studies **2013**
Research Concentration: Transnational Mexican Community in Westside Los Angeles

University of California – Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA **2007**
BA in combined Politics and Latin American/Latino Studies
College Nine Distinction for Language and Culture Curriculum

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Gender and Sexuality Studies; Cultural Studies; Immigration/Border Studies; Chicana/o Studies; Oral History; Critical Race and Ethnic Studies; Latina/o Studies; Transnational Communities; Public History

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Fulbright-García Robles Research Scholar (Finalist, Recipient) **2019**
Fulbright-García Robles Research Scholar (Semi-Finalist) **2018**
Summer Graduate Teaching Scholar **2018**
Friends of the International Center Travel Research Scholarship **2017**
Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Fellowship **2012-2013**
Research Project**:** *"Transnational Westside: Mexicans and the Discourse of Community and Identity"*
Special Recognition in Graduate Studies **2012, 2013**
College Nine Distinction for Language and Culture Curriculum **June 2007**

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 2018 –
San Diego City College – San Diego, CA **Spring 2019**
Adjunct Faculty/Instructor of Record – Chicano Studies Department
In "Chicano Studies 141A – United States History from a Chicano Perspective I"
"Chicano Studies 141B – United States History from a Chicano Perspective II"

University of California - San Diego, La Jolla, CA **Summer Session 2018; Summer Session 2019**

Associate In/Instructor of Record – Ethnic Studies Department
In "Ethnic Studies 182 – *Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Science Fiction and Fantasy*"

University of California - San Diego, La Jolla, CA **Winter 2018-Spring 2018**
Senior Teaching Assistant – Ethnic Studies Introduction Series, Ethnic Studies Department

In "Ethnic Studies 2," "Ethnic Studies 3"

University of California - San Diego, La Jolla, CA **Winter 2017-Spring 2018**
Graduate Research Consultant – Race and Oral Histories in San Diego project

University of California - San Diego, La Jolla, CA **Fall 2017**
Graduate Mentor – Student Promoted Access Center for Education and Service (SPACES)

University of California - San Diego, La Jolla, CA **Fall 2017**
Teaching Assistant – Dimensions of Culture Writing Program, Thurgood Marshall College

In "Dimensions of Culture 1"

University of California - San Diego, La Jolla, CA **Fall 2016 – Spring 2017**
Teaching Assistant – Ethnic Studies Introduction Series, Ethnic Studies Department

In "Ethnic Studies 1," "Ethnic Studies 2," "Ethnic Studies 3"

University of California - San Diego, La Jolla, CA **Summer 2016, 2017**
Graduate Advocate – STARS Program

University of California - San Diego, La Jolla, CA **Fall 2015 – Spring 2016**
Teaching Assistant – Dimensions of Culture Writing Program, Thurgood Marshall College

In "Dimensions of Culture 1," "Dimensions of Culture 2," "Dimensions of Culture 3"

University of California - San Diego, La Jolla, CA **Spring 2015**
Graduate Reader – to Professor José I. Fusté
In "Social and Economic History of the Southwest"

California State University – Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA **Fall 2011**
Graduate Assistant – to Professor Francisco Balderrama
In "Cultural Diversity and Chicanos"

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
Associate Director for Academic Initiatives, Raza Resource Centro

University of California - San Diego, La Jolla, CA **2020 - Current**

PRESENTATIONS

National Association for Chicana/Chicano Studies – Conference, Minneapolis, MN **April 2018**
Panel Presentation – *Transformative Faith and Identity Practices*
"Los Altos Regional Catholic Church and the Negotiations of Transnational Identities."

National Woman's Studies Association – Conference, Baltimore, MD **November 2017**
Panel Presentation - *Excess and Impropriety: Reconfiguring Latinx Gender through Performances of "Too Much"*
"Queer(ing) Transnational Community: Fiestas, Tiaras, and Discourse of Gender and Sexuality"

Latina/o Studies Association – Conference, Pasadena, CA **July 2016**
Panel Presentation – *Carnal Politics: Raunch Aesthetics in Latina/o Performance*
"*Cha-Cha Bitch*: Reading AB Soto's Queer Latino Performance"

National Association for Chicana/Chicano Studies – Conference, Denver, CO **April 2016**
Panel Presentation – *Politics of Recognition: Imagining New Worlds through Music, Performance, Literature*
"*Cha-Cha Bitch*: Reading AB Soto's Queer Latino Performance"

University of California – San Diego, San Diego, CA **Winter 2015**
Film Presentation – to Professor Zeinabu i. Davis in "Advanced Workshop in Communication Media
El Jardín de las Mariposas

Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA **Spring 2012**
Guest Lecture – to Professor Annemarie Perez in "Latina Feminist Traditions"

"La Chicana: Resistance & Representation in Visual, Print and Media from 'La Pachuca' to 'La Chacalosa'"

MEMBERSHIPS

UC San Diego - Graduate Student Association
Ethnic Studies Department Representative **2013 – 2016**

UC San Diego – Raza Graduate Student Association
Principle Member **2013 - 2018**

National Woman's Studies Association
American Studies Association
Latina/o Studies Association
National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Amor Eterno e Inolvidable:

Queer Diasporic Practices of Latinx Identification and Mourning

by

Omar Padilla

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnic Studies

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Professor Yen Le Espiritu, Chair

My dissertation, "*Amor Eterno e Inolvidable*: Queer Diasporic Practices of Latinx Identification and Mourning" analyzes three case studies of queer diasporic subjectivity and the ways that gay Latinx men are grieved and memorialized in social media sites: 1) Mexican singer

Juan Gabriel who never publicly articulated his homosexuality; 2) celebrity makeup artist Jacob Yebale who lived his *out* queer life as he lived in the United States and worked transnationally; and 3) the victims of the Pulse Orlando nightclub, a mass shooting incident at a gay night club during their themed "Latin Night." Connecting the fields of Latinx studies, sexuality studies, religious studies, and migration and transnational community studies, this dissertation examines how sexuality and gender are performed and transformed in diasporic and transnational contexts for queer (non-normative and Gay, Bisexual, MSM) identified men, with special attention to how the public(ized) lives of queer men impart needed information and lessons on "how to be gay" (Halperin 2014) for diasporic Latinx boys and men. I argue that the primary subjects of each chapter (Juan Gabriel, Jacob Yebale, and victims of the Pulse Nightclub shooting) negotiated their own disidentifications in public media. The primary intellectual and personal goal of this dissertation is to show how queer Latinx persons utilized social media to expand the counterstories left in the wake of death--to represent and archive queer diasporic identities in public forums.

INTRODUCTION

I came to San Diego in 2013 for graduate school with emotional wounds. Two months prior to moving, I witnessed a mass shooting at Santa Monica College (SMC) where I had worked since 2007 after graduating from UC Santa Cruz. Among the fatalities at SMC were Carlos and Marcela Franco - father and daughter. Carlos was a long-time employee at SMC in the groundskeeping team; through his gardens, he kept the campus beautiful. Even though that Friday was his day off, Carlos accompanied his daughter Marcela to campus so she could buy her books for summer school. Apart from being my co-worker at SMC, Carlos and his daughter were part of my community. Carlos was from the region of Los Altos de Jalisco, where my parents immigrated from; and my mom went to middle school with his family in the 1960s as new arrivals to Santa Monica. In addition, they were part of my extended family; my parents had attended his wedding, and they frequently attended Sunday mass at the same hour. Another fatality that day was Margarita Gomez, a grandmother and a neighbor of SMC who was on campus that day collecting aluminum cans from the recycling bins. Margarita lived in the largely immigrant Pico neighborhood, where I grew up, and used the money from recycling cans to supplement her pension and to support her prayer group at Saint Anne's church, where I attended catechism classes.

The trauma I experienced in 2013 lingered with me. I recall getting cold sweats as I walked through the crowded UCSD campus and being very aware of every possible exit in case I would have to run or hide again. Though I have processed this experience with extended support, it took a while for me to work through my survivor's guilt. In many ways, this dissertation has been informed by that experience. I came into my research with an interest in researching the

Los Altos transnational community, in particular the contradictions that arise when queer men's labor is at the heart of reproducing traditional culutral elements such as fiestas patronales in a region of Mexico that is historically conservative-Catholic. My research focus began to change after a visit to my hometown of Valle de Guadalupe, Jalisco with my parents and after participating in a Performance Studies seminar with UCSD professor Patrick Anderson. At that time, I was still grappling with the emotional wounds from having witnessed the mass shooting at SMC, and was tasked in this course to write a performance monologue where I allowed myself to explore my feelings of loss. That assignment was a meditation on my queerness, my mortality, and my positionality as a closeted son - overall, that assignment was part and product of my healing. While traces of that research continue to inform this project, my witnessing of the mass shooting left me with questions about my mortality and how I can reconcile my *queer diasporic identity* in a community that often devalues queer life.

This dissertation has since become a reflection on family, community, and loss - and the queer diasporic cultural productions that result as public expressions of grief. Prior to leaving SMC, I had separate conversations about my sexuality with Veva and Sherri, two of the counseling faculty that I worked with. Veva was my sister's best friend. Without articulating it, she *understood* my queerness, and reassured me that when I was ready to share my sexuality with my sister, things would be okay. Sherri often referred to me as her "little brother." She shared with me her experience of losing her own brother and wished that she could have known more about *how* and *who* he loved. These conversations stayed with me as I processed my grief and trauma. In my process of reconciling questions of "how would I be remembered?" I found myself thinking of examples of how queer Latinx diasporic men are memorialized after their death, which became the core research question of this dissertation.

I came to this project on queer death and memorialization through my identification with queer celebrity makeup artist, Jacob Yebale. While Yebale was born in Acapulco, Guerrero, his mother relocated to my parents' hometown of Valle de Guadalupe. Following his tragic and untimely death in December 2012, Jacob's remains were entombed in Valle, to be close to his mother. Growing up in the Los Altos diaspora, I had noticed subtle ways that queerness and homosocial practices are ever-present in this community. However, I was in awe that an *out* gay man like Jacob would be publicily recognized with a funeral in the parish church that I recall excluded effeminate men from entering to receive communion. Coming from a region of Mexico where the Catholic church informs our regional cultural identity and maintains significant influence on the day-to-day, I learned how to perform a *queer diasporic sexuality*. Being born in the United States, I was already marked as being *del otro lado* - "from the other side" - this phrase carries double meaning as "being foreign" and "being queer." Like Gloria Anzaldúa, at a very young age, I had a strong sense of who I was and what I was about (Anzaldúa 1999, 38). I learned through observation what expressions of sexuality and queerness were more acceptable, and how people in my diasporic community negotiated these expressions in public and private spaces.

My *queer diasporic identity* is informed by my discrete observations of the *out* gay men in my transnational community. Queer men like Alfonso Delgadillo who immigrated to Santa Monica from the municipality of Tepatitlán de Morelos, and owned a flower shop on Lincoln Boulevard, next to the carwash. I recall that Alfonso was good friends with my tía Lupita, and if I happened to be playing outside as he walked up Michigan Avenue, he would call me "Ramoncito" (referring to mi abuelito Ramón). I often think about Alfonso, his distinctive raspy voice, and wonder what motivated his migration to Santa Monica. I think about the beautiful

flower arrangements he would take to my paternal grandmother, and the joy in my tía when they visited.

My *queer diasporic identity* is also informed by men like José Antonio González, "Toñito el jotito," as I recall him being referred to. I include this homophobic slur that was used to identify Toño because that label marked how he navigated Valle de Guadalupe. Toño lived near my maternal grandmother's house in Valle, and I recall him enduring exclusion from the church and ridicule from some people. As he moved through the streets, he would walk with a fierce energy and held agency as to whom he would respond to. From Toñito, I learned that there existed material consequences to my queerness, and that I would have to negotiate how I presented myself.

While this dissertation studies *queer* sexualities, I am intentionally conducting a gender-specific study to focus on male subjects. It has been my experience that queer-identified women have been actively present within my local-Los Altos community, family, and my mother's comadre-network. However, in part due to my identification as a queer-man, I recall vividly instances of homophobia directed toward queer-men. It is because of those troubling memories, and the perplexities of trying to understand my sexual and regional identities together that influence my decision to focus this study on queer men. In so doing, I am in conversation with scholars such as Lionel Cantú (2009), Héctor Carrillo (2017), Carlos Decena (2011), and Martin Manalansan (2003) who have also focused on the lived experiences of queer identified men. Further my study is influenced by the works of José Quiroga (2000) and Marcia Ochoa (2014), who situate their work in a diasporic framework and who examine how diasporic queer forms of intimacy contest heteronormative conventions of gender and sexuality.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Connecting the fields of Latinx studies, sexuality studies, religious studies, and migration and transnational community studies, this dissertation examines how sexuality and gender are performed and transformed in diasporic and transnational contexts for *queer* (non-normative and Gay, Bisexual, MSM[1]) identified men, with special attention to how the public(ized) lives of queer men impart needed information and lessons on "how to be gay" (Halperin 2014) for diasporic Latinx boys and men like myself. Héctor Carrillo (2017) examines the role of sexuality as a motivation of the transnational relocation of gay and bisexual men, what he defines as "sexual migration."[2] Carrillo notes the scarcity of works that consider sexuality as a framework to study Mexican migration to the United States. Like other scholars who have studied *queer* migrations, Carrillo notes that Mexican migration studies typically situate the process of migration within heteronormative constructions, "involving heterosexual men who migrate in search of economic opportunity… [and] in the case of Mexican women and children, they are usually viewed as migrating to reunite with close relatives, parents, or spouses who preceded them in making the journey" (Carrillo 2017, 6). Further, beyond the focus on (heterosexual) men, migration studies overwhelmingly center economic factors in migrant's decisions to leave, ignoring how the gender and sexuality also inform "lifestyle decisions" as reasons to migrate.

Studies of Queer Latinidad, Chicanx/Latinx sexualities, and transnational migrant/diasporic sexualities have increased in response to the "queer turn" in cultural and

[1] Lionel Cantú (2009) notes that for Mexican men, "the act of having homosexual relations is not, in and of itself, sufficient to cause one to be defined as homosexual or *de ambiente*" (74), for this reason the category of MSM or "men who have sex with men" is commonly used in Mexican sexuality research.

[2] In *Pathways of Desire: The Sexual Migration of Mexican Gay Men* (2017), Héctor Carrillo defines "sexual migration" as, "international migration processes that are 'motivated, fully or partially, by the sexuality of those who migrate'" (Carrillo 2017, 4)

sexuality studies during the 1980s, which mostly centered white subjectivities. Roderick A. Ferguson (2004) cites Chandan Reddy, whose work critiques the silences that "both Marxism and liberal pluralism share, silences about the intersections of gender, sexual, and racial exclusions" (Ferguson 2004, 2). Ferguson forwards a *queer of color critique*, which builds on the insights of women of color feminism and views culture "as a site that compels identifications with and antagonisms to the normative ideals promoted by state and capital" (Ferguson 2004, 3). Ferguson posits that *queer of color critique* stems from the theoretical foundations of women of color feminism, which centers the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and class in its analysis. For Ferguson and José Esteban Muñoz (1999), queer of color critique works to decode cultural works from within; that is, if queer of color subject(ivitie)s are socially produced within social-cultural sites, then those sites "account for a queer of color subject's historicity" (Ferguson 2004, ibid). While queer sexuality is the topic of this study, the research questions that structure this study consider how Latinx queer boys and men navigate, negotiate, and learn about "how to be gay" from observing public performances of gayness by Latinx gay men, especially as they circulate in social media.

Interventions into sexuality and diasporic studies, such as the works of José Quiroga (2000), Martin F. Manalansan IV (2003), Gloria González-Lopez (2005), Gayatri Gopinath (2005), Lionel Cantú, Jr. (2009), Carlos Ulises Decena (2011), and Marcia Ochoa (2014) demonstrate the tensions between sexual identities of racialized migrants and dominant U.S.-centric notions of (homo)sexuality. José Quiroga (2000) explores the "dialectics of visibility, geography, and politics" through literary and art cultural productions from Cuba and Mexico that collide with "identity narratives deployed in the United States... blurring and contradicting practices and narratives of (homo)sexuality prevalent in the U.S." (Quiroga 2000, 3). By noting

that his interventions collide with what I consider U.S. *homonormative*[3] discourse of "coming out," which privileges white-subjects public identity, Quiroga demonstrates how throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, Latin Americans and Latinos in the diaspora have maneuvered their works and sexualities without necessarily giving into the politics of the "closet." Quiroga begins his work with a metaphor of the "mask," utilized during a 1993 gay pride parade in Buenos Aires, Argentina: "The mask spoke of broader circuits that did not necessarily end with an 'outing,' or an identity as conclusion. It was part of a complex dynamic of subject and identity, and the closet was one element among many" (Quiroga 2000, 1). The mask allowed for a queering of the space, creating visibility for the participants, but also requiring society to acknowledge the structural invisibility of queer persons. In praxis, the mask is a tool by queers to be able to participate in public events without having to undergo a public outing, a key argument that I make in this dissertation.

Carlos Ulises Decena (2011) takes on the politics of the closet and "coming out" through the Spanish-language grammatical concept of *sujeto tácito*, which is the "subject that is not spoken but that can be ascertained" (Decena 2011, 19). In the white neoliberal context of the United States, "coming out of the closet" links LGBTQ-identified persons to a "self-realization through speech"; however, queers of color in the United States and in the diaspora have resisted the depoliticized "liberation" of homonormative sexualities. Decena (2011) notes that the

[3] One of my understandings of *homonormativity* extends from Ferguson (2005), who describes homonormative formations as an extension of socially constructed white-liberal identity practices. Fergusons states that homonormativity, "extend such practices and access [to] racial and class privileges by conforming to gender and sexual norms, white gay formations in particular become homonormative locations that comply with heteronormative protocols" (Ferguson 2005, 53). Ferguson's critique of homonormative formations is that these, "homonormative formations achieve cultural normativity by appealing to liberal capital's regimes of visibility, the immigrant, the poor, and the person of color suffer under the states apparatuses—apparatuses that render them the cultural antitheses of a stable and healthy social order" (Ferguson, 65).

interlocutors in his studies commonly describe sexuality as “something present yet not remarked upon, something understood yet not stated, something intuited yet uncertain, something known yet not broached by either person in a given exchange” (Decena 2011, 18). Decena explores the ways in which gay and bisexual Dominican immigrants navigate belonging in their transnational social, cultural, and economic contexts, and introduces the concept of “tacit subjectivity” (2008, 2011). Decana’s concept of the “sujeito tácito " suggests that “coming out may sometimes be redundant. In other words, coming out can be a verbal declaration of something that is already understood or assumed – tacit... What is tacit is neither secret nor silent” (Decena 2008, 340). Decena’s concept of the tacit subject is particularly relevant in the context of queer diasporic subjects discussed in this dissertation. As an example, while there are open expressions of homophobia directed at Juan Gabriel (chapter 1), and that I experienced in the Valle de Guadalupe church, there are also numerous examples of tacit acceptance. Jacob Yebale (chapter 2) also represented the complexity of Los Altos sexuality discourse. Jacob immigrated to the United States to pursue his career as a makeup artist, to which he had success. There, Jacob became a naturalized U.S. citizen and lived an “out” lifestyle. Following his death, his Hollywood community and friends held a memorial vigil for him, and comments on his funeral left on his social media pages reflected their appreciation of his “outness.” But there was also an outpour of support and love from the more culturally conservative El Valle community, his mother’s adopted hometown in Mexico, which I read as a tacit understanding and acceptance of Jacob and his sexuality.

According to Martin Manalansan (2004), the growing scholarship in “new queer studies” is located in “local and global processes” (Manalansan 2004, 6). Like myself, the persons and subjects at the center of my study are influenced by multiple local positionalities. The purpose of

this study is to illuminate the complexities that sexuality as a vantage point reveals in this transnational context. As Manalansan suggests:

> The works of the 'new queer studies' are questioning the universal gay/lesbian subject but *at the same time* recognizing the ways in which gay and lesbian cultures in specific localities inflect and influence the growth of alternative sex and gender identities and practices. In other words, the useful step that these new queer scholars are making is not in denigrating gay and lesbian identity categories and cultures but rather expanding and troubling their seemingly stable borders by illuminating the different ways in which various queer subjects located in and moving in between specific national locations establish and negotiate complex relationships to each other and to the state. (Manalansan 2004, 8)

In this sense, my project is in conversation with "new queer studies" scholarship, including works by Manalansan (2004), Gopinath (2005), Decena(2011), Ochoa (2014), and Anzaldúa(1987), that critique the universality of dominant notions of gay, lesbian, or queer identities. These new queer studies works arise from a transnational movement of people and recognize the cultural and local effects of globalization on categories of gender and sexuality.

I utilize the concept of *queer diasporic pedagogies* to refer to the ways through which queer diasporic subjects learn "how to be gay" --how to delimit and navigate their queerness-- through observing gay people around them in both the "real" and virtual worlds. This concept is inspired by the scholarship of Yessica Garcia Hernandez (2015) and Gloria Anzaldúa (1999). Garcia Hernandez's concept of "sonic pedagogies',' built on Anzaldúa's framework of *conocimiento*,[4] describes the "alternative ways of knowing that integrate reflections with action

[4] Anzaldúa (2015) describes *conocimiento*: Conocimiento comes from opening all your senses, consciously inhabiting your body and decoding its symptoms… Attention is multileveled and includes your surroundings, bodily sensations and responses, intuitive takes, emotional reactions to other people and theirs to you, and, most important, the images your imagination creates—images connecting all tiers of information and their data. Breaking out of your mental and emotional prison and deepening the range of perception enables you to link inner reflection and vision—the mental, emotional, instinctive, imaginal, spiritual, and subtle bodily awareness—with social, political action and lived experiences to generate subversive knowledge. These conocimientos challenge official and conventional ways of looking at the world, ways set up by those who benefit from such constructions. (120)

to create knowledge that challenges the status quo" (428). I conceptualize queer as an analytic (Quiroga 2000) that allows me to "explore the dialectics of visibility, geography, and [cultural] politics" (28). I use Gopinath's (2010) concept of "queer affiliation,"[5] which she defines as "non-blood-based affiliation" (167), to map how diasporic Latinx queer men forge and maintain "transnational circuits of intimacies." I introduce the concept *transnational circuits of intimacy*[6, 7] to underscore the performative, discursive, social media, public and everyday spaces where *queer* realities are rendered visible and alive.

METHODOLOGY

Transnational sexuality studies such as the works of José Quiroga (2000), Martin F. Manalansan IV (2003), Gloria González-Lopez (2005), Gayatri Gopinath (2005), Lionel Cantú, Jr. (2009), Carlos Ulises Decena (2011), and Marcia Ochoa (2014) inform my methodological approach. These works employ traditional ethnography, autoethnography, "queer diasporic ethnography," and cultural analysis to explore how nation(s), transnational migrations, and culture work in producing sexual subjectivities. Ochoa defines queer diasporic ethnography through these characteristics:

> Queer diasporic ethnography is grounded in the questions, literacies, and transits of queer diasporic subjects. It questions the boundedness of the "native informant" as a point of entry for ethnographic projects. Based on these questions, transits, literacies, queer diasporic ethnography follows the not-so-straight lines of histories and genealogies that produce the intelligibility of queer diasporic subjectivities. It attends to performances of gender and sexuality with respect to

[5] I take on Gopinath's *queer affiliation* through two approaches; (1) that the existence of circuits of transnational migrations enabled the possibilities of non-blood-based affiliations, in the forms of "comadrazgo" (Fregoso, 2003) and "compadrazgo" (Limón, 1994), and (2) while "transitory and fleeting," my own queer subjectivity allows me to recognize modes of non-normative difference and queer affective relationality.

[6] Studies that consider transnational migration discuss "circuit" migrations. Filmmaker Alex Rivera (2003) describes "twinned communities" that reproduce themselves through *circuits* of migration between Mexico and the United States to survive economically. Rivera notes that the social-kin-economic relationships that were established in Mexico disrupt notions of "place," since these relationships co-exist transnationally.

[7] I am building my understanding of *intimacy* from Nayan Shah (2011) work on interracial homosocial/stranger intimacies among migrant men.

> the nation, and to genealogy and intimacy in the production of power. It is also attentive to the perverse and uneven transits that create unexpected opportunities to witness such processes (Ochoa 2014, 14).

In this sense, queer diasporic ethnography is as much about queer subjects as it is about the queerness that transnational migration and diaspora create. Ochoa cites Gayatri Gopinath (2005), for whom "diaspora space provides an opportunity for the emergence of non-heteronormative desires, a way to 'belong,' but not to the nation. Diaspora space extends the social map of the imagined community of the nation to contested spaces and created room for queer cultural produces to renegotiate and contest the terms of their belonging" (Ochoa 2014, 12).

My auto-ethnographic work centers my own queer Chicanx epistemology. I learned to understand my queerness and perform my sexuality vis-à-vis my proximity to the transnational community in Los Altos and in Santa Monica. Growing up in this community, I was attentive to how non-normative sexualities are addressed, both blatant instances of homophobia as well as spaces where queer men have inserted themselves. This work is informed by my experience of *learning* how to be queer, and the lessons learned through queer diasporic pedagogies. Situated in a transnational community, I learned about beeing queer from attending Church services in Los Altos and in Santa Monica, from participating in community organizations in both locations, and from listening to the music that my parents listened to. To that extent, the scope of this project branches from my own positionality and queer diasporic subjectivity.

In many ways, in this dissertation, I turned my experience with trauma and grief after witnessing a mass shooting into what Ramirez (2008) terms "documentary action." In a discussion on the process of creating the documentary film *¡Viva 16!* (1994), Horacio N. Roque Ramirez (2008)' has argued that "what is central is the proactive process of turning loss and

mourning into documentary action, a conscious project of historical self-giving. This return to a public self provided a way to remember community life through the traces of death (and life) in narrators' recollections rather than remain stuck in the loss itself" (Ramirez 2008, 170). As this dissertation project developed, I found myself revisited by the ghosts of queer men. In my visits to Valle de Guadalupe to conduct ethnographic research on the transnational community, I would find traces of Jacob Yebale - in the public homophobic sermons one year after his passing, in finding that his tomb in the municipal cemetery is yards away from my grandparents' house, and in seeing his mother attend nightly mass during my ethnographic visits. In the summer of 2016, the Pulse Orlando shooting and the passing of Juan Gabriel occurred, and I found myself once again reconciling grief through the lens of my sexuality. In the three chapters that follow, in part as a process of addressing my own grief, I assemble an online archive that demonstrates how social media enables Latinx diasporic people to develop and perform their multiple identities. I thus approach social media as a digital archive. For Jacob Yebale and many of the victims of the Pulse Orlando shooting, their Facebook and Instagram accounts remain active for the public to engage with, to commemorate their birthdays, and to view representations of their life. The Internet has changed the power dynamics of representation for traditionally marginalized groups. Because digital technology allows users to "route around" the traditional gatekeepers and express themselves in ways that previous generations could not, it has enabled the instant circulation of sensitive or even censored materials to potentially millions of viewers (Espiritu 2014, 113).

CHAPTER DESCRIPTION

In the chapters that follow, I present examples that offer *glimpses* of how queer diasporic subjects, specifically queer men, lived their lives across space, including the virtual space. This

dissertation does not attempt to make general claims about diasporic identities. Instead, through the detailed case-studies in each chapter, it provides a "vignette" --a slice of life-- of the Latinx queer diasporic experience. In each chapter, my own experiences with the subject(s) inform how I analyze and learn from the materials.

Chapter 1 focuses on the life and death of Mexican singer Juan Gabriel. Juan Gabriel has been key in informing my queer diasporic identity; his rancheras, ballads, and pop anthems mark pivotal eras of my life. I associate his ballad, *Amor Eterno*, a grief anthem dedicated to his mother with the loss of my own close family members. Like the examples of Alfonso Delgadillo and Toñito Gonzalez, I developed my *queer diasporic identity* through the example of Juan Gabriel. While Juan Gabriel never publicly "came out" as gay, his perceived homosexuality often defined how diasporic Mexicans, and Latinx transnational media engaged with him as a public figure. For diasporic queers like myself, Juan Gabriel's performance and aesthetics provided needed lessons on how to be queer. In life, Juan Gabriel's refusal to articulate his sexuality provided an "epistemology of the flesh" - that is, Juan Gabriel, as a transnational cultural icon, facilitated and even taught us how to identify with and perform our own sexualities. Through a survey of popular media presentations including interviews during his lifetime and podcasts following his death in 2016, this chapter analyzes the making and interpreting of Juan Gabriel as a queer icon despite his non-articulation of his own sexuality. The first part of this chapter is an analysis of a key Juan Gabriel interview, in which I argue that Juan Gabriel's self-representation and media portrayal modeled a practice of disidentification for his diasporic queer audience. I argue that Juan Gabriel became the mirror to which effeminate or queer men were compared to and learned from--mockery towards Juan Gabriel became the mockery that queer men faced, and his proclamation that "lo que se ve no se pregunta" served as

a mantra to live a quasi-out life. In the second part, I further analyze Juan Gabriel's impact on queer diasporic youth like myself. Through an analysis of social media podcasts, I reflect on the ways in which Juan Gabriel provided a pedagogy on how to perform our diasporic queerness in public.

Focusing on famed makeup artist Jacob Yebale, Chapter 2 analyzes the public and private performances that queer Latinx men engage in as they navigate spaces that are organized, regulated, or monitored by the regional Catholic Church, a key site where ideas about sexuality, family, and gender are produced, challenged, negotiated, and transformed. The chapter is anchored in my own transnational experiences with the restrictive teachings of the church. Having grown up in the Los Altos transnational community, I travel back to the region of Los Altos with my family on a yearly basis, during school breaks, to attend *fiestas* and family events such as weddings, funerals, and anniversaries. Through auto-ethnographic, conventional ethnographic, and cultural studies analysis, I show how, due to the transnational dynamic of this region, the Los Altos regional Catholic Church, the local people, and the returning migrants continuously negotiate, accommodate, and transform the meanings and practices of gender and sexual identities. I consider the Alteño population—both the locals and the migrants—as *transnational* communities whose intimate social, cultural, and economic circuits are multidirectional. In the first part of the chapter, I explore the "good son" discourse in relation to the tacit acceptance of Jacob's sexual identity in Los Altos, his mother's hometown. In the second part, I examine the legacy of Jacob's social media accounts[8] as an archive of his gay life, and his career as a make-up artist within the transnational music industry, most notably with

[8] Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/jacobyebale/; Twitter: https://twitter.com/jacobyebale; YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/yebale10; Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/jacob.yebale

Chicana Banda singer, Jenni Rivera. Following these accounts, I explore the role of social media in facilitating both public and private transnational intimacies. Even five years after his death, the archival evidence of Jacob's life remains as a testament to his transnational movements and queer sexual identity.

In Chapter 3, I examine the taking up of public space--in this case, a nightclub--by queer Latinx folks. The nightclub is a space to perform queerness publicly. However, for queer and trans people of color (QTPOC), homonationalist spaces like gay neighborhoods and even gay nightclubs can reproduce social exclusions that they face in their day-to-day. In my experience attending "Latin Nights" at gay nightclubs, the club is transformed into a space where *transnational circuits of intimacy* are made visible through the communal dancing cumbias among queers, the performance of "señora" ballads by drag impersonators, and the shared experience of living an immigrant *queer diasporic identity*. Latin Nights facilitate an ambiance of "queer affiliation" through sound and dance among a community of shared racialized and cultural identifications. In the early morning of June 12, 2016, 49 people were killed at the Pulse Orlando nightclub in what at that time was the deadliest mass shooting event in recent U.S. history. The night was advertised as "Latin Night," and the majority of the attendees including the 49 fatalities and 53 people who were severely wounded represented queer Latinx immigrants from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and other Latin American diaspora. Following a Muñozian analysis, this chapter considers how Latinx queerness is rendered visible in white homonormative and Latinx heteronormative spaces. This chapter traces the negotiations of visibility and identification in *sites* where the Pulse Orlando massacre and victims are mourned. In the first part, I analyze how "selfies" - self-portrait photographs-- from the victims' social media accounts were used by media outlets and the victims' families to create

identification with violence against queer people of color. In the second part, I analyze how public spaces that are traditionally exclusionary of queer diasporic people are transformed when they become public sites of mourning. In the third part, I analyze how queer undocumented artist, Julio Salgado transformed his grief from the Pulse Orlando shooting into a call of resistance through his "No Dejen de Bailar" art series and showcase.

Chapter 1

"Lo que se ve no se pregunta":

Juan Gabriel, El Divo de Juárez's Queer Iconization

> *I want to suggest that understanding this disidentification with his queerness as a disservice to queers or his own queer identity would be erroneous insofar as these shuttlings and displacements are survival strategies that intersectional subjects, subjects who are caught and live between different minoritarian communities, must practice frequently if they are to keep their residencies in different subcultural spheres.*
>
> - José Esteban Muñoz (1998, 187)

Figure 1: "*Felicidades a toda la gente que está orgullosa de ser como es* - JG"

Introduction

On Friday August 26, 2016, Juan Gabriel,[9] "El Divo de Juárez" performed his final concert at Inglewood's Forum in Los Angeles to an audience of 17,500 attendees.[10] Among the attendees were my great aunt Trina, her daughters and granddaughters. My cousin Diana documented the multi-generational family outing on her Facebook and Instagram social media platforms. The final song performed that night was "El Noa Noa," which Juan Gabriel performed alongside his chorus and dancers for over eleven minutes. "El Noa Noa" was originally released in 1980 and is the theme song of the 1981 film by the same name that dramatized Juan Gabriel's artistic beginnings in a night club located in the border city of Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. I view this song as Juan Gabriel's *coming out* anthem, where coded in the lyrics he describes El Noa Noa as, "un lugar de ambiente, donde todo es diferente - donde siempre alegremente, bailarás toda la noche ahí" – which I translate to, "this is a, place of the community [an LGBT safe space], where everything is different [queer], where all [sexual deviants] can happily [freely] dance all night." The pop song utilizes coded language from the 1970s to signal the queer happenings at the night club, as such, the phrase "de ambiente" signifies to be *of* the LGBT community (Laguarda, 2010). While youth movements following the 1968 student massacre at Tlatelolco, and organizations such as La Frente Liberación Homosexual in Mexico City and La Frente Homosexual de Acción Revolucionaria in Guadalajara (Murray 2015) that were inspired

[9] Juan Gabriel is the artistic pseudonym of Alberto Aguilera Valdez. In his authorized biography by Eduardo Magallanes (1995), he recounts that from 1964-1971, Aguilera Valadez used the pseudonym Adán Luna, performing in nightclubs using that stage name while being underage. In 1971, when preparing for his first studio album produced by RCA records, Aguilera took the artistic stage name Juan Gabriel - "Juan" after his childhood mentor Juan Contreras, who was a teacher in the Ciudad Juarez boys "internado" where he was interred from the age 5-13; "Gabriel" after his father, Gabriel Aguilera Rodríguez, who was interred in the La Castaneda psychiatric facility in Mexico City. In many interviews, people close to Juan Gabriel will either refer to him as "Alberto" or "Juan Gabriel." For the purpose of this chapter, I utilize "Juan Gabriel" as a singular name rather than first name, last name.

[10] https://www.milenio.com/espectaculos/el-ultimo-concierto-de-juan-gabriel

by LGBT rights movements in the United States organized, queer people continued to face police and societal violence; coded language provided queer people "in the know" an opportunity to identify and commune with other people in the community.

The image above (figure 1) is grabbed from Los Angeles-based entertainment journalist Dulce Osuna's Youtube page where she posted a video of the eleven-minute performance of "El Noa Noa" from Juan Gabriel's final concert at the Inglewood Forum. As the concert closed, the jumbo screen turns to the image above, which reads, "*Felicidades a toda la gente que está orgullosa de ser como es"* - "Cheers [congratulations] to all the people who are proud to be as they are" - the quote is accompanied by a photo of Juan Gabriel's debut album *El Alma Joven* (1971).[11] This message again utilizes coded queer language, where Latinx queer people *in the know*, receive a message of acknowledgment and affirmation from Juan Gabriel. On August 28, 2016, two days after the Forum concert, Juan Gabriel died of a heart attack in his home in Santa Monica, California.

I can identify with Juan Gabriel's music as markers for various points in my life. Indeed, the ability of Juan Gabriel's music to connect to people's everyday life contributed to his broad appeal and launched him as a popular culture icon. I hold memories of watching my tías and sisters getting ready to attend his concerts in Los Angeles throughout the 1990s; of going to family funerals, where "Amor Eterno" would move relatives to tears; and of Saturday mornings helping my mom clean the house to songs like "Buenos Días Señor Sol" and "Querida." Juan Gabriel never publicly "came out" as gay; his presumed homosexuality has been regarded as a

[11] Los Angeles-based entertainment journalist Dulce Osuna captured cellphone video at Juan Gabriel's final concert on August 26, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-phQHO7ulks

secreto a voces,[12] an "open secret" that was understood by his fans. This open secret about his queerness has been used by Mexicans and Mexican Americans at times to ridicule the singer's effiminacy, and by extension, effeminate queer men. I have vivid memories of observing Juan Gabriel impersonators performing in my pueblo's main plaza in Valle de Guadalupe during fiestas patronales. These impersonator performances were both a celebration of Juan Gabriel's music and a mocking of his queer and effeminate performance style. In retrospect, I recognize that it was difficult to distinguish the audience applause for the music from the laughter at what may have been a public homophobic scene.[13]

As a queer boy discovering my sexuality, I understood Juan Gabriel's queer difference through the performance of his movements and speech. I also understood that if I were to perform such gestures I would *out* my own queerness. In this sense, Juan Gabriel was my unofficial "gay uncle,[14]" a Mexican queer role model that showed me how *not* to act in public. At the same time, Juan Gabriel also showed me that even though he was publicly mocked for his perceived queerness, he was nonetheless loved and accepted in my Mexican immigrant household. As such, Juan Gabriel taught me *how* to perform my own queerness, a "tacit" queerness[15] that is summed up in his famous 2002 response to reporter Fernando del Ricón as, "lo que se ve no se pregunta" or "what is seen does not have to be questioned".[16]

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[12] Alejandro L. Madrid (2018: 85-111) explores Juan Gabriel's distinctive vocal stylings in relation to audience interactions as fandom and homophobic responses.

[13] For Diana Taylor (2003), *scene* "denotes intentionality, artistic or otherwise… and signals conscious strategies of display" (29); I describe the Juan Gabriel impersonation from my childhood as a homophobic scene because of its apparent intentionality to mock queer sexuality as an act for entertainment.

[14] Alberto Aguilera shares a surname with my mother, therefore my abuelita Socorro ascertained that there must be a familial relationship with my abuelito, Ramón. While there is no actual familial connection, it became a tease within my family to ask my grandmother, "¿verdad que Juan Gabriel es pariente de mi abuelito?"

[15] Carlos Ulises Decena (2011) explores the topic of "tacit subjects" among Latino homosexuality - where the *sujeto tácito* (ie homo/sexuality, or "coming out" as homosexual) does not need to be verbally stated, as it is implicitly understood.

[16] December 7, 2002, Juan Gabriel sat for an interview with news anchor Fernando del Rincon for Univision's *Primer Impacto*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCY9F5ZqE1M

In this chapter, I juxtapose the media's representation of Juan Gabriel as queer with his own "tacit" queerness to address the following questions:

- What does Juan Gabriel's refusal to publicly articulate his sexuality tell us about the ways in which queerness is experienced in Mexico/Mexican diaspora?
- What disidentification possibilities do the public interrogations and mockings of Juan Gabriel's effeminate self-presentation create?
- How have Latinx queer men claimed Juan Gabriel as a queer cultural icon after his 2016 death?

According to Hector Carrillo (2003), in Mexico, social prescriptions of homosexuality often rely on homonormative notions of masculinity and effeminacy: "Men in Mexico often find themselves using criteria that equate sexual orientation with sexual attraction and simultaneously think of sexual orientation in terms of masculine or feminine demeanor" (Carrillo 2003, 353). Carrillo finds that most Mexican homosexual men actively perform a form of acceptable masculinity in order to present their normativity in regular social encounters. Additionally, the practice of "sexual silence" allows Mexican queer men to attain an "unspoken tolerance" (Carrillo 2003, 355) for their sexuality. That is, so long as Mexican queer men align with or perform normative masculinity in public, there is a tolerance for their sexual divergence. This social practice of *silence* and *tolerance* provides context for Juan Gabriel's attitude towards public questions of his sexuality, as well as a general acceptance that despite his queer performance, he maintained a significant fandom.

Juan Gabriel's stage performances have been widely documented and discussed in both academic and media forums (Monsivais 1988, Sowards 2000, Laguarda 2002). His 1990 concerts in Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes created controversy in its time, as Juan Gabriel

was one of the first popular musicians artists to perform in the venue that had been considered a shrine to high culture. The1990 concert, in which Juan Gabriel was accompanied by Mexico's Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional, was filmed and remains an archive that demonstrates Juan Gabriel's complex aesthetic where he queerly performed his effemacy, blended with sexual bravado and innuendos. At various points of this concert, Juan Gabriel invited the audience to interact by singing along with him or by participating in cabaret-esque tease that was fueled by the audience's cheers. Deborah Paredez (2009) has argued that Selena Quintanilla's "*rasquache* sensibilities and chusma style" contributed to her queer appeal. Similarly, Juan Gabriel's popular music style and lyrics, in songs such as "No Tengo Dinero" (1971) and "El Noa Noa" (1980), spoke of and towards his working-poor experience in Ciudad Juarez internado, earning him praise and affection from a wide range of diasporic Latinx audiences. For example, his working-class sensibilities were expressed in his songs such as his debut single, "No Tengo Dinero" (1971) and "El Noa Noa" (1980).

In this chapter, I narrate key cultural, social, and political moments when Mexican and Latinx media personalities, journalists, artists and fans have engaged in the queer iconification of Juan Gabriel; that is, the *making* and *interpreting* of Juan Gabriel as a queer icon despite his non-articulation of his own sexuality. The popular interpellation of Juan Gabriel as a queer figure allows the consideration of what queer scholars Carlos Ulises Decena (2011), Martin Manalansan (2003, 2006), and Héctor Carrillo (2003, 2004, 2018) put forth as transnational gay experiences for Dominican, Filipino, and Mexican gay men respectively, contrasting their experiences in their home country with their experiences as migrants in white-homonormative U.S. communities. I intentionally read Juan Gabriel in this transnational queer context, and take my own positionality into consideration in making this reading. While Juan Gabriel primarily

lived in Mexico, in the border city of Ciudad Juarez, he was an international popular culture icon who frequently performed in the United States. The primary interview with Juan Gabriel that I will analyze was conducted in Houston, Texas for Univision, an American Spanish-language television network; and the fan podcasts that I will analyze are also U.S.-based, conducted in English and Spanish.

In the first section, I analyze the Juan Gabriel interview with Fernando del Rincon, along with interviews between the 1970s to his death in 2016, for his resistance to publicly "come out," or to address his sexuality as Mexican and Spanish-language media expected him to. I argue that Juan Gabriel's response to questions of his sexuality resists dominant Western homonormative notions of "coming out," and reflects a common representation of homosexuality among Mexican and Latinx where the performative act of *coming out* is not a prerequisite for understanding one's queerness. I trace the mockings of his effeminate self-presentation and contrast these with the celebrating of his status as a a queer icon; the religiosity aspect of it; and his tacit subjecthood toward his queer identity.

The second part of this chapter moves to the remembrance practices following his death in 2016. This section is an archive and analysis of fan podcasts that discuss the significance of Juan Gabriel's queer representation and the public articulation and claiming of Juan Gabriel as a gay figure. Focusing on new media's portrayals of Juan Gabriel's queerness through interivews and U.S.-based Latinx podcasts, I trace how his sexuality moves from question/mockery to identification/affirmation. While Juan Gabriel's queerness was apporached with mockery, I argue that those representations, and the way in which Juan Gabriel dealt with the questions, constituted a form of disidentification.[17] Moreover, through his music and films about love and

[17] "Disidentification" in Butler (1993), and Muñoz (1999).

heartbreak, Juan Gabriel became an international pop-icon for Latinx diasporic listeners- his lyrics spoke to his/their working-class immigrant experiences that transcended generational, sexuality, and gendered experiences. As a prolific songwriter whose songs have been interpreted by many singers, Juan Gabriel's music has reached an even broader audience. I argue that Juan Gabriel's self representation and media portrayal modeled a pratice of disidentification for this diasporic queer audience: Juan Gabriel became the mirror to which effeminate or queer men were compared to - mockery towards Juan Gabriel became the mockery that queer men faced, and his proclamation that "lo que se ve no se pregunta"[18] served as a mantra to live a quasi-out life.

In reading these interpellations together--the news media's questioning of Juan Gabriel's seuxality in section one, and fan's interpretation of Juan Gabriel as a queer icon in section two--I argue that Juan Gabriel provided a public example of disasporic *queer Latinx* experiences that challenge U.S.-centric white homonormative notions of *coming out*. The public interviews and questioning of Juan Gabriel resulted in "chistes y mofas," that is public mockery of his effeminate presentation. However, the podcasters responding to his death reflected that his public responses to the jeering questions also provided them with a blueprint on how to approach such situations in their personal lives.

Juan Gabriel reached popstar status in the 1970s. By 2014, two years before his death at the age of 66, his *queer iconification* was such that in his interview with Altberto Aguilera, he appeared in full camp drag, evoking interviews with María Félix or Irma Serrano at that age, who in the 1990s would give television interviews in diva-esque outfits (see Figure 2).

[18] Quote from Fernando del Rincon interview ….

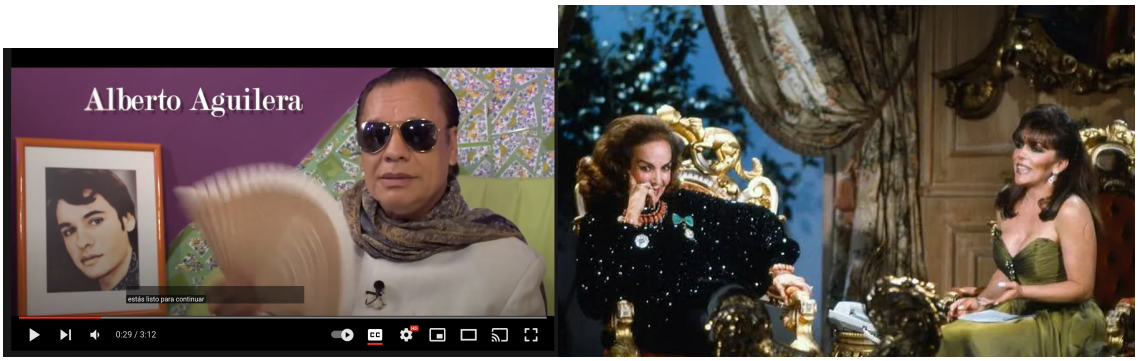


Figure 2: Screenshot of auto-interview between Alberto Aguilera and Juan Gabriel, 2014 (left); María Félix. with Veronica Castro in "La Tocada." 1991 (right)

Section 1: The Making of the Queer Icon

Juan Gabriel had become an international pop culture phenomenon early on in his career. As a songwriter, he also composed ballads for many of the pop and ranchera genre singers. In *Escenas de pudor y livianidad,* Mexican journalist and popular historian Carlos Monsiváis (1981) closely documented Juan Gabriel's early career, noting that the multi-generational attraction of Juan Gabriel solidified his *idol* status. While his good looks have been likened to that of Elvis Presley, Juan Gabriel's effeminate *style* was cause for mocking by the Mexican popular media and public:

> *El compositor más famoso de México es un joven amanerado a quien se le atribuyen indecibles escándalos, y a cuya fama coadyuvan poderosamente chistes y mofas.* (Monsiváis 1981, 269)
>
> The most famous composer of Mexico is a (limp-wrist) mannered young man who attributed unspeakable scandals, and whose fame is due significantly to jokes and mockeries.

The public perception of Juan Gabriel as a "(limp-wrist) mannered young man" in the 1970s and 1980s continued throughout his career. Below I have curated a list of pivotal public moments when Juan Gabriel's sexuality was discussed, negotiated, and dissected and his varied responses to these queer interpellations.

Siempre en Domingo (1979)

Juan Gabriel gained international notoriety because of his close friendship with several female ranchera singers and actresses, particularly Angélica María, María Félix, Lucha Villa, and Enriqueta Jiménez. In 1978, Juan Gabriel stirred controversy when he wrote and recorded "María de todas las Marías," a song that compared Mexican film legend María Félix to the Virgin Mary. On March 18, 1979, when Juan Gabriel performed the song in the weekly variety show, *Siempre en Domingo,* María Félix, was a featured guest. The show's host, Raúl Velasco, asked both Juan Gabriel and María Félix to respond to the public comments regarding the song, "que no debía haberse dejado llevar por la gran admiración que siente por ti. Y que hablaba de la Virgen cuando hablaba de ti" - "that he [Juan Gabriel] should not have been carried away by the great admiration he feels for you. And that she spoke of the Virgin [Mary] when she spoke of you."[19] Juan Gabriel stands attentive, his gaze fixated and reverent while Félix attempts to explain her feelings of gratitude and admiration from having songs inspired by her. When asked to address the controversy that the song produced, Félix affirms that because there is no historical reference, artists have used different inspirations to depict the virgin Mary, and she sees herself as a muse that inspired the song, an interpretation where she is only a stand-in for the image.

I read Juan Gabriel's fanatic devotion for María Félix as reminiscent of what Michael Bronski (1984) recognizes as gay men's deification and iconolatry of female film actresses such as Judy Garland, Bette Davis, and Carmen Miranda, among others. As Bronski notes, "it is not surprising that in a society which places so much emphasis on gender roles gay men should be drawn to personalities that blur such distinctions. In the cases of [Marlene] Dietrich and [Mae]

[19] Siempre en Domingo (min 03:09) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXubtbchAoY

West, they were not only appreciated by gay men, but their gay followings helped shape their images" (Bronski 1984, 97). In her film roles, María Félix commonly portrayed strong women who outpowered the male-lead counterpart. In roles such as *Doña Bárbara* (1943) and *La Cucaracha* (1959), Félix's characters traverse masculinity and femininity where the characters' sexuality, portrayed with the actress' iconic gaze and arching eyebrow as well as gun-slinging prowess, cause the sentimental downfall of their male protagonists. Her public image was reflective of the roles that she portrayed in Mexican and French cinema: a strong willed vamp, whose many public romances were a reflection of her sexual power, like that of Elizabeth Taylor in a U.S. context. Bronski asks:

> Did Mae West invent drag queens or did drag queens invent Mae West? An important element of gay culture is self-preservation: self-protective camouflage and first-strike wit. Mae West was a role model for gay men in both these attributes. She took control of as much sexuality as the culture was willing to allow her and then laughed at it… Mae West turned sexuality into a weapon against the accepted norm (Bronski 1984, 99).

Figure 3: María Félix and Juan Gabriel in "Siempre en Domingo," March 18, 1979; "Para mí, usted es María de todas las Marías" - Juan Gabriel.

I place Juan Gabriel in Bronski's assessment of gay culture in relation to dominant heteronormative culture. In the 1979 Siempre en Domingo interview, María Félix dominated the interview, through her gaze, gestures and pointed responses. Félix deflated Raul Velasco's

questioning and the critique from the audience that Juan Gabriel was blasphemous for penning "María de todas las Marías." While as a popular music artist, Juan Gabriel is part of the dominant culture, producing popular culture, in the 1979 interview and performance we visually see him *learning* from María Félix. Within the next decade, we would see Juan Gabriel develop his *queer* persona where he, by 1988 when presenting in "Mala Noche No," Juan Gabriel's style is marked by his folkloric language expression that aligns with Bronski's observation of drag queens, where his first-strike wit response to audience question is protective camouflage. His use of sexual inuendos and metaphors allows him to take control of as much of his own sexuality as the interviewer was willing to allow him, and Juan Gabriel, Castro and the audience laughed along together.

Mala Noche… No! (1988)

On August 31, 1988, Juan Gabriel was a guest on Veronica Castro's *Mala Noche… No!*. The live broadcast began at 11pm after the Tevelvisa's evening news, and continued until 6am the next morning, only cutting to begin the morning news show. Juan Gabriel and Veronica Castro had starred in the 1975 film *Nobleza Ranchera*, and the 1988 interview unfolded like a reunion between friends. During the seven-hour live broadcast, Juan Gabriel performed a variety of his hits, and viewers were able to call in questions and remarks that Castro would read on-air between exchanges of flirtatious *piropos* and innuendos. In recent years, Castro has received similar questions as Juan Gabriel regarding her bisexuality, and the queer identification between Castro and Juan Gabriel is demonstrated by their campy banter, where Castro appears to be *in the know*. Keith Harvey (2000) places "camp" within gay language aesthetics, arguing that "camp *makes use of* an acute aesthetic sense as one of its deconstructive *tools*" (Harvey 2000, 9 -

original emphasis), where he sees the effeminate exaggerated gestures and articulations of camp language by gay men as a parody of women's bevaviors.

I read Juan Gabriel's use of camp banter with Castro, in response to the audience questions, and his on-stage performance as a deconstruction of and addition to normative Mexican hetero-masculinity. In reading an audience request, Castro states, "dicen que si es posible, que fueras haciendo un striptease poco a poco hasta que termine el programa, por supuesto para ver lo indiscutible" - "They ask that if possible, that you do a striptease little by little until the end of the program, of course to see the unmentionable."[20] As Castro reads the question, Juan Gabriel raises his leg like a pin-up model and pulls-back his pant leg to reveal his bare skin.

Figure 4: Screenshot: Juan Gabriel and Veronica Castro on *Mala Noche… No!* - August 31, 1988.

Further in the broadcast, Castro reads a message from a caller, "Juan Gabriel tiene unos labios preciosos" - "Juan Gabriel has beautiful lips;" this prompts a camera close-up on Juan Gabriel

[20] Part 3 of 4; Juan Gabriel on "Mala Noche…No!" August 31, 1988 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=US_tUDrZfns&t=426s

where he puckers his lips and winks at the camera. He states, "lo mal es que estoy mal aprovechado" - coquettishly insinuating that his lips are underappreciated. By the time of *Mala Noche… No!* appearance, Juan Gabriel had been recognized as "el divo de Juárez," a pop culture icon, and the queer identification between Castro and Juan Gabriel facilitated the freedom to express his queerness, albeit through camp language and innuendos. Castro herself displays her own queerness throughout the broadcast, through the sequined tuxedo she wears and insinuations of her disinterest in men and lack of romantic success.

Fernando del Rincón - 2002 Interview "Lo que se ve no se pregunta"

Fernando del Rincón recalls that for the 2002 interview with Univisión's Primer Impacto, which took place in Houston, Texas, Juan Gabriel had personally requested that del Rincón conduct the interview.[21] At the time of the interview, Juan Gabriel had been involved in legal issues in both Mexico and the United States regarding claims of tax evasion in both countries; lawsuits with his former financial advisor and promoter, Ralph Hauser over back payments to concert background bands, and financial fraud; and the rights to his music catalog by his former record labels, which led the singer to take a hiatus from releasing new music, performing, and public appearances. Additionally, there were allegations that Juan Gabriel had an "inappropriate" relationship with sixteen-year-old Daniel Riolobos, III. During the interview, Juan Gabriel maintained that the allegations were false and a form of blackmail from Hauser, and that the relationship with Riolobos was one of artistic mentorship.

[21] Fernando del Rincón interview with Telemundo, September 1, 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLpbZPtQZfk

The interview was billed as “La Verdad de Juan Gabriel,” - “The Truth of Juan Gabriel” an “edición especial” of Primer Impacto, where the “globally acclaimed artist, who is going through one of the toughest moments of his career now has to answer for the allegations against him, despite his closely guarded privacy.” Del Rincón prefaces the interview stating that for an internationally recognized artist, Juan Gabriel’s private life has been surrounded by mystery - noting that few people knew that Juan Gabriel’s career began while he was incarcerated[22] and was discovered by ranchera singer Enriqueta Jimenez, “La Prieta Linda.” The preface closes with del Rincón stating, “esta es su verdad” - “this is his truth.” As the interview progresses in the Houston hotel suite, del Rincón asks Juan Gabriel to respond to allegations or rumors that have been circulating in the media regarding his intimate and personal relationships, and his financial and legal situations. Juan Gabriel frequently responded in metaphor, claiming “this is my truth, my account of the story.” While del Rincón’s questions ask about his intimate relationships, Juan Gabriel only gives indirect metaphors as responses and claims the vague answers to be his truth.

As a popular culture figure, Juan Gabriel had stirred conversation in Mexican media, his concerts had been widely attended, and his unique performance aesthetic was recognizable. In 2002, his concerts and music release had stopped because of the pending lawsuits, and questions over his alleged relationship with a minor. To Del Rincón’s first question, “in your 32 year career with highs and lows, with difficult moments. Where would you place this moment, is it one of the more difficult?”, Jan Gabriel responds in a poetic-proverbial style:

[22] In the authorized biography, Eduardo Magallanes (1995) documents that from 1969 - 1971, Alberto Aguilera Valadez was incarcerated in Mexico City’s Lecumberri penitentiary. Aguielera Valadez had been accused of theft and faced fines of $10,000 in Mexican Pesos. He wrote songs to pay for his release, and met Enriqueta Jimenez while singing for the prison warden. Jimenez used her influence to ask a judge to revisit Aguilera Valadez’s case, leading to his release. (Magallanes 1995, 98) The “Palacio Negro” de Lecumberri is regarded as the origin of the homophobic slur “joto,” where cellblock “J” held homosexual, transgender, and sexual deviants.

No, lo más difícil fue haber nacido. Todo lo demás es de uno, es fácil. Y uno puede llegar a ser lo mejor. Porque la verdad lo mejor fue haber nacido.

No, the hardest thing was being born. Everything else belongs to you, it's easy. And one can become the best. Because the truth is that the best thing was to have been born.

In his answer, Juan Gabriel is performing a form of *sabiduria popular* (Saldívar 2006, 56) - a working-class wisdom and folkloric self-representation. Juan Gabriel's rhetorical style is reflective of his upbringing in rural Michoacán, his formal education up to the fifth year of primary school until the age of 13[23] in Ciudad Juárez, and his working-poor transnational hustle. In his study of Américo Paredes's folklore and ethnographic work, Ramón Saldívar (2006) notes, "meaning emerges *between* people when words are performed collectively, expressing what in Spanish is called *sabidurias popular,* or a dialogized collective wisdom." Saldívar cites Paredes who claims that one needs to contextualize folkloric vernacular to "know what the expression really means to the people who use it. We can find its true meaning only if we know *how* and *when* it is used. Words in themselves have no meaning; their meaning is given to them by the particular context in which they are used" (Saldívar 2006, 56). The vernacular style employed by Juan Gabriel is also reminiscent of Caló or the "Pachuco" dialect of Spanish that has origins in the border region where he spent his adolescence, and popularized in Mexico by actor Germán Valdés, commonly known as "Tin Tan," who also began his career in Ciudad Juárez and a transnational zoot zooter in many of his film roles. Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1987) describes *Pachuco* as a "language of rebellion, both against Standard Spanish and Standard English. It is a secret language. Adults of the culture and outsiders cannot understand it." (Anzalúa 1987, 56). In this

[23] In a 1985 interview with entertainment reporter, Paty Chapoy, Juan Gabriel discusses his early years with his mother in Michoacán and Ciudad Juárez. Juan Gabriel recounts that because the internment school only went to the fifth year of primary, he had to live on his own after the age of 13, which led him to move between cities in Mexico and the United State to seek performance opportunities in bars and cabarets. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbyn0U1hNrA

manner, by deploying working-class border vernacular, Juan Gabriel is resisting the formal media institutions that attempt to define and delimit his personhood by his sexuality and homophobic tropes.

While Fernando del Rincón is facilitating the interview, I see the conversation to be *between* Juan Gabriel and his transnational audience, where the *meanings* are left open to their working-class understanding. Despite having a limited formal education, the *refranes* that Juan Gabriel speaks in read as sage wisdom to the young del Rincón. As the interview progresses, del Rincón asks challenging questions regarding Juan Gabriel's personal life and his finances, Juan Gabriel takes on the role of an elder to pupil - the 52 year old artist to the 31 year old journalist. Del Rincón's subsequent question focuses on Juan Gabriel's intimate partners; "Hablando de su vida, cómo es su vida sentimental ahora? ¿Está casado, tiene una pareja, tiene un apoyo?" - "Speaking of your life, how is your sentimental life now? Are you married, do you have a partner, do you have [sexual/romantic] support?" The response again utilizes a poetic vernacular; "Para ser felíz se necesita ser alegre todos los días - yo no estoy solo, nunca, siempre estoy conmigo" - "To be happy you need to be cheerful every day - I'm not alone, I'm never alone, I'm always with me." Without directly addressing the question of his intimate partners, Juan Gabriel provides a reference for *how* he attends to his emotional-sexual intimacies on his own.

Josefina Guzmán Díaz (2005) discusses the linguistic culture of "dichos" and "refranes" in Mexican spoken language. While her study contextually focuses on the use of rhetorical tools in speech related to death, Guzmán Díaz argues that the use of poetic rhetoric is particularly useful in topics that are considered social taboos:

> *Hay dos aspectos que explican la eficacia del funcionamiento retórico en general, y del metafórico en particular, del refrán y el dicho: permiten una gran condensación de*

> *las ideas; son un excelente mecanismo de economía del lengua-je; y permiten romper con el tabú, con la palabra prohibida, con los temas vetados*. (Guzmán Díaz 2005, 42)
>
> There are two aspects that explain the effectiveness of the rhetorical functioning in general, and of the metaphorical one in particular, of the proverb ["refran"] and the saying ["dicho"]: they allow a great condensation of ideas; they are an excellent mechanism for an economy of language; and they allow to break with the taboo, with the forbidden word, with the vetoed subjects.

Juan Gabriel's use of rhetorical speech permits him to address the taboo subjects asked in the interview; while he indirectly answers, his broader transnational audience responds positively to his working class affect. Further, following Guzmán Díaz, the economy of language found in the rhetorical style of the interview allows for Juan Gabriel to perform a folkloric persona in the face of the legal issues and scandals, his proverbial response form offers "how to" advice rather than addressing his positions or involvement in the issues he faced.

The topics covered in the Primer Impacto interview included Juan Gabriel's intimate partners; His relationship with Laura Salas Campa,[24] the mother of his four sons, their paternity, and method of contraception; his experience in prison; his public rupture with his former financial manager and promoter Ralph Hauser, their subsequent lawsuits, and the blackmail and threats he received from Hauser; conflicts in the United States and Mexico regarding taxes; and the publication for photographs that alleged that he maintained an inappropriate relationship with 16 year old, Daniel Riolobos, III. The last question prompted the most angered and direct response in which Juan Gabriel refutes the allegations that the relationship with Riolobos, III is of an inappropriate nature and claims that such accusations are disrespectful to all parties. Juan Gabriel further asserts that the media's comments are disdainful for alluding that Riolobos, III or other young artists need to provide sexual favor in order to break into the music industry.

[24] In the authorized biography by Eduardo Magallanes (1995), Laura Salas Campa is described to be the sister of his long-time best friend Jesus Campa. They met when Juan Gabriel was 25, and developed a platonic friendship that head to her mothering four of his children. (Magallanes 1995,175)

Juan Gabriel's angry response to the Riolobos accusation opened the conversation to topics of sexuality because Juan Gabriel accused media outlets of making speculations on his personal life. Del Rincón cites an unnamed Mexican historian who analyzes Juan Gabriel's stage performance:

> *Hay un historiador Mexicano que haciendo un análisis de sus presentaciones en público, esos conciertos masivos que tanto llenan y tanto llaman la atención y además tienen récord implantados en todos lados por audiencia. Dice este historiador Mexicano comentando sobre su sexualidad, "Rompió barreras sexuales en el escenario porque explora el lado femenino" - Qué opinión le merece a este comentario?*[25]
>
> There is a Mexican historian who analyzed your public presentations, those massive concerts that draw so much attention and have set records everywhere by the audience. Commenting on your sexuality, this Mexican historian states, "He broke sexual barriers on stage because he explores the feminine side" -What opinion does this comment deserve?

The citing of the Mexican historian who del Rincón cites as saying, "He [Juan Gabriel] broke sexual barriers on stage because he explores the feminine side," prompted an expression of annoyance from Juan Gabriel. Del Rincón's statement on Juan Gabriel's performance was meant as segue into capacious questions about Gabriel's sexuality:

> *FDR: Dicen que es gay. Juan Gabriel es gay?*
>
> *JG: (laughter) A usted le interesa mucho?*
>
> *FDR: Yo pregunto.*
>
> *JG: Pues yo le respondo… con otra pregunta.*
>
> *FDR: Dígame*
>
> *JG: Dicen que lo que se ve no se pregunta, mijo.*
>
> *FDR: Yo veo a un cantante frente a mí, veo a un triunfador.*
>
> *JG: Eso es lo más importante. Porque uno no vale por las personalidades que otras gentes pueden achacar (blame), y que esto y lo otro. Porque hombre, todo lo que uno hace es lo que se queda, lo que vale. Los hechos son los más importantes.*
>
> *FDR: Transcender.*
>
> *JG: Trascender… O ser, ¿no? Pero hombre, la gente es inteligente, ¿no? No es tonta.*
>
> *FDR: Hay cosas que no se tienen que decir, y cosas que se dicen?*

[25] "La Verdad de Juan Gabriel" *Primer Impacto*. 2002 (min 28:29) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCY9F5ZqE1M

JG: Yo no tengo por qué decir. Ni tampoco por qué decirle una cosa que a usted, como a muchas personas no les interesa… Pero tampoco la gente es tonta.[26]

FDR: They say you are gay. Is Juan Gabriel gay?

JG: (laughter) Are you very interested?

FDR: I ask.

JG: Well, I answer… with another question.

FDR: Ask me.

JG: Son, they say that what is seen, does not have to be asked.

FDR: I see a singer in front of me, I see a winner.

JG: That's the most important thing. Because one's worth is not set by characteristics that other people claim you to be, and "this and that." Because man, everything you do is what stays, what is worth. The facts are the most important.

FDR: Transcend.

JG: Transcend… Or to be, right? But man, people are smart, right? My audience is not stupid.

FDR: There are things that don't have to be said, and things that are said?

JG: I don't have to say. Nor is there a reason for me to tell you, like many people, something that you should not be interested in... But people are not stupid either.

In Juan Gabriel's responses to the questions about his sexuality, he maintains a certain level of agency by choosing not to directly address questions that he considered to be a private matter. Juan Gabriel's terse responses reflect what Carlos Ulises Decena (2008) describes as a *tacit subject*. For Decena, "*sujeto tácito* suggests that coming out may sometimes be redundant. In other words, coming out can be a verbal declaration of something that is already understood or assumed – tacit – in an exchange. What is tacit is neither secret nor silent" (Decena 2008, 340). Extending Decena's argument, I contend that Juan Gabriel's answers demonstrate ways to negotiate and navigate his multiple subjectivities and racialized sexuality. In other words, through his public discourse (or lack of discussion as discourse) Juan Gabriel traverses a geography of subjectivities.

[26] "La Verdad de Juan Gabriel" *Primer Impacto*. 2002 (min 29:20) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCY9F5ZqE1M

Auto-interview (2014)

In August 2014, Juan Gabriel released an auto-interview on his social media accounts to promote the re-launching of his U.S. tour following a hiatus due to health.[27] The interview was conducted as a dialogue between the personas of Juan Gabriel and Alberto Aguilera Valadez (see figure 2). In comparison to his stage persona where Juan Gabriel puts on a *camp* performance in bold outfits and flamboyant gestures, in this interview, Juan Gabriel is dimly dressed in black, wearing a black monogrammed shirt with a black ascot and black fedora hat. Alberto Aguilera however, is fashionably dressed in a structured white coat and an ornately patterned scarf draped over his shoulder, with shiny aviator glasses, his hair slicked back, and holding a hand fan that he cracks open at the start of the interview. The dialogue consists of flattery and addressing Juan Gabriel's hospitalization in Las Vegas after falling ill with pneumonia that had required him to cancel his 2014 tour. Alberto Aguilera begins the questioning with, *"¿cómo te encuentras?"* - "How do you feel?"

A Muñozian analysis of this auto-interview is useful to understand the reversal of the persona performance where Juan Gabriel is demure and Alberto Aguilera is campily queered. I suggest that the Juan Gabriel persona is disidentifying with the queerness attributed to him. Here, he is reserved in his posture, tone of voice, and apologetic for the controversies that he put Alberto Aguilera in. José Esteban Muñoz (1998, 1999) explores how AIDS activist and early reality TV personality, Pedro Zamora (1972-1994) performed an "ethic of the self"[28] on the

[27] "Diálogo de Alberto Aguilera Valadez con Juan Gabriel 2014." August 8, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDXS667buls

[28] Muñoz employs Foucault's (1986, 1987) concepts of "The Ethic of the care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom" in developing his analysis of Pedro Zamora's performance of his identities and disidentifications with his Latino queerness to advocate for HIV/AIDS awareness on popular media.

MTV series, “The Real World: San Francisco” (1994). Pedro Zamora’s presence in the reality series is significant for demonstrating the quotidian life of a person living with AIDS on a popular media platform. Throughout the twenty episodes viewers observed Pedro’s work as a sexual health advocate and public speaker in high schools; his interactions with conservative and homophonic castmates; doctor visits where he leaned of his declining health; his romantic relationship with his partner Sean; his interactions with his working-class Cuban family; and by the end of the season’s airing, his passing from pneumonia and advansed AIDS.[29] Contextualizing Zamora’s impact, Muñoz states, “For five months Zamora was one of the few out gay men appearning regularly on television. He was also one of the few Latinos seen regularly on national television. Furthermore, he was one of the few people living with AIDS on television” (Muñoz 1999, 151).[30] Zamora was strikingly handsome and charismatic, further in casting him, MTV would have the queer and “model minority” Latino representations covered. Muñoz, however, argued that Zamora “used MTV as an opportunity to continue his life’s work of HIV/AIDS pedagogy, queer education, and human-rights activism. Unlike his queer predecesor, he exploited MTV in politically efficacious ways; he used MTV more than it used him” (152). Zamora’s intervention is such that he understood both social ideologies around homosexuality, Latinidad, stigmas around HIV/AIDS - and by authentically portraying the quotidian life of a gay Latino living with AIDS, he was able to break those stigmas on his own terms. Throughout the season, Pedro is followed in his day-job as a sexual health advocate and

[29] The last episode of “The Real World: San Francisco” aired on November 10, 1994, and Pedro Zamora passed away in Miami, FL on November 11, 1994 at the age of 22.

[30] In a 1992 ABC special, “In a New Light: A Call to Action in the War Against AIDS,” Zamora recounts that he was diagnosed with HIV while in high school at the age of 17. Following his diagnosis he began advocating for sexual health awareness as a public speaker at high schools.

public speaker at high schools; in these features, Zamora disidentifies from the persona he was in high school, a persona that practiced sexual-emptional activities that led to him contracting HIV.

Rather than suggesting that Zamora's strategic negotiations of his identities among his conservative housemates (and their families), and among high school students during his public health work reflects negatively on LBGT activism, Muñoz argues that people who hold intersectional identities have to negotiate aspects of themselves as forms of resistance and resilience. Muñoz states:

> I want to suggest that understanding this disidentification with his queerness as a disservice to queers or his own queer identity would be erroneous insofar as these shuttlings and displacements are survival strategies that intersectional subjects, subjects who are caught and live between different minoritarian communities, must practice frequently if they are to keep their residencies in different subcultural spheres (Muñoz 1998, 187).

While only a three-minute clip that is ultimately an advertisement for his U.S. tour, by conducting the auto-interview, Juan Gabriel/Alberto Aguilera Valadez are similarly practicing a disidentification with the public's perceived queerness.

***

Juan Gabriel's public scrutiny by the media, by comedians, and by the general public because of his presumed homosexuality warrants a parallel to Saint Sebastian's public martyrdom, who is popularly recognized as the patron saint of homosexuals. I read Juan Gabriel's public silence and non-affirmation of his sexuality as a form of self-protection from a Mexican society that could be violent and deadly toward homosexuals. Juan Gabriel's silence was a form of biopolitical resistance to a society that may have otherwise *killed* his career. Carlos Monsivais (1981) as well as the 2016 biographic-series have noted how Juan Gabriel was encouraged to *butch* up. In the next section, I argue that even though Juan Gabriel did not

publicly acknowledge his sexuality, he was memorialized by his queer fans as a "secular saint." In *Borderlands Saints*, Desirée Martín (2013) explores the concept of "secular sanctity," where through popular devotion, divine characteristics are applied to otherwise fallible persons that "originate in, cross through, or are transformed by the borderlands" (Martin 2013, 7). The secular saint is "someone who is venerated for their extraordinary actions or their contribution to a noble cause, but who is not recognized as a canonical saint by a religion" (Martin 2013, 3). While Juan Gabriel recognized his Catholic upbringing, in his 1985 interview with entertainment reporter, Pati Chapoy,[31] he mentions that while in the youth institution, *"cuando iban las del catecismo, todos éramos Católicos; y cuando iban los Metodistas, todos éramos Metodistas; y cuando eran los Testigos de Jehová, todos eran Testigos de Jehová. Para los niños era bueno porque nos llevaban zapatos, dulces, medicinas, ropa."* - "When the catechism classes were going, we were all Catholics; and when the Methodists went, we were all Methodists; and when they were Jehovah's Witnesses, they were all Jehovah's Witnesses. For the children they were all good because they brought us shoes, sweets, medicine, clothes." This answer shows that Juan Gabriel was open about his spirituality, without defining his religiosity. Further, he was unconcerned when pressed regarding the polemic around his song, "María de todas las Marías." Despite his own distancing from a traditional religious affiliation,[32] and his refusal to definitively acknowledge his sexuality, his fandom, the topic of Section 2, venerates him as an icon, and his music such as the ballad to his mother, "Amor Eterno" has become a hymn at Mexican funerals.

[31] Interview with Pati Chapoy, 1985. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbyn0U1hNrA

[32] In the 2002 interview with Fernando del Rincón, Juan Gabriel is asked whether he believes in God. (min 34:37), he responds "por qué tanta duda" - "why so much doubt" [about my spirituality]. He understood that there have been questions regarding his spirituality, particularly a public comment by singer, Vicente Fernandez.

Section 2 - Podcasts Remembrance Practices after his death

A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives – our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings – all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity. Here, we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience. (Moraga and Anzalúa 2002, 21)

This section focuses on the ways in which Juan Gabriel is claimed as a queer icon by his fans after his death in August 2016. Focusing on podcasts published on online audio streaming services,[33] this section analyzes the ways in which the podcasters articulate an "epistemology of the flesh" - that is, how Juan Gabriel, as a transnational cultural icon, facilitated and even instructed the podcasters as fans on how to identify with and perform their own sexualities. I see parallels between the sexualization and idolization in-life of Juan Gabriel, and his post-death veneration with the post-death adulation of popular icons such as Selena Quintanilla (Paredez 2009) and Jenni Rivera (Garcia-Hernandez 2016, 2019). As an example, Paredez (2009) has shown how the veneration of Selena - *selenidad* took on "a life of its own " in the afterlife of Selena. Following her death in 1995, Selena's fandom grew through documentary and theatrical films, memorial concerts and stage performances, and queer performance and appropriations - the claiming of Selena as a queer icon. On the other hand, Juan Gabriel had reached a status of queer icon in life, as Babelito and FavyFav of the *Latinos Who Lunch* (2016) podcast mention, "we cannot erase Juan Gabriel's queerness remembering him." Because Juan Gabriel had received recognition as a queer icon in life, his veneration allowed queer identified fans to claim him as a patron of queer Mexican in Mexico and in the diaspora.

[33] I came to these podcasts through their social media postings around the time of Juan Gabriel's death; I regularly listened to the *Latinos Who Lunch* podcast during my drives from San Diego to Los Angeles, I identified with the hosts's queer diasporic identities and their positionality as academics completing PhDs.

I understand Juan Gabriel's fan devotion in relation to Desirée A. Martín's concepts of "secular saints." Following his death, Mexican and Chicano artists produced iconography depicting Juan Gabriel as a saintly figure, and the fan podcasts analyzed in this section discuss a reverence for his status as a queer icon, revealing *circuit of intimacy* between fans and Juan Gabriel as a queer pop cultural icon.[34] For Martín, secular saints are "defined by their human qualities – whether heroic or fallible – instead of their canonization into a pantheon of divinities or even by popular religious belief. It is because they are accessible as fallible humans that secular saints are revered as divine mediators or as sacred figures in their own right" (Martin 2013, 3). In the summer of 2016, Catholic-based organizations planned mass anti-gay rights manifestations "in defense of the traditional family" throughout Mexico. These public marches and manifestations ran parallel to the public memorialization in Mexico and in the diaspora of Juan Gabriel following his death that same year. In other words, the public anti-gay practices co-existed with the public adoration of Juan Gabriel as a culral gay icon - culminating in a public funeral for him at the Palacio de Bellas Artes.

In this section I propose that fans' interpellations of Juan Gabriel as a *queer icon* articulated what Moraga and Anzaldúa (2002) describe as "theory in the flesh" (Moraga and Anzaldúa 2002, 21), "where the physical realities of our lives – our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings – all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity. Here, we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience" (Moraga and Anzalúa 2002, 21). The podcasters featured in this section contend with the contradictions of their queerness alongside belonging to Mexican and Latino families; their identification with public homophobic

[34] Here I use "icon" for its religious and secular meaning to describe the cultural significance of Juan Gabriel.

statements directed at Juan Gabriel; their upbringings along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands; and the resilience they perceive from Juan Gabriel resisting homophobic and homonormative social standards.

Latinx podcasters responded to Juan Gabriel's passing in a forum where podcasters-as fans are able to articulate and analyze Juan Gabriel's representations to Mexicans and Latinx people. Following Juan Gabriel's death, on September 1, queer art historians Emmanuel "Bebelito" Ortega and visual artist Justin "FavyFav" Favela of the *Latinos Who Lunch* (*LWL*)[35] podcast, dedicated an entire episode to the memory of "El Divo de Juarez," proclaiming: "thank you for paving the way for queer Latinos." The podcasters reflect on the significance that Juan Gabriel has for their families and their respective upbringing in Las Vegas, Nevada for Favela and Ciudad Juárez for Ortega. Importantly, calling attention to the fact that Juan Gabriel was admired and beloved by a diverse swath of Latinx fans, both podcasters shared that their queer identifications were shaped by their family's perception of Juan Gabriel. For example, Ortega's parents frequented El Noa Noa, and he was motivated to "come out" because of his father's fandom. As Ortega reflects, "I remember when I came out, I remember thinking: 'my dad loves Juan Gabriel, he's going to be okay [with my sexuality] because he loves Juan Gabriel'" (min 25:50). The memory of his coming out to his father prompted a visceral emotional reaction, demonstrating an acceptance of their shared queer identification. For Ortega and his family, Juan Gabriel's queerness was understood and accepted.

While Ortega expressed comfort in identifying with Juan Gabriel's queerness, for

[35] *Latinos Who Lunch,* Episode 10: "Juan Gabriel - Amor Eterno." September 1, 2016 https://audioboom.com/posts/5017101-episode-10-juan-gabriel-amor-eterno

FavyFav, his association brought up the discomfort of realizing that he was "different":

> When I was little and my mom used to tell me not to move my hands a certain way, it totally just hit me. We've been through that, and it's very complicated this whole 'being gay in a Latino family' because Latino families are so close. Latinos are known for having a strong family bond. And to be gay, and to grow up knowing you are gay is really hard. One of the first times I realized I was different [gay], was because of Juan Gabriel - I remember it so specifically. I didn't know why this was so important until recently. (*Latinos Who Lunch*, Episode 10. min 27:00)

For queer men, such as podcasters Favela and Ortega, Juan Gabriel was the personification of Mexican queerness, where he came to represent what is possible and what is punishable. The moments described by Favela and Ortega reflect what Gloria E. Anzaldúa (2015) described as *nepantla*, "a psychological, liminal space between the way things had been and an unknown future… the space in-between, the locus and sign of transition" (Anzaldúa 2015, 17). For both queer men, the moments they share result in psychic-physical shock that lead to "transtional nepantla space;" a crossroads that prompted each of them to reevaluate their respective self-definition of their sexual identities. Favela expands on his queer identification with Juan Gabriel as a young child. For him, this is the "choque" - the shift that thrust him into a nepantla state:

> Somebody said something and I reacted like I was "over it;" so I rolled my eyes and turned around. My grandmother started laughing, "se parece a Juan Gabriel." And I didn't know what that meant. She made me do it again, repeating what I was doing in front of people just because she thought it was so funny. I remember seeing everybody's reaction and half of the people were laughing, and half of the people were uncomfortable, like concerned. I was a very observant kid, and I recognized that something was wrong, they were laughing *at* me - and this doesn't feel right. I just remember that after that being more serious, they called me "serio." I didn't want any attention on me. That's kind of the moment that happened for me. (*Latinos Who Lunch*, Episode 10. min 28:40)

Favela understood Juan Gabriel as a Mexican icon; however, because his family's recognition of a shared *difference*, he did not want to be associated with that queerness. Rather than fearing

losing his family because of his proximity to Juan Gabriel's queerness, Favela disassociated from the effeminate gestures that had come as a natural response.

While the podcasters reflect on the significance of Juan Gabriel's sexuality in relation to their own, they also articulate the ways in which the broader fandom respond to Juan Gabriel's onstage aesthetic performance, where he has been compared to American artists such as Liberace, Elton John, Elvis, Prince, and Michael Jackson for his stage aesthetics and expansive music catalog that traversed several genres. Ortega makes reference to Chicano pop singer AB Soto:

> That's the beauty about Juan Gabriel. AB Soto out there. He's nothing new, wearing lentejuelas with charro outfits. [Juan Gabriel] broke those barriers because he's singing rancheras, which is the most macho genre. And he came out with costumes in lentejuelas and sang those songs" (*Latinos Who Lunch*, Episode 10. min 36:18).

Figure 5: AB Soto "Cha Cha Bitch"
Figure 6: Juan Gabriel "Hasta que te conoci"

I situate AB Soto's queer Chicano aesthetic in relation to Juan Gabriel's performance aesthetic. In interviews, Soto discusses his "coming out" in his conservative Mexican household, and his commitment to representing his Chicano identity in the white-dominant gay music industry. Queer Chicano scholar Juan D. Ochoa (2021) explores the "sexual dimensions of Chicana/o subjectivity" though the performance of Soto's sexual aesthetics in his music videos

(20). Ochoa contends that AB Soto's "performances demonstrate how gay men learn to inhabit that sexual sociality … that the criticisms Soto faces when he re-interprets 'traditional' Chicano subjectivities tell us more about the heteronormative sexual politics that continue to police and structure acceptable forms of Chicano sexuality" (Ochoa 2021, 21). Like Juan Gabriel, Soto faces heteronormative sexual politics; however, Soto articulates his sexuality as an "out" gay man and markets his music within white homonormative popular music. Feminist Women's studies scholar Jillian Hernandez (2009) offers us the concept of *sexual-aesthetic excess* through a reading of "chonga" embodiment, suggesting that scholars read sexual aesthetics as "indexing ethnic pride, personal confidence, and non-normative sexuality" (Hernandez 2009, 66). I read AB Soto's "fagging out" concept as an example of sexual-aesthetic excess. In the 2013 interview, Soto explains his concept:

> [Fag Out] was inspired by the movie *Party Girl* (1995). [In it] Parker Posie tells one of her gay friends who's acting effeminate, "Don't fag out, Derrick. Don't fag out." I'm like, "No way! Let's fucking fag out!" Fagging out is about embracing who you are. (Miner, 2013)

For Soto, "fagging out" is about being comfortable in your own skin; it is living in the true essence of who one is, and being authentic with oneself. Fagging out is about *realness*, where Juan Gabriel's *amanerado* styling provoked mockery by journalist and fans, Soto embraces the the effeminate gestures directly. In considering Soto's conceptual formation, I contend that authenticity and performance aesthetics is a *self-centered* process of negotiations and navigation; fagging out in this sense allows for the self to be attuned with and perform self-determined, multiple subjectivities.

Juan Gabriel's on-stage performances are defined by a sexual-aesthetic excess, where his tacitly accepted homosexuality allowed him to amplify his hyper-sexualized performance. Ortega recounts the last Juan Gabriel concert he attended in Las Vegas:

> [Juan Gabriel] changed his costume many times. And the fact that you see all that sparkliness on top of a ranchero outfit, that's so cool… Especially if you start thinking about the history of the ranchero figure in Mexico and how it's established in the 1940's movies, the "super macho." And then you see this guy [Juan Gabriel] turning it upside down with his lyrics, with his music, with his voice, and with his performance. (*Latinos Who Lunch*, Episode 10. min 49:14).

The sentiments expressed on the *LWL* podcast was similarly explored on the *Tamarindo* podcast (episode 12)[36] with Luis Octavio and Brenda Gonzalez. The co-hosts recorded their tribute episode on the day that Juan Gabriel passed and included phone messages from family and listeners reacting to the immediate news. Luis Octovio reflects on Juan Gabriel's "presence in the gay Latino community:

> In the time when he was famous and when he started his career to be out and proud, and gay wasn't the thing you do. But when I think of Juan Gabriel as a 'gay Latino' there's a particular song from his early days… that every time I hear this song, I always relate this song to me… *Yo no nací para amar*… 'y nadie nacio para mi.' It's such a sad song, but I can also understand that in the time when he grew up, it wasn't accepted. Even if he did fall in love with someone, they probably couldn't be together because he had this music career and had to play a certain heteronormality. (*Tamarindo*, Episode 12. min 15:00)

The *Tamarindo* episode included voice messages from fans who were encouraged to participate as contributors. The *Latinos who Lunch* and *Tamarindo* podcasts articulate the significance of Juan Gabriel to the queer-millenial generation that grew up listening to the music of Juan Gabriel with their mothers and grandmothers. Chicana scholar Yessica Garcia-Hernandez (2015) explores the concept of "sonic pedagogies" as it relates to mother-daughter relationships through the fandom and consumption of Jenni Rivera's music. For Garcia-Hernandez, her "sonic pedagogies" are framed through an Anzalduan framework of *conocimiento*,[37] which is the

[36] *Tamarindo*, Episode 12: "Juan Gabriel Tribute." August 29, 2016 https://omny.fm/shows/tamarindo-podcast/tamarindo-podcast-12-juan-gabriel-tribute

[37] Anzaldúa (2015) describes *conocimiento*: Conocimiento comes from opening all your senses, consciously inhabiting your body and decoding its symptoms… Attention is multileveled and includes your surroundings, bodily sensations and responses, intuitive takes, emotional reactions to other people and theirs to you, and, most important, the images your imagination creates—images connecting all tiers of information and their data. Breaking out of your mental and emotional prison and deepening the range of perception enables you to link inner reflection and vision—the mental, emotional, instinctive, imaginal, spiritual, and subtle bodily awareness—with

"alternative ways of knowing that integrate reflections with action to create knowledge that challenges the status quo" (428). For multi-generational Jenni Rivera fans, "sonic pedagogies, and the pedagogies inspired in fan-to-fan interactions insist that learning can happen anywhere music is felt, produced and performed, listened and danced to" (429). Similarly, the podcasters-as-fans of Juan Gabriel articulate their own sonic way of learning about their sexual identities through Juan Gabriel's lyrics, stage performance, and public persona.

Shortly after his passing, NPR released an episode of the *Alt.Latino* podcast that focused on the hemispheric cultural impact of Juan Gabriel.[38] The podcast panel featured journalists Félix Contreras, Carolina Miranda, and Adrian Florido, as well as music scholar Josh Kun. I read this podcast in three segments: the significance of the loss of Juan Gabriel in the age of social media; a song that describes how each panelist "came to" Juan Gabriel; and a segment that Contreras described a"was he gay or not, and does it matter?" (min 32:16), asking where Juan Gabriel's sexuality fits in his legacy. Kun and Miranda recognize Juan Gabriel's presumed homosexuality with Miranda citing the 2002 Fernando del Rincón interview. Miranda states, "I think it matters… it informed his work, it informed who he was in private and on stage. It was defining in such a purely latinamerican style; it was this issue where his sexuality was acknowledged without being acknowledged." For Miranda, the *latinamerican* style of addressing homosexuality follows Decena's concept of the tacit subjecthood - where by not "labeling" Juan Gabriel's homosexuailty, he had the freedom to be more flamboyant - his queerness became part of his articstic persona, which offers him the "safety" to perform his queerness publicly. In contrast, for

social, political action and lived experiences to generate subversive knowledge. These conocimientos challenge official and conventional ways of looking at the world, ways set up by those who benefit from such constructions. (120)

[38] *Alt.Latino,* "Alt.Latino Pays Tribute to Juan Gabriel." August 23, 2017. (encore presentation) https://www.npr.org/sections/altlatino/2016/09/01/491989878/alt-latino-pays-tribute-to-juan-gabriel

Kun, “it does, and it doesn’t,” arguing that because Juan Gabriel was able to transcend social categories and attain such a high popular culture status, his sexuality did not matter in his trajectory, adding however, that Juan Gabriel’s sexuality does matter to the queer identified fans who had him as a public figure who mirrored their identities and experiences.

Conclusion

Pero qué necesidad
Para qué tanto problema
No hay como la libertad de ser, de estar, de ir
De amar, de hacer, de hablar
De andar así sin penas[39]

But what’s the need
Why so much trouble?
There is nothing like the freedom to live, to be, to go
To love, to do, to speak
To walk without sorrow

Prior to a July 31, 1993 charity concert in the Pasadena Rosebowl,[40] Juan Gabriel participated in an interview with Rubén Martínez for *Life & Times*, a nightly news magazine for Los Angeles-based KCET.[41] While the show’s audience is primarily English-speaking, Martínez, who is of Salvadoran and Mexican background, conducted the interview in Spanish with translated captions appearing on-screen. Martínez notes the significance of Juan Gabriel being the first Latino artist to hold a concert at the Rosebowl. The two discuss Juan Gabriel’s upbringing in Ciudad Juarez and how growing up on the border influenced his musical development, and the broad reaching and multi-generational cultural influence of Juan Gabriel’s

[39] Juan Gabriel “Pero Que Necesidad” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CcWHnel_Rc

[40] Juan Gabriel's concert at Pasadena Rosebowl, filmed July 31, 1993, was televised on Telemundo. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rU01AY69J2U

[41] “Juan Gabriel Interview for KCET's *Life & Times.*” (1993) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSvB0dCR3UU

music. The concert was attended by 75,000 fans, and proceeds of the tickets went to support the Ciudad Juarez orphanage that Juan Gabriel established in 1987.[42]

My intention in starting my dissertation with Juan Gabriel is to provide a slice-of-life of a Mexican man who personifed aspects of gay identity in a generation that did not have the contemporary opportunity to "come out" of the closet. Juan Gabriel's perceived homosexuality, and his refusal to publicly articulate his sexuality, asserting that "lo que se ve no se pregunta" provides pedagogical methods for gay Latinx boys and men in the diaspora. Following Decena's *sujeto tácito*, where the act of "coming out" is redundant, Juan Gabriel's refusal provided him the freedom to create a stage persona that both hid but also exaggerated his "queer" manner. Like podcasters Justin Favela and Emmanuel Ortega, as a boy, I learned to delineate the boundaries of my sexuality through his flamboyant performance. However, as I grew up and learned to decode the messages in Juan Gabriel's lyrics, and the agency that he demonstrated by guiding the narrative of his sexuality, I learned that, "No hay como la libertad de ser, de estar, de ir; De amar, de hacer, de hablar; De andar así sin penas" - "There is nothing like the freedom to live, to be, to go; To love, to do, to speak; To walk without regret."

[42] Enrique Lopetegui of the *Los Angeles Times* published an interview with Juan Gabriel on July 25, 1993. Among the topics in the interview were Juan Gabriel's charity efforts to support the Ciudad Juárez orphanage, and his upbringing in a similar institution.

Chapter 2

"Jacob, el Maquillista de Jenni":

Visual Intimacy, Public Counter-Narratives, and Sites of Memory

[W]hat comes after loss? What is the afterlife of a violent and tragic end, a crash, that resonates across decades and is felt through that which remains not only after violent cessation but also after an art practice that was attuned to the frenzy of experience marked by historical dispossession?

- José Esteban Muñoz (2011)

This is one of our powers. Making worlds by bringing each other into them. And all we need to do is play with makeup, and pose.

-Jillian Hernandez (2018)

Figure 7: Screenshot from Jacob Yebale's Instagram, posted December 9, 2012[43]

[43] https://www.instagram.com/p/TAq4BTN9b9/ On February 25, 2020, Jenni Rivera's youngest son, Johnny Angel responded to Jacob's December 9, 2012 post, infamously now the *last* photograph taken of Jenni Rivera.

Figure 8: Screenshot of YouTube news Segment posted by ImagenTV on December 18, 2012[44]

Introduction

On December 18, 2012, the town of Valle de Guadalupe in the Los Altos region of Jalisco, Mexico became part of the saga surrounding the widely publicized death of beloved Chicana banda singer, Jenni Rivera. A week prior, on December 9, 2012, the chartered jet that transported Jenni Rivera and her entourage from Monterrey, Nuevo León to Toluca, Estado de México crashed in the desert mountainside near Iturbide, Nuevo León. Less known is the fact that among the fatalities was Jacob Yebale, Rivera's long-time make-up artist who had participated in many of her photoshoots, concerts, and TV appearances, including the reality show *I Love Jenni* (2011-2013). The Spanish-language news coverage surrounding Jacob's funeral described him as "un gran hijo," *a great son* who texted with his family daily to keep

[44] Figure 2, Screenshot of ImagenTV news segment, 2012 María Virginia: "*En el cielo…maquillando los angelitos*" – "In heaven… making up the angels" (Imagen TV, min 1:45) Screenshot of *Imagen TV* news clip of Jacob Yebale's entombment; Jacob's mother, María Virginia is center.

them updated on his work whereabouts.[45] While covering the tragic accident that took Jacob's life, the news turned attention to the agony of loss that María Virginia, Jacob's mother faced in the moment (Figure 8). In the months that followed, Jacob and his family would again be in the news, but in relation to lawsuits filed on behalf of his mother for restitution. As Jacob had supported his mother financially, the family sued several parties for damages and for his belongings that remained in Jenni Rivera's Los Angeles home. In these instances, Jacob's queered-labor as a celebrity make-up artist is tied to his relationship with his mother and family, and respectability politics of him being a *great son.*

While mentions of his sexuality are left out from news coverage of his death, the YouTube sites where the news segments are archived by Mexican media channels leave space for commenters to respond on the public comments forums - creating a *counter-narrative*[46] alongside the Mexican and Spanish-speaking news coverage following the airplane crash and subsequent events. Moreover, the digital archives that remain in the wake of Jacob's passing, which include his personal Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter social media accounts, reveal contradictions about how Jacob documented his out-queer life through social media, and how the news media discussed him in relation to his family. These contrasting discussions surrounding how queer people use social media to present their outness and how popular media portray queer labor and loss raise the following questions:

- What do the public comments posted on the digital archives that Jacob left (Instagram, Facebook), the reporting (YouTube) of the December 2012 accident, his funeral and subsequent events reveal about transnational queer migrations?

[45] ImagenTV; CadenaTV
[46] In LatCrit Educational theory (Solorzano and Yosso, 2010), "counter-narrative" is used describe the experiences of Chicana/o graduate students through the lens of race - the counter-stories that respond to the "majoritarian story" center Jacob's queer identity, expereinces, and the queer kinship that he formed in Los Angeles.

- What do the narratives found on news posts tell us when juxtaposed with queer counter-narratives?
- What does the trope of the "good son" tell us about acceptable forms of queerness in a Latinx diasporic context?

In this chapter, I juxtapose what are conventionally considered acceptable forms of queerness with how queer people speak back to the normalized/sanitized narratives of queerness. I connect the online counter-narrative responses to the news coverage and statements by his family to my own experience in Valle de Guadalupe, where Jacob's mother lived, one year after Jacob's funeral and in subsequent trips. Because the narratives that I examine in this chapter exist online, they traverse across time and space. That is, as long as the online posts continue to be active, there remains the possibilities for people from anywhere to respond and contribute to the comment forums. I see public counter-narratives as examples of queer defiance to the normative/normalizing narratives that seek to erase or sanatize gay Mexican/Latino experiences. I explore how websites such as YouTube that serve as a digital archive become sites of queer resistance - while Jacob is no longer able to respond to the claims made in the news segments, his own social media accounts remain active and also serve as sites for public comments. Many of the counter-narratives posts that are found on YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook are made by people who held intimate relationships with Jacob in-life, providing a different perspective of his life experiences, the accident, and the mourning of his death. I argue that these examples of engagement with video and photographic digital archives reimagine these sites as queer spaces.

While queerness has been present in the parish church where Jacob's funeral mass and indeed the town of Valle de Guadalupe in the forms of queer men's labor within these spaces, I examine how the space of the parish church and the town are further transformed by the open

discussion of Jacob's queer life following his funeral there. This chapter examines two disparate field sites: the locality of Valle de Guadalupe, Jalisco, my hometown where Jacob's funeral and entombment took place, and online sites such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram where Jacob assembled his self-represented digital archive, where Mexican news media discussed the events surrounding his death, and where his fans and friends memorialize his legacy.

This dissertation examines the ways in which Latinx diasporic queer people utilize popular social media to mourn and memorialize other queer people. In this chapter, I approach the examples of public counter-narratives through a Muñozian analysis of social media. For Muñoz (1999), "identities-in-difference emerge from a failed interpellation within the dominant public sphere. Their emergence is predicated on their ability to disidentify with the mass public and instead, through this disidentification, contribute to the function of a counterpublic sphere" (Muñoz 1999, 7). The online counter-narratives in this chapter reveal common experiences of sexualization, kinship, and mourning; as well as the impact of systems of dominance (i.e. need for migration, capitalism, and celebrity status, and institutions such as the Church). I reflect on how these on-line conversations also inform notions of sexuality at the local Valle de Guadalupe level.

This chapter follows a reverse chronology. I begin this chapter by meditating on my ethnographic experience in Valle de Guadalupe, reflecting on how the local Church has been impacted following the publicity surrounding Jacob's death. The next three sections focus on digital materials, mainly news segments archived on YouTube, and Jacob's social media accounts. This chapter critically juxtaposes the *digital* representations of Jacob Yebale by news outlets with his prior self-representations in his own social media accounts. The news stories following his death and funeral depicted Jacob as a hardworking good son who was close to his

family and helped contribute to his mother's livelihood. While the Spanish-language news clips are brief notes, they focused on the "good son" narrative while ignoring any mention of Jacob's sexuality. This chapter contrasts these public news representations with the "quotidian digital archive" (Huerta 2018) that Jacob created in life and that remains in the wake of his death as a public memorial to his life and his life's work.

Valle de Guadalupe, the Catholic Church, and Ethnography

Growing up the queer son of a mother from Valle de Guadalupe, I have been aware of the precariousness of public acts of queer sexuality in a region of Mexico that celebrates Catholic religiosity as a central tenet of the local cultural identity. The Catholic Church has long been an influential institution in Mexico, where more than 80 percent of the population identifies as Catholic.[47] Zeb Tortorici (2007, ed. 2016), a scholar of colonial Latin America, examines the role of the colonial Catholic Church as a juridical power through the inquisition and as an ecclesiastical institution that defined and ordered understandings of gender and sexual practices and the colonial world in terms of "natural" and "unnatural," "righteous" and "sinful," "legitimate" and "illegitimate," "decency" and "deviance." As an example, Tortorici (2007) notes that the control of sexual practices through early church doctrine has been regulated in terms of reproduction.

In places such as Los Altos, which has maintained an established Catholic Church since the seventeenth century, sexuality discourse and regulation are constantly present in the forms of public sermons, public courtship rituals, and *chismeando* (gossip), which I view as a method for self/peer regulation. Foucault argues that the role of the Church in sex discourse was as follows:

[47] Statistics based on 2010 Mexican National Census, where an estimated 83 percent of the population identified as Catholic. (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/proyectos/ccpv/2010/)

> the Christian pastoral prescribed as a fundamental duty the task of passing everything having to do with sex through the endless mill of speech. The forbidding of certain words, the decency of expressions, all the censoring of vocabulary, might well have been only secondary devices compared to that great subjugation: ways of rendering it morally acceptable and technically useful (Foucault 1990 ed., 21).

The church's public discourse controls sex and sexuality through its statements of what constitutes acceptable and re/productive sexuality, and places sexuality prominently within the public sphere and everyday lives of Alteños.

Since the 1960s, the Church has also played an important role in Mexican migration, becoming a voice for migrants' rights while encouraging migrants to maintain ties with and materially support their places of origin. Indeed, Los Altos is one of Mexico's largest migrant-sending regions and has a long-established and influential Catholic Church.[48] The church constitutes one of the most important institutions that organizes quotidian life in Los Altos, as well as influences return migration and the community in the diaspora. Given the Church's prominence in the day-to-day life within the region, interactions with local queer commmunity members is inevitable. By juxtaposing the narratives of "official accounts" (news media, family members) and counter-narratives in the form of online "public responses" (fans and friends), I examine the ways in which sexuality, migration, class, and kinship inform acts of public mourning.

My ethnographic work with and on the Los Altos de Jalisco Catholic church examines how transnational circulations of ideas and people inform how queer Alteño men negotiate[49] their sexuality publicly and privately, especially within the context of the regional Catholic

[48] The local history regarding the image of la Virgen de San Juan de los Lagos dates to 1623.

[49] In this project I understand the "negotiations" of gender and sexual identities and practices as a type of code-switching; the public/private performances that queer/MSM/gay men conduct to navigate spaces/identities that are typically organized, regulated, or monitored by the regional Church.

Church, which I argue serves as a key local site in which ideas about sexuality, family, and gender are produced, challenged, negotiated, and transformed. By centering queer Alteño men in this chapter, I consider how the *queer affective labor*[50] of these men is significant for the religious, social and cultural life of Los Altos. While *affective labor* has been studied within the scope of gendered domestic work, I am interested in exploring queer (sexualized) aesthetic trades as affective labor; Jacob's career as a celebrity make-up artist fits within this conceptualization of *queer aesthetic labor*. Further, in my ethnographic work as well as personal interactions in Los Altos, I have observed the development of *circuits*[51] *of intimacy*[52] that underscore the performative, discursive, and everyday spaces where *queer* realities are rendered visible, such as *certamen* beauty pageants that take place during the week of fiestas and the labor of queer men and transnational participation in the production of these pageants. I argue that due to the transnational dynamic of this region, the Los Altos regional Catholic Church, the local people and the returning migrants continuously negotiate, accommodate, and transform the meanings and practices of gender and sexual identities.

The public memorials and archives of Jacob's death--both Jacob's tomb and social media accounts--deviate from the social-norms expectations of his resting place in Valle de Guadalupe. These sites constitute representations of both his successful career as a makeup artist for transnational celebrities, and of his queer life that exists *queerly* in cyber space, where both his friends and family, and Jenni Rivera fans (re)visit their lives. This chapter aligns with the works

[50] Scholars such as Federici (2012), Gutierrez-Rodriguez (2014), Hondagneu-Sotelo (1997, 2000, 2001) explore *affective labor* within the scope of gendered domestic labor.

[51] Studies that consider transnational migration discuss "circuit" migrations. Filmmaker Alex Rivera (2003) describes "twinned communities" that reproduce themselves through *circuits* of migration between Mexico and the United States to survive economically. Rivera notes that the social-kin-economic relationships that were established in Mexico disrupt notions of "place," since these relationships co-exist transnationally.

[52] I am building my understanding of *intimacy* from Nayan Shah (2011) work on interracial homosocial/stranger intimacies among migrant men.

of Judith Butler (2004) and Yen Le Espiritu (2014), who conceptualize grief not as private or depoliticized, but as sentiments that serve "as a resource for enacting a politics that confronts the conditions under which 'certain human lives are more grievable than others'" (Espiritu 2014, 106). In this way, Jacob's social media accounts serve as a public memorial to his life and work, and as a site in which to memorialize his counterparts who perished with him in December 2012.

Field(web)sites: Social Media Methodologies - Digital Ethnographies

Jacob assembled his *digital archive* himself, documenting his career through photographic posts of his work as a celebrity make-up artist on sites such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. On Instagram, Jacob published 273 posts between June 9, 2012 and December 9, 2012, where he provided a visual documentation of his work. The photos focused on the celebrities he worked with, events they attended, work travels, and small glimpses into his quotidian life such as gym selfies. Jacob's social media accounts survive him as digital archives of his successful career connecting his work to transnational celebrities, but also of his personal life as a Mexican queer man. While he was alive, Jacob was able to respond to comments left on his photographs; after his death, friends, family and fans now utilize these sites to speak to his memory and respond to public comments.

Jillian Hernandez (2018) employs Gloria Anzaldúa for her method of *visual intimacy*, where Anzaldúa states that images can "speak to and through me, imagining my ways through the images, and following them to their deep cenotes, dialoguing with them, and then translating what I've glimpsed" (2015, 4). In this chapter I take on this methodology of *visual intimacy* to see how fans, friends and family engage in conversation with and through Jacob's digital archive. Jacob's loved ones and Jenni Rivera fans speak through these images, often revisiting

the last photograph taken on December 12, the day of the crash, and adding and replying to comments on various posts. I argue that by *speaking back* through social media public responses, the commenters are performing expressions of queer counterstories. These respondents are performing "counterstories" (Gonzalez 2021, Solorzano, et al. 2019), narratives "told from the perspective of marginalized people, as opposed to stories told by the dominant mainstream" (Gonzalez 2021, 5) to bring to light disparate sides of queer Latinidad that exist along sanitized normative accounts.

Jacob's online legacy persists across several social media sites. I approach my reading of Jacob's impact and online relics through a digital ethnographic approach. Jacob's Instagram exists as an archive of his professional legacy, as well as an online memorial for Jenni Rivera, as his last photo post is of Rivera's entourage on their way to the airport prior to their fatal flight. Jacob's Facebook allows his family and friends in Mexico and the United States to communicate their memories of Jacob, and provides a glimpse to what Jacob's social life was like. On the other hand, Youtube provides accounts of how the news media discussed Jacob's death in the context of the Rivera tragedy. The digital ethnography approach allows me to view websites such as Youtube, Instagram, and Facebook as field sites where virtual communities gather and discuss the life and memory of Jacob. Within these sites, I can also trace Jacob as an ethnographic *artifact* and *subject* that since his death in 2010 has continued to be active in these field(web)sites.

I *followed* (social media terminology) Jacob's social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram to see what Jacob produced prior to his passing, and how his public following has interacted with these pages since his death in December 2012. Tracing Jacob's social media presence across his accounts reflects his self-representations through selfies and check-ins and

preserves his intimate interactions. Following Laurent Berlant (2000), Joanne Garde-Hansen and Kristyn Gordon (2013), and Cristina Miguel (2016), I engage Jacob's social media archives as "good examples of online settings where intimate storytelling is practiced, as people tell intimate stories about their family, their travels…" (Miguel 2016, 1)--where in life, Jacob was able to represent himself and his intimate life, and where following his death, these intimate connections continue to be revisited and rearticulated by his fans and followers.

Section 1: Coming to Jacob - Valle de Guadalupe and My Positionality

I never met Jacob in life, who was 11 years older than me. The first time I heard of him was following his funeral and burial in Valle de Guadalupe, the town where my mother grew up until the age of 13 and that has shaped so much of who I am. I became acquainted with Jacob, his work, and the impact that his passing had on his family and in the Valle de Guadalupe community after his passing. The following two flashpoints capture my "encounters" with Jacob and the local Catholic Church in Los Altos.

Flashpoint 1: On December 18, a week after the airplane crash, Jacob's family celebrated the funeral Mass for him in Valle de Guadalupe. While Jacob was born in Acapulco, Guerrero, in 1974, his mother relocated to Valle de Guadalupe in the region of Los Altos de Jalisco. Jacob had already immigrated to Los Angeles to pursue his career by then. It was meaningful to me that the conservative church offers a public funeral for Jacob--an out gay man who primarily lived in West Toluca Lake, a neighborhood on the north-side of the Hollywood hills, and documented his queer life through his social media.[53] Los Angeles-based *Estrella TV*[54]

[53] Jacob Yebale, Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/jacobyebale/?hl=en; Jacob Yebale, Twitter: https://twitter.com/jacobyebale?lang=en; Jacob Yebale, Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/jacob.yebale.

[54] "Último adiós al maquilliesta de Jenni" *Estrella TV* (12/2012). YouTube. https://youtu.be/JX1ixTejuxE

and Mexican-based *Imagen TV*[55] covered the funeral and interviewed members of Jacob's mourning family. Both news stories showed a crowded parish church and followed the funeral procession to the municipal cemetery for the entombment, highlighting the *"dolor indescriptible"* – "indescribable grief" of Jacob's mother, María Virginia. The parish church of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, where Jacob's funeral Mass was held, was decorated with lavish flower adornments and light blue and pink drapery, likely placed in celebration for the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Both news clips also show the crowded church to be full to capacity. Jacob through his tragic death, funeral and burial appears to have brought this community together. The funeral mass for Jacob—an out gay man—demonstrates the presence of queerness in the transnational space of the Los Altos church. What does it mean to have the socially conservative Los Altos Church celebrates one of its rites in memory of an out gay man who lived in the United States?

Flashpoint 2: I juxtapose the church's funeral mass in 2012 for Jacob with my own experience with the church's conservative stance on sexuality a year later. In December 2013, approximately one year after Jacob's funeral, I visited Valle de Guadalupe with my parents - a holiday return to our hometown that my family practiced almost yearly. While attending a traditional *posada*, I heard the celebrant attribute what he perceived to be the negative social changes in the town of Valle de Guadalupe: public displays of queer sexuality, choosing domestic partnerships over traditional marriage, divorce, and unwed or single parenting--to *los de allá,* "those from over there [the United States]." While there might be a transnational element to these social dynamics, the priest did not mention the possibility that these non-normative

[55] "No lo Cuentes. Entierran los restos del maquillista de Jenni Rivera en Jalisco" *ImagenTV* (12/18/2012). YouTube https://youtu.be/_JIn1gQqz34

queer realities have always been present in Los Altos. As I listened to the sermon, I questioned what it meant to have such homophobic statements proclaimed in public. With my parents seated at either side of me, I was troubled by the thought that they might internalize these statements since our US-based immigrant family could easily be linked to what the priest described as moral turpitudes. Being queer and having grown up "*allá*" in the United States, I felt out of place at that moment in the town that I have always regarded as "home." As my notions of "home" and my sexuality collided, I understood this moment through Gloria Anzaldúa's (2002) framework of *nepantla*,[56] which she describes as a transformative state where "different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenants, and identities inherited from your family, your education, and your different cultures" (Anzaldúa and Keating, eds. 2002, 548), sparking the realization that a transnational community entails spiritual, social, and discursive borderlands. Like Marcia Ochoa (2014), this moment also provoked for me the question: "would I still be queer had my family stayed?" Rather than engaging the priest after the mass in response to his statements, I chose to leave the posada and practice my own response of defiance by cruising the town's plaza.

These two flashpoints demonstrate that even in a ritualized religious setting, the church constitutes a discursive space where queerness, transnational interactions, and identity and sexuality discourse are actively present, often in contradictory ways. These incidents led me to ask: *How are non-normative and queer realities challenged, negotiated and formed in this conservative but transnational Catholic community?* Juxtaposing these two flashpoints--Jacob's 2012 funeral and the December 2013 posada moment--illuminates that the Los Altos regional

[56] Anzalúa refers *nepantla* as "states of mind that question old ideas and beliefs, acquire new perspectives, change worldviews, and shift from one world to another" (Anzaldúa and Keating, eds. 2002).

Catholic Church is a transnational space (Martinez 2008) in which ideologies about gender, sex, and sexuality are consantly negotiated and reformulated in the Church and beyond. In Jacob's case, even as the Church was officially condemning queer sexuality, it still offered a well-attended public funeral for an out gay man who primarily lived in West Hollywood.[57] Focusing on *transnational circuits of intimacy*, this chapter examines how the Los Altos regional Catholic Church and *queer* men who are part of the Los Altos transnational community negotiate and transform idea(l)s of gender and sexuality in the very space of the church and in the diaspora. As I discuss below, Jacob's social media accounts survive him as archives of his successful career connecting his work to transnational celebrities, and as archives of his personal life as a queer man.

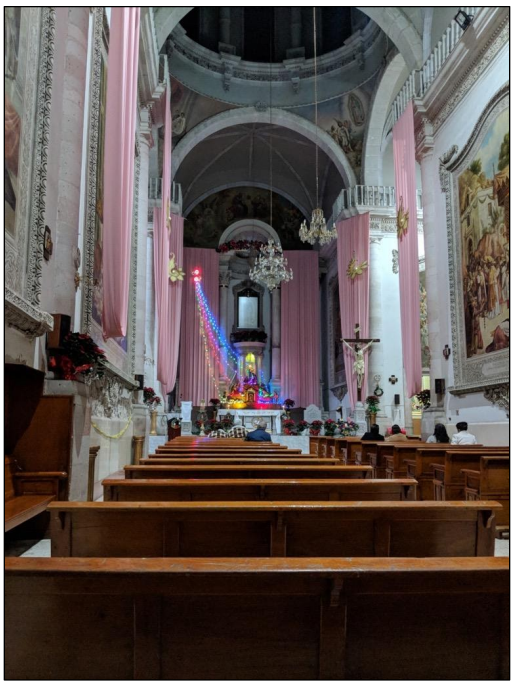


Figure 9: Interior and main altar of the parish church in Valle de Guadalupe, December 18, 2017.

[57] Jacob Yebale, Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/jacobyebale/?hl=en; Jacob Yebale, Twitter: https://twitter.com/jacobyebale?lang=en; Jacob Yebale, Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/jacob.yebale.

I took the photograph above on December 18, 2017 before the nightly 8pm Mass at the parish church of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. December 18 was the night I arrived at Valle de Guadalupe to conduct dissertation fieldwork, and soon after settling into my parents' house, the church bells began to ring for the town's people for evening Mass. Despite having experienced homophobia in the church just four years earlier, I felt obliged to attend mass that night as a way to connect with the day-to-day life in el Valle. I did not know that the mass intention would be for Jacob Yebale on the fifth anniversary of his death and burial. Jacob's mother, la señora María Virginia Aguilar, is in the foreground of that photograph, sitting to the right of the nave, wearing a black coat. This moment felt serendipitous; Jacob's funeral and burial has been a topic that I have been interested in writing for this dissertation, and the coincidence of arriving for this anniversary mass felt like a symbolic validation of the work I am doing. I continued to attend evening mass during my time in Valle de Guadalupe, as an ethnographic and cultural-spiritual practice, and I observed the many ways in which the church, despite its stated homophobic positions and practices, inadvertently facilitates "queer space." Indeed, I observed how the church space was simultaneously a place where seemingly socially conservative people went to practice their faith as well as a space that facilitated subtle but nevertheless homo-social interactions.

In the epigraph that opens this chapter, José Esteban Muñoz (2011) ponders the *afterlife* of Cuban artist Ana Mendieta, *what remains of her works*, and the combined sense of "feminist outrage and mourning" (Muñoz 2011, 191) that Mendieta's works now provoke. Muñoz begins that article with these questions: *What is attempted when one looks for Ana Mendieta? What does her loss signify in the here and now?* Similar questions frame this chapter on Jacob Yebale. When one looks for Jacob Yebale, we inevitably come across the products of his labor as a

celebrity makeup artist – in particular, his work with Chicana Banda singer Jenni Rivera. The second question that Muñoz poses is one that I have contemplated in connection to the *place* where Jacob was buried in Valle de Guadalupe. Like Jacob, I was not born in Valle de Guadalupe; however both our mothers have called that town *home*. Having visited Valle de Guadalupe multiple times since Jacob's death, I contemplate the significance of having a public religious celebration for an out gay man, and the implications of that public funeral since.

I came to learn more of Jacob's life and his death during a fall 2014 Performance Studies graduate seminar in the Department of Communication at UCSD. Through various monologue assignments, I pondered on what Jacob's mother, María Virginia Aguilar, uttered in the *EstrellaTV* news interview following the entombment of her son, when she stated:

> *"Les doy gracias a todos. Que yo no pensé – [pause] gran hijo que tenía."*
> "I thank you all. I never thought (*realized/knew*) – [pause] What great son I had."

Figure 10: María Virginia Aguilar statement to *Estrella TV* (Youtube)[58]

[58] "Último adiós a maquillista de Jenni" Dec 18, 2012. Estrella TV (U.S.-based network) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JX1ixTejuxE

I grappled with (mis)interpreting María Virginia's public utterance. At that time, I took her words as a continuous statement meaning "I thank you all (for coming); for I never realized what a great son I had." As a queer son of a mother from Valle de Guadalupe, that statement haunted me, particularly because I had been processing my own mortality after witnessing a mass shooting in June 2012. My initial (mis)interpretation came from the perspective of a son, who because of the homophobia that I have experienced in Valle, practices Juan Gabriel's "lo que se ve, no se platica" approach to living and discussing my queer sexuality with family, especially when visiting Mexico. Because of this (mis)interpretation, I wondered: *Did it take Jacob's death for his mother to find an appreciation for the person that he was?* However, I came to realize that if we listened for the breath pause, we can interpret that María Virginia is making two separate statements:

> I thank you all (for coming to support), for I never thought … [breath pause, open-ended statement] - What a great son I had. [assertion]

Hearing two separate statements, I interpret María Virginia uttering both a statement of gratitude and critique that the townspeople of Valle de Guadalupe accompany her in her grief, despite the types of public homophobia expressed in Los Altos. I see this as an acknowledgment of the "doble moral" present in Los Altos where institutions such as the local Catholic church will be vocally homophobic, yet there are always exceptions for acceptable queerness in the space of the church.

Figure 11: Screenshot of Estrella TV news segment, YouTube, December 18, 2012

> Priest: *Me uno a la familia. En estos momentos no puede ver palabras de consuelo. Para la mamá tampoco, por qué, porque separarse de un hijo no es nada fácil y menos en un acontecimiento cruel… El señor les perdone todos los pecados y vayan ahora a gozar de la vida eterna, donde se celebra la verdadera navidad.*
>
> I am with the family. At this time there cannot be words of comfort. Neither for the mother, why, because separating from a child is not easy and less so in a cruel event ... May the Lord forgive all [Jacob's] sins and now go to enjoy eternal life, where it is celebrated as a real Christmas.

I view the coverage of Jacob's funeral through my auto-ethnographic lens that centers my own queer Chicanx epistemology. Jacob, his connection to my hometown of Valle de Guadalupe, and his funeral illustrate the dynamic that I have observed in the fiestas. I learned to understand my queerness and perform my sexuality vis-à-vis my proximity to the Los Altos transnational community. Growing up in this community, I was attentive to how non-normative sexualities are addressed within this context. I noticed blatant instances of homophobia as well as spaces where queer men have inserted themselves. One example from my childhood is the memory of seeing my tía's friend Toño, a gay man with feminine presentation, who had to hear mass from the atrium of the church. Toño continued to practice his faith and participated from

the margins despite acts of exclusion. My motivation for this chapter is to understand the complex dynamics of the relationship between the regional Catholic church and queer men who live or frequent the region of Los Altos. I conceptualize queer as an analytic (Quiroga 2000) that allows me to "explore the dialectics of visibility, geography, and [cultural] politics" (28). I sought to understand how both the Los Altos Church and queer Alteño men publically negotiated discourse of sexuality.

Figure 12: Photographs of Jacob Yebale's tomb in the Valle de Guadalupe Municipal Cemetery

"Nadie muere mientras permanece vivo en el corazón de alguien."	"No one dies while it remains alive in someone's heart."
Nos dejaste mucho dolor con tu partida, pero volvemos los ojos al señor nuestro Dios, él te tiene de la mano y a nosotros nos da la paz y fortaleza que necesitamos.	You left us a lot of pain with your departure, but we turn our eyes to the Lord our God, he holds you by the hand and gives us the peace and strength we need.
Tu luz dejó de brillar en la tierra ahora eres otra estrella que ilumina el cielo.	Your light ceased to shine on earth, now you are another star that illuminates the sky.
TE RECORDAMOS CON AMOR, MAMÁ Y HERMANOS	WE REMEMBER YOU WITH LOVE, MOM AND SIBLINGS

I took the above photographs of Jacob's tomb at the Panteón Municipal Valle de Guadalupe. Jacob's tomb is decorated with brown wood-print tiles with the image of la Virgen de Guadalupe on the top, *and* a tiled plaque with Jacob's image and epitaph superimposed on clouds and a book. This photograph, in which Jacob exudes sexuality, is yet another example of how queer people inhabit the space of the conservative Catholic church. In the photo, Jacob is crouched and shirtless. Gazing intensely forward, he held a can of Heineken beer in his right hand; his left arm flexed and holding on to a black tejana hat. Perusing his Facebook postings, I notice that Heineken was Jacob's favorite beer. On several occasions such as outings at clubs or at house parties, Jacob is shown with a can or bottle of Heineken, so it is fitting that his family would include such a memory on his tomb. The photo, first posted by him on Facebook on September 3, 2009,[59] seems jarring against the image of la Virgen de Guadalupe; and yet, both images co-exist as part of a tribute to Jacob's memories in this conservative Catholic space.

Section 2: News Depictions of Jacob and the Accident

This section examines the news coverage surrounding Jacob's death, funeral, and subsequent legal challenges that his family waged in seeking restitution for their loss. I examine how the Mexican and U.S.-based Spanish-language news media and his family describe the life and death of Jacob. On the one hand, I found that these outlets portrayed Jacob in a non-sexualized sanitized language, reflecting Mexican hegemonic ideologies. On the other hand, they also provided a platform for emergent queer discourses. I place the news segments within what Raymond Williams (1977) identifies as "residual," "emergent," and "dominant" cultural formations - where the news media as an institution is central to the reproduction of traditions

[59] Facebook - Jacob Yebale September 2, 2009. https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1178060062011&set=pb.1543436286.-2207520000..&type=3

and formations, in that they actively reproduce *residual* cultural, religious, and societal ideologies on sexuality, masculinity, and family.

The news coverage focusing on Jacob began on December 18, 2012[60] - the day of his funeral. Subsequent coverage in January 2013 centered around lawsuits that the families of the other victims were filing against Learjet, and Jenni Rivera's estate, and in December 2017, on the fifth anniversary of the accident. While the majority of the coverage has been on Spanish-language media outlets, Los Angeles affiliates for CBS news, local KTLA and the *Los Angeles Times* also covered Jacob's memorial in North Hollywood, and his family's lawsuits for restitutions. However, continuous coverage of the accident began on December 9, 2012 and centered on the loss of Banda singer, Jenni Rivera. Yessica Garcia-Hernandez (2015) notes that as a reality television figure, Rivera branded herself as a "middle-class Chicana who successfully achieved, and is maintaining, the American dream of living in a million-dollar home while staying true to her 'Mexican roots'" (Garcia-Hernandez 2015, 434). Because her life played out in front of cameras, the drama surrounding career, personal life and the Rivera family fights were already hot topics for Spanish-language media. The accident, while tragic, was a bullet point addition to the stories that were already part of the news surrounding Rivera's pending divorce and the unresolved oedipal feud with her eldest daughter, Chiquis.

The news media narrated Jacob's death primarily through his family's grief, and framed his life story through the politics of respectability, depicting Jacob as a good son who provided financially for his family. On Monday December 18, Mexican-based CadenaTres (now ImagenTV as of October 2016) covered Jacob's funeral for their afternoon entertainment focused

[60] On December 18, 2012 Mexican-based CadenaTres https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JIn1gQqz34 (now ImagenTV) and Los Angeles-based EstrellaTV (see footnote 26) covered Jacob's funeral in Valle de Guadalupe, Jalisco.

talk show, *No Lo Cuentes*. The 2:30 minute segment focused on the agony that Jacob's mothers experienced as she dealt with the funeral of her son. Reporter Carla Ortega narrates:

> Una madre llora, lamenta y reniega la pérdida de su hijo - María Virginia Aguilar, madre de Jacob Yebale, maquillista de Jenni Rivera y otras celebridades perdió la vida el pasado nueve de diciembre en un accidente aéreo junto con 'la diva de la banda' y cinco personas más. [Cut to the parish church bells calling to funeral mass] El domingo pasado (17 december, 2012), los restos de Jacob llegaron al lado de quien le diera la vida, lo cuidara y lo criara hasta convertirse al hombre que fue. Y es ella misma quien no entiende y no acepta no volverlo a ver. En medio de cantos y lágrimas, sus seres queridos le dieron el adiós con una emotiva misa celebrada en una iglesia del municipio de Valle de Guadalupe en Jalisco. Y es ahí mismo donde su madre quiso que fuera sepultado pues a pesar que Jacob era originario de Acapulco, María Virginia no acepta tenerlo lejos. [Celebrantan: 'Me uno a la familia en este momento. No puede haber palabras de consuelo para la mamá tampoco, porque separarse de un hijo no es nada fácil y menos en un acontecimiento cruel… El señor les perdone todos los pecados… vayan ahora a gozar de la vida eterna donde se celebra la verdadera navidad.'] Una vez concluida la misa, un cortejo fúnebre resguardo el ataúd hasta el panteón. Con un dolor indescriptible, María Virginia se despidió de su hijo: [María Virginia: Angelitos en el cielo, en el cielo sigue maquillando a los angelitos'] Descanse en paz, Jacob Yebale.
>
> A mother cries, mourns and denies the loss of her son - María Virginia Aguilar, mother of Jacob Yebale, Jenni Rivera's makeup artist and other celebrities, lost his life on December 9 in a plane crash along with 'the diva of the banda' and five other people. [Cut to the parish church bells calling to funeral mass] Last Sunday (December 17, 2012), Jacob's remains arrived at the side of the one who gave him life, cared for him and raised him to become the man he was. And it is she herself who does not understand and does not accept not seeing him again. Amid songs and tears, his loved ones said goodbye to him with an emotional mass celebrated in a church in the municipality of Valle de Guadalupe in Jalisco. And it is right there where his mother wanted him to be buried because even though Jacob was originally from Acapulco, María Virginia does not accept having him far away. [Celebrant: 'I join the family [in their grief] right now. There can be no words of comfort for the mother either, because separating from a child is not easy at all, and even less so in a cruel event... May the Lord forgive you all your sins... go now to enjoy eternal life where the true Christmas is celebrated. '] Once the mass was over, a funeral procession took the coffin to the cemetery. With indescribable pain, María Virginia said goodbye to her son: [María Virginia: angels in heaven, in heaven keep making up the little angels'] Rest in peace, Jacob Yebale.

The news clip opens at the Valle de Guadalupe cemetery before the entombment, capturing a crowd surrounding Jacob's casket that is engraved with the image of la Virgen de Guadalupe and adorned with flowers. María Virgina, his mother, pounds her palm on the casket then lays her head on top, her gestures jolting the coffin to where it slams onto other tombs. In

both the Mexican and U.S. reporting of Jacob's funeral, María Virgina's grief is the central focus of the story. In response to Ortega's report, Gustavo Adolfo Infante, the anchor of the show who had interviewed Jenni Rivera and her brother Lupillo, reacted "que fuerte, que memento tan dramatico" - "how impactful, what a dramatic moment." The news clip (see footnote 26, min 1:00) also features Jacob 's sister telling the reporter about her close relationship to her brother: "no había día que no nos texteamos dónde estaba él. El viernes le estaba texteando, estaba en Colima y iba ir el sábado allá a Monterrey" - "There wasn't a day that we didn't text each other where he was. On Friday I was texting him, he was in Colima and was going to Monterrey on Saturday." The caption for ImageTV's youtube video included Jacob's professional credentials, including his degree in makeup and visual effects, and listed seventeen celebrities that he had worked with in addition to Jenni Rivera. In the days initially following the accident, the news coverage had focused on Jenni Rivera and the Rivera family and the spectacle outside of her mother, doña Rosa Saavera's house in Long Beach.

The Spanish-language news clips that covered Jacob's funeral focused on the showing-up of the Valle community, and the family's grief and mourning mother. In response to la señora María Virginia's statement to *EstrellaTV,* a YouTube user rebuttals through a public *comment*, claiming:

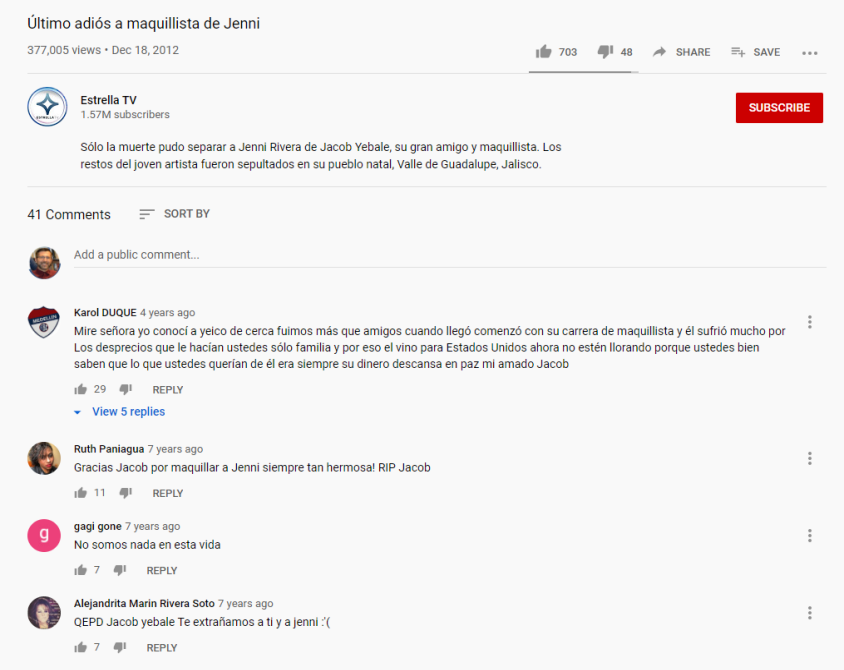


Figure 13: Screenshot of EstrellaTV news clip on Youtube

> *Mire señora yo conocí a yeico de cerca fuimos más que amigos cuando llegó comenzó con su carrera de maquillista y él sufrió mucho por Los desprecios que le hacían ustedes sólo familia y por eso el vino para Estados Unidos ahora no estén llorando porque ustedes bien saben que lo que ustedes querían de él era siempre su dinero descansa en paz mi amado Jacob*.
>
> Look, ma'am, I knew Yeico[61] [Jacob] closely, we were more than friends when he arrived, [when] he began his career as a makeup artist and he suffered a lot because of the contempt that you[,] just [his given] family did to him. [A]nd that is why he came to the United States. [N]ow, do not be crying because you well know that what you wanted from him was always his money - rest in peace my beloved Jacob.

Similar comments were made to news clips covering his funeral and subsequent lawsuits.[62] A year later, Jacob's mother and sister filed against the Rivera family for restitution and to claim Jacob's belongings that were left at Jenni's house prior to their work in Mexico.

[61] I take "Yeico" as the intentional misspelling of Jacob as pronounced in Spanish, written that way as a sign of familiarity and affection by respondant.
[62] "Madre de Jacob reclama los bienes de su hijo." Televisa Ciudad Juarez. February 12, 2014 https://youtu.be/O1oIyJqOz6I - Note: the news clip is no longer available on youtube.

Figure 14: Screenshots of Televisa Ciudad Juarez newsclip posted February 12, 2014. Youtube post no longer available.

Commenters "clap back" to Jacob's sister and mother, rebutting their claims to his property. In a similar comment to the funeral news clip, a viewer states *"Ahora si reclama si a su hijo ni lo aceptaba por ser gay"* - "Now you claim him, if you didn't even accept your son for being gay." These public comments contradict the public portrayal of Jacob's church funeral in Valle de Guadalupe in which his closeness to his family was unquestioned and celebrated. The two December 18, 2012 news clips demonstrate the grief presented by Jacob's family, and the dominant public discourse was one of the respectful son who cared for his mother. Manalasan (2006) notes that queer migrants, "coming from biological families who still live in the homeland and who depend on their remittances and other kinds of support… need to negotiate conflicting emotions and attitudes to mark the economic transnational binds that connect them to each other" (Manalasan 2006, 236). These forms of visual intimacy, the depictions of Jacob and the interviews with his family members in the news clips, demonstrate the negotiations that Jacob maintained as a queer migrant. Further, the public comments on the Youtube clips

highlight the complexities of transnational queer life. In the context of the church and Jacob's family in Mexico, his sexuality publicly remained a tacit subject (Decena 2011) that Jacob may not have negotiated with his family. Commentators to these news clips called out what they perceived to be the homophobia that Jacob experienced from his family and his family hypocrisy in publicly mourning Jacob's death. And yet, as discussed in the previous section, Jacob's sexuality is publicly present on his tomb decoration in the form of the Facebook photo that his family had chosen to memorialize on his tomb in Valle de Guadalupe cemetery.

In the ensuing months, the tenor of the news reporting shifted from focusing on the feelings of grief experienced by Jacob's mother to the legal drama playing out when the families of Jenni Rivera's entourage pursued legal actions. U.S.-based Primer Impacto reported that four weeks following the accident, a legal complaint was filed on behalf of Jacob's sister, Antonia Yebale, against the manufacturers of the jet plane that carried Jenni Rivera and her entourage. In that segment, news anchor Barbara Bermudo interviews Virginia Yebale, another of Jacob 's sisters, opening with "*tuve la oportunidad de conocer a tu hermano - sentimos mucho la perdida de el.*" - "I had the opportunity to meet your brother - we are very sorry for the loss of him."[63] In the January 3 interview, Bermudo asks about Jacob's relationship with his family, the family dynamics and their plans for moving forward; *"cuéntanos sobre la relación que llevaban"* - "tell us about the relationship you had with your brother" [Jacob with his sister Antonia, who Bermudo states 'practically raised Jacob']; *"sabemos que Jacob ayudaba económicamente a su familia en México, cuál es su plan en sí y que es lo que esperan con la demanda"* - We know that Jacob helped his family in Mexico financially, what is their plan to that respect and what are

[63]"La familia del maquillista de Jenni Rivera se prepara para demandar - Primer Impacto" January 3, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqPnsaRzeRI

they expecting from the lawsuit"; *"cómo era tu relación con tu hermano, un niño encantador."* - "how was your relationship with your brother, a lovely boy." The following week, on January 7, 2013, Primer Impacto follows up their interview with Jacob's mother in which she shares her motivations for seeking legal restitution - while she did not intend to seek monetary relief, the family of Arturo Rivera, one of the other victims encouraged Jacob's family to enter in their lawsuit against the airplane company.[64] Following the December 18 funeral and coverage of the potential lawsuits, the coverage of Jacob pivots back to focusing on Jenni Rivera, and the public conversation returns to a focus on the skepticism surrounding los Rivera.

Section 3: How Jacob's friends and fans utilize his digital archive

This sections moves to explore how Jacob is remembered by his queer online community. I analyze posts made to Jacob's Facebook profile in the period following his death in 2013 to explore how his followers express meanings of loss and tragedy. Whereas the posts made on Jacob's Instagram profile and on YouTube news clips demonstrate expressions of loss, many of these are made in response to Jacob's proximity to Jenni Rivera, the posts on Jacob's Facebook are more reflections of his intimate connections. As Lauren Berlant (1998) has argued, social media allows users to project public intimacy that "involves an aspiration for a narrative about something shared, a story about both oneself and others that will turn out in a particular way. Usually, this story is set within zones of familiarity and comfort: friendship, the couple, and the family form, animated by expressive and emancipating kinds of love" (Berlant 1998, 281). Through my analysis of the post-death social media posts and comments as *text* and *artifacts*, I

[64] "Madre del maquillista de Jenni Rivera quiere dar con responsables de muerte de su hijo" - Primer Impacto January 7, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkLOwAjZS6g

think of public expressions of queer affection that desmonstrate how nonheteronormative people maintain kinships and express public intimacy across digital time/space.

Following his death, Jacob's Facebook[65] account converted to a *Remembering* "memorialized account,"[66] a function that preserves the public content that Jacob had shared, and allows his followers to share their memories of Jacob. The *Remembering* setting maintains the public/privacy settings as Jacob had prior to his death, and Jacob's followers are able to post new messages onto his profile's timeline. It is through these features that Jacob's friends, family, and followers are able to "tag" and post comments to preserved photos and on special occasions such as his birthday and on the anniversary of his death. Online platforms, such as Facebook, serve as digital archives as well as facilitate *digital intimacy*, where social media platforms facilitate "self-(re)presentations"[67] through the creation of profiles and use of images, and comments - and serve as forums that allow participants to connect in their shared experiences of queer affect, kinship, and mourning. Cristina Miguel (2016) has looked at the use of photographs to build and convey intimacy within social media interactions. While Miguel's work primarily studies users' picture self(ie)-representation on Facebook and a dating site, she notes that *comments* are a useful way to check "reaction and affections" (Miguel 2016, 3).

Jacob had a "chosen family" in Los Angeles that consisted of other people in the entertainment and beauty industries and people in his queer community. Gay Chicano scholar Richard T. Rodriguez (2009, 2020) explores the construction of familial networks in Chicano and diasporic communities. On his Facebook, Jacob documented his quotidian life, such as club performances that his friends participated in, gym selfies, check-ins at the airport and work

[65] https://www.facebook.com/jacob.yebale Since Jacob's passing, his Facebook profile has been converted into a "remembering" profile.

[66] Facebook Definition for "Memorialized Accounts" https://www.facebook.com/help/1017717331640041

[67] Cristina Miguel (2016)

functions. Following his death, his friends continued to post memories of their times together and frequently reposted photos, particularly on the anniversary of his death in December and on his birthday in August. In the same week of his funeral mass in Mexico, a memorial service was also held for Jacob in North Hollywood, where he had resided.[68] [69] Jacob's gay sexual identity, his migrant experience from Mexico, and his work in the entertainment and beauty industries lent him to interact with varying communities and build kinship networks. In "Diaspora, Displacement, and Belonging: The Politics of the Family and the Future of Queer Kinship," Rodriguez (2020) argues:

> [T]he importance of decentering "hegemonic forms of kinship," while remaining attuned to the way "given" families may in fact link up to "selected" families for purposes of communal sustenance and endurance. I am expressly attentive to the way diasporic communities in the United States navigate family and kinship in light of racial, sexual, and gender difference. Furthermore, I aim to show how seemingly competing family and kinship systems frequently work in tandem in the face of social and economic displacement and, thus, require understanding what Elizabeth A. Povinelli identifies as interlocking "grids" with respect to their reciprocally constitutive nonnormative valances. (Rodriguez 2020, 216)

In the Facebook posts immediately following Jacob's death, we see a confluence of interactions between Jacob's blood family in Mexico and his "queer kinship" network in Los Angeles. In a December 14, 2012 interaction between Jacob's sister (figure 15) Vicky and three of Jacob's close friends, Carolina, Evelyn, and Julieta, we see a shared expression of sympathy and respect. In her post where she announces the funeral arrangements for Jacob in Valle de Guadalupe, Vicky expresses, "Gracias a todas las muestras de cariño que le han brindado a mi hermano y no solo a él sino también a la familia" - "Thank you for all the signs of affection that

[68] Leticia Ponce, a friend of Jacob had created several compilation tribute videos of Jacob's photographs and video messages: "Jacob 1 Amigos" https://youtu.be/VcAAVVF4CB0; "Jacob 2 Make up" https://youtu.be/N6pzr1eZ5m4; "Jacob 3" https://youtu.be/dNb2VXhHqiU; "Jacob 4" https://youtu.be/hrkJdvzuZXk.

[69] CBS Los Angeles (12/19/2012) https://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2012/12/19/family-holds-vigil-for-jenni-riveras-makeup-artist/

you have given to my brother and not only to him but also to the family." In the three responses to Vicky, Jacob's close friends likewise express their sympathy and shared grief, and identify that Jacob had an extensive kinship network in Los Angeles. They also communicated that while they would like to accompany the family in their funeral arrangements in Mexico, his Los Angeles family would be holding an additional memorial service the day following Jacob's funeral. While notions of queer "chosen family" often evoke connotations that they remain separate from blood familial connections, I read the interactions on Jacob's Facebook timeline as an example in which these family networks can and do "work in tandem."

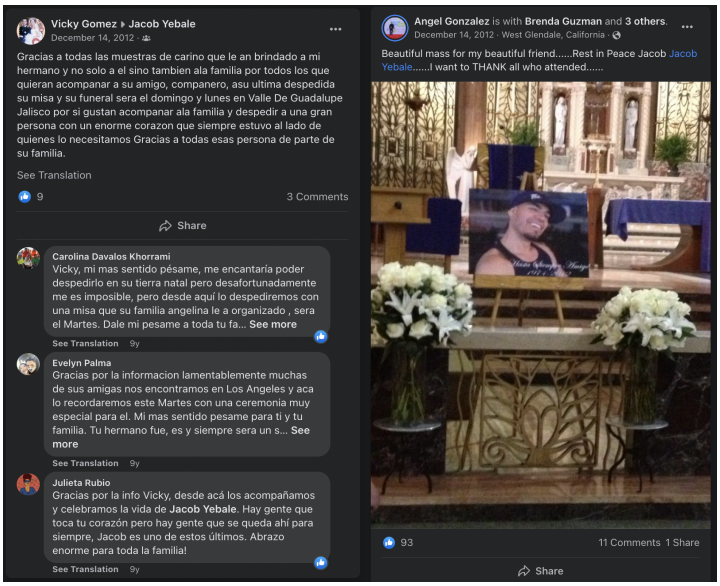


Figure 15: Screenshot of Facebook - December 14, 2012

Figure 16: Screenshot of Memorial service posted on Jacob Yebale's personal Facebook, December 13, 2012.

On January 4, 2013, Los Angeles-based entertainment producer posted an article written by trans journalist and blogger, Victoria Ruiz. Ruiz wrote a profile of Jacob titled "La Trayectoria Artística de un Ángel: Joel Linares - Jacob Yebale," published in the January 2013 issue of ADELANTE Magazine, a Spanish-language magazine that caters to the Los Angeles GLBT community. The preceding pages to the profile article include ads to gay nightclubs such as Club Coco Bongo, which hosts a banda norteña night, Club Tempo which advertises Latina drag nights and "sexy hombres" gogo dancers, and a "year in photos" review a male underwear contests, drag pageants, and gay celebrities participanting in a "NO-H8" campaign event, and a bilingual feature on a local HIV-clinic that highlights the risk of HIV/AIDS among gay Latinos and free services to the community. Ruiz writes:

> Este artículo lo quiero dedicar a honrar la memoria de un guerrero que luchó siempre por salir adelante y lograr convertir sus sueños desde niño en una hermosa realidad. Nuestra comunidad GLBT está de luto con la pérdida de uno de los más sobresalientes profesionales de la magia del maquillaje de las más grandes celebridades como lo fue nuestro querido JACOB YEBALE.

> I want to dedicate this article to honor the memory of a warrior who always fought to get ahead and turn his childhood dreams into a beautiful reality. Our GLBT community is in mourning with the loss of one of the most outstanding professionals in the magic of makeup (artistry, who worked with many) the greatest celebrities, such was our beloved JACOB YEBALE.

This obituary demonstrates the notoriety that Jacob had developed of his own accord through his involvement in the Los Angeles Latino GLBT community. Indeed, browsing Jacob's facebook, and Instagram posts prior to his passing, the club events advertised in ADELANTE magazine, such as the drag pageants at Club Tempo were events that he frequented (see figure 16).

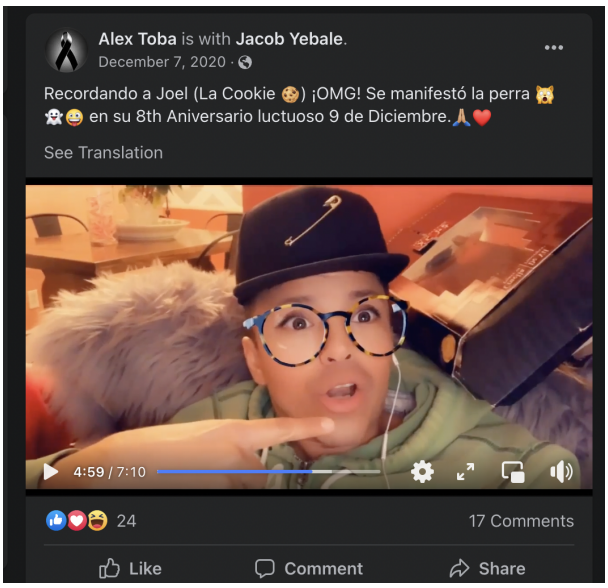


Figure 17: Screenshot of December 7, 2020 Facebook Live

On December 7, 2020, the eighth anniversary of Jacob's passing, Alex Toba, a West Hollywood drag performer and impersonator who was in Jacob's social circle in Los Angeles posted a 07:10 minute Facebook Live video into Jacob's timeline in which he recounted anecdotes about his time with Jacob.[70] Alex begins his vlog stating "hola jotiringas," identifying with his queer audience, Toba sets a camp-tone through his use of filters and familiar conversation style. Toba states that he wanted to take time from putting up his Christmas

[70] Facebook, December 7, 2020 https://www.facebook.com/100000208922487/videos/4158396697510587/

decorations to remember the life, not the death of "Joel/Jacob/la Joela,"[71] stating, "así como era divertida era tremendito - los que sí lo conocimos, sabemos, era tremendita" - "Just as she was fun, he was tremendous (devious/sly - positive connotation) - those of us who knew him, know, she was troublesome." Throughout the post, Toba intentionally switches between feminine and masculine pronouns to identify Jacob, himself and the audience. Don Kulick (2000) observes that the use of *she* in gay language is a "parodic strategy of distancing speakers from stereotypes, or that calling males 'she' might be a commentary, not on women but on gender—precisely its lack of naturalness, lack of control, and nastiness" (Kulick 2000, 254). Kulick places gay vernacular as a facet of "camp" culture that is present in gay linguistic socialization, where "camp is the one dimension of queer linguistic behavior" (ibid). Toba recounts trips to Miami, spontaneous dinners and nights out, a short falling-out that was resolved at Jacob's birthday party, and the trust that Jacob bestowed on him to hold onto his personal documents while he traveled. In a moment of levity, Toba describes that Jacob enjoyed collecting music CDs, "*iba a donde sea a buscar CDs y el que no tenía, se lo robaba… a mi me robo uno, el de Yuri*" - "he would go anywhere to look for CDs, and the ones he didn't have, he stole them... he stole one from me, Yuri's" - as he's telling this story of Jacob stealing one of his favorite CDs, a toy box falls off the wall hitting Toba over the head, prompting him to say, *"vieron, la perra me está bufando"* - "you see, the bitch is taunting me" (see figure 17).

This section explored how friends, family, and fans utilize Jacob's Facebook timeline to memorialize him in the years following his death. The posts from December 2012 to December 2021 reveal that while these might seem disparate groups, for gay Latino men, family both blood

[71] In the January 2013 issue of Adelante Magazine, a Los Angeles-based Spanish language LGBT magazine, Victoria Ruiz mentions that Jacob often utilized the artist name Joel Linares. (see Appendix)

kinship and queer kinships, often work in tandem - in this case to participate in a collective grieving and eulogizing of Jacob in the weeks following the plane accident, and on important anniversaries in the ensuing years to continue memorializing his life and death.

Section 4: Jacob's Digital Archive - His own Self-Representation

"Celebrity Makeup Artist - Airbrush Expert!!!"

This section highlights Jacob's work and self representation through his Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube social media profiles.[72] Whereas the previous section explored the ways in which Jacob's personal kinship networks, both familial and queer social kin, continue to demonstrate their affection for Jacob through Facebook posts, this section looks for Jacob's voice through his online self-representation and professional representation. Jacob's professional career as a celebrity makeup artist was launched in 2004 after graduating from the M.U.D. Designory. By the time that he began working with Jenni Rivera (Jacob worked with Rivera in the photoshoots for her 2008 album *Jenni*), Jacob had already established himself as a celebrity makeup artist in Los Angeles and Mexico. He worked with international artists such as Bret Michaels during his VH1 reality series *Rock of Love* (2007 - 2009) and Eva Longoria on her public advocacy campaigns (2010), and with Mexican artists Kate del Castillo, Gloria Trevi, and Ana Barbara. Jacob's in-memoriam Facebook profile provides an archive of Jacob's personal and professional interactions. In this archived Facebook, Jacob states that he attended Preparatoria de Universidad Anáhuac prior to migrating to the United States, graduating in the class of 1993; and in 2004, Jacob completed a Master Make-up Artistry program at M.U.D. - Make-up Designory, an accredited career school in 2004.

[72] Jacob's Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/jacob.yebale; Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/JacobYebale/?hl=en; Twitter: https://twitter.com/jacobyebale; Youtube - Yebale10: https://www.youtube.com/user/yebale10/videos; Youtube - JYebale: https://www.youtube.com/user/jyebale/videos

Reading Jacob's Facebook, there is a distinction between the posts made prior to the December 2012 accident and posts made following the accident by his friends and family to mark dates such as his birthday in August, and the anniversary of his death. In the pre-December 2012 posts, Jacob narrates his work life, check-ins at his gym, and documents moments with candid photographs of his work locations and weekends out with his friends. I see Jacob's Instagram and Youtube profiles as a curated CV of his professional work as a celebrity make-up artist; and his presence on Facebook and Twitter demonstrate his personal and social connections. Cristina Miguel (2016) is again useful in articulating the role of self-representation in social media. She argues that although choreographed, the use of photos on social media platforms facilitate a "bridging of online and offline and public and private realms" (Miguel 2016, 3). Similarly, Lasén (2015) argues that social media platforms are stages where users negotiate intimacy in public through self disclosure "in a choreographic way" (p. 76), where comments are useful to check other people's reactions and affections. In the same vein, Ardèvol and Gómez-Cruz (2012) highlight that in the process of the disclosure of selfies online in the context of everyday narratives of the self, one's intimacy becomes public. Thus, selfies could be understood as a public self-representation: "the public performance of the personal identity and the result of a performative practice with the own body" (Ardèvol & Gómez-Cruz, 2012, p. 182). In addition, the practice of sharing selfies through social media helps to develop intimacy insofar as it "creates a techno-mood that not only enables but also drives users in the direction of intimacy and self-awareness" (Gómez-Cruz & Miguel, 2014, p. 141; Miguel 2016, 3).

I read Jacob's self-representation differently than the previous sections in which narratives are told from the perspectives of Jacob's family and friends. This section provides a contrasting profile of Jacob Yebale by exploring how Jacob himself curated his professional life

on Instagram and Youtube, and how he shared aspects of his personal life on Facebook and Twitter. As an example, Jacob utilized his Facebook timeline to "check-in" at various airports for work and leisure, and at the North Hollywood 24 Hour Fitness gym where he frequently posted selfies with gym equipment.

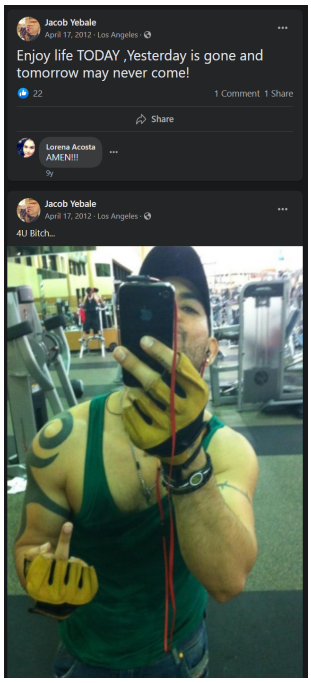


Figure 18: from Jacob's Facebook, dated April 17, 2012

Jacob's Facebook posts capture his quotidian routines. The two posts from April 17, 2012 (Figure 18) exemplify how Jacob described his everyday life on Facebook - check-ins at the gym, work-sites, and airports, and the occasional reflection on life. Jacob's family and friends often posted public comments sending each other greetings and well wishes from travel locations. Jacob's frequent posting on his social media accounts, and the public conversational nature that he maintained throughout his accounts reflect his queer, working-class, and immigrant identities. Facebook for Jacob facilitates transnational communication; this is where his family and friends exchanged birthday and holiday greetings, and where Jacob posted about

his nights out with friends. For as public as these posts are, Jacob's Facebook postings allowed his audience to have a glimpse into the personal life he wanted to represent.

The photo that Jacob's family used to decorate his tomb (see figure 13) was posted by Jacob to his Facebook account on September 3, 2009.[73] Posts like these are common on Jacob's account, as he often posted selfies of himself. The comments left on the photo were *piropos*, flattering pick-up lines maily left by other gay men. Alexander Flores, a hairstylist who often worked with Jacob in celebrity projects, and who Jacob identified as one of his best friends on several posts responded - *"hermanaaaaa"* - sister. Several responses use a Spanish feminine noun, a common use in Latinx gay interactions. Another responder, Juan Valnez comments that the "norteño" Mexican regional style suits Jacob, suggesting that they should go to TEMPO, a gay club in Hollywood that often hosts Latinx cowboy theme nights.

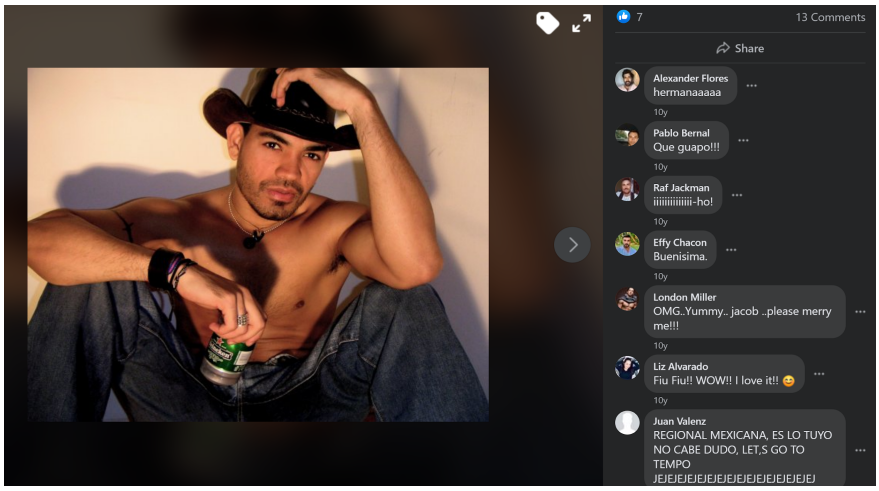


Figure 19: Screenshot of Jacob Yebale's Facebook September 3, 2009

I read this photo (Figure 19) through my own queer lens, Jacob's posture, his shirtless brown skin, his perched lips and intense gaze looking directly into the camera. Jacob's piercing

[73] Facebook: September 3, 2009
https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1178060062011&set=pb.1543436286.-2207520000..&type=3

gaze, his beard, the can of beer in one hand and the tejana on the other hand with his arm flexed evoke a *masc* imagery. However, this photo post and the comments attached to it queers contemporary ideologies of masculinity and homosexuality in Mexico. Hector Carrillo (2003) observed that for Mexican *homosexuals*, performing masculinity is "extremely valued by these men because it allowed them to retain a status as regular men—to prevent others from questioning their manhood and avoid being stigmatized for their difference. They regarded this status as crucial for their careers and their family relations and for maintaining membership in social networks where they believed they could not fit should they appear to be effeminate" (Carrillo 2003, 354). Carrillo found that in the Mexican context, performing masculinity allowed men to distinguish themselves from the effeminacy of *maricones*, and to align with normative gendered ideologies. Yet juxtaposed with the *masc* aspects of Jacob's photograph are the comments by his seemingly gay friends who refer to him as "hermana" and "buenisima."

While I cannot determine whether Jacob's pose was intentional to perform masculinity as Carrillo describes, in an effort to distinguish himself from effeminacy, we see in his April 2, 2012 post that Jacob does not distance himself from queer aspects of his *out* life. Rather, Jacob's "thirst trap"[74] posts do reflect a normative standard of gay male aesthetics. However, when compared to the response comments by his friends and fans, Jacob and his followers consistently queer these normative notions.

[74] I define "thirst trap" as a social media photo post with sexual tone - typically a shirtless pose when posted by male identified subjects. The subject entices the viewer's gaze to elicit *likes* or *comments*.

Figure 20: Screenshot of Jacob Yebale's Facebook, published April 2, 2012, nights out at the gay club.

Jacob's Facebook posts further transgress normative notions of Mexican homosexuality. Jacob's social posts involved him dancings at nightclubs with his best friend Alexander, parties with publicist Iris Corral, karaoke nights, and participating in queer pageants such as the "Mr. & Miss. Gay-Trans Latin 2012,"[75] as a judge.

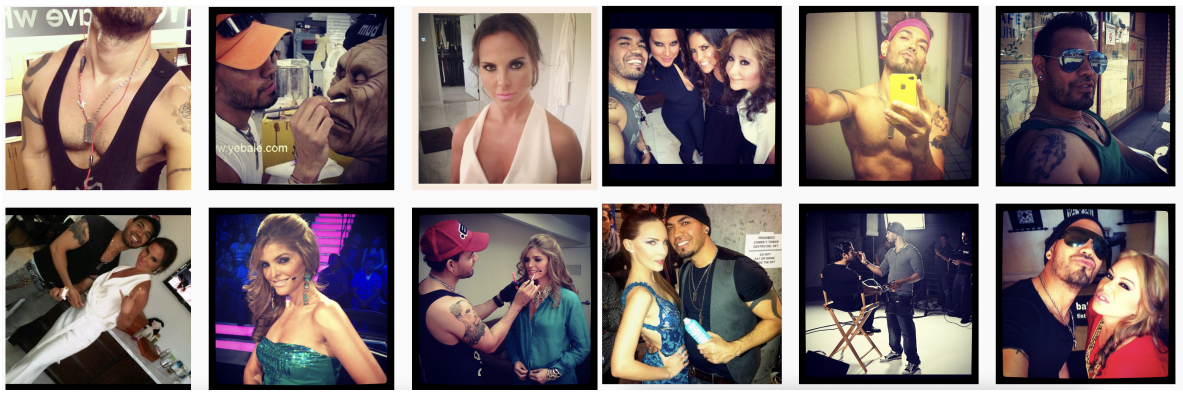


Figure 21: Instagram Posts from April 2012 to June 2012

[75] Facebook: April 2, 2012
https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=3489729132293&set=pb.1543436286.-2207520000..&type=3

Between June 9, 2012 to December 9, 2012, Jacob posted 273 photos onto his instagram account where he described himself as *"Celebrity Makeup Artist - Airbrush Expert!!!"* Where Jacob's Facebook posts reflect his social life, he utilized his Instagram (Figure 21) and personal Youtube accounts (Figure 22) to promote his work as a celebrity makeup artist. The Instagram posts consisted of "behind the scenes" moments at his work sites and "final product" photos with his celebrity clients, which ranged from US-based actors, Mexican singers, and the 2010 Miss Universe, Ximena Navarette. In the six month period that Jacob documented on Instagram, there is an understanding of his affinity for singer Rihanna.

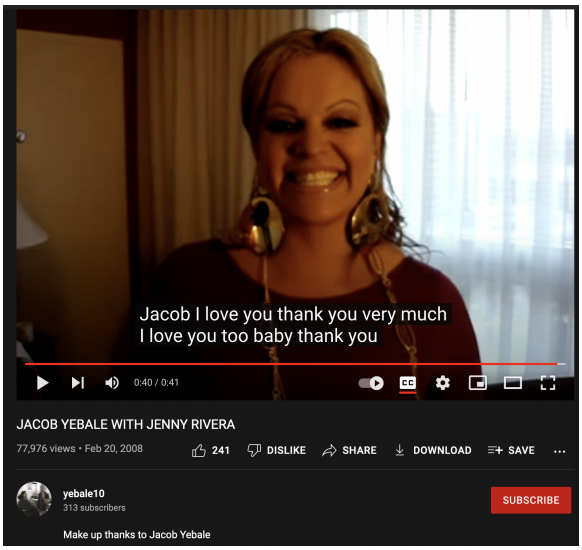


Figure 22: Image from Jacob's YouTube channel where he posted a behind the scenes video of his work in a Jenni Rivera music video

Conclusion

In the second quote in the epigraph for this chapter, Jillian Hernandez (2018) states, "This is one of our powers. Making worlds by bringing each other into them. And all we need to do is play with makeup, and pose" (Hernandez 2018, 72). Through his archived social media accounts, and in the memorials that persist, Jacob Yebale continues to have world making powers.

Fittingly, Jacob has empowered this dissertation. Every trip that I took to Valle de Guadalupe since 2013, I encountered Jacob's impact on our maternal hometown. As discussed, in December 2013, I sat through the homophobic sermon that I read as having been a response to the public celebration of Jacob's life a year prior. In December 2017, I attended evening mass on the day I arrived in Valle, unknowing that the mass was in commemoration of the fifth anniversary of Jacob's death; Jacob's mother was in attendance at this mass and the main altar was queerly decorated in rainbow patterned christmas lights (see Figure 9). In my most recent visit in March 2022, I accompanied my mother to the municipal cemetery to visit the graves of my grandparents and great-grandparents. As we prepared to leave my mother asked me, *"quieres ir a ver al maquillista de Jenni?*" - ""Do you want to go see Jenni's makeup artist?" My response to my mother was, "*si, le quiero dar gracias"* - "yes, I want to thank him" - I explained to my mother that I am writing about Jacob's legacy and have a lot to thank him for. Jacob's life and death show how migration has transformed ideologies of and attitudes on family and kinship, and gender and sexuality in both Los Altos and the Alteño diaspora in the United States.

Whereas Chapter 1 provides a vignette of the experience of a "closeted" gay man, whose music and performance provided a queer diasporic pedagogy that transcended generations and borders, this chapter centers on the experiences of Jacob Yebale, an "out" gay man who was able to self-represent aspects of his professional and personal life including his sexuality, desires, and queer community through his social media presense. Jacob's legacy provided a mirror for my own queer diasporic subjectivity. Through our mothers, we are anchored to the community of Valle de Guadalupe in central Mexico, and in the United States through our work and chosen family. Like Jacob, I follow the "good son" script--the one who leaves home to better himself professionally, the one who calls his mother on a regular basis, and the one who is there to

support when called upon. To conclude that it is Jacob's migration to the United States that has enabled him to fully live his "life *out* loud" would elide the material reality of queer trans people of color in the United States and elevate the discourse of American exceptionalism. Rather, Jacob's self-representation reflects a *queer diasporic* identity - as demonstrated in his social media archive, in his frequent trips to Mexico, and in his affective labor with and for Mexican and Chicana celebrities - that he performed alongside and in community with other queer Latinx immigrants across space, virtual and otherwise.

Chapter 3

Pulse Latin Night:

"No Dejen de Bailar - Dont' Stop Dancing"

We live in the face of historical and social conditions that produce an unjust distribution of death towards, and exploitation of, black and brown life and queer and trans bodies, actively shortening black, brown, Asian, indigenous, queer, and trans of color life with alarming and mundane regularity.

- Joshua Chambers-Letson (2018, 4)

Figure 23: "No cover before 11pm for 21+ #wepa" Pulse Orlando Instagram - "Latin Night" advertisement posted June 10, 2016. https://www.instagram.com/p/BGg_FFNxS0s/

* Stanley Almodovar III, 23 * Amanda L. Alvear, 25 * Oscar A. Aracena Montero, 26 * Rodolfo Ayala Ayala, 33 * Antonio Davon Brown, 29 * Darryl Roman Burt II, 29 * Angel Candelario-Padro, 28 * Juan Chavez Martinez, 25 * Luis Daniel Conde, 39 * Cory James Connell, 21 * Tevin Eugene Crosby, 25 * Deonka Deidra Drayton, 32 * Simón Adrian Carrillo Fernández, 31 * Leroy Valentin Fernandez, 25 * Mercedez Marisol Flores, 26 * Peter Ommy Gonzalez Cruz, 22 * Juan Ramon Guerrero, 22 * Paul Terrell Henry, 41 * Frank Hernandez, 27 * Miguel Angel Honorato, 30 * Javier Jorge Reyes, 40 * Jason Benjamin Josaphat, 19 * Eddie Jamoldroy Justice, 30 * Anthony Luis Laureano Disla, 25 * Christopher Andrew Leinonen, 32 * Alejandro Barrios Martinez, 21 * Brenda Marquez McCool, 49 * Gilberto R. Silva Menendez, 25 * Kimberly Jean Morris, 37 * Akyra Monet Murray, 18 * Luis Omar Ocasio Capo, 20 * Geraldo A. Ortiz Jimenez, 25 * Eric Ivan Ortiz-Rivera, 36 * Joel Rayon Paniagua, 32 * Jean Carlos Mendez Perez, 35 * Enrique L. Rios, Jr., 25 * Jean Carlos Nieves Rodríguez, 27 * Xavier Emmanuel Serrano-Rosado, 35 * Christopher Joseph Sanfeliz, 24 * Yilmary Rodríguez Solivan, 24 * Edward Sotomayor Jr., 34 * Shane Evan Tomlinson, 33 * Martin Benitez Torres, 33 * Jonathan A. Camuy Vega, 24 * Juan Pablo Rivera Velázquez, 37 * Luis Sergio Vielma, 22 * Franky Jimmy DeJesus Velázquez, 50 * Luis Daniel Wilson-Leon, 37 years old, * Jerald Arthur Wright, 31 years old[76]

-Presente.

[76] City of Orlando Announcement, July 12, 2016. https://www.orlando.gov/Initiatives/Pulse-Tragedy/Updates-and-Information/Victims%E2%80%99-Names

Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on yet another instance of the commemoration of Latinx queer death, this time a mass shooting in a popular public space. While chapter one examines how a Mexican gay icon, while never publicly acknowledging his sexuality, nevertheless created opportunities for his fans to identify with a public queer figure through his wildly popular televisual performances, and chapter two documents the public life and death of an out-gay Mexican-American makeup artist through an examination of an archive of social media posts by him and his fans, this chapter explores the ways in which practices of memorializing, specifically through photographs, are used to create a visual representation of remembrance to insist on making visible Latinx *queer life* in places that otherwise would not be.

On Saturday, June 12, 2016, 49 people were killed, and 53 additional people were severely wounded during a three-hour mass shooting incident at the *Pulse Orlando* nightclub in Florida.[77] As indicated in Figure 23, Saturday nights at the Pulse were billed as "Latin Night." The list above includes the names of those who died that night. While the majority of the victims were of Puerto Rican descent, four of the fatalities were of Mexican origin, two of whom, Luis Sergio Vielma Astudillo and Miguel Ángel Honorato, were born in the United States to parents who immigrated from the state of Guerrero. At least two fatalities, Juan Chávez Martínez and Joel Rayón Paniagua, were undocumented, and financially supported their families in the states of Hidalgo and Veracruz, respectively. Among the fatalities were 18 year old Akyra Murray who

[77]CBS News picture book of Pulse Nightclub victims https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/orlando-nightclub-mass-shooting-victims/

was visiting Orlando with her family to celebrate her high school graduation, and Brenda Lee Marquez McCool, 49,[78] who was at the Pulse with her son Isaiah, who survived the shooting.[79]

From my experience, Latin Nights at gay clubs exhibit *transnational circuits of intimacy*[80] - whether it is a drag impersonator singing Amanda Miguel, Rocio Durcal, or Selena, or just dancing cumbias among queers. Latin Nights faciliate an ambiance of "queer affiliation"[81] through sound and dance among a community of shared racialized and cultural identifications. Many times, Latin Nights are the nights where queer and trans people of color (QTPOC) feel visible within homonationalist gay neighborhoods that tend to erase QTPOC presence or make us invisible. Racially targeted mass shootings, like the Pulse Nightclub; the August 2019 shooting in El Paso, Texas;[82] or the June 2015 shooting at an AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina[83] are ones in which a specific demographic of people are singled out, and work to physically erase their presence in that space. At that time, Pulse Orlando massacre was the deadliest mass-shooting in the United States - the deadliest that targeted sexual and racialized minorities.[84] Among the forty-nine fatalities, there were four gay couples who died together;

[78] https://people.com/crime/orlando-mass-shooting-my-so-called-life-actor-wilson-cruz-lost-a-relative/

[79] NPR "'They Were So Beautiful': Remembering Those Murdered In Orlando" June 13, 2016. https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/06/12/481785763/heres-what-we-know-about-the-orlando-shooting-victims

[80] I define transnational circuits of intimacy to encompass tightly-woven communities spanning international locations; intimate spaces where non-normative intimacies are realized; and the performance of intimacy through cultural and regional identity.

[81] I take on Gopinath's *queer affiliation* through two approaches; (1) that the existence of circuits of transnational migrations enabled the possibilities of non-blood based affiliations, in the forms of "comadrazgo" (Fregoso, 2003) and "compadrazgo" (Limón, 1994), and (2) while "transitory and fleeting," my own queer subjectivity allows me to recognize modes of non-normative difference and queer affective relationality.

[82] August 3, 2019 - 23 people were killed at an El Paso, Texas Walmart - news reports state that the gunman had a racist manifesto where he intentionally targeted Mexicans.
"'I'm the Shooter': El Paso Suspect Confessed to Targeting Mexicans, Police Say" *New York Times.* August 9, 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/09/us/el-paso-suspect-confession.html

[83] "Nine Killed in Shooting at Black Church in Charleston." *New York Times.* June 17, 2015. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/18/us/church-attacked-in-charleston-south-carolina.html

[84] "List of Deadliest Mass Shootings in Modern U.S. History." *NPR*. June 12, 2016. https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/06/12/481768384/a-list-of-the-deadliest-mass-shootings-in-u-s-history

there was a mother who died shielding her gay son; and there were friends - members of a community; and visitors to Orlando who were there to celebrate high school and college graduations.

Mass shootings have become ubiquitous in US public life, occurrences that target public spaces such as entertainment venues, school campuses, shopping centers, grocery stores, and places of worship. While mass shootings have become alarmingly regular, the typical reaction from local individuals and communities includes comments such as, "how can this happen again?" or, "I would have never thought that it could happen so close to home." What is significant about the Pulse Orlando shooting is the scale of the incident, and that the shooting was documented in real-time on social media by the victims. In the days that followed, 9-11 calls, calls and messages that victims made to their families, and real-time social media posts were released to news outlets. I identify with the Pulse Orlando victims through my earlier experience witnessing the mass shooting at Santa Monica Community College, but also as a queer Latino wholooks for community spaces like the Pulse Orlando nightclub.[85] As I document the aftermath of the tragic loss of life in Orlando, I have also found inspiring examples of how the victims are remembered and how survivors find healing.

In popular media, the site of the gay nightclub is typically depicted as euphoric and utopian, a site of queer possibilities where you can feel free to express your authentic self through dance and community. As I write this chapter, I am reminded of my first encounters with queer nightlife; nights out at the *Dakota*, a gay bar in downtown Santa Cruz, where my queer and queer-adjacent friends and I danced together in community - where our only worry was making

[85] And I recalled how at the time of the shooting that I witnessed, I was able to hide inside a small office with 6 other coworkers and students and managed to call my sister Delia to let her know what was happening and to advise our mother that I was okay.

sure that we had enough time to catch the final bus back to campus. I reflect on the fact that many of the Pulse Orlando victims were college students at Central Florida colleges and universities. I attended college in the early 2000s when the reggaeton and bachata stylings of Ivy Queen, Aventura, Don Omar, and Nina Sky were popularized into mainstream Latin music. The distinctive beats of "Cuéntale" and "Yo Quiero Bailar" were not only the anthems of Latin Night; their "raunch aesthetic" (Hernandez 2014) provided me with a pedagogy of the body. Latin Nights, like the one hosted at the Pulse Orlando, facilitate pedagogical opportunities through a sonic and community exchange that "defies dominant regimes of respectable and heteronormative sexual expression, and presents possibilities for marginalized subjects to experience pleasure and affirmation" (Hernandez 2014, 90). I learned how to move--and how to be queer--at Latin Nights.

The Pulse Orlando massacre occurred in a time of heightened state violence in the form of police murders of Black and Brown people, and impunity for the murders of trans women of color. Mass protests and calls for policy change and investigations were social modus operandi after such incidences of public violence. However, occurrences of mass shootings like the one at Pulse Orlando do not always result in mass protests or gun reform legislation. Rather, mass shootings are typically followed by short-term calls for gun reform and "thoughts and prayers" themed public statements from politicians. For undocumented queer artist Julio Salgado, his call to protest following the Pulse Orlando shooting was a simple exhortation: "no dejen de bailar - don't stop dancing."

Figure 24: Julio Salgado (June 18, 2016)

Salgado's "don't stop dancing" does not reduce the experience of loss and grief faced by the community and loved ones of the Pulse Orlando shooting. Rather, I read his call to continue dancing as a reminder that marginalized people, like the minoritized victims of the Pulse Orlando[86] who face violence on a regular basis, still create opportunities to love and celebrate life in the face (and aftermath) of violence. As such, "Latin Nights" create a space of "disidentification" (Muñoz 1999) where for Latinx queers, the practice of dancing and the *performing* of queer sociality allows us to identify with(in) dominant notions of homosocial desire.

This chapter follows a Muñozian analysis of how Latinx queerness is rendered visible in white homonormative and Latinx heteronormative spaces. As Muñoz (1999) argues:

> Queers are not always "properly" interpellated by the dominant public sphere's heteroxesist mandates because desire for a bad object offsets that process of reactionary ideological indoctrination. In a somewhat analogous fashion, queer desires, perhaps desires that negate self, desire for a white beauty ideal, are reconstituded by an ideological component that tells us that such modalities of desire and desiring are too self-

[86] The majority of the fatalities were of Puerto Rican background; early news accounts state that four Mexican-origin, and four Dominican-origin among the fatal victims.

> compromising. We thus disidentify with the white ideal. We desire it but desire it with difference (Muñoz 1999, 15).

Following this understanding, this chapter will trace the negotiations of visibility and identification in *sites* where the Pulse Orlando massacre and victims are mourned.

Having witnessed a mass shooting in 2013, hearing about the Pulse Orlando shooting struck close to my heart. As discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation, a Performance Studies graduate seminar at UCSD provided me an opportunity to externalize my survivor's guilt and to process the traumatic questions of "why did this happen?" "why not me?" and "what if it had been me?" Since 2013, my sister Delia will call to check-in on me after every mass shooting incident. Not being completely *out* to my family, I found it difficult to express the ways I felt personally connected with the Pulse Orlando victims - we shared so many of our intersectional identities. In the days following the Pulse Orlando shooting, photographs of the victims began to be released on media outlets. The self-portraits (selfies) of the forty-nine victims impacted me deeply as I saw myself reflected in the faces of so many of them. That summer of 2016, I was working as a Graduate Advocate at the UCSD STARS program, and I recall going into the Raza Resource Centro and asking Claudia, the Assistant Director if we could post the photos of the forty-nine victims in the glass display case outside. For me, that temporary memorial took on the same significance as that of Judith Baca's 1976 installation of *Las Tres Marías*, where the reflection from the glass display case allowed my past, present, and future self to connect with the victims. Present again in this interaction was a *visual intimacy* (Hernandez 2018, 68); in my moment of reflection I dialogued with my past trauma and my queer kin from the Pulse Orlando.

This chapter is concerned with *how* queer Latinx and their loved ones respond to create visibility in the face of grief. I do this by examining visual productions of memory, that is, how loved ones of the Pulse Orlando victims and queer Latinx artists utilize visual elements such as

pop-up memorials, art instalations, social media, and photographs to remember and commemorate the lives lost. The focus on the practices of publicly mourning the Pulse Orlando shooting, and the 49 fatal victims has led to the following questions:

- How are selfies used to publicly commemorate queer victims of mass shooting?
- How are public spaces transformed when they become temporary sites of mourning for queer Latinx people?
- How does "commemorative art"[87] reframe the narrative of loss from homonationalist injury to queer of color survivance?

This chapter has three sections. Section one examines how the self-portraits (selfies) of the 49 victims were evoked in the news and utilized by their families during their funeral and memorial services. The second section explores the "pop-up" memorials--the creation of temporary public installations that facilitate a space for community grief. Section three looks at the work of artist Julio Salgado who in 2017 curated *Que Siga la Fiesta*, an art show in Oakland, California on the anniversary of the Pulse Orlando shooting. Similar to the selfies that were used in memorials shortly after the shooting, Salgado employs his digital graphic art method to create portraits of his queer community.

Immediately following the Pulse Orlando mass shooting, there was a lot of debates regarding the motives of the perpetrator, whether to label this an act of terrorism, an act related to mental health, or an act of homophobia. In 2018, *GLQ: The Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* published a special issue (Volume 24, Issue-1) that features reflections, poetry, and

[87] In their forthcoming chapter, Alexis Meza and Leslie Quintanilla discuss the use of public "commemorative art" as a mode of protest for "transforming collective grief." They discuss this in relation to public protests following the deaths of children and youth at the Otay Mesa immigrant detention center from 2018 - 2020. In this chapter, I include "selfies" and portraits such as the ones worn by victims' families and the ones produced by artists Julio Salgado and Chucha Marquez.

articles dedicated to the Pulse Orlando shooting. In this special issue, titled "GLQ Forum/Aftereffects: The Pulse Nightclub Shootings," prominent Queer Studies scholars contrasted the national narratives that attempted to attribute the gunman's motives to "terrorism" and homophobic political rhetoric associated with the Islamic State (ISIS)[88] with the "epidemic of toxic masculinity" that is present in white normative-homo-nationalist subculture (*GLQ* 2018). These scholars link the Pulse mass shooting with the U.S. presidential election between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump and the extreme nationalist, racist, xenophobic rhetoric of the "MAGA" campaign that fueled targeted violence against communities of color. However, I caution against *over* theorizing the event. My motivation for this chapter is modest: to examine the ways in which the victims are memorialized by families, friends, and allies when their community space is lost. While dominant national news outlets attempted to frame the Pulse Orlando mass shooting within narratives of *terrorist* violence agaist the *nation*, and Queer theorists actively reframed the incident around dominant *homonormative* cultural trends, I argue that the incident took place within the regular violences experienced by the racialized communities that the victims and witnesses were a part of.

[88] While the Pulse nightclub shooter was a U.S. citizen and had attended a Florida police academy, he had left a manifesto where he claimed sympathy and allegiance to ISIS; news and political discourse around the shooter's motives shifted after the manifesto was made public.

Section 1: Selfies/Self-Portraits

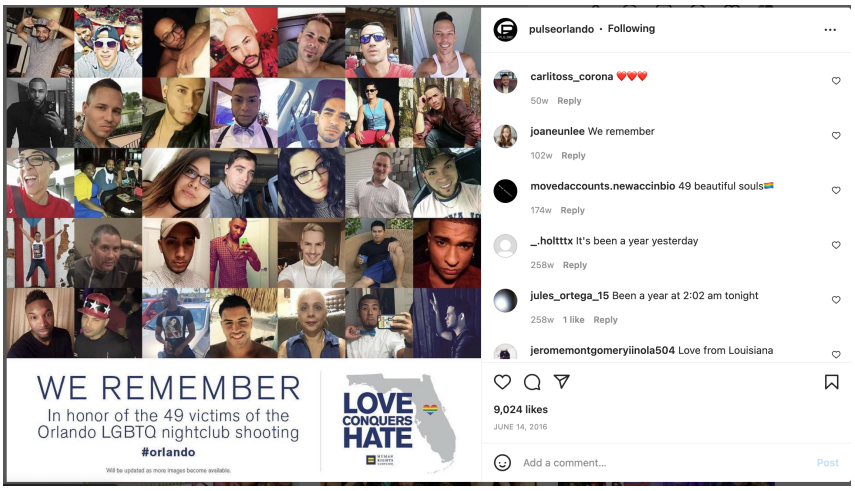


Figure 25: Screenshot of Pulse Orlando Instagram post dated June 14, 2016 - reposting of June 13, 2016 Human Rights Campaign image.

On June 14, 2016, the Instagram page for the Pulse Orlando nightclub reposted a collage of "selfies" originally published by the political advocacy organization, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). The original caption from the HRC stated:

> We remember: In honor of the 49 victims of the Orlando LGBTQ nightclub shooting.
> #Orlando #LoveConquersHate
> *Note that we will update this as more images become available.[89]

Prior to the Pulse Orlando shooting, the HRC had used the "#LoveConquersHate" hashtag in other posts, particularly in response to homophobic rhetoric during the 2016 national political campaigns, and in their 2013 merchandise campaign ahead of the Winter Olympic games in Russia.[90] While the use of this particular hashtag assimilates the Pulse shooting into homonationalist political discourse, the use of hashtags such as "#OnePulse" and

[89] June 13, 2016 Human Rights Campaign Instagram post: https://www.instagram.com/p/BGnM-cvrvOA/?hl=en

[90] Human Rights Campaign press release, November 4, 2013. https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/hrc-launches-love-conquers-hate-campaign-supporting-russias-lgbt-community

"#PulseOrlando" and the selfies of the victims allowed for a broader sense of what Cristina Miguel (2016) calls *digital intimacy*, as described in Chapter 2. These hashtags, as well as "#OrlandoStrong," "#PulseNightclub," and others used in association, facilitate the accumulation of a digital archive where people who engage with the phrase on social media are able to not only view the postings commemorating the Pulse victims, but also to contribute their own images or comments, thereby collectively creating an online memorial for the victims. Since the June 2016 shooting, the Pulse Orlando Instagram account[91] has become a digital memorial for the 49 victims. There, they primarily commemorate the 49 on their birthdays by posting a photograph and a short biographical caption, posting on the June anniversary of the event, and re/posting fundraising events for the One Pulse Foundation non-profit that drives the efforts to establish a permanent memorial and museum at the nightclub site.

The 49 victims are often depicted in a collage of 7x7 photos taken from their social media accounts (see figure 25). While the collage effect can obscure the individual, the collage allows for perspective, a scaled view of the impact of the mass shooting. Even though the collage does not include the 53 people who survived their wounds and the additional individuals who witnessed the mass shooting, the collage depiction of selfies allows the viewer to get a sense of the social interactions at a gay nightclub. If the *selfie,* as a practice of self-representation, captures moments of joy, affection, quotidian routine, aspirations, and even flirtation that the 49 victims experienced, then a broader public can identify with the impact of what was lost in the mass shooting - folding them into the experience of collective *queer joy* and loss. In constructing my definition of "queer joy," I follow Nicholas de Genova (2010), Samuel Chambers (2009), and David Halperin (1995) in my understanding of *queer*; where they take the term "queer" as

[91] Pulse Orlando Instagram https://www.instagram.com/pulseorlando/;

not "rooted in the positive fact of homosexual object-choice" but instead "acquires its meaning from its oppositional relation to the norm" (de Genova 2010, 105). I advance de Genova's approach to "queer politics" in relation to the politics of migrants by considering the politics of "joy" in which "queer joy," when applied to the experiences of queer people color, exeeds the inclusion in homonormative and homonationalist connotations of the LGBT+ experience. The 49 victims, and attendees at the Pulse Orlando's "Latin Night," included queer people of color who in their *sexuality*, *gender,* and *ethno-racial* identities exceeded *queerness*. In section 3, I further explore how queer undocumented artivist Julio Salgado reaffirms "queer joy" through his digital portraits.

News outlets began to publicize the public images of the victims in the hours following the Pulse Orlando shooting, after the victims' families were notified, and their names were released to the public. These pictures were presumably taken from the victims' public social media accounts such as Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook. As discussed in Chapter 2, the *selfies* that are preserved in Jacob's archived social media accounts serve as afterimages of his quotidian life. As such, Jacob's personal social media profiles have become the memorial sites for his friends and family to visit and comment. In this sense, photographs posted on social media facilitate the documenting and archiving of self-represented life, and untimely death. These *selfies* are *self*-representations that the shooting victims posted on their respective social media accounts that demonstrate the curated characteristics of their social and personal lives. They document mundane activities such as getting ready for work, school, going out, or completing a gym workout. As an example, in his selfie photo, Luis Sergio Vielma Astudillo is shown wearing his Harry Potter-themed "Gryffindor" uniform with his nametag from the Universal Orlando theme park where he worked. In a June 13, 2016 online article, NRP utilized the victims' social

media postings to provide a biography of each person. This article links directly to the victims' social media accounts, creating an opportunity for the reader to get to know the intimacies that the victims shared with their social media followers. For example, by following these links, we find that victims Juan Ramon Guerrero and Dru Leinonen were boyfriends, having spent the previous Christmas with Juan's family.[92] Similarly, Martin Benitez Torres's Facebook profile is archived as a "remembering" account.[93] From this account, Martin documented his arrival in Florida a few weeks prior to the shooting after completing his semester at his university in Puerto Rico. We learn about Martin's boyfriend Michael; his fandom for the *Nuestra Belleza Latina* reality competition; his closeness to his family; and his mother whom he filmed cooking a traditional Puerto Rican dinner the night of the shooting. What remains of their *self*-produced social media accounts give testament to their lives-lived, and reaffirms that the sum of their lives was not the violent way in which they ended.

Learning that four of the victims were of Mexican descent, I followed the digital archive to learn how Luis Sergio Vielma Astudillo, 22; Juan Chávez Martínez, 25, Miguel Ángel Honorato, 30, and Joel Rayón Paniagua, 31had been memorialized. Mexican and U.S.-based Spanish-language news outlets like Univision and Telemundo covered the memorial services and funerals for these victims. At their respective memorial services, the families of Luis Sergio Vielma Astudillo (figure 27) and Juan Chávez Martínez (figure 26) wore T-Shirts with the selfies of their loved ones. Juan Chávez Martínez and his friend Joel Rayón Paniagua were undocumented immigrants from Mexico, and attended the nightclub together. Chávez Martinez's niece, Brenda, wore shirts with his photograph in public interviews to discuss his "American

[92] December 25, 2015 Instagram post from Juan Guerrero: https://www.instagram.com/p/_uwPumEvMB/
[93] "Martin B'nitez" Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/mbenitezvgi

dream" to become a hairstylist for quinceañeras, and the challenges that the family faced with repatriating his body to Mexico. Similarly, Luis Sergio Vielma Astudiollo's father wore a shirt with his son's *selfie* on news interviews with Mexican media to discuss his son's aspirations.

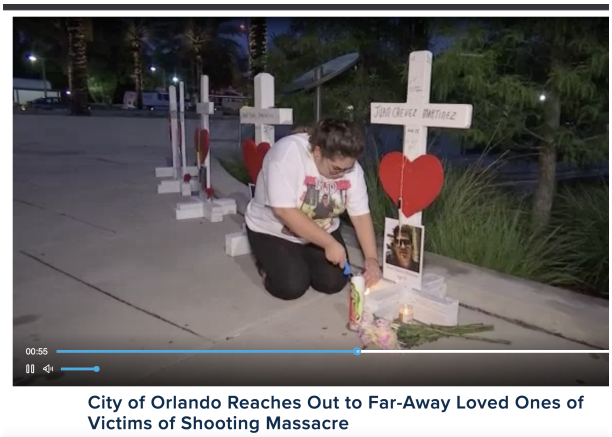


Figure 26: Family of Juan Chavez Martinez at an Orlando Pulse memorial

Figure 27: Family of Luis Sergio Vielma Astudillo at his public funeral in Guerrero, Mexico

I understand the practice of wearing the *selfie* as a reinterpretation of *performing the mundane* (Joshua Chambers-Letson 2018). In meditating about the loss of his friend and mentor José Esteban Muñoz, Chambers-Letson has stated:

> It can be as hard to survive as it is to live on in the wake of those who didn't. But you taught me that performance is imbued with a weak power of resurrection, or at least the power to sustain some fragment of lost life in the presence of a collective present. Performance, you wrote, is what allows minoritarian subjects to "take our dead with us to the various battles we must wage in their names—and in our names." And performance is also a way of drawing people together. (Chambers-Leston 2018, xvii)

In this sense, the *selfies* worn by the victims' families at memorial events and news interviews allow for the living to perform and embody a resurrection of the victims' life dreams.

Figure 28: "Sepultan en Guerrero a mexicano asesinado en masacre de Orlando, Florida," Excélsior TV, June 25, 2016

On June 25, 2016, Excelsior TV, a Mexican national news outlet reported on the funeral services of Luis Sergio Vielma Astudillo. Reflecting their binational existence, Luis Sergio's family decided to repatriate the remains to their hometown of Coyuca de Catalán in the south-western state of Guerero, even though Luis Sergio was born in the United State. As was the case with Jacob Yebale, the townspeople showed up to support Luis Sergio's family in the funeral rituals, including the Mass and burial. The reporter noted that Luis Sergio's family and the community in attendance at his services wore white t-shirts with a photograph of Luis Sergio. Noticeable is the fact that his name on the T-shirt was in the "Harry Potter " style font that Luis

Sergio loved. During his sermon, the priest presiding over Vielma Astudillo's funeral mass states, "*Perdonenle ustedes si les ofendió. O si hay que pedirle perdón, pídanle perdón"* - "Forgive him if he offended you. Or if you have to ask him for forgiveness, ask for forgiveness" (Excélsior TV, min 1:50). I interpret this statement as a disidentification with the conservative Mexican Catholic church. While the asking of "forgiveness" is part of the church's funeral rite, the highlighting of this statement reminds the viewer of the online archive of the church's stand on homosexuality. However, I read the mourners wearing t-shirts with Luis Sergio's selfie (figure 28) as a strategy of subtle or even unaware resistance within the space of the church whose discourse on sexuality continues to exert social power (Muñoz 1999, 19).

For the 49 Pulse Orlando victims, their selfies from their social media accounts have been used to represent the mass shooting incident; real-time footage of the shooting was uploaded on to Facebook and Snapchat, and victims were able to make FaceTime video calls as the shooting transpired. I am intentional in excluding an analysis of the "real-time" social media videos of the Pulse Orlando shooting. However, I recognize their significance as self-documentation of the incident that allowed for public and police response.[94] Because of the mass scale of the shooting, the victims often get aggregated into the event. While this collapsing can obscure individual experiences of loss, like the collage depictions of the victims on social media, they also have a mosaic effect - and require visitors to Pulse Orlando memorial posts to focus their attention on each and every photo as well as the collective community.

[94] While I am not including an analysis of the real-time documentation of the shooting, the 9-11 call transcripts and recordings have been transcribed and released by the Orlando City government; these reveal both how victims, witnesses and people who were reached through social media attempted to reach police response. "Pulse Tragedy Public Records. "https://www.orlando.gov/Our-Government/Departments-Offices/Executive-Offices/City-Clerk/Pulse-Tragedy-Public-Records

Section 2: Public Memorials

As shared earlier, I grew up taking yearly trips to my family's hometown in Mexico. We would often drive in a caravan from Los Angeles to Los Altos, and common along the highway are roadside memorials. These memorials range from simple white crosses with a name and dates painted on, to more elaborate installations resembling a small house-like structure with a religious figure or photograph of the person that the memorial is meant to commemorate. These roadside memorials usually serve as markers of where a fatal car accident took place. For me, being on the road in Mexico brings me stress; these *memento mori* markers serve as a reminder that even though I am excited to reach a destination that I consider "home," there is considerable personal risk in getting there. Public memorial sites, however, serve a purpose for the people who have survived. These public markers simultaneously function as a haunting reminder[95] of a tragic *loss of life*, as well as a site where people can gather to *celebrate living*.

Soon after the June 2016 shooting, the fencing erected around the site of the Pulse Orlando nightclub on the corner of South Orange Avenue and West Esther Street became a pop-up memorial. For Lisa M. Cacho (2012), makeshift memorials function "to reactivate the 'scenario' of their deaths, forcing roadside spectators to become witnesses and participants" (Cacho 2012,155). The Pulse Orlando memorial simultaneously stands as a site for mourning and a symbol for the social-political rhetoric of gun violence and "terrorism" that framed the shooting as homonationalist injury, as the timing of the shooting coincided with the 2016 U.S. volatile presidential campaigns. Holly Randell-Moon (2022) argues that "memorialization and advocacy for the Pulse victims by dominant institutions is striated by colliding phobias (Islamo-,

[95] Avery Gordon (2008)

xeno-, and homo-) that interrupt a clear mode of nationalist address or point of identification in mediations of the shooting" (2).

Figure 29: Screenshot of Google Maps image at Pulse Orlando nightclub, taken July 2016.

Figure 29 is an image of the roadside memorial at the Pulse Orlando nightclub as it stood in July 2016, weeks after the shooting. The image is "pinned" as part of a collection of over three thousand images on the Google Maps website. There, "visitors" to both the location of the Orlando nightclub and to the website can contribute photographs from their visit. As such, Google Maps and Instagram function as a digital archive of images from visitors who utilize the geographical tagging to contribute their photographs when visiting the memorial. In July 2016, the memorial site consisted of a covered chain-linked fence adorned with crosses, a Mexican flag, that I see as representing the four Mexican-origin fatalities as well as the Mexican-origin visitors to the site, and various art pieces. There is a large grouping of glass devotional candles with images of la Virgen de Guadalupe and the Sacred Heart of Jesus under the PULSE marquee, the candles showing signs of having been lit. These devotional images once again collapse the harsh boundaries between the Catholic church and its queer diasporic members.

William True spends a moment in front of a picture of his friend Luis Omar Ocasio-Capo at the memorial to the 49 shooting victims setup at the Pulse nightclub on June 11, 2018 in Orlando, Florida. On June 12, 2016 a mass shooting took place at the Pulse nightclub killed 49 people and wounded 53. Joe Raedle—Getty Images

BY JASMINE AGUILERA AND MADELINE FITZGERALD JUNE 12, 2019 9:22 PM EDT

Figure 30: Pulse Orlando Memorial from TIME Magazine online article

In the six years since the Pulse Orlando shooting, the site of the nightclub has remained a "roadside" temporary memorial. While the promise of a permanent "onePULSE National Memorial and Museum" continues to feel aspirational, construction has not been completed. As seen in figures 29 and 30, the roadside aspect of the interim memorial allows for visitors to the site to add personal items to the temporary fencing. The Orange County History Center in Florida has compiled a digital collection of items left at the temporary memorials at the Pulse Orlando site. The "One Orlando Collection" includes digital images of stuffed animals, banners that visitors to the memorial site signed, and art pieces.[96]

Section 3: "Que Siga la Fiesta"

On June 18, 2016, just days following the mass shooting incident at the Pulse Orlando nightclub, queer undocumented artivist Julio Salgado published a simple call to action "No Dejen de Bailar" - "Don't Stop Dancing" (see figure 24). His simple statement was a call to

[96] Orange County History Center, "One Orlando Collection." https://collections.thehistorycenter.org/MResultsGlobal.aspx?pS=@OneOrlandoCollection#

resist the acts of violence that queer people of color face in public space through expressions of *queer joy*.[97] In May 2017, Salgado and queer artist Chucha Marquez held an art show in Oakland, California, inspired as a remembrance of the Pulse Orlando victims.[98] The art show, titled *Que Siga la Fiesta*, commemorated the one-year anniversary of the Pulse Orlando shooting and included a gallery wall of photographic portrait illustrations of Salgado's friends and chosen family attending gay bars; an installation made to resemble a queer youth's bedroom; and a mural that depicted trans and queer *mothers*, including Pulse Orlando victim, Brenda Lee Marquez McCool. Salgado states that his graphic photographic series was inspired by the news coverage following the Pulse Orando shooting, which served as a reminder of the constant threats that queer and trans people of color face in public:

> After confronting the sadness that came with this tragic loss, it dawned on me that it took the death of 49 black and brown for our stories to count. It took tragedy to see the stories of people who looked like me and my friends to be in the conscience of straight (and gay) white America. (Salgado 2017)

Salgado argues that it should not take a violent tragedy for the stories of Black and Brown queer people to be recognized and celebrated: "in these sets of graphic illustrations, my goal was to honor our brown and black migrant, queer and trans community by capturing their resilience and beauty while dancing, drinking and just having a great time in their local gay bars or clubs" (Salgado 2017). I am again reminded of Joshua Chambers-Leston's (2018) description of the *party* as a *refuge*, "[the party] is a place to catch one's breath when you can't breathe. It is a way of staying alive and of keeping each other alive" (Chambers-Leston 2018, xi), where the space of the party or gay nightclub becomes a *queer commons* that Chambers-Leston describes as a space

[97] I refer to Salgado as an "artivist," artist+activist. Salgado takes on his political and social activism through the forum digital artwork that he shares through public installations and social media. https://www.juliosalgadoart.com/; https://www.instagram.com/juliosalgado83/

[98] Salgado, Julio. "Que Siga la Fiesta," Huffington *Post.* June 10, 2017. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/que-siga-la-fiesta_b_5939e012e4b0b65670e56915

of "refuge" and "radical planning" for alternative possibilities to what they encounter in the homonormative/heteronormative world outside. As Salgado ruminates,

> For most of them, the last thing they saw was their room. The place where they got dolled up, maybe pre-gamed and joked with their friends. A ritual that queers and trans folks across this country do right before going out and having a fun night. It was our way to honor them by celebrating this ritual (Salgado 2017).

"A Queer Room With A View" installation.
PHOTO BY JESUS IÑIGUEZ

Figure 31: "A Queer Room with a View" - Julio Salgado (2017)

The immersive experience that Salgado produces through his "Queer Room with a View" and portrait art installations are reminiscent of Horacio Roque Ramirez (2008), where Salgado's reflection of grief from the loss of queer life is turned into "documentary action, a conscious project of historical self-giving."

Salgado first published his *Que Siga La Fiesta* series in 2016 on his Facebook profile.[99] Utilizing his artistic style, Salgado situates his subjects within the space of the gay bar where they are able to be their "full queer selves." Salgado produced this series while traveling the United States in his capacity as an artist and activist, and met queer people of color. For them,

[99] Julio Salgado Posted the images from his "Que Siga La Fiesta" series on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10153707836280095&type=3

the gay bar is “a spot to call their own. A spot where they can dance, drink and kiss. A spot where you feel safe from the bullshit of this world” (Salgado, 2016).

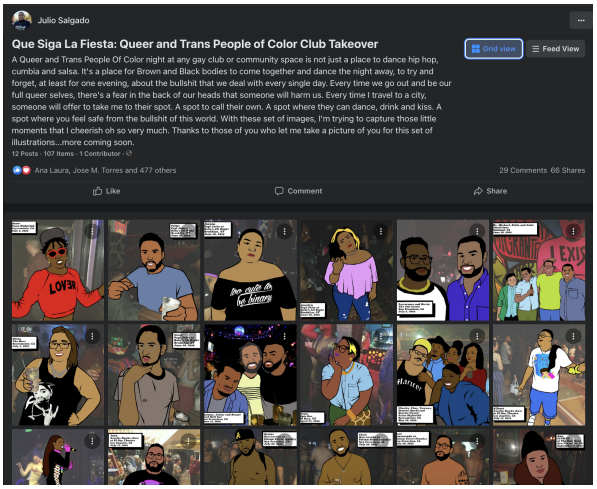


Figure 32: Julio Salgado “Que Siga la Fiesta”

The gallery view of Salgado’s Facebook album resembles the grid of “selfies” that depict the 49 fatal victims of the Pulse Orlando. Salgado is employing his approach to digital graphic art to depict *queer joy* by placing his subjects in spaces where they self-identify as bringing them happiness and a sense of *home*. Where the selfie-grid that depict the 49 victims gives a sense of what a gay nightclub is like, Salgado’s portrait series brings the viewer directly into the nightclub.

Conclusion

In 2017, during the ninth season of the reality competition series, *RuPaul’s Drag Race (RPDR)* contestants Cynthia Lee Fontaine and Trinity “The Tuck” Taylor discussed their experiences having performed at the Pulse Nightclub. Living in Orlando, Trinity discussed having been “Miss Pulse” and that she had performed at “Latin Night” the week prior to the

shooting. While she did not directly know any of the persons who lost their lives that night, working and living in Orlando, she had connections with people who lost loved ones including a co-worker who lost their daughter. Cynthia Lee Fontaine revealed that she had been scheduled to perform the night of June 11, 2016 alongside fellow RPDR alum, Kenya Michaels,[100] but had to reschedule last-minute. Kenya Michaels texted with Cynthia Lee Fontains from a barricaded bathroom as the shooting occurred; and added that one of the fatalities, Martin Benitez Torres (age 33) had gone to the nightclub specifically to see her perform. During her confessional interview, Cynthia Lee Fontaine states, "We never expect that a tragedy like this [would] happen in our community, or would happen in our clubs, because we thought that we finally [had] built a safe place for our community."[101]

In 2022, I had the opportunity to volunteer at a memorial event for the sixth anniversary of the Pulse Orlando shooting held at the San Diego LGBT Community Center. There, Center staff Carolina and Ricardo had set up large photographs of the 49 victims along the perimeter of the Center's entry courtyard. Each photograph had the name and age of the victim, and in front of the photos we alternated flowers or a candle in rainbow-lined glass vessels (Figure xx). At the center of the courtyard, Carolina, who is Mexican, and Ricardo, who is Puertorriqueño, erected a small altar with pastries, malta beverage, and sage that was used to bless the event space.

[100] Kenya Michaels is the drag stage name of transgender performer, Kenya Olivera Bonilla. She competed in the fourth season (2012) of the reality competition, RuPaul's Drag Race. https://www.instagram.com/kenya_olivera/

[101] "Trinity & Cynthia Discuss Pulse Orlando Shooting | RuPaul's Drag Race Season 9." RuPaul's Drag Race. (April 7, 2014) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zx62KQyJQg

Figure 33: Memorial June 12, 2022 at San Diego LGBT Community Center

Ricardo, Carolina, and Laura, another volunteer, shared with me their experiences visiting the Pulse memorial site in Orlando. They conveyed that even though the nightclub building is boarded up, dance music continues to play to remember the joy that people shared in that space. Laura felt so impacted by her visit that she felt compelled to get a "PULSE" tattoo on her left wrist with a heart cardiogram as part of the design. Carolina and Ricardo described the space as both a memorial and museum; and for both, the most impactful section is a message board where the father of one of the victims left a handwritten message to his son, expressing regret for having rejected his queerness. Carolina added, "you could tell that the father visits the memorial frequently." The event and the space set up was a reflection of the community in San Diego who organized the memorial. As community members entered the space, Carolina and Gus, another Center staff, explained the significance of having an altar as part of their Mexican traditions; their belief that placing water for the souls of the victims will both nourish them and provide clarity in their spiritual journey.

The responses to the June 2016 Pulse shooting, both at the time of the massacre and at subsequent memorial events like the one that I volunteered at in San Diego, make visible the transnational circuits of Latinx queer intimacy. Because the shooting victims hailed from different places in Latin America, technologies of communication (circuits) were utilized to bring people together in mourning and healing. As such, queer spaces like the Pulse nightclub represented transnational spaces of queer possibilities. As an example, as a response to the June 2016 shooting, community organizations such as QLatinx were formed to provide community support and a space of healing to the surviving victims and the LGBTQIA+ community at large. In their website history statement, QLatinx affirms the transnational nature of Latinx queer lives:

> In our work we honor the memory and legacy of the 49 angels whose lives were taken that night, nearly half were of Puerto Rican descent; while many more were Cuban, Dominican, Ecuadorian, Mexican, Salvadoran, Venezuelan, Afro-Latinx, and from other Latinx communities. Some were Black. Some were undocumented. Over half were under the age of 30, the youngest victims having just turned 18 years old. The victims of the shooting were a reflection of the Orlando queer community, as such the programming work of QLatinx addresses topics of social justice, sexual health and immigration, as well a healing circle for survivors once a month.

Epilogue

Juan Gabriel's 1984 ballad, **"**Amor Eterno," that he wrote following the death of his mother has become a Latinx diasporic anthem for grief. Following the August 3, 2019 mass shooting at the Cielo Vista Mall in El Paso, Texas near the Ciudad Juárez border, podcaster Felix Contreras of NPR described the ballad as "more like a consoling family member." Whether it is the version that Juan Gabriel sang at his 1990 concert at Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes[102] in his iconic black and gold sequined jacket, or interpretations of the song by singers like Rocio Durcal,[103] or mariachi renditions at funerals and memorials,[104] "Amor Eterno" represents the grief experience that is distinctive to the diasporic examples that I discussed in the preceding chapters.

In the years since the death of Juan Gabriel, "reaction" videos have trended on YouTube. These are recordings in which YouTubers record themselves watching and reacting to popular music such as the presentations of Juan Gabriel. For many of the youtubers, it is the first time they have heard the music of Juan Gabriel, and many others are reacting to the music and performance even though they do not know Spanish. Still, these YouTubers are able to provide their interpretations and be moved by Juan Gabriel's performance. For YouTuber Raul from Spain, who goes by "Golferioo," Juan Gabriel's performance of "Amor Eterno" at the Palacio de Bellas Artes (1990) had been recommended by a follower.[105] In his YouTube video, Golferioo

[102] Juan Gabriel, "Amor Eterno" Desde el Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1990. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgKqxLAhRKE

[103] Rocio Durcal, "Amor Eterno" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QuXKirNX3I

[104] Uvalde Mariachis - concert following mass shooting, June 12, 2022. https://youtu.be/jmso1-atGRY?t=699

[105] "Español reacciona a Juan Gabriel - 'Amor Eterno'" - February 11, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMXIz5VxR6A

shared that he did not know much about Juan Gabriel or the song, only that "Amor Eterno" is like a Mexican anthem for mothers, "yo creo que tiene cabida en este canal, ya sabes que yo a mi mami la quiero mucho" - "I think this song is appropriate for this chanel, you know that I love my mom very much." Raul notes that the video clip has over 500 thousand likes on YouTube, stating "debe ser una muy buena canción" - "it must be a very good song" based on the number of likes and the length of the clip being almost seven minutes long, mentioning that the length of the video indicates that the song is sure to be good. Within the first minutes of the song, Raul begins to sit uncomfortably (minute 3:30). When Juan Gabriel begins the chorus *"como quisiera que tu vivieras,*" - "How I would like you to still lived," Raúl sits back and pauses the video momentarily as he rubs his hands together and his eyes begin to well with tears. The song continues, "*que tus ojitos jamás se hubieran cerrado nunca y estar mirándolos. Amor eterno e inolvidable. Pero tarde o temprano yo voy a estar contigo para seguir amándonos.*" - "that your eyes would have never closed, and I be looking into them. Eternal and unforgettable love. But sooner or later I will be with you to continue our loving." These social media reaction videos are useful in demonstrating an example of the queer diasporic identification of mourning that is described in Juan Gabrie's lyrics "Me miro en el espejo y veo en mi rostro el tiempo que he sufrido por tu adiós" - "I look in the mirror and see in my face the prolonged suffering since your goodbye"

For Deb Paredes (2009), performance is often spoken of in both effect and affect:

> Jill Dolan writes evocatively about how performance can capture "attention of the audience in a way that lifts everyone slightly above the present, into a hopeful feeling of what the world might be if every moment of our lives were as emotionally voluminous, generous, aesthetically striking, and intersubjectively intense." Dolan refers to these moments as utopian performatives that "in their doings, make palpable an affective vision of how the world might be better." Utopian performatives are "most effective as a feeling," and, as such, their political and social efficacy resides in creating "the condition for action" in the spaces beyond

> the now of the performance. Thus the most potent effects of performance are often the affective spaces it can open up for its participants. (Paredes 2009, 33)

Therefore, performances such as Juan Gabriel's "Amor Eterno" performed at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, or Jenni Rivera's final concert in Monterrey (where the drive from the concert venue to the airport was captured by Jacob Yebale,) have become immortalized, simultaneously a time capsule of those moments, and recontextualized to reflect the moments in which they are revisited by fans and spectators. In this way, new spectators viewing Juan Gabriel's performance of "Amor Eterno" (or one of the other renditions of the song) are able to experience an affective connection with the audience at the concert, with the performers, and the lyrics that evoke emotions. Dolan's description is helpful in understanding the longevity and versatility of "Amor Eterno" across queer diasporic dimensions.

In June, 2017, Colombian singer Carlos Daniels performed at the Orlando House of Blues. Daniels was there as part of his "Te Sigo Amando" tour, which he billed as an homage to Juan Gabriel.[106] Daniels prefaces his performance stating, "Esta canción es una canción muy especial para mucha gente. Yo quiero dedicarla ya que estoy en la ciudad que lamentablemente fue tocada por una tragedia tan grande el año pasado… yo se que muchas personas perdieron algún amigo, algún familiar en eso tan triste que pasó" -"This is a very special song for a lot of people. I want to dedicate it since I am in the city that unfortunately was touched by such a great tragedy last year... I know that many people lost a friend, a family member in that sad incident." The audience is seem audibly activated by the time that the violin strings begin in minute 1:05; and the crowd is illuminated by the time Daniels and his on-stage mariachi get to the chorus in minute 2:48, revealing the audience swaying side-to-side as they sing along:

[106] Carlos Daniels, "Amor Eterno" Orlando, June 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deeRT8g0Qk0

> *Como quisiera, ay que tú vivieras; Que tus ojitos jamás se hubieran cerrado nunca y estar mirándolos;* ***Amor eterno e inolvidable****; Tarde o temprano estaré contigo para seguir amándonos.*

Towards the end of the seven minute cover, Daniels again acknowledges the impact of the Pulse Orlando shooting on many people in the audience, asserting "esta canción va para ustedes… seguimos adelante" - "this song is for you…we keep going."

This dissertation traces the way queer diasporic men lived their lives through an examination of their self-represented digital archives (social media presence), and how they are remembered by family, friends, and fans. I approached this research through an auto-ethnographic lens. Having witnessed a mass shooting prior to beginning my graduate work at UC San Diego, I found myself noticing traces of queer afterlife as I reconciled my personal trauma and coming into my sexual identity. These chapters look at ways in which queer people have been memorialized through online venues such as Instagram, Youtube, and Facebook. These online spaces provide an opportunity for a shared experience to process grief through a queer diasporic identification with those who have left.

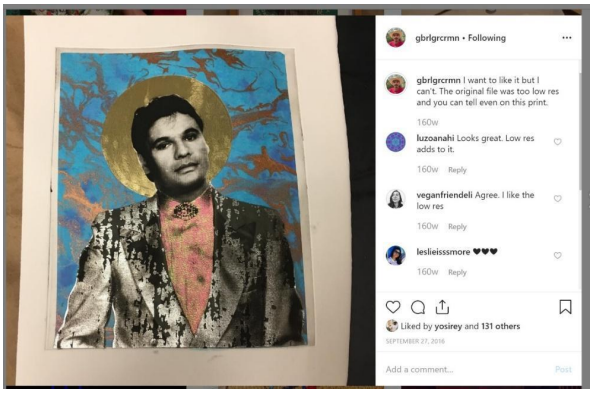
In all, these chapters outline examples of queer counterpublics - moments in which queer Latinx people are able to utilze what has become the social media and online public sphere to highlight their counterstories of queer life and life after death. In "Pedro Zamora's Real World of Counterpublicity: Performing and Ethics of the Self," José Esteban Muñoz (1998) points to Negt and Kluge's (1993) description of the public sphere as "comprising various forms of publicity that are connected to different communities and modalities of publicity… counterpublics often emerge out of already existing industrial and commercial channels of publicity, especially electronic media" (Muñoz 1998, 177). Here, Muñoz is contextualizing the early-1990s moment of "pro-family" public rhetoric that was manifesting in anti-immigrant and anti-lgbtq+ legislation

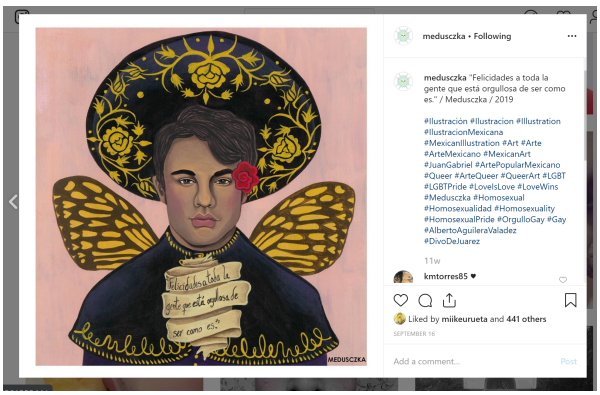
and the “Republican Revolution " of 1994. Muñoz focuses on the work of television activist, and early reality-television figure, Pedro Zamora - who was a participant in the third season of MTV’s “The Real World: San Francisco.” Zamora utilized the medium of MTV to produce his counterpublic narrative of what it is to be an out gay Cuban American living with AIDS. In his television trajectory, Zamora negotiates parts of his identities - what Muñoz refers to as disidentification - “the practices and spaces where identities are negotiated through a series of tactical and partial identifications within the majoritarian public sphere” (Muñoz 1998, 193). In contrast to the subjects that I will be discussing in these chapters, Pedro Zamora was the agent who drove his counter publicity narrative, Zamora utilized what Muñoz refers to as the majoritarian media to negotiate a narrative of his ethnic and sexual identities.

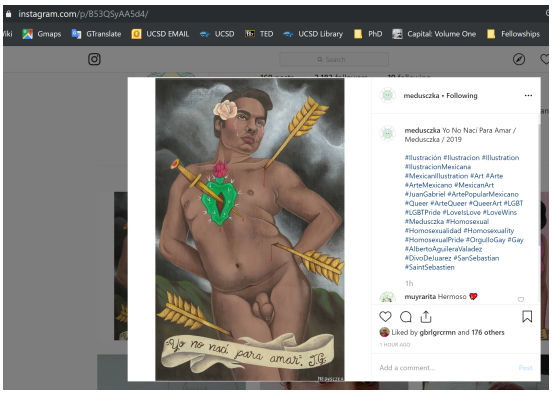
Whereas the primary subjects of each chapter (Juan Gabriel, Jacob Yebale, and victims of the Pulse Nightclub shooting) negotiated their own disidentifications in public media, the primary analysis of this dissertation is on how other queer persons utilized such media to expand the counterstories left in the wake of the subject’s death. These counterstories are what Education Studies scholar Heriberto Vasquez Ramirez refers to as “positive perpetuity of queer portraits,” where the people who engage with the lived experiences of the subjects practice a humanizing and relational interaction with the digital public archive of queer life, thus simultaneously maintaining the subject’s counterstories alive, while contributing their own.

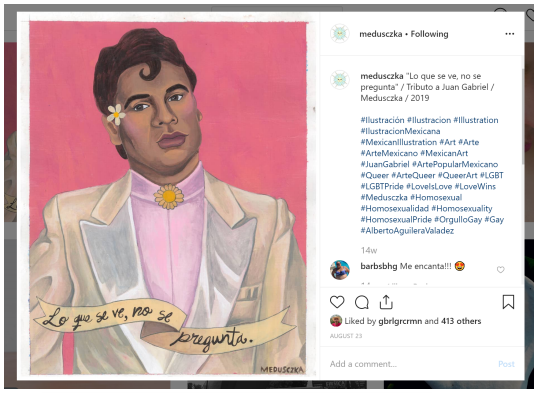
APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 1

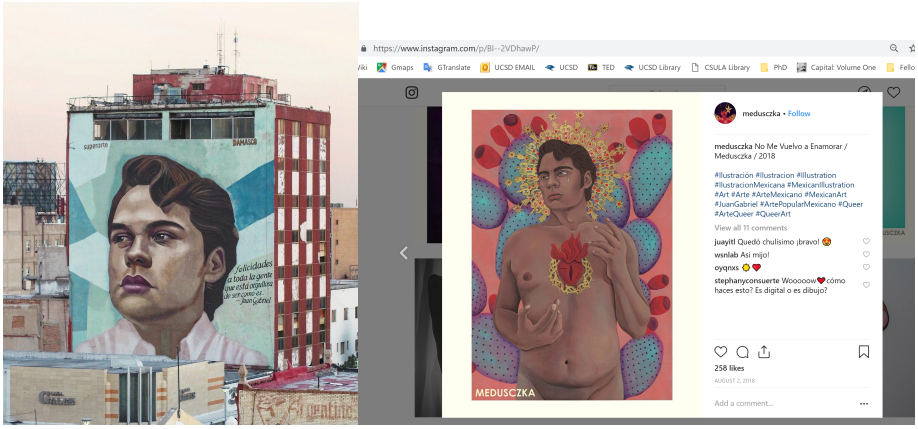
In developing the digital archive of representation of Juan Gariel in social media following his death, I encountered Mexican and Latinx artists who were inspired to create works depicting Juan Gabriel as the patron saint of queers. New York-based Mexican artist Gabriel Garcia Roman and Mexico City-based artist Medusczka blended Christian iconography with iconic images of Juan Gabriel at various epochs of his life to produce the following images:











The *spirits* of my dissertation *haunt* me. In June 2022, I had the opportunity to travel to León, México to attend a bi-national conference on U.S. - Mexico border research. I attended this conference in my capacity as Associate Director for Academic Initiatives at the Raza Resource Centro, where my goal is to support student research opportunities. The conference was held at Centro Fox, the Presidential Library of former President Vicente Fox. Attendees stayed at Hacienda San Cristobal, the historical home of the Fox family, and where Fox had hosted celebrities and dignitaries. I attended this conference with the intention of getting my final edits to this dissertation, and surprisingly I was assigned to stay in the "Habitación en Memoria de Juan Gabriel" - the suite in which Juan Gabriel had stayed in when he performed at Centro Fox.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3

In searching for the online memorials for the victims of the Pulse Orlando mass shooting, I compiled a list of references to the incident, archived social media profiles, and online news articles that discuss the mass shooting incident:

- City of Orlando Reaches Out to Far-Away Loved Ones of Victims of Shooting Massacre By Alberto Pimienta Florida PUBLISHED 8:46 PM ET Jun. 17, 2016 https://spectrumlocalnews.com/news/2016/06/17/city-of-orlando-reaches-out-to-far-away-loved-ones-of-victims-of-shooting-massacre
- CNN espanol - madre de juan chavez martinez https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/video/cnnee-pkg-alis-masacre-orlando-familia-juan-chavez-martinez-hidalgo-mexico/
- Dan último adiós en Guerrero a víctima de masacre en Orlando 24 de junio de 2016, 22:40. El texto original de este artículo fue publicado por la Agencia Quadratín en la siguiente dirección: https://www.quadratin.com.mx/municipios/regiones/dan-ultimo-adios-en-coyuca-catalan-a-victima-masacre-en-orlando/
- Dan último adiós en Coyuca de Catalán a víctima de masacre en Orlando. Jun 24, 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IieokMD1nX0
- Families Of Undocumented Victims Of Orlando Face Unique Challenges June 19, 20167:57 AM ET. Heard on Weekend Edition Sunday https://www.npr.org/2016/06/19/482668952/families-of-undocumented-victims-of-orlando-face-unique-challenges
- Hablan los sobrevivientes de la Masacre de Orlando. Jun 19, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOtXyYp7Rq8

- Human Rights Campaign June 12, 2016 https://www.instagram.com/p/BGkPZb0LvLw/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=
- HRC instagram - June 12, 2017 https://www.instagram.com/p/BVTJcdUglCD/?hl=en "honor them with action"
- Human Rights Campaign Instagram June 12, 2016. https://www.instagram.com/p/BGj9SV2rvCG/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=
- HRC instagram - October 12, 2016 https://instagram.com/p/BLelkVWBPja/?hl=en "four months"
- Jasmine Aguilera and Madeline Fitzgerald June 12, 2019. "Concerns, Controversy Surround the Planned Construction of a Memorial and Museum at Pulse Nightclub, Site of 2016 Mass Shooting" *TIME Magazine.* https://time.com/5605008/pulse-nightclub-onepulse-memorial-museum-audit/
- Las dolorosas huellas de la masacre de Pulse en este sobreviviente colombiano. Jun 12, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XafsOCgpOjY
- Miguel Angel Honorato: Apopka father mourned by family and friends. Matt Murschel and Annie Martin. Orlando Sentinel. Jun 22, 2016 at 1:17 pm https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/pulse-orlando-nightclub-shooting/victims/os-orlando-mass-shooting-miguel-angel-honorato-20160613-story.html
- Orange county history center - One Orlando digital collection https://collections.thehistorycenter.org/MResultsGlobal.aspx?pS=@OneOrlandoCollection#

- Productor de La Voz Kids muere en masacre de Orlando | Noticiero | Noticias Telemundo. Jun 13, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08p2Y39pZUM
- REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF THE PULSE SHOOTING. A gunman killed 49 people on June 12, 2016 at Pulse nightclub in Orlando. These are the victims and their stories: Juan Chavez Martinez https://www.msnbc.com/all-in/watch/after-orlando-undocumented-family-risks-everything-707979331903
- Salgado, Julio - Que Siga La Fiesta - Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/julio.salgado.589/media_set?set=a.10153707836280095.1073741845.625120094&type=3
- Sepultan en Guerrero a mexicano asesinado en masacre de Orlando, Florida/ Atalo Mata. Jun 25, 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfqrnv8-14I
- Trasladan cuerpo de asesinado en Orlando a panteón de Coyuca de Catalán. 24 de junio de 2016, 19:00 https://guerrero.quadratin.com.mx/trasladan-cuerpo-asesinado-orlando-panteon-coyuca-catalan/
- Trasladan cuerpo de asesinado en Orlando a panteón de Coyuca de Catalán. Jun 24, 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phGBrcg1IjU&t=62s

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